

VICTORIAN OPERA



ANNA GOLDSWORTHY | GRAEME KOEHNE

A Christmas Carol

Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we honour the continuation of the oldest music practice in the world.

Conductor's Message

Carols, sleigh bells, Christmas trees, markets, Salvation Army bands, lights, markets, snow – it must be Christmas time! (okay, no snow here in Australia).

How wonderful it has been to be a part of the process of creating a new Christmas production. The creative genius of Anna Goldsworthy's libretto and the magical soundscape of Graeme Koehne's score come together in a fabulous mix of celebration, sentimentality, grumpiness, reflection and joy. Dickens' timeless tale has been reset in contemporary Melbourne, complete with images and sounds of its unique culture. The glorious score illuminates each moment in time

and infuses it with a distinctly Christmassy flavour.

We welcome our two Melbourne community choruses, the Decibelles and Low Rez, as well as our children's chorus who join a stellar cast and creative team, all accompanied by the fine musicians of Orchestra Victoria.

Wishing everyone a joyful Covid-free Summer!

PHOEBE BRIGGS
Conductor

Librettist's Message

When Richard Mills first floated the idea to me of an opera of *A Christmas Carol*, I leapt at the opportunity. The book has all the fingerprints of Dickens' genius: the deft characterisation; the social purpose; the generosity and human insight; the comedy and the satire; the deep seriousness of its themes. But it has something else besides. *A Christmas Carol* is so finely wrought a fiction that it has entered the realm of myth. An uncanny number of *A Christmas Carol*'s characters and sayings have been absorbed into the vernacular: Scrooge; the Ghosts of Christmases Past and Present; Tiny Tim; 'Bah Humbug!'; 'God bless us everyone'. It is that rare type of book that becomes archetype, and opera loves archetypes. On top of that, its dramaturgy was clear – that three-part structure – and its themes of inequality, greed and generosity seemed more pertinent than ever. I suspected the text would graft readily onto a Melbourne summer, and with

Graeme Koehne's command of Dickensian registers – the levity alongside the lyricism, seasoned with a liberal dose of Christmas carols – this quickly became a dream project. I can't think of a better antidote to the trials of recent years than a project that celebrates community, connection and kindness. It's been a joy to work with Emma, Phoebe and the rest of the creative team, alongside this brilliant cast of singers and musicians. God bless them, everyone!

ANNA GOLDSWORTHY
Librettist

Victorian Opera presents

A Christmas Carol

WORLD PREMIERE

Based on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol

Composer **Graeme Koehne**

Librettist **Anna Goldsworthy**

CREATIVES

Conductor **Phoebe Briggs**

Director **Emma Muir-Smith**

Set Designer & Associate

Costume Designer **Claudia Mirabello**

Costume Designer **Bridget Milesi**

Lighting Designer **Richard Vabre**

Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**

Orchestra **Orchestra Victoria**

CAST

Ebenezer Scrooge

Samuel Dundas

Marley/Ghost of Christmas Present

Simon Meadows

Freda/Ghost of Christmas Past/Woman in Bar/

Thief/Tenant Woman

Antoinette Halloran

Bob Cratchit/Fezzoli/Belle's Husband/Man in Bar/

Pawnbroker/Tenant Man

James Egglestone

Mrs Fezzoli/Belinda Cratchit/Freda's Wife

Dominica Matthews*

Young Fan/Belle/Martha Cratchit

Akansha Hungenahally

Puppeteer and Movement Direction/Ghost of

Christmas Future

Nadine Dimitrievitch

Tiny Tim/Child Scrooge

Maxwell Chao-Hong, Anderson Mokyi

Chorus/Charity Collector/Party Guest

Shakira Dugan**

Chorus/Street Vendor/Fishmonger/Party Guest

Michael Dimovski**

Chorus/Young Scrooge/Charity Collector/

Butcher/Party Guest

Stephen Marsh***

Chorus/Poulterer/Party Guest

Emily Burke

Community Chorus of adults

The Decibelles and Low Rez Choirs

Community Chorus of children

Sophie Cowall, Miliyah Dee, Isla Goding, Jin Jin Li,

Michelle Lung, Alec McMichael, Mathew Rigby,

Michael Roskam, Alyssa Schiavello, Zara Tono

**The appearance of Dominica Matthews is made possible through the generosity of Prof Barbara van Ernst AM.*

***The appearances of Michael Dimovski and Shakira Dugan are made possible through the generosity of Dr Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts.*

****The appearance of Stephen Marsh is supported by The Family of the late Frederick R Davidson AM.*

Special thanks to Nadine Dimitrievitch and Tom Willis for puppet creation and Matilda and Elliott Hollingbery for the children's artwork.

