JOHN ADAMS
NIXON IN CHINA
A MODERN MASTERPIECE
16 - 23 May 2013
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Supported by: Victorian Opera Youth Opera Patron Miss Betty Amsden OAM, Victorian Opera Education Syndicate, Victorian Opera New Work Syndicate and the Robert Salzer Foundation.
Fortunately, they have been proved wrong. The opera has had regular new productions almost annually since the year of its first performance.

Alice Goodman set out to write a heroic libretto, a treatment of the story which develops the epic nature of the visit and its place on the stage of the world. But the genius of the work resides in its ability to penetrate the procession of public facades and reveal the shared, common humanity, the uncertainties, the vulnerabilities, doubts and fears of the protagonists behind the sometimes impenetrable public masks necessary for the grand occasion.

Adams has said that he sees no contradictions in music being serious, well-wrought and also popular. He cites Charles Dickens as an example of a great artist whose gravitas was not sacrificed to facile popularism. In Nixon in China, Adams and Goodman, and also let it be said Peter Sellers who initiated the project and was its first director, have made a work which speaks with great eloquence, directly – yet with substantial invention and serious intent.

Naturally, the world has moved on from both the Presidency of Nixon and the decade in which this opera first came to life. It is interesting and disturbing to think about the idealised figures of Mao and Nixon as they appear in the opera, with the guilty realities of their actual history – but that is another story – and part of the enduring fascination of this important and wonderful piece which implies, in its final scene, a hope and optimism about the human condition, despite its frailty and capacity for evil. This is not a hope easily won, rather achieved despite the moral ambiguity of the diplomatic process – and it is precisely this capacity for ambiguity, rendered more sharply in perspective by the passage of time, that is the stuff of art which we often call “great”.

The casting and creative team of Nixon in China is a combination of company debuts and familiar artists. I am delighted to welcome Barry Ryan as Richard Nixon, Bradley Daley as Mao Tse-tung and Eva Jinhee Kong as Chiang Ch’ing (Madame Mao Tse-tung) as well as Fabian Russell as Conductor. Nixon in China also sees the return of Director Roger Hodgman and cast members Andrew Collis, Sally-Anne Russell, Dimity Shepherd, Emily Bauer-Jones, Tiffany Speight and Christopher Tonkin. This new production reunites the talents of Richard Roberts, Esther Marie Hayes, Robert Curran and Matt Scott.

Welcome and enjoy our production.

Richard Mills
Artistic Director
Mark Twain wrote ‘history doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.’ I have found myself quoting this a great deal during our planning and reimagining of this incredible work of 20th century opera. Whilst Nixon’s famous visit and the opera inspired by it encapsulate a particular moment in time, East-West relations have never been more critical, as highlighted in the recent events in the Korean Peninsula.

But Nixon in China isn’t just an American story; it has also become part of our story. After all, it was only the year before Nixon’s trip in ’72 that Australia’s then opposition leader Gough Whitlam visited Premier Chou En-lai in Peking. Thirty years on and Australia is firmly in the Asian century, with every aspect of contemporary Australian life recalibrating accordingly. To see our own artists and creative talents interpret and bring to life an historic moment between East and West, has given us another opportunity to demonstrate opera’s relevance to modern storytelling in the 21st century.

Victorian Opera is here to challenge perceptions, and with our diverse range of activities invite you to think about opera in a completely new light. In 2013 Richard’s vision sees us stepping through a Parisian painting with Sunday in the Park with George and dancing in a dangerous underworld with Maria de Buenos Aires. Our new Australian work is an operatic retelling of the much loved Australian classic The Magic Pudding – the opera and our specially created schools performance of Montsalvatge’s delightful opera, Puss in Boots in Spanish.

Telling these unique operatic stories is only possible through the continued support of our government and corporate supporters, loyal subscribers, generous Patrons, dedicated Board and staff, talented performers and musicians, and many more. To those of you who are new to our story, I invite you to play your part in Victorian Opera’s next chapter. And to those who are joining us on our journey in 2013, thank you and welcome.

Lucy Shorrocks
Managing Director
Victorian Opera is embarking on a new chapter in its history. For nearly seven years, Founding Music Director and now Conductor Emeritus Richard Gill, has defined and driven the vision which has established Victorian Opera in the hearts and minds of Victorian audiences.

The glorious Opera on a White Night at Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne in February, marked the accession of Artistic Director Richard Mills. His vision is to build on Victorian Opera’s passion for discovery, participation, innovation and art form development, and to make opera which speaks to and for our dynamic and evolving community.

In 2013 he invites you to discover 19th century Paris (Sunday in the Park with George), a timeless Buenos Aires (Maria de Buenos Aires) and the mythical bush town of Tooraloo (The Magic Pudding – the opera) as well as tonight’s performance of Nixon in China. It is a compelling journey giving new life, new colour and new voice to this extraordinary art form.

Our new Australian commission, The Magic Pudding – the opera, is part of Victorian Opera’s first family subscription program (also featuring Sleeping Beauty and Puss in Boots). Our family package subscribers make up over 40% of our subscriber base – an exciting result for a company committed to ensuring the widest possible access for this art form.

Our operatic adventures are made possible through the continued support of loyal subscribers and audience members, Arts Victoria, John Holland, the Robert Salzer Foundation, RACV and our generous sponsors and Patrons. I am also grateful to my fellow Board members and a dedicated team of staff for realising this work.

