

MEDIA RELEASE

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Opera Australia launches most exciting and innovative Sydney program to date



Opera Australia today launched one of its most exciting and innovative programs to date when it unveiled its 2019 Sydney Season in the Joan Sutherland Theatre at the Sydney Opera House.

Launching the 2019 Season using the new LED screens that have wowed the sell-out audiences at the new production of *Aida*, Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini was thrilled to present such a diverse, creative and progressive program.

“As a national opera company we need to remain part of the 21st century and 2019 will be a showcase of how we are approaching this challenge,” said Terracini.

Celebrating its boldness as a contemporary arts organisation still steeped in tradition, Opera Australia unveiled a program indicative of its forward thinking approach to the art form. With the introduction of three exciting new digital productions along with a mix of crowd-favourite revivals and concert presentations, the 2019 Season will showcase the finest talent from Australia and around the world, both on and off the stage.

As Opera Australia’s reputation for excellence has grown, so has its appeal to internationally acclaimed artists wanting to work here with three of the world’s best returning to Australian stages next year.

Back by popular demand will be stunning sopranos **Ermonela Jaho** and **Lise Lindstrom** who earned great acclaim and adoration for their performances in recent years in *La Traviata* and *The Ring Cycle* respectively, along with the world’s greatest tenor **Jonas Kaufmann** who will perform in both Sydney and Melbourne.

Accompanying them will be some of the most highly acclaimed conductors including world renowned Verdi specialist **Renato Palumbo**, plus two Maestros making their long awaited returns, **Johannes Fritzsich** with *Salome* and **Massimo Zanetti** who will bring Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* to life. Maestros **Pinchas Steinberg**, **Guillaume Tourniaire** and **Christian Badea** will also be returning to the Sydney Opera House pit.

And making his eagerly awaited Company debut, celebrated Australian conductor **Daniel Smith**, will be at the helm of Damiano Michieletto’s *Il Viaggio a Reims*.

In total seven Australian conductors will be performing with OA across the 2019 season, including **Benjamin Northey**, **Nicholas Milton**, **Dane Lam**, **Tahu Matheson**, **Warwick Stengards** and **Guy Simpson**.

2019 will also see the welcome return of **Teddy Tahu Rhodes** to Opera Australia, taking on the role of King Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* while several of Australia's finest singers will be consolidating their recent successes, with **Lorina Gore** and **Michael Honeyman** starring in *Wozzeck*, and **Stacey Alleaume** making her role debuts as Susanna in Sir David McVicar's *Marriage of Figaro* and Sophie in *Werther*.

The Australian premiere of highly acclaimed visual artist **William Kentridge's** production of *Wozzeck*, is set to be a highlight of Sydney's summer. A co-production with Salzburg Festival it will be a feast for the senses.

Opera Australia will present three brand new productions in the next phase of its digital development program that will all premiere in the Sydney Winter Season; *Madama Butterfly*, *Whiteley* and *Anna Bolena*.

Madama Butterfly, is brought you by the same team that thrilled audiences earlier this year with *The Merry Widow*. Director **Graeme Murphy**, Janet Vernon, set designer **Michael Scott-Mitchell** and costume designer **Jennifer Irwin** have reunited to present, what is set to be an unforgettable new version of this Puccini classic.

In a spectacular first, Opera Australia has commissioned a new Australian work on the life of iconic Australian artist, Brett Whiteley. Simply titled *Whiteley*, the production will be directed by **David Freeman**, music composed by **Elena Kats-Chernin**, libretto by **Justin Fleming**, and what is expected to be a spectacular set design featuring Whiteley's celebrated artworks, by **Dan Potra**, known for his outdoor designs at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour and *The Eighth Wonder*, *Sydney Opera House The Opera*.

In another successful pairing, **Daive Livermore** and his *Aida* creative team of **Giò Forma** and **D-Wok** are creating another digital masterpiece with *Anna Bolena*, in the first of Donizetti's Three Queens Trilogy.

"The 2019 Season exemplifies why Opera Australia is considered one of the world's leading opera companies," declared Terracini in closing.

SYDNEY SUMMER 2019

PUCCINI: *La Bohème* | Conductor Benjamin Northey | Director Gale Edwards

This much loved production of *La Bohème* by Gale Edwards will open Opera Australia's 2019 program with star soprano Joyce El-Khoury making her Opera Australia debut in the role of Mimì and popular Italian tenor Ivan Magri will make his Australian debut in the role of Rodolfo. Both will be joined by a superb cast including Anna Princeva, Samuel Dundas, Shane Lawrencev and many more.