14 – 17 December
Palais Theatre, St Kilda

Running time is approximately 1 hour 40 minutes, plus one interval

Sung in English

Artistic Director's Message

Dickens was one of the greatest storytellers ever. He opened a window into his world, Victorian London, with its complex and rich pageant of human life, and observed with compassion, a sense of common justice and a crusading zeal to reveal the hypocrisy of the lawmakers and moneyed classes at the expense of ordinary working people. He held the mirror up to nature – and what that mirror reflected was not always pleasant or conforming to prevailing social mores. He did not preach – simply revealed the truth – and clothed these revelations with a wealth of lovingly crafted human detail and richness of character. His prose was always at the service of his mission – having an inexorable rhythm of its own which held readers spellbound week by week in the works which were released as serial installments. He was an artist who was serious, profound and very, very popular. A fact noted by American composer John Adams, who held up the ideal of Dickens as something composers of our time could do well to reflect upon. Koehne has brilliantly responded to that challenge.

Our *A Christmas Carol* is based on the original - but re-interprets the process of the original story in the context of our own city in 2022 – a vastly different place to the London of Dickens – on the surface anyway. Anna Goldsworthy has remoulded the original into a series of snapshots of contemporary life to form the basis of the “pilgrim’s progress” of Scrooge on his journey to understanding and compassion.

Stories in the theatre are interesting because of the way they embrace the experience of time – via the “lived experience” of the characters concerned, and – via the timeframes that the audience experiences in encountering the work

in the theatre – a kind of double helix perhaps. This confluence of time frames presents as very adaptable to musical treatment – and in the hands of a master storyteller-as-composer, Graeme Koehne, provides the inspiration for music which works on many levels, not least of which is the additional conceit of the traditional Christmas Carol themselves, woven with a masterly sense of contrapuntal energy and skill into the total fabric of the opera to proceed alongside the narrative and character development.

This all sounds a bit heavy going perhaps – but Koehne has both a sure-fire theatrical instinct and the gift to be simple. That is not to say there is anything simple-minded about this score – the music admirably reflects Ravel’s dictum of ‘complex, ma pas compliqué’ with an opera that is charming, humane and listenable, and gives us hope in human nature – not a bad Christmas present for us all as 2022, with all its problems, draws to a close. Welcome, and enjoy.

RICHARD MILLS
Artistic Director

Production

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager **Felicity Hollingbery**