Thank you all for being such active and committed members of our audience. I do hope you will enjoy this magnificent work.

Jane Hemstritch
Chairman
In 1988 I had my first encounters with the music of John Adams while working as a contract musician with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Two highly energetic works composed only a few years earlier for the San Francisco Symphony - *A Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and the epic work for large orchestra *Harmonielehre*. Both of these pieces, particularly *Harmonielehre* began my lifelong fascination with this marvellous musician. What attracted me to his music was not only its high energy, complexity of rhythm and metrics but the artistry and imagination of one of our most important living composers. It is contemporary American music inspired by John Cage and Steve Reich but the influence of Wagner, Schoenberg and Mozart is clearly evident.

Having conducted a number of his orchestral works over the years I know that the challenges for every member of the Orchestra are substantial, but these are challenges that are both fun and highly satisfying. This is not always the case with contemporary music but when the hard work is as rewarding as it is with the music of Adams. Musicians increasingly can be inspired to relish the challenges of 'difficult' music. Earlier this year I conducted the Australian Youth Orchestra National Music Camp in *Harmonielehre* and was thrilled to be introducing the music of this contemporary giant to the young generation of Australian musicians. Once the fear of the first rehearsal passed the determination and drive kicked in as they became more and more excited with the fact that they could actually play a piece that a week earlier seemed impossible. One quirky youngster wrote me a note following the performance and said "I hate playing contemporary music but I now really love playing the music of John Adams. Thanks for introducing me to him."

*Nixon in China* is a celebration of "the week that changed the world" albeit a poetic analysis of its flawed heroes. We have Nixon at the height of his political power relishing his moment in history one year ahead of his spectacular downfall. Pat his long suffering 'Stepford' wife at his side, or a few feet behind him as the case often was. Chairman Mao, the philosopher and politician - now elderly and frail but still with the glint of revolution in his eye. Madame Mao – feisty, determined, proud and as tough as nails. Henry Kissinger who receives merciless treatment in the libretto as the Opera Buffo.

And lastly Premier Chou En-lai, a statesman of deep sincerity who is one of the most eloquent characters in the work and perhaps the one that comes out of it all in better shape than any of the others. The rest of it is up to you, our audience.

When I was approached to conduct this new production of *Nixon in China* with Victorian Opera I immediately agreed. In what is the first time Melbourne audiences will experience this marvellous work it has been a privilege to be part of the Victorian Opera's *Nixon* Journey over the past year. The cast, creative team and staff have been a joy to work with. Although who could call this work - it's been a thorough pleasure.

Fabian Russell
Conductor
Roger Hodgman

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

*Nixon in China* presents exciting challenges to its director and designers.

The first is to find a coherent set design that serves the particular needs of the six very different scenes as well as allowing them to seem part of a coherent whole. Much of the staging of the opera was worked out as part of the development of set designer Richard Roberts’ clever design.

The opera depicts real characters and events, but is still a work of the imagination. The first five scenes are based on real moments in Nixon’s groundbreaking visit to China, but John Adams and his librettist Alice Goodman frequently break from these moments – for example giving Nixon his wonderful “News” aria in the first scene and Pat her aria during her tour of Peking in Act Two. Then, in the scene where they watch a ballet developed by Madame Mao, things become almost surreal with the villain apparently being played by Henry Kissinger – hinting at the West’s rape and pillage of China in the nineteenth century, along perhaps with resonances of Kissinger’s behaviour towards Cambodia. Pat, and even Nixon, become involved in the ballet (perhaps in Pat’s imagination) and in the end Madame Mao herself takes the stage with an amazing aria. Incidentally Adams has said that he tried to write the music for the ballet as if it was written by a Party Committee.

The final act is entirely a work of imaginative fiction with all the characters reflecting on their lives and their pasts.

We have been inspired by reading about the characters and the events and by watching contemporary film footage, occasionally stealing a detail for inclusion in the staging – Pat’s unexpected curtsey to Chou En-lai, for example, and the moment at the ballet where she is handed a programme by Madame Mao and immediately puts it down when she realises it is written in Chinese.

But in the end it came down to Adams’ remarkable score – complex in detail but exciting, fast moving, varied and emotional – and trying to serve it well. It has been a treat during the last few weeks listening to it being beautifully sung by an amazing cast.

Roger Hodgman

Director
Richard Nixon first put on his makeup. Never again would the TV public be allowed to recoil from the 6 o’clock shadow that cast him a dozen years earlier as the villain in the debates with John F Kennedy.

This time of all times, the viewers of the news footage must be made aware they are watching a formidable leader seize a rare chance to shake up the way their world is shaped.

Then he walked down the steps of the Boeing 707 Air Force One, and into history in the most astonishing way. The glorious bright blueness of the winter sky – Beijing had yet to suffer its more recent “toxic growth” – matched the new livery of the plane.

Americans had taken the first lunar steps less than three years earlier. In its own way, this was a strategic version of landing on the moon.

Nixon was greeted on the tarmac at Beijing airport by Mao Zedong’s loyal, long-suffering and courtly lieutenant, Premier Zhou Enlai.

