LAUGHTER AND TEARS
WHEN OPERA MEETS CIRCUS
13 - 18 August
Pagliacci is a masterpiece that grows from the enduring vibrancy of the theatrical tradition, Commedia dell’Arte, which had its defining period in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was theatre of convention played by absolute professionals, with a line-up of standard characters such as Arlecchino, Colombina, Pulcinello, Capitano, Servetta and the Zanni figures who rendered improvised text. The influence of Commedia on Italian opera is profound, its traditions animating many Italian composers during the 17th and 18th centuries and persisting into the early 19th century and beyond – the plot of Rossini’s The Barber of Seville being an excellent example.

The genius of Leoncavallo’s Pagliacci is in its stated ambition to abandon the “vecchie usanze”, the old customs of Commedia, and to make a theatre based on “truth” – real passions as opposed to stylised archetypes. These real passions are explored in the opera plot in the context of those formal archetypes via the “play within a play” and finally break free of them to make a gesture based on the hyper-reality of the passions. In the end, they defy the formal conventions and break free from the formal constraints of the situational comedy of Commedia. Nevertheless, the Commedia characters are mirrors of many of the less comfortable predicaments of human life: illicit love, the sting of unrequited desire in old age, servants outwitting masters and opportunistic charm seducing those with wealth and power.

However, in the world of Commedia, these all too human discomforts are contained within the two dimensional perspective of the mask, rhetorical practice and formulae, and the lazi or comic turns – which hold a benign mirror up to nature – through which the audience can see at a safe distance the pains of being human and laugh at them as a cathartic experience. The clown somehow heals our sorrow through sharing it and demonstrating its lurking absurd potentials.

The structured formality of modern circus resonates with the emotional objectivity of Commedia, underscored by technical brilliance which is a resonance of the rhetorical brilliance of “tirata”, the formal improvised speeches of Commedia practice. Thus, the circus practice in our double bill becomes a physical metaphor for the aesthetic of Commedia, manifesting the relationship of this aesthetic to music by expressing the texts of the arias and ensembles in physical action which sometimes assumes a comedic life of its own. The eclectically synthesised score of ‘Laughter’ is drawn from the early Madrigal comedies of Vecchi (1597) and Banchieri (1598) and the tradition of Arie Antiche – whose lyrics are often situationally derived from the plots of Commedia.

In essence, ‘Laughter’ is a pasticcio intermezzo, a form with some interesting antecedents. Here is a description by Massimo Troiano of the festivities for the marriage of Duke Wilhelm and Renata of Lorraine in 1568, which consisted of a Commedia cobbled together by the great composer Orlando di Lasso:

“After the prologue, Messer Orlando arranged for a Madrigal in five parts to be sung while Massimo, who now played the lover changed his clothes… From the other side of the stage appeared Messer Orlando dressed as
Magnifico… with a mask that drew roars of laughter at first sight.”

The traditions of Commedia were essentially slapstick, as the critic Muratori points out over 100 years later: “These comedies consist of buffooneries and lewd intrigue, in fact a tangle of absurd situations, in which we find not the smallest trace of verisimilitude… and whose only concern is to make people laugh.”

Despite the high-minded disdain for Commedia found in the 18th century, the fact that audiences like to be amused kept vigour in the Commedia traditions, and the form alive in practical theatre making up to the present day.

Our process of synthesis of a score from extant sources around an absurd plot exactly mirrors operatic practice in the late 16th and 17th centuries, the age of the made-to-order pasticcio. In that spirit of authenticity, I have unashamedly used a 21st century symphony orchestra and its resources of colour in the orchestrations.

Director Emil Wolk has constructed another mirror, placing the proceedings of the evening in a fictional working theatre near Montalto (the alleged scene of the murder in Pagliacci – Leoncavallo’s father was a magistrate). The first part of our show is an imagined final rehearsal of a traditional Commedia, still popular in Italy in the 1930s, interrupted by the declaration of WWII. The action of Pagliacci takes place five years later, as the theatre reanimates post-war and the theatre workers attend a run-through by a reconstituted Commedia company whose tangles of personal relationships unravel as the show progresses.

Thus, both ‘Laughter’ and ‘Tears’ have the construct of ‘play within a play’ – images of a working theatre and the lives of the actors and technical crew who staff them. This construct is resonated by our foyer exhibition by the Tonti Filipini Opera Company, formed during the exigencies of WWI in Sydney by itinerant Italian singers: art interrupted and reformed across the tides of history.

