

MEDIA RELEASE – SYDNEY WINTER SEASON 2016

Opera Australia celebrate their 60th anniversary Season with new and rare diamonds

Carmen 16 May (18 perf) | The love for Three Oranges (8 perf) | Così fan tutte (8 perf) | Simon Boccanegra (9 perf)



Opera Australia (OA) will celebrate its 60th anniversary in style this June - launching a phenomenal winter season at the Sydney Opera House that includes new delights and classic favourites. **John Bell's** new production of *Carmen* is set to sizzle, an all Australian cast will bring Russian gem *The Love for Three Oranges* to life, the Du Ponte trilogy meets its final chapter with **David McVicar's** *Così fan tutte* and drama and intrigue reach new heights with Verdi classic *Simon Boccanegra*.

"For our 60th anniversary programming, I wanted to offer Sydney audiences four distinct opera experiences," said Opera Australia Artistic Director **Lyndon Terracini**

An entirely new production of *Carmen*, directed by **John Bell** will be seen for the first time in Sydney, bringing with it some of opera's biggest names – French singer **Clémentine Margaine**, Australian star **Milijana Nikolic** (Carmen), thrilling Korean tenor **Yonghoon Lee** and the power of American tenor **Brandon Jovanovich** (Don José).

One hundred and forty-one years after its premiere, *Carmen* remains one of the world's favourite operas, continuing to inspire contemporary music, fashion and film. "*Carmen* is a must see opera, even if you've never set foot in an opera house," said **Lyndon Terracini**.

Eye-popping costumes, physical comedy and sets of acid colour tell the tale of *The Love for Three Oranges*, an opera that never takes itself too seriously. This Russian gem is juicy, sweet and a trifle acerbic, just like the proverbial oranges. A brilliant all-Australian cast performs the lively English translation by playwright **Tom Stoppard**.

Director Sir **David McVicar** delivered profound and acclaimed productions of *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, and now anticipation builds for the final instalment of the Da Ponte trilogy, *Così fan tutte*. **Jonathan Darlington** returns to conduct a cast of Opera Australia's finest talents, along with one of the world's leading tenors **Charles Castronovo**, who makes his Australian debut.

Personal sacrifice meets political thriller in *Simon Boccanegra*, a vast opera by a master of the genre. No composer rivals Verdi in his ability to draw the audience into complex political landscapes by telling intimate, personal stories. Under the baton of conductor **Renato Palumbo**, a major cast including **Barbara Fritoli**, **Diego Torre**, **George Petean** and **Giacomo Prestia** comes together to bring this masterpiece to the Sydney Opera House stage.

Originally known as the Australia Elizabethan Theatre Trust, July 21 marks 60 years since OA staged its first production. Industry website Bachtrack recently named OA as the third busiest opera company in the world, only behind The Metropolitan Opera (New York) and The Royal Opera (London). In 2015 OA staged a total of 751 performances, including 193 opera performances, 17 festival performances of new Australian work *The Rabbits* by **Kate Miller-Heidke**, 384 schools performances, 157 musical performances and delivered its first made-for-television work *The Divorce* for the ABC (watched by 1.1 million people).

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Bizet | Directed by John Bell | Conducted by Andrea Molino (until July 13) Brian Castles-Onion

Carmen

June 16 – August 12 | 18 Performances | Starring Clementine Margaine and Yonghoon Lee



The passion, heat and danger of *Carmen* will be brought to dazzling heights in John Bell’s new production, tackling the gritty tale of power, corruption and destruction head on. Set against crumbling, monumental colonial architecture, this vibrantly colourful show will bring obsessions and love to the stage through Spanish dance and contemporary breakdancing.

“I’ve always been intrigued by the psychology of that choice,” says John Bell, who follows up critically acclaimed *Tosca* with *Carmen* this Sydney Winter season. “What leads you to love the one person who is going to destroy you?”

Carmen is colourful, physical and entertaining, but it shouldn’t get “too pretty”, he adds. To succeed, it must have punch. Sex and sexual politics. Physicality and power.

Conducted by **Andrea Mollino** and then **Brian Castles-Onion**, Bizet buffs and first-time opera goers alike can sit back and take in *Carmen*’s extraordinary score.

This entirely new production of *Carmen*, commissioned by Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini will be seen for the first time in Sydney, bringing with it some of opera’s biggest names – French singer **Clementine Margaine** and Australian favourite **Milijana Nikolic** (Carmen) and thrilling Korean tenor **Yonghoon Lee** and the power of tenor **Brandon Jovanovich** (Don José).

The sets have been designed by **Michael Scott-Mitchell**, the brains behind the incredible sets of *Tosca* and *The Elixir of Love*. *Carmen* will invite viewers into a once grand but now crumbling world featuring Havana-inspired bright colours, cobblestone grounds and pale blue combi vans.

Teresa Negroponte’s costumes don’t shy away from the colour and life of *Carmen* with punchy hot colours and a mix of 50’s cool and modern day clothing. Featuring gangsters in bright jewel-toned suits and girls in sequins, turbans and furs, there’ll be plenty to watch.