The People’s Liberation Army band played what travelling journalists – we have to find fault somewhere, even making history doesn’t give us the right to let such a show off the hook entirely – described as a toneless version of The Star-Spangled Banner.

The President and his wife Pat – who wore a red coat, traditionally the colour for brides – were accompanied by Zhou to what remains the state guest-house, Diaoyutai, set in a serene traditional Chinese water-garden in west Beijing.

That afternoon, on the very first day of their week in China, they went to meet communist party chairman Mao Zedong, who had been so ill until recently that there were fears he would not be well enough to meet Nixon. His doctor Li Zhisui – who was to write a remarkably frank memoir, The Private Life of Chairman Mao – said: “He was so bloated that he had to be fitted with a new suit and shoes. His throat was still swollen and he had difficulty talking. His muscles had atrophied from weeks of immobility, so we put him on an exercise routine a week before Nixon’s arrival.”

But on the day Nixon flew in, he went on, “Mao was as excited as I had ever seen him. He woke up early and immediately began asking when the president was scheduled to arrive. He had a shave and a haircut – his first in more than five months.” Li and his colleagues dismantled Mao’s hospital bed and moved the rest of the emergency medical equipment into the corridor connecting the study with the bedroom, hiding most of it behind potted plants.

Nixon was driven to Mao’s home inside Zhongnanhai, the vast walled zone immediately to the west of the old imperial Forbidden City where the leaders still work and mostly live. They talked for an hour.

Mao, Li wrote later, was delighted. “As soon as the president left, he changed back into his customary bathrobe. I took his pulse, which was steady and strong. Mao liked Nixon. ‘He speaks forthrightly – no beating about the bush’.”

Mao told Nixon “I like to deal with rightists. They say what they really think – not like the leftists, who say one thing and mean another.” Nixon responded that “those on the right can do what those on the left talk about.”

There were to be no more encounters with Mao, but several more lengthy meetings with Zhou, including banquets in the Great Hall of the People a short walk south of Zhongnanhai.

On the second day, the Nixons, Zhou and his wife Deng Yingchao, went to see a performance of the revolutionary ballet The Red Detachment of Women. They were accompanied by the chief architect of this high-energy proletarian myth-making, Mao’s third wife, former actress Jiang Qing – one of the notorious Gang of Four who drove the decade-long Cultural Revolution that was still ravaging China, and who was to hang herself while undergoing medical treatment in 1991 after being jailed for life. When Nixon asked her who had composed the work, she responded that it had been “created by the masses.”

Nixon, who was accompanied to China by a vast retinue, went on to tour the Great Wall, Shanghai and the nearby ancient city of Hangzhou with its famously scenic West Lake where they visited the Island of Three Towers Reflecting the Moon. Much of the visit was screened live back to avid TV viewers in the US. The Americans gave Beijing Zoo musk oxen named Matilda and Milton, and in return received pandas Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing.

The impact of the encounter was to be momentous. China, over time, helped the US ease its way out of the Vietnam War. The US immediately revoked travel and trade bans, and later went on to
recognise the People’s Republic as the “one China.” They formed diplomatic common cause against the Soviet Union, ensuring the ultimate downfall that Russia might have avoided if the two great communist powers had marched in step. And after Mao’s death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping opened China to the world economically, laying the foundations for its extraordinary surge from poverty towards today’s comparative prosperity.

Nixon’s ultra-realist Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who had set up the visit during a dramatic, secret foray of his own the previous year from Pakistan, told Nixon in a memo to prepare him: “Your meetings with the Chinese will be totally unlike any other experience you have had. The drama and colour of this state visit will surpass all your others... You will have to resist being seduced by the charm of the hosts. These people are both fanatic and pragmatic.”

As a footnote, Australian audiences should be aware that Prime Minister Gough Whitlam visited China and met Mao both as opposition leader in 1971 and then as prime minister in 1973, when like Nixon they met in the chairman’s home.

Australia’s first ambassador to the PRC, Stephen Fitzgerald, who was the first Beijing based diplomat to see Mao for years, described Mao’s library, where they met, as “spacious and well lit with skylights at the four corners of the room. A bed is there on which the chairman takes rests. He appears to spend a great deal of time in this room.”

Whitlam and Fitzgerald found Mao sitting down, but he rose and came to greet them unassisted. Mao said: “My body is riddled with disease,” Whitlam asked the questions, with Mao providing single sentence answers so softly uttered and so heavily flavoured with his Hunanese origins that Fitzgerald, whose Chinese is excellent, found him difficult to follow. Fitzgerald concluded that essentially, “the scope of Mao’s existence... appears managed by Zhou and an extraordinary group of young women cadres.”

Now there’s a topic for a new commission for Victorian Opera: Whitlam In China...

*Rowan Callick is the Asia-Pacific editor of The Australian. His new book Party Time: Who Runs China and How has been published recently by Black Inc.*
16 – 23 May 2013
Her Majesty’s Theatre, Melbourne
Composer John Adams
Librettist Alice Goodman
First performed in 1987, Houston.
Running time approximately 2 hours
and 55 minutes including one interval.
These performances of Nixon in China by John Adams with libretto by Alice Goodman are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd of London.

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Carla Rosetta.

CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)
Chou En-lai
Richard Nixon
Henry Kissinger
Nancy T’ang
(First Secretary to Mao)
Second Secretary to Mao
Third Secretary to Mao
Mao Tse-tung
Pat Nixon
Chiang Ch’ing
(Madame Mao Tse-tung)

Christopher Tonkin
Barry Ryan
Andrew Collis
Sally-Anne Russell
Dimity Shepherd
Emily Bauer-Jones
Bradley Daley
Tiffany Speight
Eva Jinhee Kong
VICTORIAN OPERA CHORUS

**Soprano**
Lee Abrahamsen
Kirilie Blythman
Olivia Cranwell
Belinda Dalton
Teresa Duddy
Sophie Viskich

**Mezzo**
Margaret Arnold
Lotte Betts-Dean
Kerrie Bolton
Joanne Carroll
Belinda Paterson
Anna Plotka

**Tenor**
Jonathan Bam
Paul Batey
Michael Edwards
Timothy Reynolds
Brenton Spiteri
Daniel Todd

**Baritone/Bass**
Kristian Gregory
Jeremy Kleeman
Jerzy Kozlowski
Nathan Lay
Christopher Rickerby
Matthew Tng

CHINESE DOCUMENTARY CREW

Christine Heald
Jeremy Kleeman
Daniel Todd

**DANCERS**
Lauren Lotz
Madeleine Murray
Courtney McKeown
Benjamin Stuart-Carberry

**CHILDREN**
Eloise Docherty
Natalie Sciacca
Bianca Weller

**ORCHESTRA**
**Orchestra Victoria**
**Concert Master**
Yi Wang

**1st Violins**
Tomomi Brennan
Binny Baik
Claire Tyrell
Olga Vakoussevitch
Lubino Fernandes

**2nd Violins**
Rachel Gamer
Oksana Thompson
Martin Reddington
Severin Donnenberg

**Violas**
Paul McMillan
Jason Bunn
Catherine Bishop
Lawrence Jacks

**Celli**
Melissa Chominsky
Sarah Cuming
Tania Hardy-Smith
Paul Zabrowarny

**Bass**
Daniel Todd

**Flutes**
Lisa-Maree Amos
Michael Smith

**Oboes**
Stephen Robinson
Naomi Eager

**Clarinets**
Paul Champion
Richard Sholl
Andrew Mitchell

**Trumpets**
Mark Fitzpatrick
Mark Skillington
Robert Smithies

**Trombones**
Scott Evans
Anthony Gilham
Ben Anderson

**Percussion**
Conrad Nilsson

**Soprano Saxophone**
Barry Cockcroft

**Alto Saxophone**
Lachlan Davidson

**Tenor Saxophone**
Martin Hemingway

**Baritone Saxophone**
Gideon Brazil

**Piano**
Stefan Cassomenos
Phillipa Safey

**Keyboards**
Phoebe Briggs
A joyous musical theatre retelling of the creation of Georges Seurat’s 19th century masterpiece ‘A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grand Jatte’

STEPHEN SONDHEIM & JAMES LAPINE

SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE

Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne, 20 - 27 June 2013
Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183
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By arrangement with Playwrights Horizon, Inc. New York City which produced the original production of Sunday In The Park with George in 1983.

By arrangement with Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd Exclusive agent for Music Theatre International (NY).
ACT I

Scene 1
The airfield outside Peking: it is a cold, clear, dry morning; Monday, February 21, 1972. Contingents of army, navy and air force circle the field and sing “The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points of Attention.” Premier Chou En-lai, accompanied by a small group of officials, strolls onto the runway just as “The Spirit of ’76” taxis into view. President Nixon disembarks. They shake hands and the President sings of his excitement and fears.

Scene 2
An hour later he is meeting with Chairman Mao. Mao’s conversational armory contains philosophical apothegms, unexpected political observations, and gnomic jokes, and everything he sings is amplified by his secretaries and the Premier. It is not easy for a Westerner to hold his own in such a dialogue.

Scene 3
After the audience with Mao, everyone at the first evening’s banquet is euphoric. The President and Mrs. Nixon manage to exchange a few words before Premier Chou rises to make the first of the evenings toasts, a tribute to patriotic fraternity. The President replies, toasting the Chinese people and the hope of peace. The toasts continue, with less formality, as the night goes on.

ACT II

Scene 1
Snow has fallen during the night. In the morning Mrs. Nixon is ushered onstage by her party guides and journalists. She explains a little of what it feels like for a woman like her to be First Lady, and accepts a glass elephant from the workers at the Peking Glass Factory. She visits the Evergreen People’s Commune and the Summer Palace, where she pauses in the Gate of Longevity and Goodwill to sing, “This is prophetic!” Then, on to the Ming Tombs before sunset.

Scene 2
In the evening, the Nixons attend a performance of “The Red Detachment of Women,” a revolutionary ballet devised by Mao’s wife, Chiang Ch’ing. The ballet entwines ideological rectitude with Hollywood-style emotion. The Nixons respond to the latter; they are drawn to the downtrodden peasant girl – in fact, they are drawn into the action on the simple side of virtue. This was not precisely what Chiang Ch’ing had in mind. She sings “I am the wife of Mao Tse-tung,” ending with full choral backing.

