



Victorian  
Opera

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



VICTORIAN OPERA 2015



## Welcome

**In just ten years, over 300,000 audience members have experienced a performance by Victorian Opera – over 20,000 of those attending regional performances.**

During our short history, we have created 14 new Australian works and collaborated with some of Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions. We employ hundreds across the theatre industry and recruit some of the finest singers from Australia and around the world. We are committed to the accessibility of opera through tactile tours, and audio described and relaxed performances. We have inspired over 500 young singers through our youth opera program and developed over 30 emerging artists. Our vision – to create a state opera company that is a state icon and a national leader.

# 2015 Highlights

Our 10th consecutive financial surplus.

A 40% increase in live audiences from 2014.

371,500 reached in broadcast audiences.

In a world first, Victorian Opera presented a full length opera with 3D digital scenery.

A record number of new works, including *Alice's Adventures in Operaland*, *Remembrance*, *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* and *Seven Deadly Sins*.

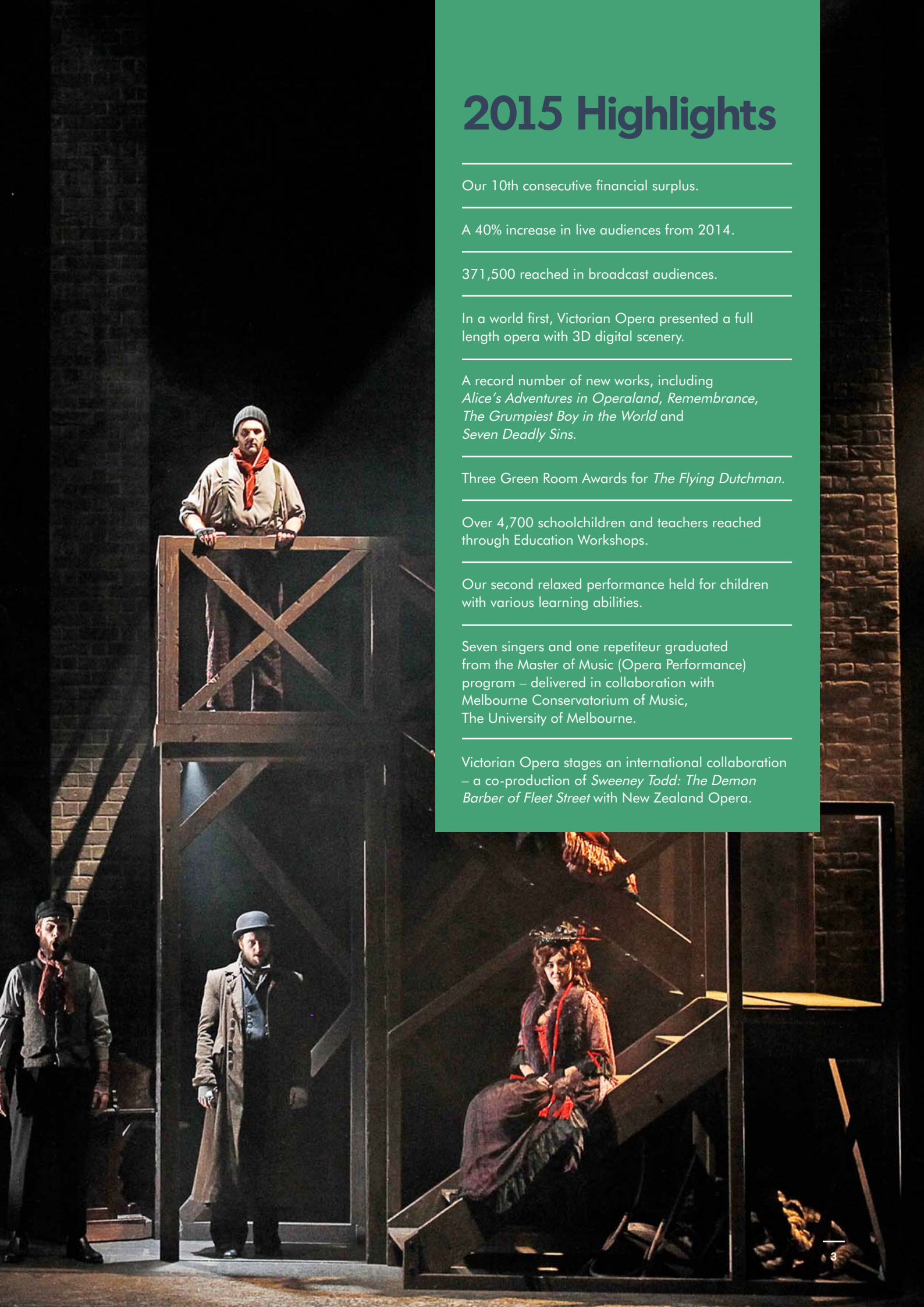
Three Green Room Awards for *The Flying Dutchman*.