Moreover, the antics of ‘Laughter’ are often mirrored in the business of ‘Tears’, characters juxtaposed and cross-referenced with the Commedia traditions explored in a light-hearted way. This rich web of correspondence extends sub-textually to the Gesualdo Madrigal sung as a lament when the ‘Laughter’ rehearsal is interrupted; Gesualdo murdered his wife and her lover in a fit of jealous rage and spent the remainder of his life in penitential seclusion composing astonishing music.

Both ‘Laughter’ and Pagliacci mirror each other, their theatrical processes reflect the richness of the theatrical and musical traditions from which they draw sustenance. All their action is mirrored in the idea of their placement in the working life of an actual theatre in a time when events of history intervened. The theatre and life may “not be the same thing”, according to Canio, but at the deepest level, they are mirrors of each other. Mirrors which distort and reinvent perspectives, but mirrors which upon inspection provide glimpses of the deepest truths of the human condition. Enjoy!

Richard Mills
Artistic Director & Conductor, Victorian Opera
Welcome to this evening’s performance and back to the Palais Theatre! Victorian Opera is thrilled to return to this iconic seaside venue for a second outing following last year’s epic 3D reimagining of Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*. *Laughter and Tears* seems like the perfect production to return with too; another bold reimagining of an operatic classic.

In this production, the focus is on Leoncavallo’s masterpiece *Pagliacci* and the Commedia dell’Arte roots of the opera. A desire to contextualise the work for a modern audience provided an opportunity to explore the colourful world of Commedia, and who better to do that than our friends and collaborators at Circus Oz. This production boasts incredible aerial acrobatics and hilarious hijinks alongside breathtaking performances from our cast of internationally acclaimed singers, headed by Rosario La Spina and Elvira Fatykhova.

*Laughter & Tears* marks Victorian Opera’s first collaboration with Circus Oz – an icon of Australian performing arts and it’s been a joy! We extend our great thanks to Circus Oz General Manager Lou Oppenheim and her wonderful team for their input and hospitality. The working styles of an opera and circus company certainly vary but this production has come together magnificently.

Collaboration is at the heart of our work and mindset at Victorian Opera and we’re delighted to be co-producing this work with the State Opera of South Australia. Opera lovers across South Australia will be in for a treat when *Laughter and Tears* is remounted there in a future season.

Victorian Opera is able to continue to present productions of the scale and quality of *Laughter and Tears* thanks to the generous assistance of The State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria, The Robert Salzer Foundation, our philanthropic supporters; especially our Artistic Director’s Circle and our many corporate partners. Their contributions are vital to our company’s ongoing success.

Thank you for joining us at the Palais Theatre for a night of comedy and tragedy; opera and circus. You’ll laugh, you’ll cry, you’ll love it!

Andrew Snell
Managing Director, Victorian Opera
CIRCUS OZ MESSAGE

LOU OPPENHEIM

Circus Oz and Victorian Opera are both proud Melbourne performing arts organisations. Through this unique project, we look forward to inviting our audiences to experience a new art form, or to delight in a familiar art form in a new light.

Since its ancient beginnings, Circus has been a bricolage of art forms – theatre, music, comedy, dance, puppetry, just to name a few – and this collaboration gives us an exciting opportunity to weave new creative realms into our work. While music inspired by the likes of Vecchi, Banchieri and Leoncavallo may have appeared briefly in our eclectic soundtracks before, it has been a delight and a privilege to explore first hand how this language can inspire and shape our world.

The creation of a circus show is not based on a pre-written script. Rather, the skills of the artists are brought to the rehearsal floor, and through collaboration and exploration of ideas and scenarios, a work begins to emerge. Fitting this type of process within the bounds of a tight operatic structure was always going to be part of the intrigue of this project, and it has been exciting to see the exchange of artistic cultures begin on the floor – even with occasional singing acrobats and juggling singers.

This project has brought together Circus Oz Founding Member and Senior Circus Artist Tim Coldwell, Circus Oz Company Member Luke Taylor, and our long term circus alumni Kate Fryer, Geoffrey Dunstan and DJ Garner.

Crucially, the work that Kate, Geoffrey, DJ and Luke have developed within their independent theatre ensemble, Dislocate, has also made an important contribution to this overall collaboration. We are delighted to be working with Director Emil Wolk again, who was the Guest Director for the Circus Oz 30th Birthday Bash and our Bicentennial Show.

It has been a treat for us to be part of this collaboration, and thank you for coming on this exciting journey with us.

Lou Oppenheim
General Manager, Circus Oz
PRODUCTION

LAUGHTER AND TEARS

13 - 18 AUGUST 2016
PALAIS THEATRE, ST KILDA

Pagliacci
Composer and Librettist Ruggero Leoncavallo
Running time is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes with one 20 minute interval.
Sung in Italian with English surtitles.

