

MEDIA RELEASE

22 August

Opera Australia's 2020 Sydney Season a showcase of exceptional local and international talent



Opera Australia (OA) today launched its 2020 Sydney season, presenting an exciting program that will deliver a selection of opera's greatest hits along with some rare gems that will feature the best talent from around the world including a record number of alumni from OA's Young Artists Program (YAP).

OA's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini emphasised the company's success and the continued expansion of its programs and artists.

"We have built an international reputation as one of the best opera companies in the world and our 2020 program reflects our ability to foster local Australian performers as well as cast talent from overseas including exceptional singers **Renée Fleming**, **Jennifer Rowley** and **Carmen Topciu** to name just a few.

"We're striking a balance between traditional approaches and modern creativity, delivering debuting singers and crowd-favourites, and nurturing young performers whilst showcasing international stars," Terracini said.

The success of the Young Artist Program has never been more obvious in the 2020 season. Focusing on identifying and developing Australian talent, it has produced many successful artists who have gone on to enjoy international careers. Twelve alumni will perform in the Sydney Season next year including **Nicole Car**, **Natalie Aroyan**, **Stacey Alleaume**, **Julie Lea Goodwin**, **Richard Anderson**, **Sian Sharp**, **Anna Dowsley**, **Taryn Fiebig** and **Shanul Sharma**.

Leading the field of home-grown talent is **Nicole Car** who has been lauded as the next Joan Sutherland. Car will perform opposite her husband **Etienne Dupuis** in an opera for the first time in Australia in *Eugene Onegin*, the very same opera in which they first met in 2015. The duo play passionate lovers in Tchaikovsky's classic, which is performed in its original Russian.

Rising soprano **Natalie Aroyan** stars as Rachel in the Australian premiere of *La Juive*, a co-production with Opera de Lyon directed by Olivier Py. This grand French opera features **Stacey Alleaume** as Princess Eudoxie, **Shanul Sharma** as Prince Leopold and **Richard Anderson** as Albert.

Aroyan also stars in the Australian premiere of the acclaimed *Attila*, a co-production with Teatro alla Scala, featuring a world-class cast with **Aroyan** as prisoner Odabella, **Taras Berezhansky** as Attila and **Diego Torre** as Foresto, with conductor **Andrea Licata** making a welcome return to the stage. **Davide Livermore** directs this grand revenge opera, fusing digital projections, colossal set pieces, and live on-stage horses.

After the success of 2019's *Anna Bolena*, **Livermore** continues his digital productions of the Three Queen Trilogy with the Australian debut of Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*. This rare opera tells the story of Queen Elizabeth I, played by Metropolitan Opera star **Jennifer Rowley** and conducted by Italian maestro **Paolo Carignani**, both making their debuts with OA.

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour presents the crowd favourite *La Traviata* starring **Stacey Alleaume** in her role debut as Violetta. Based on the inaugural overwater production in 2012 by Francesca Zambello, the 2020 production will be directed by Constantine Costi and will see the return of the breathtaking 9-meter high chandelier with its 10,000 glistening crystals. **Brian-Castles Onion** makes a welcome return to the stage to conduct **Rame Lahaj** as Alfredo, **Michael Honeyman** as Giorgio and **Dominica Matthews** as Flora.

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CREATIVE VICTORIA

Opera Australia will present four musicals in the Sydney season next year. In a spectacular first, six-time Tony Award-winning Broadway hit *The Light in the Piazza*, starring the inimitable world-famous **Renee Fleming**, will make its Australian debut. This world-class production is directed by multiple Olivier Award-winner **Daniel Evans**.

OA is excited to announce that *Fiddler on the Roof*, one of the most renowned musicals of all time, will premiere at the Sydney Opera House with a new production performed entirely in Yiddish. It opens in Australia after sold-out seasons in New York and worldwide critical acclaim.

At the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta, we proudly present the first Australian revival of *Bran Nue Due*, celebrating its 30th anniversary with a full indigenous cast performing on a stage that is an authentic recreation of the historic Sun Pictures open-air cinema in Broome.

And we're delighted to bring Susan H. Schulman's Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *The Secret Garden* back to Australia for a spectacular 25th anniversary season. Based on the popular literary classic by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* will open at the Sydney Lyric Theatre in August.

Performing alongside Opera Australia's YAP alumni and principal singers are thirteen international artists who will make their company debuts both on and off the stage.

Among them are Australian-Chinese tenor **Kang Wang** playing Rodolfo in *La Boheme*, and Italian soprano **Valeria Seppe** as Mimi. She shares the role with South Korean **Karah Son**, who received rave reviews for her performance in 2019's *Madama Butterfly*.

Talented Chinese conductor **Zhong Hu**, Head of the Shanghai Opera, makes his OA debut in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, with OA debut **Eleanor Lyons** in the role of Donna Anna. In the revival of digital production *Aida*, the titular role is shared by two OA debut sopranos, American **Leah Crocetto** and Siberian **Elena Guseva**, both performing under the baton of Italian conductor **Giampaolo Bisanti** who also makes his OA debut.