ACT III

The last evening in Peking.
**Background:** In a career spanning over twenty five years Fabian has established a reputation as a conductor, orchestral musician, soloist and teacher. He founded The Orchestra Project, a training orchestra for young Australian musicians, and is currently the Principal Conductor of the Monash Academy Orchestra, as well as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Tasmanian Discovery Orchestra.

Fabian has received numerous prizes and awards including a nomination for a Green Room Award in 2009 for Music Direction in a new production of Stravinsky’s *Soldier’s Tale* by The Hayloft Project. He was awarded the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Elton John Scholarship in 1998, Equal 1st Prize in the Other Instruments Category of the Symphony Australia Young Performer Awards in 1997 and the Sir Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2011. He is an international adviser to the London based Australian Music Foundation.

**Other Companies:** Has conducted for Australian Youth Orchestra, Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Sinfonia, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, University of Melbourne Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestra, Sydney Youth Orchestra, Darwin Symphony Orchestra, University of Tasmanian Conservatorium Orchestra, Australian International Summer Orchestra Institute and AYO National Music Camp.

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**Background:** Roger Hodgman was born and educated in Tasmania. He has directed theatre, opera, musical theatre and television drama in Australia and internationally for over 30 years and was Artistic Director of the Vancouver Playhouse, Dean of Drama at the VCA and Artistic Director the Melbourne Theatre Company (1987-1999).

**Victorian Opera Repertoire:** Baroque Triple Bill, Xerxes (co-production with New Zealand Opera).

**Other companies:** Opera: Rigoletto for Oz Opera/Opera Queensland, *La Cenerentola* for Opera Queensland, *Lakmé* and *Don Pasquale* for Opera Australia. Theatre: Around a hundred productions (including six productions of works by Stephen Sondheim) for MTC, STC, State Theatre Co of S.A, Black Swan, QTC, Vancouver Playhouse, Shaw Festival, IMG, Production Company, TML Enterprises and others. He has won two Green Room Awards and a Helpmann Award for best director and has numerous nominations. His critically acclaimed Australian version of the stage production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is currently touring Australia. TV: Numerous TV Drama credits including twelve episodes of *Secret Life of Us* (AFI Nomination), *Stepfather of the Bride* (best Telemovie, Chicago Film Festival), *Lockie Leonard* (AFI award and BAFTA nomination for best Childrens Drama), *CrashBurn*, *City Homicide*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *A Place to Call Home*. 


Other Companies: The Magic Flute (West Australian Opera), Die Fledermaus, The Pirates of Pencance, My Fair Lady, La Sonnambula, Don Pasquale (Opera Australia), The Barber of Seville, Rigoletto (Ozopera), Rigoletto (New Zealand Opera), Requiem, Molto Vivace, Raymonda (The Australian Ballet), Macbeth, As You Like It, Hedda Gabler, Death of a Salesman, All My Sons, Life After George, The Man From Mkinupin, Australia Day (Melbourne Theatre Company), True West, Riflemind (Sydney Theatre Company), Stolen (Playbox).

Victorian Opera Repertoire: Greenroom awards for Stolen, Life After George, Requiem, Molto Vivace.

Background: Esther is a 2006 graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, where she was awarded the Orloff Family Charitable Trust scholarship. She was nominated for a Green Room Award for her costume designs for the Hayloft Project’s Delectable Shelter.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: Costume design for Midnight Son and Baroque Triple Bill.

Other Companies: Costume design for Melbourne Theatre Company: Other Desert Cities, The Heretic, Hamlet, All About My Mother, Richard III and Rigoletto. Other set and costume designs include Big Sky Town, St. Martins Youth Theatre, A Cup of Tea with Aunty Marge, Sparc Theatre, and Erwin and Elmire, l’Opera.

Esther also works as one third of The Sisters Hayes, a sibling artist group comprising of herself, Christina and Rebecca Hayes. As a group they have designed set and costumes for the Malthouse’s production of Blood Wedding, Finucane and Smith’s production of The Flood and the production design of The Carnival of Mysteries (Melbourne Festival), for which they received a Green Room nomination. Other work with The Sisters Hayes include; Profile Me (ACMI) The Great Un Reveal (Arts Project Australia) Big Sky Country (Rae and Bennet Gallery) and A Good Death (2010 Next Wave Festival: No Risk Too Great).
CREATIVE TEAM

BIOGRAPHIES

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Matt Scott

Background: Born in Australia, Matt has worked as a lighting designer for almost all of Australia’s leading performing arts companies for the past 17 years. Awards include a 2005 Helpmann Award for his lighting on Urinetown, which followed his 2003 Helpmann Award for The Blue Room.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: The Rake’s Progress, Baroque Triple Bill, The Turn of the Screw, Xerxes, Orphée et Eurydice.

Other Companies: Opera credits - Madame Butterfly (NZ Opera); Don Pasquale (Opera Australia/Tokyo ARt Foundation); La Sonnambula, La bohème (Opera Australia); Cinderella, Così fan tutte (Opera Queensland). Theatre credits include Elling, His Girl Friday, Red, The Seed, Tribes, The Importance of Being Earnest, Clybourne Park, The Joy of Text, Next To Normal, A Behanding in Spokane, Life Without Me, All About My Mother, The Ugly One, The Drowsy Chaperone, God of Carnage, August: Osage County, Blackbird, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, The Pillowman, Festen, Urinetown, The Blue Room (Melbourne Theatre Company); Betrayal, Titus-Anatomy (Queensland Theatre Company); The Grenade, Rock and Roll, Doubt, Blithe Spirit, The Glass Menagerie (Sydney Theatre); Henry IV, Much Ado About Nothing, The Alchemist, As You Like it, Macbeth (Bell Shakespeare); Paul, The Sapphires (Company B Belvoir); Rising Water, The Year of Magical Thinking (Black Swan); Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (TML Enterprises). Dance credits includes Where the Heart Is (Expressions Dance Company); Sync, Orpheus, Cloudland, Petrushka (Queensland Ballet).