Acknowledgements
Laughter and Tears is a co-production of Victorian Opera and State Opera of South Australia, presented in association with Circus Oz.
Surtitles prepared by Simon Bruckard, with thanks to the Centre of Italian Studies.

Creative Team
Conductor Richard Mills
Director Emil Wolk
Set Designer Julie Nelson
Costume Designer Harriet Oxley
Lighting Designer/Production Manager Eduard Ingles-Sancho
Assistant Director Libby Hill
Stage Manager Felicity Hollingbery
Deputy Stage Manager Elise Stewart
Assistant Stage Manager Louise Miller
Circus Oz Performer Rigger Christian Schooneveldt-Reid
Circus Oz Production Assistant Cath Carmody
Costume Supervisor Kate Glenn-Smith
Head Mechanist Kieran Santoso

Head Electrician Peter Darby
Chorus Preparation Richard Mills, Phoebe Briggs
Repetiteurs Phillipa Safey, Tom Griffiths

Cast in order of appearance
Stage Hand/Columbina Kate Fryer
Stage Hand Geoff Dunstan
Stage Hand DJ Garner
Stage Hand Luke Taylor
Arlecchino/Beppe Michael Petruccelli
Minstrel Kate Amos
Minstrel Daniel Carison
Minstrel Michelle McCarthy
Minstrel Shakira Tsindos
Capitano/Stage Hand Tim Coldwell
Nedda Elvira Fatykhova
Canio Rosario La Spina
Tonio James Clayton
Silvio Fabio Capitanucci

Victorian Opera Chorus
Soprano
Kate Amos, Elizabeth Barrow, Kirilie Blythman,
Michelle McCarthy, Rebecca Rashleigh,
Cristina Russo, Diana Simpson, Nicole Wallace

Mezzo
Kerrie Bolton, Fleuranne Brockway,
Rebecca Bywater, Ursula Paez,
Belinda Paterson, Emma Muir-Smith,
Shakira Tsindos, Lynlee Williams

Tenor
Jonathon Bam, Carlos E. Bárcenas, Tom Dalton,
Michael Edwards, Ernst Ens, Alister Lamont,
Timothy Reynolds, Shanul Sharma
Baritone/Bass
Daniel Carson, Paul Hughes, Jerzy Kozlowski,
Nathan Lay, Timothy Newton, Alex Pokryshevsky,
Matthew Tng, Julian Wilson

Orchestra Victoria
Concertmaster Roger Jonsson
Deputy Concertmaster Yi Wang

Violin
Erica Kennedy Acting Principal~,
Tomomi Brennan Associate Principal,
Binny Baik, Alyssa Conrau, Lubino Fernandes~,
Rachel Gamer, Matthew Hassall, Rachael Hunt,
Mara Miller, Philip Nixon, John Noble,
Martin Reddington, Christine Ruiter,
Rebecca Adler*, Miranda Matheson*,
Edwina Kayser*, Lisa Reynolds*, Christine Wang*

Viola
Paul McMillan Principal, Catherine Bishop,
Jason Bunn, Nadine Delbridge, Suying Aw*,
Cora Teeuwen*

Cello
Melissa Chominsky Principal,
Diane Froomes Associate Principal,
Sarah Cuming, Philippa Gardner,
Tania Hardy-Smith, Andrea Taylor

Double Bass
Damien Eckersley Principal, Dennis Vaughan
Associate Principal, Davin Holt, Matthew Thorne

Flute
Lisa-Maree Amos Principal~, Karen Schofield
Associate Principal, Kate Proctor Principal
Piccolo, Dominique Chaseling*

Oboe
Stephen Robinson Principal,
Joshua de Graaf Associate Principal~,
Dafydd Camp Principal Cor Anglais

Clarinet
Paul Champion Principal,
Robert Schubert Associate Principal^,
Andrew Mitchell Principal Bass Clarinet

Bassoon
Lucinda Cran Principal, Timothy Murray
Principal Contrabassoon, Matthew Angus*

Horn
Jasen Moulton Principal, Heath Parkinson
Associate Principal~, Linda Hewett Principal
Third Horn, Sydney Braunfeld, Rachel Shaw~

Trumpet
Mark Fitzpatrick Principal~, Rosie Turner
Associate Principal, Anthony Pope,
Tristan Rebien^*

Trombone
Scott Evans Principal, Tony Gilham
Associate Principal, Benjamin Anderson
Principal Bass Trombone

Tuba
Jon Woods Principal^*

Timpani
Guy du Blêt Principal~,
Scott Weatherson Principal~

Percussion
Richard Gleeson Principal^,
Conrad Nilsson Associate Principal

Harp
Delyth Stafford Principal~,
Alannah Guthrie-Jones Associate Principal~

* = Guest Musician
^ = Guest Musician Acting in a Principal Role
~ = Orchestra Victoria musician not appearing
in this performance
LAUGHTER AND TEARS

