Richard Mills and Rodney Hall

REMEMBRANCE

Melbourne, Bendigo, Wodonga, Warragul & Shepparton
13 August - 12 September
REMEMBRANCE
IS A TRIBUTE TO THE ANZAC LEGACY IN STORY, SONG AND IMAGE.
RICHARD MILLS

In marking the centenary of ANZAC, Victorian Opera has developed a new work that creates a space for remembrance through music, story and images.

In Remembrance, we trace the ANZAC legacy through chapters; beginning with the Declaration of War to the eventual homecoming. We commemorate the terrible battles of the Somme and the Western Front, the compassion of the medical staff and the euphoric sense of the adventure of enlistment, embarkation and training in Egypt.

We explore the defeat of Gallipoli and the profound disillusion of the return home, often to unemployment and difficult personal and domestic circumstances. We also reflect on the emergence of the traditions of comradeship, service, sacrifice and heroism which expressed something truly unique in the soul of a young nation and which has been and is valued as sacred by succeeding generations.

This was a war commemorated in song, at a time when singing was a natural part of Australian life. Men sang at work, people sang at parties and families spent their evenings around the piano in an important tradition that we have lost today. It is this expression through song that lends itself naturally to Remembrance.

To recount this legacy, we have sourced letters, popular songs of the time sung by the soldiers and those at home, photographs from home and the front, newspaper clippings and commemorative lists.

Our story is told by the young artists of Victorian Opera and acclaimed Australian opera and recording artist David Hobson who plays a War Correspondent. The young artists are roughly the same age as so many young men and women in the Great War, so their involvement is poignantly appropriate.

Remembrance is simultaneously a musical documentary, an elegy and a drama. As Victoria’s state opera company, it is our duty to speak to and for people and share uniquely Victorian stories. We have done this through music with material which celebrates this important anniversary and remains important in our history and national identity.

Richard Mills
Artistic Director, Composer & Conductor
To commemorate the ANZAC Centenary, Victorian Opera has brought together two-time Miles Franklin Literary Award winner Rodney Hall and our Artistic Director Richard Mills to create a moving tribute in song, poetry and image.

Remembrance retells an Australian experience of WW1; featuring archival photography sourced from the Australian War Memorial and National Library of Australia.

The work had its world premiere with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in April and was broadcast nationally on ABC Classic FM prior to ANZAC Day. Victorian Opera is proud to stage the Melbourne debut of Remembrance at Hamer Hall and on tour in regional Victoria.

Remembrance reflects Victorian Opera’s commitment to new work, education and community. In our Melbourne performance, acclaimed opera singer David Hobson leads an ensemble featuring our emerging artists together with our performance partner Orchestra Victoria. They are joined by a chorus of over 100 choir members; diligently rehearsed by Richard Mills and our music staff.

With kind thanks to the generous support of the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Victorian Opera has established a regional hubs program enabling us to tour this commemorative concert and will visit Bendigo, Wodonga, Warragul and Shepparton. We would like to give our thanks to the regional local government partners and presenters.

In a series of rehearsals in each regional location, Richard Mills and our music staff have also prepared local choirs to join the performances in their community. We are excited to return to regional Victoria once again next year with a new production created for, and to be performed by the community. Victorian Opera is proud to increase its commitment to share opera with all Victorians.

Developing projects such as Remembrance is also thanks to the ongoing support of Victorian Opera’s New Work Syndicate and the Robert Salzer Foundation. We thank our Government Partners: Creative Victoria, the Victorian Government through their ANZAC Centenary Major Projects Grants, the Ministry for the Arts through their Centenary Arts and Culture Fund, the Australian Government under the ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program. Their contributions allow the company to continue to reimagine the future of our art-form, develop talent and engage with our broader community.

We hope you enjoy this evening’s concert as Victorian Opera commemorates our nation’s history, service and sacrifice.