CHOREOGRAPHER
Robert Curran

Background: Born in Canberra, Robert started dancing at an early age and completed his dance training at The Australian Ballet School before joining The Australian Ballet in 1996. Promoted to Principal Artist in 2001, Robert danced every major leading role in the classical ballet repertoire as well as performing in many celebrated contemporary works.

Other Companies: Renowned for his partnering, Robert’s career highlights include The Australian Ballet roles such as Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake, Lt. Pinkerton in Stanton Welch’s Madame Butterfly and Count Danilo in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow, as well as works such as Stephen Baynes’ Requiem and Krystof Pastor’s Symphonie Fantastique. Robert has created four works for The Australian Ballet’s Bodytorque program and has an ongoing interest in the creation of dance-theatre, and is a director of project based dance company JACK Productions.
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Daniel Carter


Victorian Opera Repertoire: Conductor: Master Peter’s Puppet Show/What Next? (Australian Premiere), The Parrot Factory (World Premiere), Education performances of La Cenerentola, Magic Flute and Hansel and Gretel, NOVA Workshops 2010 and 2012. Assistant Conductor for over 12 productions including The Magic Flute, The Marriage of Figaro, Bluebeard’s Castle, Carmina Burana, Julius Caesar and La Damnation de Faust.

Other Companies: Aida, Cosi fan tutte (Opera Australia Assistant Conductor), The Threepenny Opera (Sydney Theatre Company/Victorian Opera Conductor), Pierrot Lunaire (Melbourne Festival Conductor), Requiem (Australian Ballet/Victorian Opera Chorusmaster), Assembly (Sydney Festival), Education Concerts and Playerlink Conductor (Sydney Symphony), Carnival of the Animals, The Night Garden (Melbourne Recital Centre Conductor), Willoughby Symphony and MYM.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Cameron Menzies

Background: Cameron is the recipient of the 2011 Berlin New Music Opera Award from Opera Foundation Australia and the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, the 2008 Bayreuth Opera Award from Opera Foundation Australia; The Besen Family Artist Program (Direction), Malthouse Theatre and currently holds the position of Artistic Director for Opera in the Park for City of Stonnington and Head of Direction at The Opera Studio, Melbourne.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: La Cenerentola (Education Program), The Threepenny Opera (co-production with the Malthouse Theatre), The Magic Flute and Hansel and Gretel (Education Program).

Other Companies: CONTACT! - A netball opera (Arts Centre Melbourne), Eugene Onegin, Don Giovanni, The Juniper Tree, The Old Maid and the Thief (The Opera Studio Melbourne), The Magic Flute (OzOpera – Opera Australia), Il Trovatore, I Capuleti e I Montecchi (Opera Australia), Tannhäuser (Deutsche Oper, Berlin).

BIOGRAPHIES

CAST

MAO TSE-TUNG
Bradley Daley

Background: Born in Australia. Studied at the University of Southern Queensland, the Queensland Conservatorium and UK.

Other Companies: Don José: Carmen, Curley: Of Mice and Men (Green Room Award in 2011), Rodolfo: La bohème (Opera Australia); Dick Johnson: La fanciulla del West (SOSA); Camille: The Merry Widow; Florestan: Fidelio (Opera Queensland); Duke: Rigoletto (Mid Wales Opera); Canio: I Pagliacci (Hanoi State Opera); Rodolfo, The Silver Tassie, Nixon in China (ENO); Billy/Bill in Mahagonny Songspiel and Happy End by Kurt Weil and world première of Henderickx’s The Triumph of Spirit over Matter (Belgium and The Netherlands); Carlo VII: Giovanna d’Arco, Edgardo: Lucia di Lammermoor, Alfredo: La traviata, Nemorino: L’elisir d’amore, Turiddu: Cavalleria Rusticana, Riccardo: Un ballo in Maschera, Manrico: Il Trovatore.

Concert Repertoire: Dvorák’s Stabat Mater, Verdi’s Requiem, Puccini’s Messa di Gloria, Die Erste Walpurgisnacht (Prague Music Festival); Messiah (Britten Sinfonia).


CHIANG CH’ING (MADAME MAO TSE-TUNG)
Eva Jinhee Kong

Background: Eva Kong (born Jin Hee Uhm) was born in Seoul, South Korea and studied opera at Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea and then at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Her career path has been as a lyric soprano in several lead roles in Australia.

Other Companies: For Opera Australia: Aida (Sydney, 2012), The Pearlfishers (Sydney, 2012), Madame Butterfly (Sydney, 2012), Lucia di Lammermoor (Sydney, 2012), Die Tote Stadt (Sydney, 2012), Violetta (Study Cover); La traviata (Sydney, 2012), Turandot (Sydney, 2012), La bohème (Sydney, 2011). For Pacific Opera: Pamina; The Magic Flute (Sydney, 2011) Gretel; Hansel & Gretel (Sydney, 2010) Amina; La Sonnambula (Sydney, 2009).