Over 4,700 schoolchildren and teachers reached through Education Workshops.

Our second relaxed performance held for children with various learning abilities.

Seven singers and one répétiteur graduated from the Master of Music (Opera Performance) program – delivered in collaboration with Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne.

Victorian Opera stages an international collaboration – a co-production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* with New Zealand Opera.



**"We continued to extend the boundaries of the art form, and ensured that opera remained accessible to all Victorians."**



## Extending Boundaries

2015 marked Victorian Opera's 10th Anniversary Season – a year of new productions and new collaborations. Our year opened with an epic new production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*; a collaboration with the remarkable Australian Youth Orchestra and Deakin.Motion.Lab lead by Professor Kim Vincs.

We were proud to return large-scale opera to the Palais Theatre in St Kilda – the venue was once a mainstay of the city's opera landscape during the 1970s and still offers the best acoustic for opera in the country. Stuart Maunder's Sondheim Trilogy at Arts Centre Melbourne concluded with *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Teddy Tahu Rhodes made his debut with the company in the title role and starred opposite Victorian Opera favourite Antoinette Halloran as a decidedly wicked Mrs Lovett. It was a bloody

goodbye to Stephen and a thrilling conclusion to three years of staging his work.

International star soprano Jessica Pratt returned home for another bel canto masterpiece following her 2014 performance in *La traviata*. She performed opposite acclaimed Spanish tenor Celso Albelo in Bellini's *I Puritani* staged in concert at Hamer Hall with our orchestra partner Orchestra Victoria. Hamer Hall also provided backdrop for *Heart and Soul*, our Mother's Day Concert with the Australian Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Remembrance*, our project for the ANZAC Centenary which engaged community choirs from around Victoria.

The year concluded with two new works, the first our youth opera *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* at the Malthouse Theatre. Our final presentation was our double bill *Seven Deadly Sins*,

featuring Weill's *Die sieben Todsünden* and a cabaret inspired collection of new works from four of Australia's brightest composers, commissioned by Victorian Opera in association with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's Composer Development Program and Symphony Services International. The double bill saw cabaret diva Meow Meow's company debut and also starred the students from our Master of Music (Opera Performance) – a collaboration between Victorian Opera and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne.

Our commitment to youth and new work was the underpinning feature of our 10th Anniversary Season – we continued to extend the boundaries of the art form, and ensured that opera remained accessible to all Victorians.

**Richard Mills**  
Artistic Director, Victorian Opera

# State Icon, National Leader

Victorian Opera's 10th Anniversary Season was a year of great successes, many firsts and valuable collaborations

## – a year which further cemented the company's reputation as a state icon, national leader and major player in the Australian operatic landscape.

The year opened with a revelatory exploration of Wagner's earliest masterpiece, *The Flying Dutchman*, which saw our entire audience wearing 3D glasses to experience ground-breaking 3D digital scenery.

This feat in technology was followed by a concert in the dark. Set during Earth Hour, *Opera for the Earth* was a unique collaboration between Victorian Opera and Dumbo Feather performed to an audience limited to 100 people – admission granted through ideas around the sustainability of the planet and our art form.

Our littlest fans were treated to our family production of *Alice's Adventures in Operaland* – a chance to travel down the rabbit hole to meet some of opera's biggest characters and hear some of opera's most iconic music. This production marked another collaboration with Arts Centre Melbourne – our fourth collaboration with them for our Education Season production. Following the company's work with Arts Centre Melbourne on the first relaxed performance staged in Victoria, *Alice's Adventures in Operaland* was presented to an audience of children with various learning abilities.