Andrew Snell
Managing Director
The research for Remembrance began with the discovery of irreverent versions of popular tunes of the day, as sung by the troops themselves. From that initial idea the scope of the show took its free-flowing form—as an interplay of scenes ‘at the front’ with scenes ‘at home’.

The amazing courage and resilience of the fighting men and the field hospital staff held good right through the war. So, the narrative developed to explore this idea as a tribute to all the services on land, sea and air throughout the entire conflict (rather than singling out any specific campaign). The result is a three-layered interplay of action, music and documentary still photographs. To these have been added a cluster of individual tributes.

The six phases of the war, from enlistment through to the return home, remained pretty much unchanged during the process of fleshing out the script and providing a narrative for Richard Mills’s music.

As stage director my decision was already implicit: the action would be notional, suggestive, sketched in—rather than locked down as separate, self-contained scenes. A continuum of movement would be the key. Delia Silvan’s input began at this early stage and remained essential to developing a free-flowing plan adaptable to various venues.

Rodney Hall
Writer & Director
13 August 2015
Arts Centre Melbourne
Hamer Hall

Composer Richard Mills
Librettist Rodney Hall
Running time approximately 80 minutes.

Regional Venues

Bendigo
Saturday 15 August 2015, 7:00pm
Ulumbarra Theatre

Wodonga
Monday 31 August 2015 10:30am & 7:00pm
The Cube

Warragul
Thursday 3 September 2015, 8:00pm
West Gippsland Arts Centre

Shepparton
Saturday 12 September 2015, 7:30pm
Eastbank Centre

Creative Team

Conductor Richard Mills (Melbourne, Bendigo),
Simon Bruckard (Wodonga, Warragul, Shepparton)

Director Rodney Hall

Digital Concept and Lighting Design
Peter Darby

Digital Programmer David McKinnon

Assistant Director Delia Silvan

Production Manager Luke Hales

Stage Manager Andrea Corish

Assistant Stage Manager Laura Hansford

Repetiteurs Phoebe Briggs, Phillipa Safey,
Simon Bruckard

Cast

War Correspondent
David Hobson (Melbourne, Bendigo),
Kanen Breen (Wodonga, Warragul, Shepparton)

Ensemble Kate Amos*, Carlos E. Bárcenas, Elizabeth Barrow, Michael Edwards, Nathan Lay*, Elizabeth Lewis*, Emma Muir-Smith*, Michael Petruccelli*, Kiran Rajasingam, Cristina Russo*, Matthew Tng*, Shakira Tsindos

*Students from the Master of Music (Opera Performance), presented in partnership with Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne.
**Choir**


**Orchestra Victoria**

1st Violin Binny Bail, Rachael Hunt, Miranda Matheson, Lynette Rayner, Martin Reddington, Christine Ruiter, Kate Sullivan, Yi Wang

2nd Violin Ed Antonov, Tomomi Brennan, Sarah Coghlan, Mara Miller, Philip Nixon, John Noble, Lisa Reynolds

Viola Catherine Bishop, Jason Bunn, Paul McMillan, Katie Yap

Celli Melissa Chominsky, Sarah Cuming, Paul Ghica, Andrea Taylor

Bass Davin Holt, Dennis Vaughan

Flute Laila Engle, Rebecca Johnston

Oboe Joshua de Graaf, Stephen Robinson

Clarinet Robin Henry, Andrew Mitchell

Bassoons Lucinda Cran, Tim Murray

Horns Linda Hewett, Ben Messenger, Heather McMahon

Trumpets Mark Fitzpatrick, Anthony Pope, Trombones Ben Anderson, Robert Collins, Scott Evans

Tuba Jon Woods

Timpani Guy du Blet

Percussion Dan Richardson, Greg Sully

Harp Delyth Stafford
Enlistment
A shot in the dark and the world is at war. With Australia’s commitment to the war effort, a patriotic fervour seizes the suburbs. Young recruits rush to enlist, dreaming of bravery, saving their country and a chance to see the world.