Background: Bachelor of Music Performance (University of Adelaide), Victoria State Opera Young Artist Program. ARIA Award, Nominated for Young Australian of the Year, Young Achiever of the Year (Arts) and Green Room Award. International Jury member Belvedere Singing Competition.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: Viva Verdi!

Other Companies: Suzuki (Madama Butterfly), Mallika (Lakmé), Stephano (Romeo and Juliet), Cherubino (The Marriage of Figaro), Sesto (Julius Caesar), Bradamante (Alcina), Siebel (Faust), Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte), NYE Gala, Opera Australia; Ursula (Beatrice et Benedict), Washington DC; Lucienne (Die tote Stadt), Spoleto Festival Italy; Amastris (Xerxes) Oper der Stadt Koln; Mercedez (Carmen) Opera Queensland; Rosina (Il Barbiere di Siviglia), Flosshilde (Das Rheingold) New Zealand; Nicklausse/Muse (Tales of Hoffmann), Jo (Little Women), Teresa (La Sonnambula), Suzuki, State Opera of South Australia; Mistress Quickly (Falstaff), Angelina (La Cenerentola) WA Opera; Pinchgut Opera; all Australian Symphony Orchestras, Festivals and major choral societies, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Seoul National Symphony, Orchestra Victoria, Pacific Baroque Vancouver, Carmel Bach Festival, California.

Concert Repertoire: Enchanting, Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater, Bach Arias/Duets, Mozart Requiem, Don John of Austria, Vivaldi Juditha Triumphans, Handel Semele, Purcell Fairy Queen, Top 100 ABC Concert Gala, Opera Australia’s Golden Jubilee/50th Anniversary DVD (ABC Classics).
CAST

BIOGRAPHIES

SECOND SECRETARY TO MAO
Dimity Shepherd

Background: Dimity Shepherd was born in Perth and is a graduate of WAAPA.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: Dargonelle in Sleeping Beauty, Cherubino in The Marriage Of Figaro, Clara in Midnight Son, Orphee in Orpheus et Eurydice, Alice in Through The Looking Glass, Arsamene in Xerxes, Nireno in Julius Caesar and Lucy in The Threepenny Opera, Jazz in How To Kill Your Husband (And Other Handy Household Hints).

Other Companies: Cherubino in The Marriage Of Figaro and Rosina in The Barber Of Seville both for Opera Australia, Carmen for Oz Opera, Tisbe in La Cenerentola and Stephano in Romeo & Juliet, both for Opera Queensland, Carmen for Melbourne Opera and Ruggiero in Handel’s Alcina for Jung St. Polten Oper in Vienna, Jonathan Mill’s The Ghost Wife at the Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney festivals and the BiTE02 festival in London, Rebecca in Opera Australia’s seasons of Paul Grabowsky’s Love In The Age Of Therapy, the lead role in Crossing Live and Elizabeth in The Children’s Bach.

Concert Repertoire: Sculthorpe’s String Quartet No.13 Island Dreaming in the Sydney Festival, Ravel’s L’Enfant et le Sortilege and Messiah for the Melbourne Symphony, Vaughan-Williams’ Serenade To Music for the Melbourne Recital Centre, and the Australian premiere performance of Goliyov’s Ayre for the 2012 Fremantle Music Festival. She regularly gives opera concert performances for Victorian Opera and is one of the founders of corporate and major events entertainment group, Divas Inc.

PAT NIXON
Tiffany Speight

Background: Born in Australia. Graduate of Victorian College of the Arts.


Other Companies: European debut: Rigoletto (Vienna Staatsoper); Armida: Rinaldo (Rheingau Music Festival, Germany); Despina: Così Fan Tutte, Pamina/Papagena: The Magic Flute, Susanna /Cherubino/Barbarina: Le nozze di Figaro, Johanna: Sweeney Todd, Valencienne: The Merry Widow (Green Room Award), Phyllis: Iolanthe, Yum-Yum: The Mikado (on DVD and ABC television), Phyllis: The Magic Flute, Musetta: La bohème (NBR NZ Opera); Opera Under the Stars (Broome); Prime Minister’s Olympic Dinner; gala farewell with Seoul Symphony Orchestra; Who Killed Mario Lanza? (Riverside Theatres, Parramatta); Musica Viva Coffee Concert recital; concerts with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic and Australian Pops Orchestra; Castlemaine Festival recital and Australian String Quartet.


Other Companies: Count: Capriccio, Novice’s Friend: Billy Budd, Antonio: The Gondoliers (Opera Australia); Guglielmo, Ping: Turandot, Delirio: L’Opera Seria, Schauard: La Bohème, Harlequin: Ariadne auf Naxos, Valentin: Faust, The Algerian: Intolleranza, Pantalon: The Love for Three Oranges, Dancairo: Carmen, Silvio: Pagliacci, Demetrius: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Pollux: Castor et Pollux, Harry Easter: Street Scene (Hannover Staatsoper); Silvio (Romania); Happy: La Fanciulla del West (State Opera of South Australia); Black Minister: Le Grand Macabre (Adelaide Festival); Happy, L’Horloge Comtoise and Le Chat: L’Enfant et les Sortilèges, Beethoven 9 (Melbourne Symphony); Don Giovanni title role (Melbourne Opera); Antenor: Dardanus, Robert: Iolante, Marco: Gianni Schicchi, Tarquinius: Rape of Lucretia, Drebyednyetsov: Paradise Moscow, Count Almaviva: Le Nozze di Figaro (Royal Academy of Music).

