

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Opera Australia is rolling out the big guns in Melbourne in 2018**

**Opera Australia will be rolling it out big and bold in Melbourne in 2018 with some of the world's biggest voices taking on some of the greatest roles in opera.**

Presenting the Company's 2018 Melbourne Season at the Arts Centre Melbourne today, Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini said he's looking forward to an exciting program with some extraordinary artists and fabulous productions.

"We have some of the finest conductors, singers and directors, it will be an outstanding season, especially our Australian premiere of Kasper Holten's staging of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

"Melburnians have shown they have a passion for the big, iconic German operas in the past so we're sure they will embrace this one; it's Wagner at his biggest and best," said Terracini.

The 2018 season will be a showcase of what a world renowned opera company such as Opera Australia is capable - a company that is widely respected on the world stage, and attracts the finest international artists, many of whom return to perform time after time.

Stefan Vinke, hailed as the world's greatest Siegfried, returns after his *Ring Cycle* triumph in 2016 to perform Walther in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* along with other *Ring Cycle* alumni James Johnson and Pietari Inkinen.

In addition the remarkable local talent who wowed audiences with their outstanding performances in *The Ring* will be back to exercise their Wagner vocals including Warwick Fyfe, Dominica Matthews, Daniel Sumegi, Graeme Macfarlane and Luke Gabbedy.

OA will also be hosting, arguably the world's finest bass, Ferruccio Furlanetto who brings his celebrated interpretation of *Don Quichotte* to Melbourne for the first time. And OA is thrilled to have stunning American soprano Corinne Winters who is making her Australian debut and is guaranteed to make a big impact.

"I'm also particularly excited about the powerhouse performers in *Tosca*, Latonia Moore, Diego Torre and Marco Vratogna, they are going to bring the house down," said Terracini.

Plus there are OA's resident super-stars in the making, who are stepping up and spreading their vocal wings into more challenging leading roles such as Natalie Aroyan, Sian Pendry and Michael Honeyman who enthralled audiences with their performances in 2017.

**AUTUMN 2018**

**Verdi: *La Traviata* | Conductor Carlo Montanaro | Director Elijah Moshinsky**

The world's most popular opera and the smash hit of last year's Sydney summer season, *La Traviata* makes a triumphant return to Melbourne, this time with the Australian debut of American star soprano Corinne Winters playing the role of Violetta that she recently debuted at The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, and has played to great acclaim around the world. "Corinne Winters is a beautiful and fearless Violetta, capable of both power and subtlety." *Seattle Times*. Joining her on stage will be Yosep Kang and Ho-Yoon Chung who will share the role of Alfredo.

**Arts Centre Melbourne April 17 – May 11**

**Puccini: *Tosca* | Conductor Andrea Battistoni | Director John Bell**

This production of John Bell's critically acclaimed 20<sup>th</sup> century retelling of Puccini's *Tosca* calls for three exceptionally strong principal singers to take on the challenging roles of Tosca, Cavaradossi and Scarpia and this year OA have cast three of the best in the business. Fresh from his performance in *Otello* at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden with Jonas Kaufmann, Marco Vratogna will play Scarpia, the most famous villain in opera and a role he has made his own. His femme fatale is American powerhouse soprano Latonia Moore with Australia's favourite tenor Diego Torre rounding out the trifecta as Cavaradossi. With sensational young conductor Andrea Battistoni at the helm, this will be a knock out production, not to be missed. **Arts Centre Melbourne April 24 – May 10**

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

Following on from the critical acclaim OA's concert performance of *Thaïs* attracted in Sydney this year, this full staging of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* will be keenly anticipated for lovers of such glorious music. Never having staged this opera before, OA has assembled a stellar cast from around the world including, arguably the world's finest bass Ferruccio Furlanetto whose turn in the title role has become his signature piece. He'll be joined by an exciting cast of Australian performers including mezzo-soprano Sian Pendry, soprano Jane Ede, baritone Warwick Fyfe and tenors Graeme Macfarlane and John Longmuir. Brilliant French Maestro Guillaume Tourniaire, who conducted *Thaïs* in Sydney, will return for this much loved work. **Arts Centre Melbourne May 3-12**

**SPRING 2018**

**Wagner: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* | Conductor Pietari Inkinen | Director Kasper Holten**

It doesn't get much bigger in scale than this Wagner masterpiece. For the Australian premiere of this Royal Opera House Covent Garden co-production, OA has amassed a world-class cast, bringing together some of the finest singers of this repertoire in the world, many returning to Melbourne for the first time since their success in *The Ring*. Baritone James Johnson leads this huge and incredibly talented cast including Stefan Vinke, David Portillo, Warwick Fyfe, Dominica Matthews, Natalie Aroyan, Michael Honeyman, Daniel Sumegi, Graeme Macfarlane, Luke Gabbedy and so many, many more. Coupled with Kasper Holten's extravagant staging, this is the not to be missed production of 2018. **Arts Centre Melbourne November 13-22**

**Puccini: *La Bohème* | Conductor Pietro Rizzo | Director Gale Edwards**

This much loved production of *La Bohème* by Gale Edwards will be raised to yet another level of adoration when gorgeous Latvian soprano Maija Kovalevska returns to the Melbourne stage in her beloved role of Mimi, the role she debuted at The Met to great acclaim and has played many return seasons. Popular Korean tenor Yosep Kang will reprise his role as Rodolfo and both will be joined by a superb Australian cast including Jane Ede, Christopher Tonkin, Shane Lawrence and many more. **Arts Centre Melbourne November 7-24**

**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 quite fantastic fashion by director Tama Matheson as the first in a series of performances OA plans to stage at the Coopers Malthouse. Featuring a great Australian cast and with set and costumes designed by Mark Thompson it promises to be a very physical experience. **Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre, Southbank October 25-27**

**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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