Other debut performers include Italian **Claudia Pavone**, Romanian-born Brit **Simona Mihai**, Polish award-winning bass **Lukasz Golinski**, Italian baritone **Simone Piazzola**, Polish mezzo-soprano **Agnieszka Rehlis** and conductors **Lorenzo Passerini** and **Giampaolo Bisanti**.

SYDNEY SUMMER 2020

PUCCINI: *La Bohème* | Conductor Carlo Goldstein | Director Gale Edwards

This beloved production of *La Bohème* by Gale Edwards once again returns to open Opera Australia's 2020 program with South Korean star soprano Karah Son in the role of Mimi and Australian-Chinese tenor Kang Wang making his Opera Australia debut in the role of Rodolfo. Revival director Liesel Badorrek brings together a superb cast including Italian soprano Valeria Seppe making her OA debut, Julie Lea Goodwin, Samuel Dundas and Richard Anderson. **Sydney Opera House, December 31, 2019 – January 30, 2020**

BIZET: *Carmen* | Conductor Christian Badea, Tahu Matherson | Director John Bell

John Bell's bold production of Bizet's *Carmen* returns in this revival by Constantine Costi. Italian mezzo-soprano Veronica Simeoni makes her OA debut in the role of Carmen, shared with our very own Sian Sharp and Carmen Topciu who returns after her successful OA debut in 2019's *Anna Bolena*. The role of Micaela is played by young sopranos Italian Claudia Pavone and Romanian-born British Simona Mihai, both making their Opera Australia debuts, along with Roberto Aronica as Don Jose and Lukasz Golinski as Escamillo. **Sydney Opera House, January 11 – March 26**

MOZART: *Don Giovanni* | Conductor Zhong Xu, Dane Lam | Director Sir David McVicar

Zhong Hu, Chinese Conductor and Head of the Shanghai Opera, makes his Opera Australia debut in this revival of Sir David McVicar's *Don Giovanni*. Luca Micheletti plays the titular role with Eleanor Lyons making her OA debut in the role of Donna Anna. They lead a cast including Jane Ede, Anna Dowsley, Shane Lawrence and Richard Anderson. **Sydney Opera House, January 24 – February 27**

GOUNOD: *Faust* | Conductor Lorenzo Passerini | Director Sir David McVicar

Conducted by young 28-year-old OA debut Lorenzo Passerini, *Faust* sees Teddy Tahu Rhodes take the stage as the devil Mephistopheles, with Ivan Magri playing the wayward Faust and Russian star soprano Irina Lungu as the innocent, desirable Marguerite. The elaborate production was first performed at Covent Garden and features Michael Honeyman, Anna Dowsley, Sian Sharp and Richard Anderson. **Sydney Opera House, February 10 – March 11**

VERDI: *Attila* | Conductor **Andrea Licata | Director **Davide Livermore****

This is the first time Verdi's opera has ever been presented in Australia. A co-production with Teatro alla Scala, visionary director Davide Livermore's production received widespread acclaim following the premiere in Milan. Livermore fuses video projections with colossal set pieces to create an awe-inspiring world, adding two real horses on stage for grandeur. This production features a world-class cast including Taras Berezhansky as Attila, Natalie Aroyan as Odabella, Diego Torre as Foresto and Simone Piazzola as Ezio, all under the baton of Italian Maestro Andrea Licata. **Sydney Opera House, March 12 – 28**

SYDNEY WINTER 2020

VERDI: *Aida* | Conductor **Giampaolo Bisanti, Tahu Matherson | Director **Davide Livermore****

Sydney's winter season opens with the revival of Davide Livermore's acclaimed 2018 digital production of *Aida*. Ten digital LED screens are used to create bold scenes evoking the power of ancient Egypt in a production celebrated as "truly thrilling" by the Daily Telegraph. The titular soprano role is shared by American Leah Crocetto and Siberian Elea Guseva, both making their Opera Australia debuts, as is conductor Giampaolo Bisanti. **Sydney Opera House, June 25 – August 10**

DONIZETTI: *Roberto Devereux* | Conductor **Paolo Carignani | Director **Davide Livermore****

Roberto Devereux brings back the creative team that brought you 2019's *Anna Bolena* in this next instalment of Davide Livermore's new digital productions of the Three Queen Trilogy. Never before performed by Opera Australia, it explores the life and love of Queen Elizabeth I, played by international star soprano Jennifer Rowley making her OA debut under the baton of Italian conductor Paola Carignani who also makes his OA debut. **Sydney Opera House June 30 – July 16**

HALEVY: *La Juive* | Conductor **Guillaume Tourniaire | Director **Oliver Py****

The Australian Premiere of this grand French opera depicting a dangerous affair in 1930s France, *La Juive* stars a raft of performers developed by Opera Australia's Young Artist Program including Natalia Aroyan, Stacey Alleaume, Shanul Sharma and Richard Anderson. A co-production with Opera de Lyon, *La Juive* offers a rarity of two sopranos, two tenors and a world-class bass all in leading roles.