Image: President and Mrs Nixon visit the Great Wall of China and the Ming tombs 1972, US National Archives and Records Administration 194421.
THIRD SECRETARY TO MAO
Emily Bauer-Jones

Background: Emily Bauer-Jones studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal College Of Music in Manchester.


Other Companies: In the UK and Europe her roles have included Geneviève in Debussy’s Peleas & Melisande for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Zenobia in Radamisto for Opera North, The Third Lady in The Magic Flute and Suzuki in Madam Butterfly, both for Welsh National Opera and Katherine in Nigel Osborne’s The Piano for Music Theatre Wales. She has also appeared in the world première production of Param Vir’s opera, Ion, for Opera du Rhin in Strasbourg.

Concert Repertoire: Emily is a highly experienced oratorio and concert soloist, appearing in such works as Bach’s St. Matthew and St. John Passion, and Mass In B Minor, Handel’s Messiah, Mozart’s Requiem and Elgar’s The Dream Of Gerontius at Smetana Hall in Prague, at London’s Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall and at the Royal Albert Hall, and with the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Melbourne University Choral Society.

HENRY KISSINGER
Andrew Collis

Background: Member of Cologne Opera in 1993-2007, singing more than eighty roles. Andrew returned regularly to Cologne as a guest artist and has performed throughout Germany, as well as The Hong Kong Festival, New Zealand International Festival, San Diego Opera and the Vienna Festival.


Other Companies: St. Matthew Passion, Ashby: La Fanciulla del West, Angelotti: Tosca, Dr Dulcamara: L’Elisir D’amore, title roles in Don Pasquale and Le Nozze di Figaro, Monterone: Rigoletto (Opera Queensland), Dr. Grenvil: La Traviata (OQ and Brisbane Festival), Sparafucile: Rigoletto, Swallow: Peter Grimes, Sarastro: Die Zauberflöte (West Australian Opera), Count Rodolfo: La Sonnambula (WAO and State Opera of SA), Friar Lawrence: Roméo et Juliette (WAO, Opera Australia and OQ), Speaker: The Magic Flute, Mr Flint: Billy Budd (OA, Cologne Opera), Crespel, Luther and Spalanzani: The Tales of Hoffmann, Fasolt: Das Rheingold (SOSA and Melba Recordings), Colline: La bohème, Hobson: Peter Grimes (San Diego Opera), Messiah (Sydney Philharmonia, Queensland and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras) and soloist in Beethoven Symphony no. 9 (Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra).
Victorian Opera has a distinct artistic program which champions the creation of new Australian opera whilst presenting a less familiar repertoire to audiences in Melbourne and across regional Victoria.

Victorian Opera is committed to presenting new opera each year and engaging the widest possible audience with accessible ticket pricing and regional touring. Victorian Opera is also committed to collaborating and co-producing with different partners (as well as festivals and other opera companies) and also maintains a vibrant education program.

The company nurtures Victorian Youth Opera, a strong youth development initiative, and presents popular community events.

As Victoria’s state opera company Victorian Opera has a unique role; to present professional opera in Victoria; maintain a commissioning program for new Australian work; create more employment and professional development opportunities for Victorian artists; and provide access to touring productions for regional Victorians. Victorian Opera has also established and maintains the only professional chorus in Victoria.

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The Orchestra provides unique opportunities for students and emerging artists to work with and learn from professional musicians through its far reaching state-wide ‘mOVe’ education program.

The diversity of activities makes Orchestra Victoria unique among Australia’s professional orchestras.

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6pm, Thursday 6 June 2013
Horti Hall
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**Applications close Friday 14 June 2013**
Visit conservatorium.unimelb.edu.au/events for registrations and course information.
VICTORIAN OPERA

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Fairfax Studio, Arts Centre Melbourne
1300 182 183
Saturday 1 June 11.30am, 2.30pm

Sunday in the Park with George
Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne
1300 182 183
Saturday 20 July 7.30pm
Tuesday 23 July 7.30pm
Wednesday 24 July 1.00pm, 7.30pm
Thursday 25 July 7.30pm
Friday 26 July 7.30pm
Saturday 27 July 1.00pm, 7.30pm

Maria de Buenos Aires
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre
(03) 9699 3333
Wednesday 21 August 7.30pm
Thursday 22 August 7.30pm
Friday 23 August 7.30pm
Saturday 24 August 1.00pm, 7.30pm

Rush Hour
Merlyn Theatre, Malthouse Theatre
(03) 9685 5111
Tuesday 1 October 6.30pm
Wednesday 2 October 6.30pm

The Magic Pudding - the opera
Merlyn Theatre, Malthouse Theatre
(03) 9685 5111
Friday 4 October 6.30pm
Saturday 5 October 4.00pm, 6.30pm
Sunday 6 October 12.00pm, 2.30pm

Victorian Opera
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