THE MUSIC OF 'LAUGHTER'

1. Intrada
2. Minstrels Entry – Italian keyboard Album
3. Minstrels Prologue – Prologue to L'Amfiparnusso (1597)
4. ‘Udite tutti quanti’ from La Pazzia Senile (1598)
5. Già il sole dal Gange
6. Giga – from Violin Sonata in G minor
7. Corrente from Violin Sonata in D minor
8. Danza, danza, fanciulla gentile
9. Quella fiamma che m’accende
10. Teco sì...vengo anch’io
11. Canon
12. Sonata in D major, K. 96
13. ‘Lasciatemi morire’ from L’Arianna (1608)
14. ‘Pulchinell che vostu far’ from La Pazzia Senile (1598)
15. ‘Balletto di Villanelle’ from La Pazzia Senile (1598)
16. Fuor di periglio from Floridante
17. Vado ben spesso cangiando loco
18. Sarabanda from Violin Sonata in G minor
19. Sebben, crudele
20. ‘Pur ti miro’ from L’incoronazione di Poppea
21. Il teatro è la vita
22. Ecco morirò
23. Moro lasso

Anon, 16th century
Anon, 16th century
Orazio Vecchi, 1550 - 1605
Adriano Banchieri, 1568 - 1634
Alessandro Scarlatti, 1660 - 1725
Antonio Vivaldi, 1678 - 1741
Francesco Durante, 1684 - 1755
Francesco Durante, 1684 - 1755
Bernedetto Marcello, 1686 - 1739
Leonardo Vinci, 1690 - 1730
Antonio Vivaldi, 1678 - 1741
Domenico Scarlatti, 1685 - 1757
Claudio Monteverdi, 1567 - 1643
Adriano Banchieri, 1568 - 1634
Adriano Banchieri, 1568 - 1634
G.F. Handel, 1685 - 1759
Salvator Rosa, 1615 - 1673
Antonio Vivaldi, 1678 - 1741
Antonio Caldara, 1670 - 1736
Claudio Monteverdi, 1567 - 1643
Sigismondo Molino, 1628 - 1701
Carlo Gesualdo, 1566 - 1613
Carlo Gesualdo, 1566 - 1613
SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Forty five minutes before WWII is declared in 1938, a final dress rehearsal of a traditional Commedia dell’Arte pantomime is taking place in a provincial Italian theatre. It includes a chorus of minstrels whose music comes from the very first madrigal comedies of Vecchi (1577) and Banchieri (1598). An intrada sets the scene, with the stage hands not quite ready. The show begins despite the interruptions of a wilful clown, el Capitano, who becomes the jealous and finally outwitted buffone.

The minstrels who are a ‘play within a play’ enter and invite the audience into the world of the Commedia.

A beautiful young ward is trapped in an old man’s house. We see Nedda, playing the traditional Innamorata, appear on the balcony obsessively “supervised” by her guardian or old husband. She sings of the new day and one of the minstrels, as Arlecchino, becomes smitten. He seeks the help of the zanni troupe to get into Capitano’s house and rescue Innamorata/Nedda. Capitano is seduced by a zanni stage hand, disguised as Colombina who entertains him and by trickery gains entrance to his house. Meanwhile Arlecchino/Beppe and Innamorata/Nedda declare their love and he, with assistance from the zanni troupe, attempts to bring her down from the balcony prison. This is foiled by the sudden appearance of Capitano and a chase ensues. Innamorata/Nedda sings a lament.

This first half is a play being rehearsed like the play within the play in Pagliacci, where Arlecchino/Beppe and Colombina/Nedda are similarly lovers. Confused? Good, this is the essence of Commedia.

Arlecchino/Beppe, still desperate to rescue Innamorata/Nedda garners a second attempt to extract Innamorata/Nedda from her house.

A minstrel comforts Capitano who weeps for his lost love. Seven o’clock chimes and the other minstrels remind Arlecchino and his new conquest that theatre and life are not the same thing. The rehearsal run is interrupted by Canio with the news of the declaration of WWII.

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Illustrations © Harriet Oxley (pp. 11, 13)
**SYNOPSIS**

**ACT II – PAGLIACCI**

Tonio, as a prologue, bids farewell to the old customs of Commedia. He tells us that what we are about to see is not artifice, but real flesh and blood, real passions, real dilemmas and a slice of life as it is really lived, as distinct from the world of fantastic comedy. He introduces Pagliacci and invites us into the reality of a theatre company and the human relationships of its members. Their aspirations, hopes, desires and foibles which will be the focus of new exploration. He gives us this concept and invites us to see how it unfolds. The Commedia masks are removed and real people enact their destinies.