Alongside Victorian Opera's *10th Birthday* concert for children and families and our new commission and youth opera *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*, a production supported by The Robert Salzer Foundation and our New Work Syndicate, the company offered a number of works to engage young audiences and indeed, our audiences of the future.

*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* was the final instalment in our Sondheim trilogy – produced with our dear friends at New Zealand Opera who will be touring the musical thriller in late 2016.

2015 also boasted Victorian Opera's first trip to Tasmania with Richard Mills' ANZAC commemoration, *Remembrance*, making its world premiere with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. This production was performed in Melbourne in August before touring regional Victoria; it deepened the company's involvement with community choirs in every centre where the work was staged.

We collaborated with the TSO further, as well as Symphony Services International, on double bill *Seven Deadly Sins* – specifically developing multiple compositions from some of the country's brightest young composers.

In a series of federal funding firsts, matched funding from Creative Partnerships Australia, Ministry for the Arts and Department of Premier and Cabinet enabled a number of critical projects from the implementation of Tessitura, an industry wide customer relationship management tool, to the presentation of our ANZAC centenary work.

Critical to the company's achievements is the ongoing support of the State Government of Victoria, through Creative Victoria's Organisation Investment Program, The Robert Salzer Foundation, The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, our generous Supporters and Patrons including our Artistic Director's Circle and New Work and Education Syndicates, and our loyal subscribers. Most importantly, our thanks must go to our dedicated board and staff whose tireless efforts continue to ensure the company's success.

**Jane Hemstrich**  
Chairman, Victorian Opera

**Andrew Snell**  
Managing Director, Victorian Opera

# Productions in 2015

## The Flying Dutchman

"The Flying Dutchman is a watershed moment for the Victorian Opera. An ambitious undertaking, but one that deserves admiration and praise. Set sail to St Kilda."

– The Age



## The Flying Dutchman

"With its 3D projection, an outstanding Senta, and our brilliant national orchestra of young musicians in the pit, it is an ideal entrée for those new to opera and a memorable night for all Wagnerians."

– Australian Book Review

## The Flying Dutchman

"For this pioneering production, the audience will be asked to wear 3D glasses to view the images projected on huge screens that fan out from the stage. Thus one is fully immersed in the turmoil of the mythical Dutchman coming ashore beneath the Norwegian cliffs."

– The Age

## Alice's Adventures in Operaland

"...a great vehicle for educating the younger generation."

– Stage Whispers

## Sweeney Todd

"Few shows could boast such a superb union of technical, musical and artistic balance in an opening night performance."

– Herald Sun

## Sweeney Todd

"Halloran is revelatory as Mrs Lovett"

– Australian Book Review

## Sweeney Todd

"The singing is, as you'd expect, magnificent"

– The Age





### I Puritani

"The beauty of her performance and almost insouciant ease of her upper register, as she floated and expanded notes with an exceptional range of colours, left her capacity audience ecstatic."

– *The Australian*

### I Puritani

"Victorian Opera's performance was truly affecting, one that captured the poignancy and death-hauntedness of Bellini's spirit."

– *Australian Book Review*

### Opera for the Earth

"Victorian Opera's latest venture takes the novel step of ditching traditional ticket prices and instead allowing admission by ideas only... Hopeful attendees must share their thoughts on "environmental sustainability and how they envisage the future for opera with their state opera company."

– *The Age*

### Opera for the Earth

"A wonderful night! We loved the intimate space filled with "The Young Artist's" voices. Superb."

– Audience Member

### The Grumpiest Boy in the World

"In Victorian Opera's world premiere of a homegrown work... a little bit of magic was made at Malthouse's Merlyn Theatre. It's a delightfully adventuresome jaunt from the living room to a world of fantasy that reintroduces ourselves to a comfort zone we often ignore."

– *Opera Chaser*

### Remembrance

"Accompanied by an impressive chamber orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, and a large rousing community choir, *Remembrance* does offer a glimpse into what life might have been like during World War 1: something we should all continue to remember."

