**Press release**

**Galway International Arts Festival announces world premiere of major new opera production**

Following on from the massive success of *The Second Violinist* at last year’s festival, Galway International Arts Festival is delighted to announce the world premiere of Irish National Opera’s major new production of *Orfeo ed Euridice* as part of Galway International Arts Festival 2018.

Christoph Willibald Von Gluck’s influential opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* is based on the myth of Orpheus, who is granted permission to travel to the underworld to rescue his wife Euridice on the condition that he not look at her until they are back on earth.

This new large-scale production features a revolutionary new mix of words, singing and dancing and will be sung in Italian with English surtitles. It is directed by renowned choreographer and director Emma Martin and features the acclaimed Irish mezzo soprano Sharon Carty, the sopranos Sarah Power and Emma Nash; the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and the Irish National Opera Chorus, with conductor Peter Whelan.

The co-production, with United Fall in partnership with Irish Baroque Orchestra, is the first of a number of new productions that Irish National Opera will unveil at Galway International Arts Festival in the coming years.

Irish National Opera was formed after the merging of two existing companies - Opera Theatre Company and Wide Open Opera - who have created some of the most exciting opera productions on the Irish stage in recent years, including *The Second Violinist* (co-produced with Landmark Productions)*,* which premiered to critical acclaim at Galway International Arts Festival last year.

Artistic Director of GIAF, Paul Fahy commented, ‘The foundation of the new Irish National Opera offers brilliant possibilities for Irish singers, composers and artists, many of whom are widely celebrated internationally to showcase their work on an Irish stage. This is a very exciting time for Irish opera and we look forward to collaborating with and presenting the work of this wonderful new company to festival audiences.’

Fergus Sheil, Artistic Director of Irish National Opera, added, ‘We are particularly excited in our inaugural year to be collaborating with Galway International Arts Festival in the new production of *Orfeo ed Euridice* directed by Emma Martin and featuring the acclaimed Irish mezzo soprano Sharon Carty. GIAF offers us a high-quality platform to present new work alongside leading major artists from Ireland and abroad. *Orfeo ed Euridice* is the first of a number of new productions that we intend to unveil in Galway in the coming years.’

*Orfeo ed Euridice* is the most popular of Gluck’s works and one of the most influential, with variations of the plot found in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Wagner's *Das Rheingold*.

It will run at the Town Hall Theatre in Galway from 23-29 July 2018 as part of Galway International Arts Festival. Tickets, priced€30 - €40, go on sale on 29 January 2018.

Galway International Arts Festival would like to acknowledge the support of its principal funding agencies the Arts Council and Fáilte Ireland, its Festival Partner Ulster Bank and Education Partner NUI Galway.

**Cast**

Orfeo                                           Sharon Carty

Euridice                                       Sarah Power

Amore                                           Emma Nash

**Creative Team**

Conductor                                     Peter Whelan

Director                                         Emma Martin

Set designer                                  Sabine Dargent

Costume designer                        Catherine Fay

Lighting designer                         Stephen Dodd

Irish National Opera Chorus

Irish Baroque Orchestra

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Town Hall Theatre

Courthouse Square, Galway

23, 25, 26, 28 & 29 July 2018

8pm

€30 - €40

On sale from 29 January 2018

**Praise for Sharon Carty**

‘This is the moment a star is born, I told myself as I sat breathlessly through mezzo soprano Sharon Carty’s sublime rendering of the aria *Scherza infida*.’

The Sunday Business Post

**Praise for Sarah Power**

‘Sarah Power used her bright, personable soprano with unfailing taste and technical ease – supremely so in her mesmeric Act 3 aria… a fitting climax to the whole performance.’

Opera Magazine

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