On the 15th of August, 1945, the theatre reopens with a reunion of its former employees. Canio is welcomed back and invites all to a rehearsal of their new spectacle to take place that evening. The crew invite Canio and others for a drink, Tonio says he’ll join them later.

Nedda is alone and muses on the life giving warmth of summer filled with longings she cannot rationalise. She sees the freedom of the birds as two company acrobats rehearse an aerial routine. Tonio intrudes on this happy contemplation with an unwelcome advance and swears revenge for her rejection.

Silvio, Nedda’s lover, appears and they talk about the reality of Nedda’s loveless marriage to Canio and her dislike of the nomadic life of theatre. They resolve to run away together after the performance that evening.

Tonio meanwhile, hoping to compromise Nedda, has gone to fetch Canio from drinks. The two return to surprise Nedda and Silvio. He manages to escape without his identity being discovered. Canio is furious and heartbroken in betrayal, but the performance must proceed.

All the theatre crew return from vespers and drinks to see the new show, a Commedia play politicised by the war years. Canio is unable to contain his passion, and his emotion fractures the traditional persona of his character as he scolds Nedda for her duplicity and demands the name of her lover. He kills her. As she dies she calls for help from Silvio, Canio also kills him, dropping the knife as Tonio observes ‘La commedia è finita’.

© Richard Mills
BIOGRAPHIES

LAUGHTER AND TEARS

RICHARD MILLS
Conductor

Richard Mills is one of Australia’s most prolific and internationally recognised composers. He pursues a diverse career as a composer, conductor and artistic director. He has held numerous prestigious posts, and received many scholarships, fellowships and awards including an AM, in 1999. He is currently Artistic Director of Victorian Opera, and has previously been Artistic Director of the West Australian Opera 1997 - 2012, Director of the Australian Music Project for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra 2002 - 2008 and Musica Viva’s Composer of the Year in 2008. Richard regularly conducts the leading orchestras and opera companies of Australia and has an extensive discography of orchestral works including his own compositions.

EMIL Wolk
Director

Emil Wolk, born in New York City, has worked as a stage director and screen actor with Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal National Theatre and Royal Exchange, Manchester. He was awarded the Laurence Olivier Award as ‘Best Actor in a Musical’ (Kiss Me, Kate). Professional highlights include: Circus Oz’s 30th Anniversary Show; Puck in Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream at La Scala, dir. Robert Carsen; Ariel in Peter Greenaway’s Prospero’s Books, Samuel in Escape from Sobibor for HBO, Judge Kieren Webster in Rake for ABC TV, Charley’s Aunt with Michael Sheen for the Royal Exchange Manchester. He also worked as a Vaudeville Consultant in David McVicar’s Pagliacci at The Metropolitan Opera.

JULIE NELSON
Set Designer

Julie has designed the sets and costumes for over 40 productions in Australia and the UK, including a production of The Clandestine Marriage attended by Queen Elizabeth II. This is her fourth design for Victorian Opera. She has completed set and costume designs for Victorian Opera’s Sleeping Beauty (2012), Cinderella (2013) and The Cockatoos (2010). She was Associate Designer for the Australian Ballet’s production of Romeo and Juliet. Julie also designs for commercial events, most recently for Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution at Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall.
HARRIET OXLEY
Costume Designer
Harriet studied at RMIT and VCA and now designs costumes primarily for music and movement. For Victorian Opera, Harriet designed *Into the Woods*, *Assembly*, *The Bear, Angelique*, and *The Snow Queen*. Her design for *Angelique* won the 2011 Green Room Award for Design for Opera. In contemporary dance, she has worked for award-winning choreographers such as Gideon Obarzanek (Chunky Move and Sydney Dance Company), Stephanie Lake, Michelle Heaven, Ros Warby, Victoria Chiu, and is soon to work with Lucy Guerin, and Dancenorth. Harriet has designed circus costumes for Dislocate and NICA, and costumes for VCA’s Music Theatre department, as well as the big budget musical *Moonshadow the Musical*.

EDUARD INGLES-SANCHO
Lighting Designer
Eduard has created lighting designs for some of the most prestigious dance, theatre, and opera companies in both Europe and Australia. Since moving to Melbourne from Barcelona in 2004, he has worked as a designer for theatrical productions and exhibitions including; *The Key* (Dislocate), *Dance of the Bee* (Astra), *Rembrandt’s Wife* (Victorian Opera), *If These Walls Could Talk…?* (Dislocate), *Bradman Hall Of Fame* (Bradman Museum), *Leap of Faith* (National Institute of Circus Arts), *Racing Gallery* (National Sports Museum), *A Newcastle Story* (Newcastle Museum), *Silverscreen* (Callum Morton), *Last Orders* (National Institute of Circus Arts), and *Curiosity* (Dislocate).