Embarkation
Reports break of the first loss of Australian lives in the war. Meanwhile, men and women bid farewell as troops leave their training in Albany bound for danger and war. Five weeks at sea, eventually heading up the Suez Canal, their spirits are high.

Training
The troops disembark in Cairo, and their days are filled with laughter and loneliness. In Egypt ANZAC as a word and bond is born. The camaraderie of the troops grows stronger as they prepare to storm foreign shores and promise never to surrender the Southern Cross.

Gallipoli
A catastrophic landing, a tragic loss of life. At home loved ones struggle to accept the situation, reflecting on the courage of ordinary men caught in the crossfire of defeat. With the evacuation of ANZAC forces, there is a bitterness among the troops that their losses were in vain.

Trenches (The Western Front)
The troops are holed up in the trenches in France, surrounded by a fierceness of bombardment beyond description. At home, the women reflect on the conditions of war endured by loved ones and sing of their bravery.

Homecoming
At the end of the brutal war, soldiers return. Those who have survived will bear their wounds forever. To their loved ones, they are strangers. The extent of their courage will remain unknown but their sacrifice will be remembered.
RICHARD MILLS  
Conductor*/Composer

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, was 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.

*Melbourne, Bendigo

RODNEY HALL  
Writer/Director

Rodney Hall’s Melbourne based productions include *Quilting the Armour* at the Old Melbourne Gaol, *A Dialogue of Love & Power* for Accademia Arcadia and, for the Woodend Winter Arts Festival, Gagliano’s opera *Dafne* of 1604, Stravinsky’s *A Soldier’s Tale* and Peri’s opera *Euridice* of 1600. He taught recorder at the Canberra School of Music and with John Stinson he founded and directed the Australian Summer School of Early Music. Rodney Hall is an author with an international reputation. He has twice won the Miles Franklin Award. From 1991-1994 he was chairman of the Australia Council.

PETER DARBY  
Digital Concept & Lighting Design

Peter is a Green Room Award nominated Lighting Designer, Head Electrician and Programer. Peter works at Victorian Opera in the role of Technical & Operations Coordinator and has worked on more than 50 productions. Victorian Opera Lighting design credits include: *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Magic Pudding* – the opera, *Rush Hour*, *The Play of Daniel*, Digital Concept and Lighting Design, *Brundibár*, *The Cockatoos* and *The Little Sweep*. As an Assistant Lighting Designer, his credits include Jumpy, *The God of Carnage* (MTC), *Showboat* (Production Company), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Xerxes* (Victorian Opera). Peter is Vice President for the Australasian Lighting Industry Association and member of the Association of Lighting Designers.
**SIMON BRUCKARD**
Conductor*

Repertoire and conductor Simon Bruckard is a Developing Artist with Victorian Opera, currently completing a Master of Music (Opera Performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. Simon has worked as a coach and repetiteur for Victorian Opera for La traviata, Norma, Hansel and Gretel, The Flying Dutchman, Sweeney Todd and I Puritani to name a few. In 2015, Simon will appear as the conductor of Victorian Opera’s youth opera The Grumpiest Boy in the World, and the company’s regional tour of Remembrance. Simon frequently performs as a collaborative pianist with singers and instrumentalists and is also a sought after French, German and Italian language coach.

*Wodonga, Warragul, Shepparton

**KANEN BREEN**
War Correspondent*

Past engagements for Victorian Opera include Sweeney Todd and Through The Looking Glass. Roles for Opera Australia include Camille in The Merry Widow, Nanki Poo in The Mikado, Emilio in Partenope (Helpmann and Greenroom award), Caius in Falstaff, Alfred in Die Fledermaus, Sellem in The Rakes Progress, Pong in Turandot, Andres/Cochenille/Pittichinaccio/Frantz/Nathanael in The Tales Of Hoffmann, Pirelli in Sweeney Todd, Albert Herring, and Johnny in Bliss at the Edinburgh Festival. Other engagements include Nanki Poo, Nadir in The Pearlfishers, Ramiro in Cenerentola, and Andy Warhol in The Perfect American for Opera Queensland and Rodolfo in Baz Luhrmann’s La bohème on Broadway.

