

**MEDIA RELEASE - SYDNEY**  
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## **Opera Australia to unleash its creative powers in 2018**



Opera Australia has cast off the creative limitations of 2017 and will unleash one of its most inspired and innovative programs to date when it returns to its Sydney home in the Joan Sutherland Theatre in 2018.

Presenting the Company's 2018 Sydney Season at the Sydney Opera House today, Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini said the current closure of the JST presented a challenge to the Company.

"The renewal works were absolutely welcomed and supported by OA and we are very keen to get back into the space, but the closure was definitely a challenge.

"Having said that, it gave us the opportunity to think and perform outside our usual 'square' and that became an exciting journey, with some outstanding and memorable performances that our audiences definitively embraced and enjoyed.

"Next year we're aiming to present some big productions with some of the finest conductors, singers, directors and designers, it's really what we've all been working towards for many years and it's finally all coming together for 2018," said Terracini.

The 2018 season will be a showcase of what a world renowned opera company such as Opera Australia is capable - a company so widely respected that the finest international conductors, singers and directors are jumping at the opportunity to work with them.

"We are privileged to be hosting some of the most outstanding artists of our time, singing roles they have made their own around the world, with Leo Nucci and Ferruccio Furlanetto bringing their celebrated interpretations of *Rigoletto* and *Don Quichotte* to Australia for the first time," continued Terracini.

It is also a year where Australia's finest who have made their mark wowing audiences on the international stages of London, Berlin and New York, are coming home to great acclaim and anticipation. Singers such as sopranos Nicole Car, Danielle de Niese and Jessica Pratt, who are starring in lead roles and director Barrie Kosky, whose production of Shostakovich's *The Nose* will be a highlight of Sydney's Summer Season.

Plus the remarkable local talent who are stepping up and spreading their vocal wings into more challenging leading roles such as Natalie Aroyan, Stacey Alleaume and Michael Honeyman who enthralled audiences with their performances in 2017.

**SYDNEY SUMMER 2018****Lehár: *The Merry Widow* | Conductor Vanessa Scammell | Director Graeme Murphy**

Sydney's Summer Season will start with a bang. Literally. Sydney's world famous New Year's Eve celebrations will be the perfect backdrop to the Sydney premiere of Graeme Murphy's magnificent production of *The Merry Widow*. Featuring Australia's own Danielle de Niese, making her opera debut in her home country, the stunning soprano has been lured from her glorious country estate in the UK, famous for the Glyndbourne Opera Festival, to perform in this beautiful production, lavishly designed with lashings of satin and with Graeme Murphy's signature spirited choreography. **Joan Sutherland Theatre December 31 to February 3**

**Bizet: *Carmen* | Conductor Paolo Carignani | Director John Bell**

Starring the singer who has made this role her own in Australia, having performed as Carmen in the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour production as well as John Bell's highly acclaimed take on one of the world's most popular operas in Melbourne, Israeli soprano Rinat Shaham is now poised to wow Sydney audiences. Shahan will be joined on stage by exciting young Argentine tenor Marcelo Puente who will be making his OA debut in the role of Don José, a role he recently played in North America and Japan to wide acclaim. **Joan Sutherland Theatre February 10 - March 23**

**Shostakovich: *The Nose* | Conductor Andrea Molino | Director Barrie Kosky**

This highly anticipated production of the rarely performed Shostakovich masterpiece by Australian director Barrie Kosky and co-produced with The Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, is guaranteed to delight. Conducted by Andrea Molino, most likely from memory, and featuring a huge cast of both international and local performers, this will be the first time *The Nose* has been performed in Australia. *The Spectator* described it as "terrifically realised, brilliantly inventive and highly entertaining". **Joan Sutherland Theatre February 21 to March 3**

**Verdi: *La Traviata* | Conductor Andrea Licata | Director Elijah Moshinsky**

The smash hit of last year's summer season, *La Traviata* makes a triumphant return to the Joan Sutherland Theatre, this time with Australia's own superstar soprano Nicole Car making her world-wide role debut as Violetta, a role Lyndon Terracini believes she was born to play. Nicole will be joined by great Russian tenor Vitaliy Bilyy and the fabulous Ji Min Park who has become a huge favourite with Australian audiences. **Joan Sutherland Theatre March 1 – 27**