– *Theatre Press*



### Seven Deadly Sins

"This clever one-night-only double-bill, united Kurt Weill's brilliantly acerbic ballet chanté of 1933... with a freshly contemporary *Seven Deadly Sins*, by four young Australian composers, who also wrote their own texts."

– *Classic Melbourne*

### Seven Deadly Sins

"The seven cast members, graduating members of Victorian Opera's Masters of Music (Opera Performance) program performed with great confidence, flair and polish."

– *Simon Parris, Man in Chair*

# Inspiring Audiences

In its 10th Anniversary Season,  
Victorian Opera reached a  
national audience of

**438,020**

across

**123**

performances, activities  
and broadcasts.

**4,801**

people joined Victorian Opera to  
witness the return of opera to the  
Palais Theatre in the company's epic  
3D reimagining of Wagner's  
*The Flying Dutchman*  
across three performances.

**7,383**

audience members attended the  
bloody conclusion to Victorian Opera's  
Sondheim Trilogy – *Sweeney Todd:*  
*The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.*

**2,134**

people attended the double bill  
*Seven Deadly Sins* at Hamer Hall.

The world premiere performance of  
Richard Mills' ANZAC commemoration  
*Remembrance* with the  
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra  
was broadcast on ABC Classic FM  
to an audience of

**50,000.**



"This is a company that understands about accessibility – but does not compromise on performance. Impressive given what must be limited resources."

"Richard Mills embraces us as members of his opera family, the different venues are interesting, the opera's good value for money & the productions and performers of high calibre."

"As they say, Victorian Opera is redefining opera and helping to build its future."

"They are different, they push the boundaries of conventional opera to appeal to a wider audience and their engaging education program is outstanding."

"I am writing to express my (and my wife's) absolute joy at the *I Puritani* last Thursday. I do not think I have enjoyed an evening like it since the last night of the Sutherland season in 1965! Seriously it was fantastic and I can only hope you keep up this standard after *Norma* and now this concert version."





## Engaging the Community

In its ongoing commitment to presenting opera across the state, Victorian Opera toured its production of Richard Mills' ANZAC commemoration *Remembrance* to four of the company's regional hubs: Bendigo, Shepparton, Warragul and Wodonga. This was made possible thanks to the support of The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. Community choirs joined the production in each regional centre – totalling 252 participants across these centres. Multiple rehearsals in each regional hub were delivered by Victorian Opera music staff and all choir participants received additional musical resources to assist in their preparations to perform alongside the company. The work had its world premiere with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and TSO Chorus in Hobart in April.

Reflecting the growing demand for Victorian Opera's annual family work, the company staged its 2015 production *Alice's Adventures in Operaland* in Arts Centre Melbourne's Playhouse.

Due to past sell-out seasons of *Puss in Boots* (2013) and *Hansel and Gretel* (2014) in Arts Centre Melbourne's 376 seat Fairfax Theatre, the company moved into the higher capacity 884 seat Playhouse. The four-day performance season, which played to a combined audience of schools and the general public, reached 4,740 students, teachers and families.

This production was also staged as a relaxed performance for children with various learning abilities and reached an audience of 355 children and families. This followed the first relaxed performance staged in Victoria,

*Hansel and Gretel* (2014) – both collaborations between Victorian Opera and Arts Centre Melbourne. These performances represent the company's commitment to making opera accessible to all audiences.

"Thank you to all involved in making this event possible. We loved it. This was an exciting venture and another step forward in inclusivity for all people. It was so well done. The information and photos available on the website were extremely thorough and very helpful. It helped parents prepare their children. This is often a crucial element in determining whether an outing is a success or a disaster! Brilliantly done. It was great to see that there were children who were profoundly affected in the audience."

– Leanne Hogan, Relaxed Performance audience member

# Our People

Putting on a Victorian Opera mainstage performance takes a large and talented group of people months of preparation – planning, building, painting, tailoring, coaching and rehearsing – to create an unforgettable night at the opera. In 2015, Victorian Opera engaged hundreds of people in the creative industry.