Deputy Stage Manager **Carli Griffin**

Assistant Stage Manager **Finlay Pedler**

Head LX **Ashlee Poole**

Costume Supervisor **Mel Serjeant**

Music Staff

Repetiteurs

Phillipa Safey

Su Choung

Season Staff

Assistant Company Manager **Hristina Tsingas**

Child Chaperone **Emma Mosley**

Chorus Manager **Claudia Howarth**

Wig and Make Up Artist **Drew-Elizabeth Johnstone**

Props **Alex Donnelly**

Staging Crew **Tiernan Maclaren**

Production Electrician **Ashlee Poole**

Sound Technician **Ebony Rattle**

Surtitle Operator **Carlo Antonioli**

Costumiers

Kim Bishop

Frances Burton

Jemma Eton

Justine Haselton

Jacinda Hill

Emma Ikin

Carla Noto

Nicole Serjeant

Dressers

Justine Haselton

Kim Bishop

Costume Maintenance

Nicole Serjeant

Acknowledgements

Music Typesetter

Glynn Davies

Set construction

Imported Theatre Fabrics

Show Works

Violin

Concertmaster

Sulki Yu

Deputy Concertmaster

Yi Wang*

Principal First Violin

Erica Kennedy*

Associate Principal

First Violin

Tomomi Brennan

Principal Second Violin

Monica Naselow

Associate Principal

Second Violin

Tony Zhai*

Tutti

Rebecca Adler

Binny Baik

Alyssa Conrau

Rachel Gamer

Matt Hassall

Rachael Hunt

Philip Nixon

John Noble

Christine Ruiter

Lucy Warren

Cameron Jamieson+

Rachael Kwa+

Viola

Section Principal

Paul McMillan

Associate Principal

Thomas Higham

Tutti

Jason Bunn

Nadine Delbridge

Sandra Ionescu+

Cindy Watkin+

Cello

Section Principal

Melissa Chominsky §

Josephine Vains+

Associate Principal

Diane Froomes §

Tania Hardy Smith*

Tutti

Sarah Cuming §

Philippa Gardner

Andrea Taylor

Double Bass

Section Principal

Stuart Riley

Associate Principal

Kylie Davies

Tutti

Matthew Thorne

Flute

Section Principal

Lisa-Maree Amos §

Melissa Doecke+

Associate Principal

Nichaud Munday+

Oboe

Section Principal

Joshua de Graaf*

Associate Principal

Briana Leaman+

Principal Cor Anglais

Dafydd Camp

Clarinet

Section Principal

Paul Champion

Associate Principal

Justin Beere

Principal Bass Clarinet

Robin Henry

Bassoon

Section Principal

Timothy Murray*

Associate Principal

Colin Forbes-Abrams+

Horn

Section Principal

Linda Hewett*

Tutti

Melanie Simpson+

Trumpet

Section Principal

Mark Fitzpatrick

Associate Principal

Timothy Francis

Trombone

Section Principal

Scott Evans

Associate Principal

Kieran Conrau

Principal Bass Trombone

Benjamin Anderson §

James Littlewood+

Timpani

Section Principal

Guy du Blêt

Percussion

Section Principal

Mathew Levy §

Robert Allan+

Associate Principal

Nathan Gatenby+

Harp

Section Principal

Delyth Stafford+

* Acting

+ Guest musician

§ On leave

Synopsis

Stave One: Marley's Ghost

It's Christmas time and Ebenezer Scrooge is grumpy. He hates Christmas and doesn't understand why people find merriment in such a season.

Leaving the house after a bad start to the day, Scrooge walks to work, where he works with his clerk, Bob Cratchit. His niece, Freda, pays him an unannounced visit at the office to invite him to Christmas lunch, which he rudely declines, seeing no value in upholding Christmas traditions. Freda advocates for the holiday and the charity and generosity it inspires in people, but Scrooge dismisses her arguments and asks her to leave. After she departs, Scrooge turns to his clerk, Bob Cratchit, and begrudgingly grants him a day off for Christmas, all the while complaining about his loss of profit and demanding that Bob return early on Boxing Day to make up the time.

On his walk home through the streets of Melbourne, Scrooge is Pestered by people as his frustration over Christmas mounts.

When he arrives back home, Scrooge is visited by The ghost of Jacob Marley, his former business partner. Marley, draped in a heavy chain – each link representing the mistakes he made in life – warns Scrooge that he must change his ways to avoid the same fate. He tells Scrooge that he will be visited

by three spirits, whose lessons he must heed for the sake of his soul.

Stave Two: The first of the three spirits

Rattled by Marley's appearance, Scrooge lays in bed awaiting the arrival of the first spirit. Sure enough, when the clock strikes one, the room fills with light, and Scrooge finds himself face-to-face with the Ghost of Christmas Past – his past.

The Ghost leads Scrooge to a Victorian country town where he was born and grew up. She explains that what they see are 'shadows of things that have been'. They find a young boy in the local school sitting alone at Christmas time, reading books. Recognising the boy as himself as a child, Scrooge reflects on the friends that literary characters became to him in his loneliness.

They journey to another Christmas a few years later, in another schoolroom, where Scrooge's sister Fan arrives to bring him home for Christmas. Next, the Ghost takes him to Fezzoli's, an Italian Deli where Scrooge was an apprentice as a young man. It's Christmas Eve, and the Fezzolis are throwing their staff and customers a Christmas party. Scrooge had forgotten about the Fezzolis' generosity, and it makes him think about his behaviour towards his own employee, Bob Cratchit. Following the raucous festivity of Fezzoli's, the Ghost presents Scrooge with a conversation between himself and Belle, his former fiancée. Belle, heartbroken and neglected in favour of Scrooge's business interests, offers him release from the obligations of his engagement.

