

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**10 April 2018**

**Investec Opera Holland Park wins  
International Opera Award for Education  
and Outreach work**



Investec Opera Holland Park was announced as the winner of the 'Education & Outreach' category of the International Opera Awards at the London Coliseum last night. The award recognises OHP's *Inspire* programme, which since 2010 has been working to bring opera to all via accessible ticket schemes and projects for social inclusion, health and wellbeing, and education.

*Inspire* aims to embrace, engage and enrich the lives of the whole community, working with schools, refugees, the elderly and individuals with learning disabilities. Last year, *Inspire* engaged with over 5,700 people, through 15 projects and 60 *Inspire* sessions, all of which were free for participants. *Inspire*'s specially designed programmes supported almost 200 people living with dementia in 2017, using music to ease its symptoms, bring loved ones together through shared memories and enable participants to enjoy a better quality of life. This year OHP is delighted to be opening its doors as London's first dementia-friendly opera theatre; having been adapted for those living with memory loss.

OHP's hugely popular accessible ticket schemes enabled almost 3,000 people to watch a main-stage opera last year, via free and low-cost schemes, and a two-for-one offer for Emergency Services staff. Accessible performances are a fixture every season, and OHP is the first London-based opera company to give audio-described performances for blind and visually impaired people. Relaxed performances for children with special needs and their families have given young people who would usually find theatre environments challenging the chance to discover opera.

As Lucy Curtis, *Inspire* Coordinator explains, *Inspire* is central to everything OHP does:

"It is in the DNA of the company. We do it because we can and should make a difference, and because we all want to."

OHP is extremely grateful to its principal sponsor Investec Wealth & Investment for ongoing generosity, which makes *Inspire* projects possible. This year new *Inspire* initiatives include the inaugural Schools' Matinee, a special performance of *La traviata* reserved exclusively for school groups aged 7-18. OHP will also be engaging families through OperaUNITY workshops, developed around the 2018 season productions. Finally, Refuge in Harmony will see 50 unaccompanied minors come together to create a work and perform it at OHP's Open Day on 22 July.

OHP has recently released the short film *Hip hop to opera*, in which teenagers from a south London school take a journey into opera, led by

OHP General Director Michael Volpe. The documentary is available on BBC Arts and BBC iPlayer:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5SP9I5NCBswnym1v0fZmTtS/hop-to-opera-expanding-horizons-through-music>

In a joint statement, James Clutton, Director of Opera, and Michael Volpe, General Director of OHP said:

"We have always put our outreach and accessible ticket schemes at the heart of everything we do so receiving this recognition is enormously gratifying. Thank you to everyone at the International Opera Awards, to our fantastic sponsors Investec Wealth & Investment, our fellow nominees and every single person in the OHP team. Thank you to the many charities we work with and to all the groups and individuals to whom we take music and drama."

See the 2016/17 *Inspire* review:  
<http://www.operahollandpark.com/inspire-review-2017/>

Find out more about OHP's *Inspire* projects and ticket schemes at [www.operahollandpark.com](http://www.operahollandpark.com). Investec Opera Holland Park's 2018 season will run from 29 May to 28 July.

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**Notes to editors**

Investec Opera Holland Park is extremely grateful to Investec Wealth & Investment, its principal sponsor since 2011.

The 2018 season production of *La traviata* is generously sponsored by Viking Cruises.