Photographic Credits:  
Magnus Hastings (cover),  
Jeff Busby (pp. 2, 6, 12),  
Charlie Kinross (pp. 4, 7, 9, 10),  
Bri Hammond (pp. 8)



# 680

performers, musicians  
and creatives across

# 26

mainstage performances

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# 130

creatives, from directors and  
designers to technicians and  
production staff.

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# 160

performers, including international  
guests, local singers and chorus,  
and young developing artists.

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# 390

musicians including appearances  
from Orchestra Victoria,  
Australian Youth Orchestra,  
Australian Philharmonic Orchestra  
and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

# Victorian Opera Patrons



## Founding Patrons

Lady Potter AC  
The Late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE

## Patron in Chief

The Honourable Linda Dessau AM,  
Governor of Victoria

## Leadership Circle (\$20,000+)

Deanne Bevan & Guy Russo  
William J Forrest AM  
Hans & Petra Henkell\*  
Dr John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith\*

## Artistic Director's Circle (\$10,000+)

Robert & Caroline Clemente  
John & Diana Frew  
Mrs Jane Hemstritch  
Peter & Anne Laver

## Living Bequest

Susan Harley

## Platinum Patrons (\$5,000+)

Beth Brown & Tom Bruce AM\*\*  
Greig Gailey & Geraldine Lazarus  
Suzanne Kirkham\*\*  
Siobhan Lenihan\*\*  
Kaye Marion  
Marian & Ken Scarlett OAM\*\*  
Greg Shalit & Miriam Faine  
Wesfarmers Arts

## \*Education Syndicate (\$5,000+)

Hans & Petra Henkell  
Dr John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith

## \*\*New Work Syndicate (\$5,000+)

Beth Brown & Tom Bruce AM  
Suzanne Kirkham  
Siobhan Lenihan  
Marian & Ken Scarlett OAM

## Gold Patrons (\$2,500+)

Joanna Baevski  
Tanya Costello & Peter Costello AC  
Craig D'Alton & Peter Sherlock  
The Late Neilma Gantner

Jennifer George & Matthew Williams  
Murray Gordon  
Peter & Jenny Hordern  
Ian Kennedy AM & Sandra Hacker AO  
Peter Lovell  
Ian Merrylees  
John & Elisabeth Schiller  
Tim & Lynne Sherwood  
Earl & Countess of Wilton  
Anonymous (2)

## Silver Patrons (\$1,000+)

Ian Baker & Cheryl Saunders  
Kirsty Bennett  
Buckett Family  
David Byrne  
Terry & Christine Campbell  
Ernest Dawes OBE & Nola Dawes  
Jean Dunn  
Bob Garlick  
John & Gaye Gaylard  
Brian Goddard  
Nance Grant AM MBE  
Gras Foundation  
Lesley Griffin

If you would like to get more involved in the work of Victorian Opera through our Individual Giving Program please contact Pooja Dutt, Individual Giving Manager on 03 9001 6408 or [poojad@victorianopera.com.au](mailto:poojad@victorianopera.com.au)



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Stewart & Denise Jackel  
Simon L Jackson & Brian Warburton  
Rod & Daniele Kemp  
Alun & Patricia Kenwood  
John & Lynne Landy  
Paul & Glenys Lejins  
Anne Lierse  
John & Kerry Lovering  
Margaret Mayers & Marie Dowling  
Ian Morrey & Dr Geoffrey Minter  
Douglas & Rosemary Meagher  
Ken Muirden AO  
Greg Noonan  
Ruth & Tom O'Dea  
Jillian Pappas  
Jane Patrick & Robert Evans  
Lynette Payne  
John Rickard  
Judith Robinson & Michael Robinson AO  
Judith Rodriguez  
Tomasz & Elizabeth Romanowski  
Joseph Sambrook & Mary-Jane Gething  
Graeme Samuel AC & Jill Davies  
Michael Sassella  
Aubrey Schrader