Fast forward years later, and Belle is at home with her new husband. As they set up their modest Christmas tree, they discuss seeing Scrooge at the office, alone and buried in work, while his friend Marley is dying in hospital.

Stave Three: The second of the three spirits

The next night, the second spirit appears and introduces himself as the Ghost of Christmas Present – this Christmas. He takes Scrooge to the market on Christmas Morning, watching as people hurry about picking up supplies for the day, before taking a tour of Federation Square and St Paul's Cathedral. They then follow Martha Cratchit, the eldest of Bob's children, as she travels into the suburbs to the Cratchit house for Christmas lunch. The children help Belinda Cratchit prepare the table, as Bob and Tiny Tim return home from the hospital where Tim is receiving ongoing treatment. Tim is very ill, and this may be his last Christmas with the family. After the meal, he gets up to sing the carol *Once in Royal David's City* in a performance beside the Christmas tree. Scrooge and the Ghost travel to Freda's house, where a Christmas celebration with her wife and their friends is well underway – the celebration to which Scrooge had been invited.

As the life of the Ghost begins to fade, Scrooge asks if Tiny Tim will live. The Ghost tells him that when he gazes into the future, he sees great pain for the Cratchit family.

Stave Four: The third of three spirits

On the final night, Scrooge receives a visit from the otherworldly and unknowable Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The ghost shows Scrooge three scenes from the future, each of which centres around the death of an unspecified man. Unceremonious and grotesque, the man is not remembered kindly in these conversations. The Ghost shows Scrooge the dead body of this man, and orders him to pull back the sheet to reveal the body's face – an order Scrooge cannot fulfil.

In a bleak hospital, the Cratchit family is mourning the death of Tiny Tim, before Bob Cratchit lays his son's body to rest in front of his bereft family. Passing through the cemetery, Scrooge is confronted with a derelict, lonely tombstone bearing his own name: Ebenezer Scrooge. The penny drops: he was the man whose death had been so crassly celebrated. The Ghost disappears, leaving Scrooge alone with his deepest fears.

Stave Five: The end of it

Scrooge wakes up in the present day on Christmas morning and resolves, having now come to understand the impact his actions have on others, to honour the spirit of Christmas going forward. Joyfully, he leaves the house and greets passers-by, with warmth and generosity. He makes his way to Freda's house, apprehensive to ring the doorbell. Freda, surprised by his arrival, welcomes him with open arms.

On Boxing Day, Bob Cratchit arrives at work late, only for Scrooge to offer him a pay rise and suggest they take the day off to discuss how they can help Bob's family.

Creative Team



Graeme Koehne

Composer

Graeme Koehne's music achieves that elusive synthesis of sophisticated compositional technique and a popular touch, giving his music an emotional eloquence, visceral appeal and aural pleasure. His orchestral compositions such as *Elevator Music*, *Powerhouse*, *Shaker Dances*, *Inflight Entertainment* (oboe concerto) and *High Art* (trumpet concerto) have long been among the most popular by any Australian composer, and Koehne's music is now a regular presence on the international stage through the advocacy of musicians such as conductors Vladimir Jurowski and Kristjan Järvi. He was one of a select group of Australian, New Zealand and Turkish composers commissioned to contribute to the Gallipoli Symphony, a 10-year project culminating in 2015 that commemorated the legendary World War I military campaign.

Graeme Koehne served on several occasions on the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding advisory body. In 1998-99 he was the state of South Australia's Composer-in-Residence. He was awarded a Doctorate of Music from the University of Adelaide in 2002 and in 2004 received the Sir Bernard Heinze Award from the University of Melbourne. In 2014 he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO).



Anna Goldsworthy

Librettist

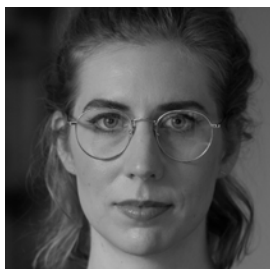
Anna Goldsworthy is an award-winning pianist, writer, and festival director. Anna's literary publications include the bestselling memoir *Piano Lessons* and the acclaimed novel *Melting Moments*. Her writing for the stage includes the libretto for Victorian Opera's award-winning production of *The Magic Pudding*; the cabaret show *Cole* for Michael Griffiths; and a forthcoming adaptation of her memoir *Welcome to Your New Life* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia. As a pianist, Anna performs extensively throughout Australia and internationally. Her most recent CD is the ARIA-award-winning *Thirteen Ways to Look at Birds*, with Paul Kelly, James Ledger, Alice Keath and Seraphim Trio. Anna is currently Director of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, at the University of Adelaide.