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|-----------|--|-------------------|--|
| Carmen | Clementine Margaine Milijana Nikolic (9/7 - 12/8) | Creatives | |
| Don José | Yonghoon Lee Brandon Jovanovich (9/7 - 12/8) | Conductor | Andrea Molino Brian Castles Onion (15/7 - |
| Escamillo | Michael Honeyman Shane Lawrencecev (9/7 - 12/8) | 12/8) | |
| Micaela | Natalie Aroyan Stacey Alleaume (9/7 - 12/8) | Director | John Bell |
| Zuniga | Adrian Tamburini | Set Designer | Michael Scott-Mitchell |
| Dancairo | Luke Gabbedy | Costume Designer | Teresa Negroponte |
| Remendado | Kanen Breen | Lighting Designer | Trent Suidgeest |
| Morales | Samuel Dundas | Choreographer | Kelley Abbey |
| Frasquita | Jane Ede | | |
| Mercedes | Sian Pendry | | |

Running time

Approx 3hrs & 15mins including one interval
Performed in French with English surtitles

Evening Performances 7.30pm

June 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 29

July 1, 5, 9, 13, 15, 21, 23, 29

August 3, 9, 12

Matinee Performance 1pm

August 6

Prokofiev | Directed by Francesca Zambello | Conducted by Anthony Legge

The Love for Three Oranges

June 22 – July 9 | 8 Performances | Starring David Parkin, Rosario La Spina, Sian Pendry and Andrew Moran



“This is a brilliant production, brilliantly sung, brilliantly played, which grabs the listener’s attention from the start and keeps it precariously spinning throughout, all for no apparent purpose other than to divert the eye and ear, while subverting the mind’s attempt at interpretation.” *The Sydney Morning Herald*

This Russian gem is juicy, sweet and a trifle acerbic, just like the proverbial oranges. A brilliant all-Australian cast performs the lively English translation by playwright Tom Stoppard (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*).

Take a melancholy prince, a cantankerous witch and the curse of a love strange and strong: an unquenchable passion of unusual fashion for not just one orange, but three! Add an infectious march, some fantastical farce and a kingdom of curious characters, and you have Prokofiev’s surreal, screwball fairytale for adults.

“*The Love for Three Oranges* is dynamic, it’s vibrant, it’s exciting and even when it’s being lyrical it has a slightly edgy, percussive side to it,” said **Lyndon Terracini**, Artistic Director of Opera Australia.

“This revival of Francesca Zambello’s production is beautiful – the costumes are so vivid and exciting that the whole piece jumps off the stage at you.”

With **Tania Noginova’s** fantastical and strange costumes - from bright and zesty tulle oranges to eye-catching green cacti, these are not merely garments worn but larger than life delights that add another dimension of fantasy to the stage. Equally wondrous is the world **George Tsypin’s** creates through his sets, with a large hospital bed and exotic leafy greens, you never quite know what is around the corner.

This all-star all Australian cast features **David Parkin, Rosaria La Spina, Sian Pendry, Andrew Moran, Eva Kong and Julie Lea Goodwin** to name few.

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| The King of Clubs | David Parkin |
| The Prince | Rosario La Spina |
| Princess Clarice | Sian Pendry |
| Leandro | Andrew Moran |
| Pantaloon | Luke Gabbedy |
| Chelio | Gennadi Dubinsky |
| Fata Morgana | Antoinette Halloran |
| Princess Linetta | Eva Kong |
| Princess Nicoletta | Catherine Bouchier |
| Princess Ninetta | Julie Lea Goodwin |
| The Cook | Adrian Tamburini |
| Farfello | Pelham Andrews |
| Smeraldina | Victoria Lambourn |
| Master of Ceremonies | Graeme Macfarlane |
| Herald | David Greco |

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|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Creatives | |
| Conductor | Anthony Legge |
| Director | Francesca Zambello |
| Revival Director | Matthew Barclay |
| Set Designer | George Tsypin |
| Costume Designer | Tania Noginova |
| Lighting Designer | Mark Howett |
| Choreographer | Denny Sayers |

Evening Performances 7.30pm

June 22, 24, 28, 30

July 2, 4, 6

Matinee Performance 1pm

July 9

Running time

Approx 2hrs & 20mins including one interval.

Performed in English in a translation by Tom Stoppard, with surtitles

Mozart | Directed by Sir David McVicar | Conducted by Jonathan Darlington

Così fan tutte

July 19 – August 13 | 8 Performances | Starring Nicole Car, Taryn Fiebig and Charles Castronovo



Director **Sir David McVicar** delivered profound and acclaimed productions of *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, and now anticipation builds for the final instalment of the Da Ponte trilogy, *Così fan tutte*.

"Così fan tutte!" (All women are the same!); so believes the cynical old philosopher Don Alfonso and his reckless young friends, the officers Guglielmo and Ferrando agree to put his theory to the test, participating in an elaborate charade, attempting the seduction of each other's fiancées, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella. The four young people soon discover more about each other, themselves and life itself than any of them have bargained for.