LIBBY HILL
Assistant Director
Libby trained as a classical dancer, performing with the West Australian Ballet for ten years before moving into freelance choreography, working primarily with opera productions. During this time, she developed an interest in the artistic management and administration of companies. She was the Company Manager at Opera Australia, followed by Artistic Liaison Manager. Since 2012, Libby has been Executive Producer for Victorian Opera. In addition to this role, she has also directed several productions for the company, including *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Play of Herod* and *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*. Libby most recently directed Victorian Opera’s production of *Cinderella*.
LAUGHTER AND TEARS

BIOGRAPHIES

KATE FRYER
Stage Hand/Columbina

Kate Fryer has been a performer, director, teacher and writer of circus and physical theatre for 20 years. Combining story-telling and physical mayhem she has travelled the globe performing at street festivals, major events and in some of the world’s most prestigious theatres. She is a founding member and Artistic Director of Dislocate’s Theatre Program and has worked with Circus Oz, QTC, Legs on The Wall, Strut & Fret, Rock n Roll Circus, Circa, Olympic and Commonwealth Games Cultural Programs and festivals worldwide. As a director she has helped create circus acts, ensemble productions and curated parades.

GEOFFREY DUNSTAN
Stage Hand

Geoffrey has been a physical theatre performer, and producer for almost 20 years. He has danced, sung, composed, directed, produced, clowned, rigged and somersaulted his way around the world working for companies such as Circus Oz, Rock’n’Roll Circus, Dislocate, Circa, Queensland Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Torque show, Y Space, JOLT, Holthouse Theatre, Horned Moon Productions, QPAT, Chambermade Opera, Snuff Puppets, MDPE, The Australian Shakespeare Company and Legs on the Wall, to name a few. He is a founding member of Dislocate Circus Theatre and currently the Artistic Director of Children’s Theatre. Geoffrey is also the Director of Ruccis Circus School.

DJ GARNER
Stage Hand

DJ Garner has spent 29 years honing his skills, producing a physical vocabulary of acrobatics and slapstick to defy the eye and tantalise your funny bone. After a staggering 17 years training in gymnastics and 12 years judo competing both nationally and internationally, DJ Garner completed a Diploma of Circus Arts at the National Institute of Circus Arts in 2003. Most recently, after returning to Australia from the USA on completion of his Cirque du Soleil contract in the internationally acclaimed Quidam DJ has taken on the role of Artistic Director of the Corporate and Special Event side of things in the Dislocate team.
LUKE TAYLOR
Stage Hand
Luke’s circus career started when he joined the Flying Fruit Fly Circus at aged 12, and toured nationally and internationally with the Fruities. Luke spent a year with Lunar Circus touring Western Australia and the Northern Territory performing, teaching workshops, and taking turns driving a large bus across the Nullarbor. He completed the Bachelor of Circus Arts at the National Institute of Circus Arts, refining his solo juggling and extending his group acrobatic skills. Since graduating Luke has performed with various companies including Circus Oz, Circa, Circus Risque, Dislocate, Chipolatas and Throw Down, and co-founded the circus show Caravan with other circus school graduates.

MICHAEL PETRUCCELLI
Arlecchino/Beppe
Recognised as an engaging and passionate performer, Michael Petruchelli is establishing himself as one of Melbourne’s emerging operatic tenors. With Victorian Opera, he has performed the roles of Giuseppe in La Traviata, the Sandman in Hansel and Gretel, the White Rabbit in Alice’s Adventures in Operaland and Lord Arturo Bucklaw in Lucia di Lammermoor. He will make his debut for Opera Australia performing Stephen Goldring in Sydney Opera House, The Opera. Michael is also the recipient of the RJ & AF Hamer Opera Scholarship with the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust, and is a current artist in Victorian Opera’s Professional Development Program.