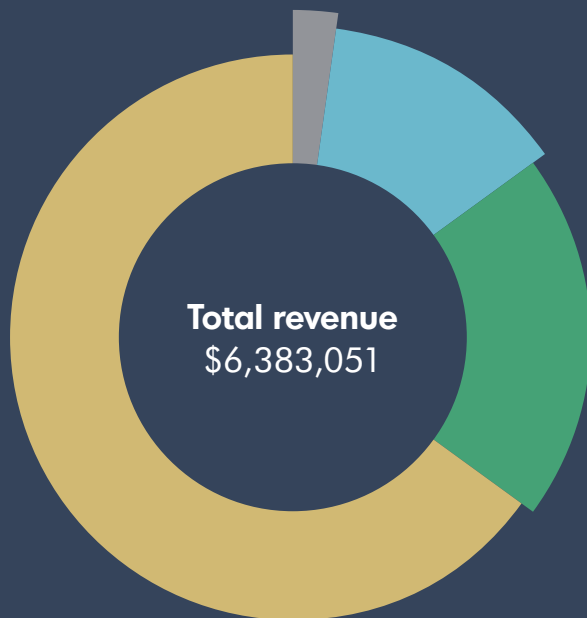
Phillip Schudmak  
Andrew Snell  
Lady Southey AC  
Felicity Teague  
Caroline Travers OAM  
Michael Troy  
Helen & Chris Trueman  
Liz & Peter Turner  
Catherine Walter AM  
Ian A Watts  
Russell Waters & Marissa Barter-Waters  
Anonymous (5)

**Bronze Patrons (\$500+)**

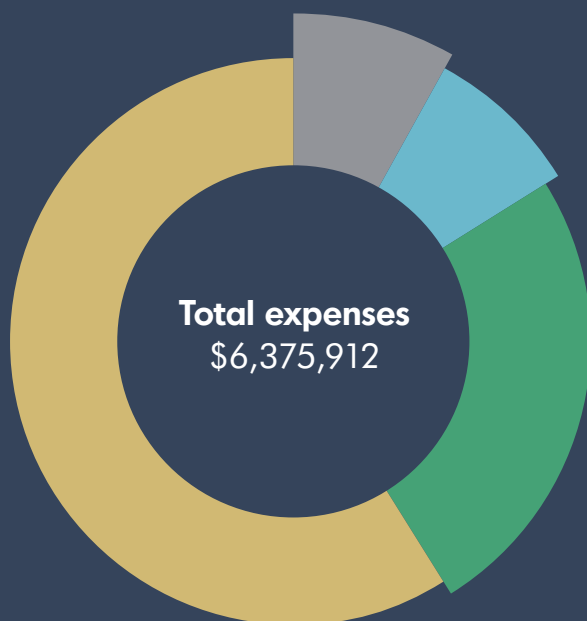
Ines & Don Behrend  
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Elizabeth Douglas  
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Lesley Tan  
Hugh & Liz Taylor  
Caroline Vaillant  
Euahna Varigos  
John Ward  
Peronelle Windeyer  
Bart Wissink & Kaye Salisbury  
Anonymous (16)

# Accounts



- **Government funding revenue**  
\$4,119,587
- **Box Office and performance income**  
\$1,273,893
- **Sponsorship, philanthropic and donation income**  
\$857,024
- **Other income**  
\$132,547



- **Personnel expenses**  
\$3,785,620
- **Production expenses**  
\$1,573,942
- **Administrative expenses**  
\$526,701
- **Marketing and development expenses**  
\$489,649

Victorian Opera is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Victorian Opera would also like to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the contribution of the partners listed on this page.

## Government Partners



### Foundation Partner

### University Partner

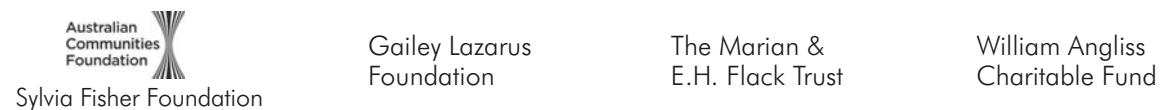
### Regional Partner



## Supporting Partners



## Education & Access Partners



## Performance Partners



### Technology Partner



Victorian Opera creates tailored partnerships to enable businesses to meet their strategic priorities. For a discussion about how your business can benefit from a partnership with Victorian Opera, please contact Louise O'Loughlin, Development Manager, on (03) 9001 6405 or [louise@victorianopera.com.au](mailto:louise@victorianopera.com.au)



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