*Wodonga, Warragul, Shepparton

**DAVID HOBSON**
War Correspondent*

Australian tenor and composer David Hobson is one of Australia’s best known operatic and recording artists. His unique talents have enabled him to sing for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, win Dancing with the Stars and play such diverse roles as Rodolfo in La bohème to Caractacus Potts in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. He is a major recording artist – with many albums reaching No 1 chart status. David has won awards including Operatic Performer of the Year, the Sydney Critics Circle Award, The Age Performing Arts Award for Best Performer in Opera and an Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA) Award.

*Melbourne, Bendigo
NATHAN LAY
Ensemble
Since graduating from the Melba Conservatorium of Music, Nathan has established his career in the Melbourne opera scene. Nathan has won the National Liederfest, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria, and placed 3rd in the Herald Sun Aria. He has performed with Opera Australia (A Masked Ball, Aida, Falstaff, Tosca), Melbourne Opera (‘Schauard’ – La bohème, ‘Guglielmo’ – Così fan tutte), and is currently a developing artist at Victorian Opera, having performed ‘The Baker/Billy Webster’ – Sunday in the Park with George, ‘The King’ – Puss in Boots, ‘Barone Douphol’ – La traviata, ‘Father’ – Hansel and Gretel, ‘Bunyip Bluegum’ – The Magic Pudding – the opera, and ‘Young Recruit’ in Richard Mills’ Remembrance.

CARLOS E. BÁRCENAS
Ensemble
Born in Colombia. Bachelor of Music Performance and Masters in Music (Opera Performance) at University of Melbourne. His work for Victorian Opera includes Steuermann in The Flying Dutchman (2015), Norma (Flavio, understudy Pollione), Hansel and Gretel (the Witch), La traviata (Gastone, understudy Alfredo) and Games of Love and Chance (2014); The Magic Pudding – the opera, Miller in Puss in Boots and as a soloist for Opera on a White Night (2013); Master Peter’s Puppet Show in 2012. Michael in Deborah Cheetham’s new opera Pecan Summer with Short Black Opera (2010 & 2011). Normanno and understudy of Edgardo in Lucia de Lammermoor in Treviso, Italy (2014).

KATE AMOS
Ensemble
Kate is a young soprano versatile in performing repertoire that spans genres. She completed her BMus (Perf) (Hons) at Melbourne University and Dip. (Italian). Performances include: Victorian Opera’s Noye’s Fludde, Snowqueen, La traviata, Hansel & Gretel, The Flying Dutchman, leading roles in: GSOV’s Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, UHT’s Sweeney Todd (Johanna), & The Phantom of the Opera (Christine, Lyrebird Award). Performed solo at NYE concerts 2014: Hamer Hall & SOH with the APO. Kate studied in Italy on scholarship at Fondazione Spontini Pergolesi, awarded Sleath Lowrey scholarship and was 2014 IFAC Australian Singing Competition finalist, winning awards including: Symphony Australia Prize & UK Royal-Overseas League Award.

REMEMBRANCE
BIOGRAPHIES
ELIZABETH LEWIS
Ensemble
Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music Studies from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. In 2013 Elizabeth became a member of the Opera Q Studio and in 2014, a Developing Artist for Victorian Opera. Roles for Victorian Opera include Mother and Witch – *Hansel and Gretel*, Isabella and Cinderella – *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*, Adalgisa (cover) – *Norma*, Mary (cover) – *The Flying Dutchman*, Enrichetta di Franca (cover) – *I Puritani*, Mrs Lovett (cover) and Beggar Woman (cover) – *Sweeney Todd*. Other roles include Dido – *Dido and Aeneas* (Brisbane Baroque Festival), Sorceress – Dido and Aeneas (Bangalow Festival), Emilia (cover) – *Otello* (Opera Q) and Tolomeo – *ABANDON* (Opera Q).