Sydney Opera House December 31, 2018 – March 28, 2019

PUCCINI: *Turandot* | Conductor Christian Badea | Director Graeme Murphy

Graeme Murphy's adaptation of Puccini's final opera returns to Sydney under the baton of distinguished conductor Christian Badea. After her acclaimed portrayal of Aida in 2018, American soprano Amber Wager will return to the Joan Sutherland Theatre stage, this time as the icy princess Turandot, and will be joined by Andeka Gorrotxategi as Calaf singing one of the most recognised tenor arias of all time – 'Nessun Dorma'. **Sydney Opera House January 15 – March 30**

BERG: *Wozzeck* | Conductor Andrea Molino | Director William Kentridge

One of the most exciting visual artists of our generation, William Kentridge, directs and illustrates this extraordinary production, which is a collaboration between Opera Australia, the Metropolitan Opera, Salzburg Festival, and the Canadian Opera Company. The Financial Times labelled it "*a breathtaking reassessment of Berg's masterpiece...a work of art across many genres.*" Kentridge's haunting illustrations, charcoal drawings and frenetic scribbles are dynamically illuminated and erased on OA's new digitally-integrated sets. Michael Honeyman and Lorina Gore, who starred alongside each other in *King Roger* (2017) to huge acclaim return to the stage to tackle this cerebral opera, conducted by the talented Andrea Molino. **Sydney Opera House January 25 – February 15**

MASSENET: *Werther* | Conductor Carlo Montanaro | Director Elijah Moshinsky

A decade on from its last performance, Moshinsky's production of Massenet's *Werther* will return to the Joan Sutherland stage in 2019. American tenor Michael Fabiano, renowned for his intense, character driven performances will make his role debut as Werther, performing alongside acclaimed Russian mezzo-soprano Elena Maximova as Charlotte. OA welcomes back Italian maestro Carlo Montanaro to lead these world-class performers in the ultimate Romantic opera.

Sydney Opera House February 22 – March 11

STRAUSS: *Salome* | Conductor Johannes Fritzsich | Director Gale Edwards

Gale Edwards' provocative production of Richard Strauss' beautiful and outrageous *Salome* returns to Sydney, starring dazzling American soprano Lise Lindstrom. Lindstrom's unique vocal power and commanding stage presence are the perfect instruments to take on the famously taxing role in this biblical tale about lust without limits. Given the visceral treatment by design dream team Brian Thomson, Julie Lynch and John Rayment, and led by revival director Andy Morton (Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour 2018 – *La Bohème*), this is an entrancing production filled with exotic melodies, enticing rhythms and a rich visual spectacle. **Sydney Opera House March 6 – 26**

SYDNEY WINTER 2019

PUCCHINI: *Madama Butterfly* | Conductor Massimo Zanetti | Director Graeme Murphy

Puccini's classic opera is set to be reimagined by the creative forces that brought last summer's runaway hit, *The Merry Widow*. Director Graeme Murphy will again be joined by Janet Vernon, Michael Scott-Mitchell and Jennifer Irwin along with digital artist Sean Nieuwenhuis to deliver the first of OA's 2019 digital productions. The stunning designs will be complemented by Murphy's choreography to capture the grace and gravity of this heartbreaking tale. Two outstanding casts will perform, including Karah Son and Hyeseoung Kwon playing Cio-Cio San, Sian Pendry and Agnes Sarkis as Suzuki and the powerhouse tenors Andeka Gorrotategi and Diego Torre as the much maligned Pinkerton.

Sydney Opera House June 28 – August 10

DONIZETTI: *Anna Bolena* | Conductor Renato Palumbo | Director Davide Livermore

The next instalment of the season's digital productions is the first in Donizetti's Three Queen Trilogy, *Anna Bolena* (Anne Boleyn). Acclaimed director Davide Livermore returns to Sydney after his triumphant staging of *Aida* in 2018. A stellar cast has been assembled to tackle the acrobatic coltura, described by many as a masterclass in *bel canto* opera. Teddy Tahu Rhodes will play the ruthless King Henry VIII, with his ill-fated Tudor Queen played by glorious soprano Ermonela Jahu, back in Australia after her thrilling turn as Violetta in 2017's *La Traviata*. **Sydney Opera House July 2 – 26**

