



Satyagraha

Philip Glass (B 1937)

Libretto Philip Glass and Constance DeJong (based on the ancient Hindu text *Bhagavad Gita*)

Conductor, Stuart Stratford

Director, Phelim McDermott

Philip Glass's operatic masterpiece makes a welcome return to ENO

Opening Wednesday 20 November, 7.00pm at London Coliseum (6 performances)

ENO revives an iconic piece of contemporary opera, Philip Glass's *Satyagraha* this November. This critically acclaimed production is by visionary director Phelim McDermott and designer Julian Crouch, co-founders of Improbable. Described by The Times as 'a masterwork of theatrical intensity and integrity', it broke box office records for contemporary opera on its UK premiere, making it the most popular contemporary work to be performed by ENO.

Satyagraha, a Sanskrit word meaning "truth force", looks at Mahatma Gandhi's early years in South Africa and his development of non-violent protests as a political tool. The story moves back and forth through Gandhi's life, with the flow of time, words and music creating a hypnotic, almost ritualistic experience. Each of the three acts depicts a spiritual guardian who is linked to the Satyagraha philosophy. Act 1 features Tolstoy, Act 2 the Indian mystic and poet Tagore and Act 3 Martin Luther King Junior, representing the past, present and future of *Satyagraha*.

Alan Oke returns to the principal role of M.K. Gandhi, following his acclaimed performances in 2007 and 2010. The Sunday Telegraph commented on his 'remarkable presence' and that 'his characterisation is compelling'. Soprano Janis Kelly is again reunited with Phelim McDermott and Philip Glass after recent performances at ENO in *The Perfect American* in June 2013, and will reprise the role of Mrs Naidoo. Stephanie Marshall also reprises her role as Kasturbai. She has performed in numerous ENO productions including *Carmen*, *Orfeo*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Gondoliers* and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

American bass Nicholas Masters, a recent graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, makes his ENO debut singing the dual roles of Parsi Rustomji and Lord Krishna.

Highlighting ENO's strong track record for showcasing British and British-trained talent, soprano Clare Egginton performs the role of Mrs Schlesen and mezzo soprano Sarah Pring – who has performed in *Lucia de Lammermoor* and *Jenufa* at ENO, as well as at the Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera and Welsh National Opera – is Mrs Alexander. Completing the cast is baritone Eddie Wade as Prince Arjuna, who recently performed with ENO in *Caligula*.

The ENO Chorus also takes a central role as the mass force for change under Gandhi's inspired leadership. Integrated with the ENO Chorus are 12 members of a skills ensemble including aerialists, puppeteers, acrobats and regular performers with Improbable.

Performed in Sanskrit which complements Glass's expressive score, *Satyagraha* is the second of his trilogy of operas about men who changed the world. The first was *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) and the third *Akhnaten* (1984) which had its UK premiere at ENO in 1985, sparking a special artistic relationship between Glass and ENO. ENO works on a regular basis with more living composers than almost any other opera house in the world.

Phelim McDermott recently directed the UK premiere of *The Perfect American* at ENO in June 2013. He will also direct a new production of *Così fan tutte* for ENO which premieres in May 2014.

For further press information please contact:

Sara Parsons

Press Officer

020 7845 9433

sparsons@eno.org



Conductor Stuart Stratford makes a welcome return to ENO. He previously conducted the revival performances of *Satyagraha* in February 2010. The Guardian described how his conducting 'makes the score seem more ravishing than ever'. Completing the creative team are costume designer Kevin Pollard, lighting designer Paule Constable, video designers Leo Warner and Mark Grimmer for Fifty Nine productions Ltd, and movement and puppetry by Rob Thirtle.

Satyagraha opens at the London Coliseum on Wednesday 20 November for 6 performances – 20, 25, 26 November 4, 6 December at 7pm, 8 December at 3pm

Running time: 3 hours 10 minutes (with 2 intervals)

Pre-performance talk, Tuesday 26 November, 5.00-5.45pm, £5/£2.50 concs.

An *Opera Undressed** performance of *Satyagraha* will take place on Wednesday 4 December, 7.00pm.

Co-produced by English National Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, New York. In collaboration with Improbable.

Original production supported by ENO 20/20 Group

Notes to Editors

Satyagraha is performed in Sanskrit, the original language of the ancient Hindu text *Bhagavad Gita* which inspired the libretto. At the composer's request, surtitles are not used in *Satyagraha* for two reasons. Firstly, the greatest contribution of the words to the piece, and to the audience experience, is as sound rather than story – rather like a chant. Also, some elements of the libretto are incorporated into the design of the production and would therefore be duplicated by surtitles.

English National Opera (ENO) is the UK's leading producer of world-class opera, sung in English. Working with the very best talent from across the arts and creative industries, we produce highly theatrical productions that push the boundaries of what opera can be. We champion British and British-trained talent by providing development programmes for singers, composers and conductors, placing them at the heart of our performances. Our productions are seen by audiences across Europe, North America and Australia thanks to partnerships with the world's most celebrated opera houses. Though all our activities we aim to make our work enjoyable, accessible and affordable for as many people as possible.

www.eno.org

***Opera Undressed** is an audience development scheme that aims to introduce newcomers to English National Opera by demystifying the opera-going experience in a fun and informal setting.

During our 2013/14 season, ENO is hosting eight *Opera Undressed* nights. For just £25, audience members will:

- Get one of the best seats in the house
- Attend a pre-performance chat about the production
- Get an outline of the opera in advance
- Attend post-show drinks with cast and company members
- Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the London Coliseum, with bars serving beer and cocktails

An *Opera Undressed* performance of *Satyagraha* will take place on Wednesday 4 December at 7.00pm.

See www.eno.org/undress for more information.

If you would like to attend an *Opera Undressed* performance, please contact:
Sara Parsons, Press Officer – sparsons@eno.org / 020 7845 9433

For further press information please contact:

Sara Parsons

Press Officer

020 7845 9433

sparsons@eno.org