Absurd? Yes, but Mozart's luminous music takes the absurd and makes it sublime. *Così fan tutte* is about testing fidelity in an intriguing story set to music of impossible beauty.

"The questions the opera poses to an audience are today even greater and possibly more disturbing. Often played in the past as an all-out farce, the subtle mix of sexual politics, heart-break, loss and pain that are inherent in the final masterpiece of Mozart and Da Ponte are more relevant today than ever before," said Director **Sir David McVicar**.

"The new production sets this most troubling and ambiguous of operatic comedies in the dying days of a Europe about to lose itself in the carnage of the First World War. The ravishing costumes of the early 1900's are bathed in the late summer light of an age of innocence and elegance on the brink of being shattered, as the lives of the four lovers in the comedy ultimately are."

Jonathan Darlington returns to conduct a cast of Opera Australia's finest talents, along with one of the world's leading tenors Charles Castronovo, who makes his Australian debut.

Two of Australia's most exciting female opera singers – **Nicole Car** and **Taryn Fiebig** performed in both *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, complete the trilogy with performance with *Così fan tutte*.

With set and costume designed by **Mortiz Junge**, the brains behind the incredible costumes of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacca* at the Metropolitan Opera and both set and costumes of *The Tempest* at The Royal Opera, *Così fan tutte* will transport its audience to another time.

This entirely new production of *Così fan tutte*, commissioned by Artistic Director **Lyndon Terracini** will be seen for the first time in Sydney.

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|-------------|---------------------------|
| Fiordiligi | Nicole Car |
| Dorabella | Anna Dowsley |
| Despina | Taryn Fiebig |
| Ferrando | Charles Castronovo |
| Guglielmo | Andrew Jones |
| Don Alfonso | Richard Anderson |

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Creatives | |
| Conductor | Jonathan Darlington |
| Director | Sir David McVicar |
| Set and costume Designer | Mortiz Junge |

Evening Performances 7.00pm
 July 19, 22, 25, 27
 August 5, 11, 13

Matinee Performance 12.30pm
 July 30

Running time
 Approx 3hrs including one interval
 Performed in Italian with English surtitles

Verdi | Directed by Moffatt Oxenbould | | Revival Director Matthew Barclay | Conducted by Renato Palumbo

Simon Boccanegra

June 26 – August 13 | 9 Performances | Starring Barbara Frittoli and Diego Torre



It's only fitting that a Verdi masterpiece would conclude Opera Australia's 60th anniversary season, with the finest of voices, the greatest of composers and the highest levels of drama, passion, and intrigue.

Boccanegra is a powerful man with a great tragedy in his past: 25 years earlier, his young lover died and their baby mysteriously disappeared. Just as he thinks he might have found his daughter, his enemies start to move against him.

Personal sacrifice meets political thriller in this vast opera by a master of the genre. No composer rivals Verdi in his ability to draw the audience into complex political landscapes by telling intimate, personal stories. Grave duets, complex ensembles and majestic choruses reveal a world of intrigue and influence, where the past is never behind you and every friendly face could disguise an enemy.

The opera's extraordinary musical demands and sprawling story make it a rarity on the opera stage.

Under the baton of conductor **Renato Palumbo**, a major cast including **Barbara Frittoli**, **Diego Torre**, **George Petean** and **Giacomo Prestia** comes together to bring this masterpiece to the Sydney Opera House stage.

"This is a wonderful grand opera. One of my favourites. For Verdi aficionados, it is one of the greatest penned by the master composer," said Opera Australia Artistic Director **Lyndon Terracini**. "It's notoriously difficult to sing and you need a conductor at the top of their game. After his extraordinary success with *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*, **Renato Palumbo** is regarded as one of the greatest living Verdi conductors and I'm privileged to welcome him back."

"We have a fabulous cast. **Barbara Frittoli** is one of the world's great sopranos and **George Petean** is one of the world's great baritones. They are joined by **Giacomo Prestia** who sang such a magnificent King Phillip in *Don Carlos* last year in Melbourne, and the wonderful tenor **Diego Torre**. *Simon Boccanegra* is a big piece and you need big voices. We have them in spades in this production and the great council chamber scene where Boccanegra enters with Plebe! Patrizi! will be a moment to remember."

Cast

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|------------------|-------------------------|
| Amelia Grimaldi | Barbara Frittoli |
| Gabriele Adorno | Diego Torre |
| Simon Boccanegra | George Petean |
| Jacopo Fiesco | Giacomo Prestia |
| Paolo | Warwick Fyfe |
| Pietro | Richard Anderson |
| Maid servant | Rebecca Currier |
| Captain | Stuart Haycock |

Creatives

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Conductor | Renato Palumbo |
| Director | Moffatt Oxenbould |
| Revival Director | Matthew Barclay |
| Set Designer | Peter England |
| Costume Designer | Russell Cohen |
| Lighting Designer | Nigel Levings |

Evening Performances 7.30pm

July 26, 28, 30

August 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

August 3, 9, 12

Matinee Performance 1pm

August 13

Running time

Approx 2hrs & 30mins including one interval
Performed in Italian with English surtitles

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