TIM COLDWELL
Capitano/Stage Hand
Tim is an acrobat, trumpeter and clown with Circus Oz, a member of the Board of Directors, the Executive in charge of Production and, from time to time, tent designer, props engineer, inventor and director. He has previously been the Artistic Director and Chair of the Board. Tim started with Ashton’s Circus in 1974, and co-founded New Circus in Adelaide later the same year. He toured with New Circus and Circus Royale and co-founded Circus Oz in 1978. Tim used to stand on his head on a high wire, and ride the group bike. He also originated and performed the signature Circus Oz Roofwalk Act and walked across the Torrens River on a highwire.
BIOGRAPHIES

LAUGHTER AND TEARS

ELVIRA FATYKHOVA
Nedda
Russian soprano Elvira Fatykhova debuted in Australia as Violetta (La Traviata) with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and has since sung many of the leading lyric coloratura roles, such as Gilda (Rigoletto), Lucia di Lammermoor, Rosina (The Barber of Seville), Manon (Massenet), Donna Anna (Don Giovanni), Countess (The Marriage of Figaro), with Opera Australia, New Zealand Opera, all the Australian State opera companies, Salzburg Opera, Ankara State Opera, Croatia State Opera, Bashkirian State Opera and Opera Holland Park, London. Elvira’s concert appearances include Opera Australia’s New Year’s Eve Gala, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Haydn Orchestra, Bolzano, and the Presidential and Bilken Symphony Orchestras of Turkey.

ROSARIO LA SPINA
Canio
Rosario La Spina’s American debut was as Rodolfo (La bohème) for Seattle Opera in 2007; he returned to Seattle as Radames (Aida) and made his first Canadian appearances in the same role. Since 2013, he has appeared as Radames in Detroit, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and New Zealand; Don Alvaro (La forza del destino) in Adelaide; Gaston (Jérusalem) in Fidenza, Don José (Carmen) in Japan and throughout Australia; Pollione (Norma) for Victorian Opera; Manrico (Il trovatore) for West Australian Opera and Calaf (Turandot) for Opera Australia. In 2016, he sang The Prince (Love for Three Oranges) in Sydney and will perform Samson (Samson et Dahlia) in Tokyo and Cavaradossi (Tosca) in Adelaide.

JAMES CLAYTON
Tonio
In 2016, James Clayton sang Scully (The Riders) for West Australian Opera and The Speaker (The Magic Flute) for New Zealand Opera. He also appears as a soloist with the Melbourne and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras. Most recently, he has sung Escamillo (Carmen) for Opera Australia and several roles for West Australian Opera – the title roles in Rigoletto, Le nozze di Figaro and Il barbiere di Siviglia, Leporello (Don Giovanni), Iago (Otello) and Conte di Luna (Il trovatore). A regular soloist with all the major Australasian symphony orchestras, James made his Japanese debut as Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte for Biwako Hall.
At the age of 23 Fabio Maria Capitanucci won the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale di Spoleto competition, and from 1999 until 2001 worked at the Accademia di Perfezionamento of Teatro alla Scala. In 2002 he was awarded the Premio Renato Bruson at its first edition. Since 1999, he has been a regular guest at Teatro alla Scala in Milan. In the past seasons: Falstaff at La Scala and in San Francisco; La Traviata at Wiener Staatsoper and in Munich; Madama Butterfly in Barcelona; Les Troyens at la Scala; La Vedova allegra in Genoa, Falstaff in Bamberg and Luzern, La Bohème in Genoa, Madama Butterfly in Bergen.

Kate is a young Melbourne-born soprano and she holds a BMus (Honours) and Dip. Lang (Italian) from The University of Melbourne, and is a current artist in Victorian Opera’s Professional Development Program. In 2015, Kate completed a Masters of Music (Opera Performance) at the MCM in conjunction with Victorian Opera. A prestigious Sleath Lowrey Scholarship winner, Kate studied at the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini in Italy winning a study scholarship through the Italian Acclaim Awards and recently was an Australian Singing Competition finalist winning the Symphony Australia Prize, Merenda Scholarship and UK Royal-Overseas League Award under maestro Johannes Fritzsch. She recently performed the title role in Victorian Opera’s production of Cinderella.

Daniel holds a Bachelor of Music at The University of Melbourne, is a current artist in Victorian Opera’s Professional Development Program and a scholar with The Melba Opera Trust. Performance highlights with Victorian Opera include; Pandolfe in Cinderella, Ensemble in The Flying Dutchman and Sweeney Todd along with Balthazar in The Play of Herod. Daniel is a seasoned concert and oratorio performer and has received tremendous ovations particularly for his performances of Schubert’s Winterreise, his live radio performance of Schumann’s Dichterliebe on 3MBS and the World Premiere of Cassomenos’ Requiem For The End of Time. Daniel is the winner of a number of highly regarded singing competitions including; The Royal Philharmonic Aria and 3MBS’ The Talent.
LAUGHTER AND TEARS

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHELLE MCCARTHY
Minstrel

Michelle completed a Bachelor of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music in 2013, and is a current artist in Victorian Opera’s Professional Development Program. Upon graduation Michelle was cast as the title role in the Opera Australia Schools Company production of Cinderella. In 2015 Michelle starred as Williamson Girl in the Australian premiere of The Difficulty of Crossing a Field as part of the Nagambie-Lakes Opera Festival. Concert engagements include soloist in Carmina Burana, Mozart Requiem, Handel Dixit Dominus, Kodaly Missa Brevis and with the MSO in Jeff Mills and Derrick May’s performance at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. She recently performed the role of Fairy Godmother in Victorian Opera’s production of Cinderella.