Phoebe Briggs

Conductor

BMus (University of Melbourne). Opera Australia music staff 2002 – 2012, Head of Music at Victorian Opera since October 2012. For Victorian Opera, Phoebe has conducted *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Play of Herod*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cendrillon*, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (Green Room nomination), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Green Room nomination), *Lorelei*, *Black Rider* (Helpmann nomination, VO/Malthouse), *A Little Night Music*, *Happy End*. Other companies: Opera Northwest, IFAC, Opera Australia, Ambassador Group, Chamber Made Opera, MTC, OzOpera. Phoebe has appeared in concert in Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Japan.



Emma Muir-Smith

Director

Emma Muir-Smith is an interdisciplinary writer, director, and performer. In 2021 she wrote and directed MSO's *Performance of a Lifetime* COVID-19 vaccination campaign for social media and SBS, working with local artists including Tim Minchin, Virginia Gay, Meow Meow, Deborah Cheetham. Other recent credits include: *Carnival of the Animals*; *Peter and the Wolf* (MSO), *La Juive* (OA), *The Selfish Giant*; *Die Freunde Von Salamanka*; *Alice Through the Opera Glass* (VO), *Listen to my Story* (Co-Opera), *Missing* (NYO GB), *Top of the Hill*; *Terra Nullius* (RADA). In 2023, Emma will return to VO to direct Mozart's *Idomeneo* alongside other projects in Australia and the UK. She holds masters degrees in both music (VCA) and theatre (RADA, London).



Claudia Mirabello

Set Designer &
Associate Costume
Designer

Claudia Mirabello (she/her) is a set and costume designer for all areas of live performance. She is based in Melbourne on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land and trained at the Victorian College of the Arts. Design credits include: *The View From Up Here* (co-design with James Lew, VIMH), *Betty*, (directed by Iain Sinclair), *Nora* (set, UHT), *Everyday Acts of Disobedience* (lead artist Belinda Locke), *The March* (costume, 5AM), *Animal Farm* (costume), *The Great Australian Play* (set, Montague Basement), *Body* (costume, choreographed by Sue Healey), *The Great Australian Play* was nominated for Best Independent Production at the 38th Annual Green Room Awards. In 2020 she completed an internship with Anna Cordingley on *Salome* (Victorian Opera). She continues to work as Anna's some-time assistant, helping on several projects including *Holding Achilles* (Brisbane Festival) and *Time Portrait* (Lee Serle).



Bridget Milesi
Costume Designer

Bridget is a multidisciplinary artist interested in fun, colourful and comedic projects. She holds a first class degree in Production (Design Realisation) at the Victorian College of the Arts. In 2019 she featured as an emerging artist in First Commissions, a major Australian art concept where her sculpture of a hedgehog formed a commentary on the unjust treatment of asylum seekers. Bridget has worked with many Australian creatives including Gorman, Princess Highway, Back To Back Theatre, Polyglot Theatre, Playable Streets, Brunswick Street gallery, Stage Mom, My Ugly Brother, Rising Festival, ArtPlay, Melbourne Fringe, Edinburgh Fringe and The Listies. Bridget has recently moved to Edinburgh and is currently working as creative producer for Playable Streets among other freelance projects.



Richard Vabre
Lighting Designer

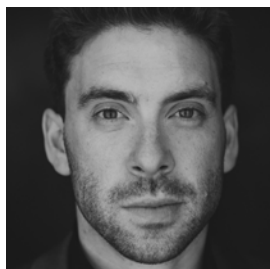
Richard Vabre is a freelance lighting designer who has lit productions for MTC, STC, Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir Street, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Back To Back Theatre, Victorian Opera, Circus Oz, Rawcus, Windmill Theatre, Arena Theatre Company, NICA, Barking Gecko, The Flying Fruit Flies, The Darwin Festival, Stuck Pig's Squealing, Chambermade, Red Stitch, Polyglot, Melbourne Worker's Theatre, Speak Percussion, Aphids, Lyric Opera and many many productions at La Mama. Awards Richard has won 5 Green Room Awards including the Association's John Truscott Prize for Excellence in Design (2004). He has also been nominated for 10 other Green Room Awards. Previously for Victorian Opera: *The Parrot Factory*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*.