KATS-CHERNIN & FLEMING: *Whiteley* | Conductor Tahu Matheson | Director David Freeman

This brand new opera about iconic Australian artist Brett Whiteley will be the third in the Company's digital series. Bringing together some of Australia's finest talent to tell the tumultuous life story of one of the most widely recognised and celebrated artists of our time, the production will honour the life and work of the outrageous Whiteley and his vivacious wife Wendy. Bringing this story to life are some great Australian artists; highly acclaimed composer Elena Kats-Chernin and playwright and librettist Justin Fleming, whose work is renowned for its warmth, wit and poignancy. Along with digital artist Sean Nieuwenhuis and well-known set designer Dan Potra who together will create an immersive world of Whiteley incorporating the iconic artworks into the larger-than-life LED screens.

Sydney Opera House July 15 – 30

MOZART: *The Marriage of Figaro* | Conductor Guillaume Tourniaire | Director David McVicar

Sir David McVicar's acclaimed production of Mozart's classic comedy returns to delight Sydney audiences in 2018. With stunning period costumes and lush set designs true to their era, this upstairs-downstairs comedic masterpiece is enduringly entertaining for its witty, fast-moving libretto and charming melodies. Young soprano Stacey Alleaume continues her thrilling rise to stardom with her role debut as Susanna, while famous Italian buffo bass Paolo Bordogna reprises his world-class Figaro, under the baton of the acclaimed Guillaume Tourniaire.

Sydney Opera House October 18 – November 2

ROSSINI: *Il Viaggio a Reims* | Conductor Daniel Smith | Director Damiano Michieletto

Rossini's exultant opera *Il Viaggio a Reims* makes its Sydney premiere in grand fashion with a first-rate cast performing this co-production of the Dutch National Opera, Royal Danish Opera and Opera Australia. In Michieletto's playful interpretation, the world's most famous artworks come to life for a highly entertaining evening with some seriously impressive arias. This weird and wonderful world is portrayed by a stellar cast including Teddy Tahu Rhodes, Giorgio Caoduro, Mariangela Sicilia, Julie Lea Goodwin, John Longmuir, Juan de Dios Mateos, Emma Pearson and Warwick Fyfe under the baton of acclaimed Australian conductor Daniel Smith.

Sydney Opera House October 24 – November 2

IN CONCERT: GIORDANO: Andrea Chénier | Conductor Pinchas Steinberg

Superstar tenor Jonas Kaufmann returns to Sydney to perform one of his most celebrated roles. Kaufmann will perform alongside Eva-Maria Westbroek singing Maddalena, renowned baritone Ludovic Tézier as Carlo Gérard and a host of Australian talent in a concert staging of Giordano's famous opera based on true events. They will be joined on stage by celebrated conductor Pinchas Steinberg, leading the performance in all its glory, and the Opera Australia Orchestra.

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House August 8-11

REIMANN: *Ghost Sonata* | Conductor Warwick Stengards | Director Greg Eldridge

OA continues its exploration of contemporary chamber opera, this time with Reimann's eerie *Ghost Sonata* based on the play by August Strindberg. Conductor Warwick Stengards will lead Richard Anderson, Dominica Matthews, John Longmuir, Shanul Sharma, Danita Weatherstone, Virgilio Marino and Alexander Hargreaves in this chilling new production by Australian director Greg Eldridge.

Opera Australia Scenery Workshop, The Opera Centre September 11-14

Mazda Opera in the Domain

Returning again in 2019, *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

HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 2019

BERNSTEIN & SONDHEIM: *West Side Story* | Conductor Guy Simpson | Director Francesca Zambello

Opera Australia will bring one of the world's greatest pieces of theatre, the much-loved and admired *West Side Story*, to the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour stage in 2019, continuing the tradition of the great outdoor spectacles that have come before it, with the world's finest singers, musicians, dancers and creative teams set to bring the vision to life.

American director Francesca Zambello will make her highly anticipated return to the OA's outdoor stage. She will be joined by award-winning set designer Brian Thomson who will bring his expertise and creative genius back to OA's outdoor extravaganza after his dazzling designs in *Carmen* wowed the audiences in previous years. Taking the orchestral reins for the first time will be Guy Simpson, one of Australia's most notable and sought-after conductors. **Mrs Macquaries Point March 22 – April 21**

NATIONAL TOUR 2019

OA will take their acclaimed production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* on its regional tour across VIC, QLD, NT and WA from **July to September in 2019**.

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