**Massenet: *Don Quichotte* | Conductor Guillaume Tourniaire | Revival Director Hugh Halliday**

Following on from the critical acclaim OA's concert performance of *Thaïs* attracted this year, this full staging of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* will be keenly anticipated by lovers of such glorious music. Never having staged this opera before OA has gathered a stellar cast from around the world including, arguably the world's best bass Ferruccio Furlanetto whose turn in the title role has become his signature piece. He'll be joined by exciting young Russian mezzo-soprano Elena Maximova and Guillaume Tourniaire who conducted *Thaïs* will return to Australia for this much loved work. **Joan Sutherland Theatre March 16 – 28**

**HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR****Puccini: *La Bohème* | Conductor Brian Castles-Onion | Director Andy Morton | Design Dan Potra**

Continuing this hugely successful series that has become known as one of the world's great outdoor opera events, Puccini's much-loved *La Bohème* is expected to draw huge crowds to this harbour-side pop up stage. Leading the all-star cast are stunning European sopranos Iulia Maria Dan and Maija Kovalevska as Mimi with Ho-Yoon Chung and Paul O'Neill sharing the role of Rodolfo. They will be joined some of Australia's finest including Julie Lea Goodwin and Samuel Dundas.

**Mrs Macquaries Point March 23 – April 22**

**SYDNEY WINTER 2018****Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor* | Conductor Carlo Montanaro | Director John Doyle**

Celebrated Australian soprano Jessica Pratt will make her OA debut in the bloody role of Lucia, the role she has become famous for and sought-after to play around the world. The same role that first brought international acclaim to a very young Joan Sutherland. Jessica will be joined on stage by dynamic American tenor Michael Fabiano who after winning a Helpmann for his performance in OA's production of *Faust* in 2015, is making a very welcome return to Sydney. **Joan Sutherland Theatre June 28 – July 27**

**Verdi: *Rigoletto* | Conductor Renata Palumbo | Director Roger Hodgman**

The most famous Rigoletto of the past 50 years, the indefatigable Italian baritone Leo Nucci will make his long-awaited Australian debut, finally bringing his signature performance, seen by adoring audiences around the world, to the Sydney Opera House. He will lead an all-star cast including Irina Lungu and Gianluca Terranova who recently performed the role of Duke of Mantua at the Arena in Verona to great acclaim. Nucci will hand over the role to Dalibor Jenis who has previously performed for OA in *Luisa Miller* to great success and Nadine Sierra who is hailed as the most promising soprano in the USA, will take over the role of Gilda. **Joan Sutherland Theatre July 6 – August 24**

**Verdi: *Aida* | Conductor Andrea Battistoni | Director & Choreographer Davide Livermore**

*Aida* has always been known as the BIG piece in any repertoire and this new production will be no exception, with director and choreographer Davide Livermore at the helm for the first time with OA, he'll be introducing new digital technologies that will take the audience experience to a whole new level. Stunning soprano Amber Wagner who certainly made an impression on audiences in last year's production of *The Ring* when she played Sieglinde will play Aida before local star Natalie Aroyan takes over the role. The all-star cast also includes such luminaries as Yonghoon Lee, Riccardo Massi, Michael Honeyman, Warwick Fyfe, Diego Torre and Roberto Scandiuzzi. **Joan Sutherland Theatre July 18 – August 31**

**Rossini: *The Turk In Italy* | Conductor Andrea Molino | Director Simon Phillips**

Celebrated young soprano Stacey Alleaume is stepping into the fun and fabulous lead role of Florilla in this hysterically funny opera where director Simon Phillips manages to wring every last laugh from Rossini's ridiculous romp. This production is a laugh on every level, from the fantastical cartoonish characters and sets to brightly coloured costumes, it's a brilliant introduction to opera for newcomers and a light and bright breath of fresh air for the converted. **Joan Sutherland Theatre August 10 – September 1**

**Howard: *Metamorphosis* | Conductor Paul Fitzsimon | Director Tama Matheson**

Based on one of Franz Kafka's best-known novels, and with music by Australian composer Brian Howard *Metamorphosis* is being revived in a fantastic fashion by director Tama Matheson as the first in a series of performances OA plans to stage in the rustic, industrial surrounds of The Opera Centre's scenery workshop in Surry Hills. Featuring a great Australian cast and with set and costumes designed by Mark Thompson, it promises to be a very physical experience. **Scenery Workshop, Opera Centre Surry Hills September 26-29**

**Mazda Opera in the Domain**

Returning again in 2018, *Mazda Opera in the Domain* is an undisputed crowd favourite in the long hot Sydney summer. Hear some of Australia's finest singers and musicians perform some of opera's greatest hits under the stars. The Domain Saturday 13 January. FREE

**Regional Tour**

OA will take John Bell's production of *Madame Butterfly* on its regional tour across VIC, NSW, ACT and TAS from **July to September in 2018**.

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