Jim Atkins
Sound Designer

Jim Atkins designs and mixes sound for a host of live, installed and recorded situations nationally and internationally. Recent highlights include *La bohème on the Beach* (State Opera South Australia); *The Pearl Fishers*, *Elektra* and *Butterfly Lovers* (Victorian Opera); *Four Winds Festival* (Bermagui); *Acoustic Life of Sheds in Lavender Bay* (Sydney Festival); *One Infinity* (Melbourne, Sydney and Perth Festivals); *Pleasure Garden* (Sydney Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, City of London Culture Mile), *24 reasons to Party* (Kate Ceberano / Adelaide Symphony Orchestra); *Setan Jawa* (AsiaTOPA/ Humboldt Forum Kultur, Berlin); *Between 8&9* (Chamber Made, Castlemaine Festival, Chengdu China); *National Geographic*, *Symphony for our World* (Adelaide Festival).

Cast



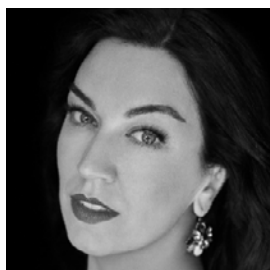
Samuel Dundas
Ebenezer Scrooge

Samuel Dundas made his opera debut with Opera Queensland, before joining Victorian Opera's Artist Development program and subsequently Opera Australia's Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artist program. He has performed leading roles with Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, West Australian Opera, State Opera South Australia, New Zealand Opera, Hanoi Opera, Lost and Found Opera, Perth, and appeared with the Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmanian, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Samuel has also featured at Adelaide Festival and Opera Under The Stars, Broome. This year he returns to State Opera, Victorian Opera, West Australian Opera, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Adelaide Festival.



Simon Meadows
Marley/Ghost of
Christmas Present

Award-winning Australian baritone Simon Meadows enjoys a busy opera and concert career throughout Europe, Asia and Australasia. For Opera Australia, he recently sang Telramund (*Lohengrin*) and The Count (*Le nozze di Figaro*); for Victorian Opera, Priam in Simon Bruckard's *Cassandra* and Jimmy in Stuart Greenbaum's *The Parrot Factory*. Simon was the baritone soloist in the world premiere of Richard Mills' song cycle *In Tempore Bello*. For Melbourne Opera, Simon has performed the title roles in *Macbeth* and *The Barber of Seville*, Alberich in *Das Rheingold* and many others. In 2021, he sang Alfio/Tonio in *Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci* for West Australian Opera and returned to Perth as Germont (*La traviata*).



Antoinette Halloran
Freda/Ghost of
Christmas Past/Woman
in Bar/Theif/Tenant
Woman

One of Australia's most accomplished and best-loved sopranos, Antoinette Halloran performs regularly with all the major Australasian opera companies and symphony orchestras. In 2021/2022, she sings Mrs Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and Olive in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* for State Opera of South Australia, Lorelei for Opera Queensland and Victorian Opera, Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* and Jenny in *Mahagonny* for Melbourne Opera and *A Christmas Carol* for Victorian Opera.

Recent engagements for Opera Australia and the state opera companies include the title roles in *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Merry Widow* and *Rusalka*, Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*), Mrs Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*), Mimi (*La bohème*), Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Green Room Award) and Fata Morgana (*The Love for Three Oranges*). She has also appeared as Associate Artist for Jose Carreras, Nick Cave and Elvis Costello.



James Egglestone

Bob Cratchit/Fezzoli
Belle's Husband/Man in Bar/
Pawnbroker/Tenant Man

James Egglestone's roles for State Opera of South Australia have included Laurie in *Little Women* and Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers*; for West Australian Opera – Nadir, Almaviva, Ismaele in *Nabucco*; for Victorian Opera – Don Ottavio, Ferrando and Peter Quint. Most recently, James has sung Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, Cassio in *Otello* and Lysander for Opera Australia and Rodolfo (*La bohème*) for State Opera of South Australia. He returned to Victorian Opera in 2020 as Narraboth in *Salome*; James is a dual Helpmann Award and dual Green Room Award winner – most recently for his 2021 Loge in *Das Rheingold* for Melbourne Opera.