SHAKIRA TSINDOS
Minstrel

Shakira holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne, and graduated with Honours. She is a current artist in Victorian Opera’s Professional Development Program and made her major operatic debut opposite Jessica Pratt in Lucia di Lammermoor in April. Other roles for Victorian Opera include Dorothée in Cinderella, the Mother in The Grumpiest Boy in the World and Ensemble in Remembrance. Other credits: Snow White in Gordon Kerry’s Snow White and Other Grimm Tales and Carmen in Carmen in the Caves alongside David Hobson. Shakira is the 2016 recipient of the Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship with the Melba Opera Trust. Earlier this year, Shakira made her successful MSO debut as the soloist in Hitchcock and Herrmann.
Victorian Opera is excited to tour regional Victoria with two productions – *The Pied Piper* and *Cinderella*.

Richard Mills’ kooky new opera, *The Pied Piper*, has been specifically written for community involvement and features local community members, children through to adults, performing as rats and the citizens of Hamelin alongside the cast and orchestra in each region. Our music staff have enjoyed working with over 380 Victorians who will perform on stage in their local arts centres.

We’re proud to share the joy of singing and live performance across the state and can’t wait to visit Port Fairy, Mildura, Warragul, Bendigo, Shepparton and Albury/Wodonga.

**PORT FAIRY**
Southcombe Park Stadium
*The Pied Piper*
Sunday 9 October, 3:30pm

**MILDURA**
Mildura Arts Centre
*Cinderella*
Tuesday 18 October, 10:30am & 1:30pm
*The Pied Piper*
Thursday 20 October, 7:30pm

**WARRAGUL**
West Gippsland Arts Centre
*Cinderella*
Tuesday 25 October, 10:30am & 1:30pm
*The Pied Piper*
Thursday 27 October, 11:00am & 7:30pm

**BENDIGO**
The Capital
*Cinderella*
Wednesday 2 November, 10:30am & 1:30pm
*The Pied Piper*
Friday 4 November, 6:00pm & 5 November, 2:00pm

**SHEPPARTON**
Westside Performing Arts Centre
*Cinderella*
Tuesday 8 November, 10:30am & 1:30pm
*The Pied Piper*
Friday 11 November, 7:30pm

**ALBURY/WODONGA**
Albury Entertainment Centre
*The Pied Piper*
Wednesday 16 November, 7:30pm
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ERCOLE AND NANCY FILIPPINI

This year marks the centenary of the arrival of baritone Count Ercole Filippini in Australia. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1885 to Italian parents, he made his professional debut in his home city, before gaining a contract with Italy’s prestigious La Scala opera house in Milan in 1912. With the closure of theatres in Europe during World War I, Filippini joined the Gonzalez Opera Company for a tour that included India, China, and the Philippines, followed by 14 months in Australia and New Zealand from June 1916.

When the tour ended Filippini remained in Australia and, in 1918, opened a school of opera in Sydney. One of his students was a young music graduate, Anne McParland (later known as Nancy), and by the end of the year the couple were married. In 1919 Filippini joined Frank Rigo’s touring company, which featured other Italian principals and Australian singers.

During the 1920s, the Filippinis set up Grand Opera companies in South Australia and Western Australia, all the while envisioning a national audience. Ercole performed onstage while Nancy produced and directed. She became Australia’s first female conductor of symphony orchestras and later joined her husband in lead roles.

The pair were dedicated to making Italian opera widely accessible, touring regularly to the outback and remote corners of the country as well as major cities. In order to make ends meet, Ercole also sang in vaudeville venues and cinemas, and together with Nancy, experimented with shortened versions of operas.

In the early 1930s they broadcast regularly on ABC Radio in Perth, even performing full operas with their company in the studio.

Ercole Filippini died at the age of 48 in 1934. Nancy continued her involvement with singing, broadcasting, and leading choirs and orchestras; she died in 1987, aged 91. Instrumental in sharing Italian opera across Australia, their musical legacy also continues through many family members including grandson, singer-songwriter Paul Kelly.

Text courtesy of Arts Centre Melbourne, Performing Arts Collection

**Opera Pioneers in Australia**

A display celebrating the contribution of Ercole and Nancy Filippini to Italian opera in Australia

Arts Centre Melbourne,
Smorgon Family Plaza, level 5

Until 30 August 2016
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