

PRESS RELEASE 10 NOVEMBER 2009

The World Premiere of the original version of Prokofiev's *War and Peace*

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and Scottish Opera's world premiere of Prokofiev's original and unadulterated version of *War and Peace* opens in Glasgow and tours to Edinburgh in January 2010.

Based on Tolstoy's monumental novel, spanning decades and thousands of miles, this production is the culmination of a two year project to complete Prokofiev's uncensored score for this world premiere.

It took Prokofiev nearly ten years to complete the work as it was processed through the Soviet censoring system. The initial version failed to find approval with the Soviet authorities, however, and the opera was subjected to continual revision in the eleven years until Prokofiev's death in 1953.

By this time it had grown to 13 scenes, lasting about four hours. It has been performed in many edited versions since then, but the original has remained amongst the composer's manuscripts in Moscow until now. This version has been produced by Dr Rita McAllister, a renowned Prokofiev expert and former Director of Music at the Academy. During many visits to Russia during the past two years, she was given unprecedented access to these manuscripts by the composers' family, some of whom are expected to attend the premiere in Glasgow.

Prokofiev began writing *War and Peace* in the months leading up to World War II which gave it contemporary relevance and political backing – and in its first form was completed in the spring of 1942.

This production of *War and Peace* marks the fifth year of a collaboration in which The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and the company's senior specialist artisans and technicians act as mentors for the Academy's young musicians, costume makers, set builders and stage technicians throughout the process of creating a new opera production. Academy musicians must audition for their place in the orchestra pit.

And this year, the collaboration builds on the successful partnership between the Rachmaninov State Conservatoire in Rostov on Don and the Academy. This encompasses a burgeoning staff and student exchange programme, educational collaborations in jazz, composition, keyboard, traditional music. Musicworks projects with young people and the Russian premiere of *War and Peace* in Rostov on March 11 2010.

John Wallace, Principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, said: "Prokofiev's *War and Peace* has been reassembled in the original non-sovietised version by one of the world's leading Prokofiev scholars, our very own Dr. Rita McAllister. Glasgow and Scotland – Scottish Opera and the RSAMD – the first conservatoire of Dance, Drama and Music in Europe - setting the pace – leading the field. This is an unmissable event in the

European cultural calendar. I am delighted that the Academy and its partners are at the forefront of the UK in our engagement with the glory that is Russian culture."

Alex Reedijk, General Director of Scottish Opera, said:"We are thrilled to be collaborating once again with the RSAMD. This is a great opportunity for their young musicians and singers to work directly with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera in presenting an opera of this ambitious scale on the Theatre Royal Stage. In addition, the Company's senior specialist artisans also mentor young technicians and makers, providing vital hands-on experience in the industry and ensuring these specialist skills are nurtured in Scotland."

War and Peace is the tale of Natasha, the men in her life and the epic conflict taking place on the world stage. The threat of Napoleon is never far away and Russia's fate hangs in the balance.

With a cast of 75 and a full orchestra, rehearsals for this world premiere have been going on since early September.

A classic work, with 64 named roles, this production of *War and Peace* is a brand new performing version of Prokofiev's original score, reduced to approximately 3 hours.

Tickets on sale now

22/23 January 2010 – Theatre Royal www.theatreroyalglasgow.com

28 & 30 January 2010 – Edinburgh Festival Theatre
www.festivaltheatre.org.uk

Sung in Russian, Running time approximately 3 hours

Conductor Timothy Dean

Director Irina Brown

Designer Chloe Lamford

Lighting Designer Johanna Town

This project is funded by the European Union
***War and Peace* is sponsored by Standard Life**

Background Notes

No musical material has had to be invented for the reconstruction; the sections discarded in the revision process have been orchestrated, as far as possible in keeping with Prokofiev's distinctive style. The outcome reveals a work much closer to the ideals of Tolstoy, with greater emphasis on the personal and intimate and less focus on the national and tableauxque.

Ends - November 2009