Dominica Matthews

Mrs Fezzoli/Belinda
Cratchit/Freda's Wife

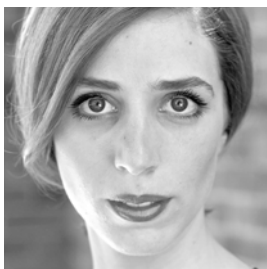
Dominica Matthews' major appearances for Opera Australia have included the title roles in *La Cenerentola* and *Orlando*, Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and many others. In 2022, she sings Verdi's *Requiem* for Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and Aristeia in *Oronthea* for Pinchgut Opera; she is also vocal soloist in The Australian Ballet's *Anna Karenina*. Dominica sang Flosshilde and Schwertleite in Opera Australia's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 2013 and 2016. Other recent appearances include Sister Berthe in the national tour of *The Sound of Music* and Schwertleite (*Die Walküre*) in Singapore.



Akansha Hungenahally

Young Fan/Belle/Martha
Cratchit

Akansha Hungenahally is a singer, actor, activist, and song-writer with a passion for diverse storytelling in Australian musical theatre. Akansha has been singing since age 7, beginning her training in North Indian Classical Singing and adopting Western styles at the age of 12. Having completed her Bachelor of Music Theatre at Federation University's Arts Academy in 2019 she has since featured in Be You Productions' *Ordinary Days* as Claire, and the award-winning musical short film *Suddenly*. Akansha is also proud to be an AOC Initiative 2020 semi-finalist, and to have appeared in the Green Room nominated 2020 video phenomenon *I Need You To See Me* by Vidya Makan, alongside 100 other emerging performers of colour.



Nadine Dimitrievitch

Puppeteer and
Movement Direction/
Ghost of Christmas
Future

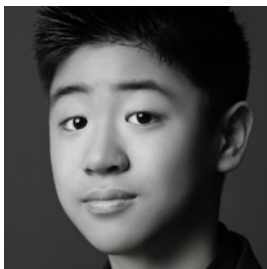
Nadine Dimitrievitch is a multidisciplinary performer. Nadine graduated from Swinburne University with a Diploma of Theatre Arts (2007) and completed the professional course at the prestigious L'École de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq – Paris (2012). She also completed her Masters of Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts (2017). In 2013 Nadine founded the physical theatre company Bone Marrow Theatre, producing several physical theatre pieces including *Exodus* (2013), *La Peste* (2014) and *Tales from Ovid* (2015). Nadine's most recent theatre credits include performing in *Peter and the Wolf* (2021) and *Carnival of the Animals* (2022) with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and *The Sleeping Beauty* (2021) with Victorian Opera as puppeteer and physical theatre performer.



Maxwell Chao-Hong

Tiny Tim/Child Scrooge

Maxwell is a 14-year-old treble singer. Classically trained from the age of 9, Maxwell enjoyed some great success in the junior vocal sections at Eisteddfods and competitions. His on stage performances in 2022 include Opera Australia's *Mefistofele* and Victoria Opera's *Il Mago di Oz*. Maxwell is currently studying, where he is an avid rower at school and is a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.



Anderson Mokyiu

Tiny Tim/Child Scrooge

Anderson is a charismatic 13-year-old boy soprano from Melbourne. He has been singing since the age of 6 and is currently learning under Susan Breen-Clarke. He is the Head Chorister of the St Patrick's Cathedral Choir and has been the recipient of several vocal awards including first prize in the 2022 Monash Youth Music Festival Junior Vocal section. In 2022, Anderson has been part of the Children's Chorus in *Mefistofele in concert* (Opera Australia) and *Il Mago di Oz* (Victorian Opera). Anderson will be making his debut with Victorian Opera in the world's premier season of *A Christmas Carol* playing the role of Tiny Tim and Child Scrooge at the Palais Theatre.