Sydney Opera House, July 14 – July 18

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Eugene Onegin* | Conductor **Carlo Montanaro | Director **Kasper Holten****

Married opera stars Nicole Car and Etienne Dupuis perform together in an opera for the first time in Australia in *Eugene Onegin*, the very same opera in which they met in 2015. Celebrated widely as the next Joan Sutherland, Car reprises her performance as Tatyana, the role that made her a star in Australia and internationally. **Sydney Opera House, July 25 – August 8**

GUETTEL: *The Light in the Piazza* | Conductor **Kimberly Grigsby | Director **Daniel Evans****

Never before performed in Australia, this six-time Tony award-winning production stars four time Grammy award-winner Renée Fleming. Directed by multiple Olivier Award-winner Daniel Evans, this world-class production boasts a score that is both operatic and musical. **Sydney Opera House, August 14 - 22**

FORD and SMITH: *Rembrandt's Wife* | Conductor **Warwick Stengards | Director **Tabatha McFadyen****

The first revival of this 2009 chamber opera by the ABC's *The Music Show* host Andrew Ford and playwright Sue Smith is directed by **Tabatha McFadden** who returns to Opera Australia as a director under the Young Artist Program. This chamber opera features a nine-piece ensemble and stars Richard Anderson as Rembrandt, Taryn Fiebig as Saskia as well as Rembrandt's maid and muse, Hendrickje, along with Agnes Sarkis and Benjamin Rasheed. **The Opera Centre Scenery Workshop, September 16-19**

HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 2020

VERDI: *La Traviata* | Conductor **Brian Castles-Onion | Director **Constantine Costi****

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour once again returns to the cultural calendar with *La Traviata* starring Stacey Alleaume in her role debut as Violetta. Based on the inaugural overwater production in 2012 by Francesca Zambello, *La Traviata* sees the return of the breathtaking 9-meter high chandelier with its 10,000 glistening crystals. Brian-Castles Onion makes a welcome return to conduct Rame Lahaj as Alfredo, Michael Honeyman as Giorgio and Dominica Matthews as Flora.

Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point, March 27 – April 26

MUSICALS

BOCK and HARNICK: *Fiddler on the Roof* | Director **Joel Grey**

One of the most renowned musicals of all time will premiere at the Sydney Opera House in an award-winning production performed entirely in Yiddish. Celebrated as authentic and emotionally impactful, *A Fidler afn*

Dakh comes to Australia after multiple sold-out seasons in New York and worldwide critical acclaim. Cast to be announced. **Sydney Opera House, September 10 – Oct 31**

SIMON and NORMAN: *The Secret Garden* | Director Susan H. Schulman

When it premiered on Broadway in 1991, *The Secret Garden* took New York by storm. Tony Awards, national tours and international productions all followed. Now, for the first time in 25 years, this sensational musical returns to Australia. Based on the classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, this production reunites the original Broadway creative team of Director Susan H Schulman, Choreographer Michael Lichtefeld and Designer Heidi Ettinger to unlock *The Secret Garden* for a new generation of music theatre lovers. Cast to be announced. **Sydney Lyric Theatre, August 4 – September 6**

JIMMY CHI AND KUCKLES: *Bran Nue Dae* | Director Andrew Ross

The Opera Conference presents this 30th Anniversary revival of the hit musical *Bran Nue Dae*. Written by the late Jimmy Chi in collaboration with the band Kuckles, *Bran Nue Dae* was recognised as the world's first Aboriginal stage musical when it premiered to great acclaim in 1990 and has been described as "a beacon of light" in Aboriginal and Australian cultural history. Co-presented with Sydney Festival 2020 on a stage that is a recreation of the historic Sun Pictures open-air cinema in Broome.

Riverside Theatre Parramatta, January 17 – February 1

IN CONCERT

DONIZETTI: *Lucrezia Borgia* | Conductor Carlo Montanaro

For one night only superstar soprano Jessica Pratt returns to Sydney to perform one of her most celebrated roles. Pratt will perform alongside Varduhi Abrahamyan singing Maffio Orsini, Giuseppe Gipali as Gennaro, Michael Honeyman as Duke Alfonso and Virgilio Marino as Rustighello in Donizetti's famous opera. They will be joined on stage by the Opera Australia orchestra led by conductor Carlo Montanaro.

Sydney Town Hall, October 10

NATIONAL TOUR 2020

BIZET: *Carmen* | Director Matthew Barclay

Matthew Barclay makes his directorial debut with a vibrant new production of *Carmen* in OA's 25th anniversary tour. *Carmen* tours across Victoria, New South Wales, Canberra, and Tasmania, bringing the traditional operatic experience to communities across the nation. This production will include a Regional Children's Chorus, giving 24 young singers from each community a chance to perform onstage. Sung in French with English surtitles, *Carmen* is supported by the Opera Conference and QBE.

MAZDA OPERA IN THE DOMAIN

Returning again in 2020, *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, January 19 - FREE**

THE RING CYCLE BRISBANE 2020

Opera Australia, in partnership with the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council, is proud to present a brand new, fully digital production of Wagner's epic Ring Cycle at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in November 2020.

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