EMMA MUIR-SMITH
Ensemble
Mezzo Soprano Emma Muir-Smith is currently a Developing Artist at Victorian Opera, completing a Master of Music (Opera Performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. During her time with Victorian Opera, Emma has covered several roles, and appeared in *La traviata*, *Norma*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *I Puritani*, and notably as ‘Hansel’ in *Hansel and Gretel*, and ‘Alice’ in *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*. In addition to her operatic commitments, Emma is a frequent recitalist and oratorio soloist, with a particular interest in chamber music. She performed, recorded, and toured extensively with the Choir of Trinity College from 2009-2012.

MICHAEL PETRUCCHELLI
Ensemble
Michael Petruccelli is currently working as a Developing Artist with Victorian Opera whilst completing a Master of Music (Opera Performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. With Victorian Opera he has performed the roles of Giuseppe in *La traviata*, the Sandman in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and the White Rabbit in *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*. On the concert platform he has performed as a soloist in *Games of Love and Chance*, the *Big Sing*, *Opera for the Earth* and *Heroes and Villains*. In 2014 Michael was also received the Richard Bonynge Study Scholarship through the Melbourne Opera Bel Canto Masterclass.
CRISTINA RUSSO
Ensemble

Cristina completed BMus (Hons) and BA majoring in Italian at University of Melbourne and is developing artist with Victorian Opera, studying a Master of Music (Opera Performance) at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne.

Notable roles: Gretel (Hansel and Gretel), Violetta (cover) (La traviata), Elvira (cover) (I Puritani), Valencienne (The Merry Widow).

Chorus: La traviata, Norma, Der Fliegende Holländer (Victorian Opera) and Aida (Opera Australia). Cristina collaborated with Hollywood film composer Johnny Klimek singing and co-writing music for Chinese feature film Lord of Shanghai with Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra. Winner of Acclaim Italian Opera Study Award, Cristina studied in Italy with Valeria Esposito, Luciana Serra and Mirella Freni.

MATTHEW TNG
Ensemble

Last year Victorian Opera embarked on a 3-year program to harness the creative capacity of regional Victoria with the support of the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. The goal of the Regional Hub Program is to provide access to participative opportunities for all Victorians, build community creative capacity and social capital and be a source of new Australian artistic product.

In 2014 *The Big Sing* in Hamer Hall (pictured), a program of popular opera choruses provided a unique performance opportunity for regional participants from several local choirs. This performance was the culmination of a series of workshops and professional development workshops around Victoria.

In 2015 Victorian Opera presents a new Australian work that will travel to Bendigo, Wodonga, Warragul and Shepparton. *Remembrance* will again engage local community choirs participating in an ANZAC tribute featuring music and poetry from Australia’s wartime experience.

In 2016 Victorian Opera returns to regional Victoria to present a brand new fairytale opera created by Richard Mills. Both children and adults from each town will participate in this community created work. The opera will be revealed at the launch of Victorian Opera’s 2016 season in late August.
We are the only opera company in Australia to commission, workshop and perform new work annually. In *The Flying Dutchman* (pictured), we used cutting edge 3D technology to reimagine Wagner’s first masterpiece in St Kilda’s Palais Theatre.

“I loved everything: ...the performance of all the opera singers was exquisite and the 3D production brought so much excitement and ambience to the production. The memory of those red sails going through treacherous waters will stay with me forever.”
– Audience Member, *The Flying Dutchman*

Our Education and Community Engagement program connects with new audiences of all ages through performances, workshops in schools and access programs.

“They loved the costumes, staging, singing – even in different languages. It was a familiar storyline – which helped them follow what was happening… It was an all-round resounding success!! They raved about it!!!! And still are.”
– Teacher, *Alice’s Adventures in Operaland*

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Read our behind the curtain blog
Our blog explores the art of bringing opera and musical theatre to life. Learn more about our past productions and our upcoming performances in 2015: Remembrance, Seven Deadly Sins and The Grumpiest Boy in the World.

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Bravo!

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