Shakira Dugan

Chorus/Charity
Collector/Party
Guest

Shakira made her professional operatic debut with Victorian Opera, playing the role of Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* in 2017. Since then, starring and covering roles in *The Magic Pudding the Opera*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, Rossini's *Otello*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Alice Through the Opera Glass*, *Mahagonny*, *Parsifal* as well as numerous concert performances, and making her international debut as Cherubino in Australian International Productions' *Le Nozze di Figaro*. 2021 saw Shakira as a Principal Artist with Victorian Opera, creating the role of Cassandra in Simon Bruckard's new opera, *Cassandra*, and The Cuckoo in Respighi's *La bella dormiente nel bosco*. Shakira is a recipient of the 2022 Opera Prize with Victorian Opera.



Michael Dimovski

Chorus/Street Vendor/
Fishmonger/Party Guest

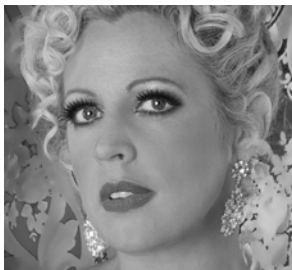
A Melbourne based tenor who graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2017, Michael is the recipient of the 2022 Victorian Opera Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts Opera Prize as well as the recipient of Melbourne Opera's Rotary NGSE scholarship to perform and experience Germany. Michael's most notable engagements include: Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Opernakademie Henfenfeld, Germany. Featured soloist at the Holzhauzer Musiktage Meisterkurse in Ammerland, Germany. Touring nationally throughout Australia as a member of the Ten Tenors throughout 2021, Malcolm in Verdi's *Macbeth*, Melbourne Opera, Froh (Cover) in *Das Rheingold*, Melbourne Opera and Jaquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Melbourne Opera.



Stephen Marsh

Chorus/Young Scrooge/
Charity Collector/
Butcher/Party Guest

Stephen Marsh is a 31-year-old baritone who resides in Geelong, Australia. He currently studies under the tutelage of the Welsh/Australian baritone, Roger Howell. Stephen made his professional debut in Victorian Opera's *Sleeping Beauty* in 2017 and was a developing artist for the company for both the 2017/2018 seasons. He has performed several roles with the company, which include: Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Bizet) The Woodcutter in *Sleeping Beauty* (Respighi), Peter in *Hansel und Gretel* (Humperdinck) and The Giant in the Australian premiere of *The Selfish Giant* by Simon Bruckard and Emma Muir-Smith. In 2021 Stephen also made his European debut as Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland. Stephen was a scholar with the prestigious Melba Opera Trust Programme for 2018/2019 as well as an inaugural member of Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artist Program. He is the recipient of several other awards, including an Ian Potter Cultural Trust Scholarship and the Australia Council Sir Robert Askin Operatic Scholarship. Stephen is the Inaugural recipient of Victorian Opera's Opera Prize.



Emily Burke

Chorus/Poulterer/
Party Guest

Emily's major roles include, Mimi and Musetta in *La bohème*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, The First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Marzelline in *Fidelio*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Merry Widow* and *Alcina*. Emily stole the show as Berta in *The Barber of Seville*, Clorinda in *Cinderella*, Pitti Sing in *The Mikado* and Despina in *Così fan tutte*. Emily was critically acclaimed for her portrayal of Aunt Lydia in the opera *The Handmaid's Tale* and in a contrasting role as Elettra the mermaid in Victorian Opera's Children's Opera – *Alice Through the Opera Glass*. In 2020 Emily performed the title role of Kate Kelly for ACOCO. Emily's own show, *Diva - Always Sublime, Sometimes Ridiculous*, had sell-out shows in Tasmania, Brisbane and The Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

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Victorian Opera is the state opera company of Victoria. We make creative, accessible and affordable work for everyone while adventurously evolving our art form.

Since the company was founded in October 2005, Victorian Opera has entertained hundreds of thousands of people with our imaginative approach to opera and musical theatre. Each year we premiere at least one new Australian opera, and have commissioned 36 new works since our formation.

We employ hundreds of people across the creative industries, recruit some of the finest local singers, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through the Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE) and our innovative Access All Areas: Livestream Program.

We also stage opera in Tasmania biennially to share the joy of our art form even further.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera proudly became an Australian Major Performing Arts company in 2019. In 2021 we transitioned to the newly formed National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (NPAPF).

As the world went into lockdown, we got to work, sharing our passion far and wide with a range of web series and online performances. Returning home to the stage, we embrace the new normal and will continue to perform in Victoria's finest theatres and concert halls to give our audiences the best possible and safest experience.

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