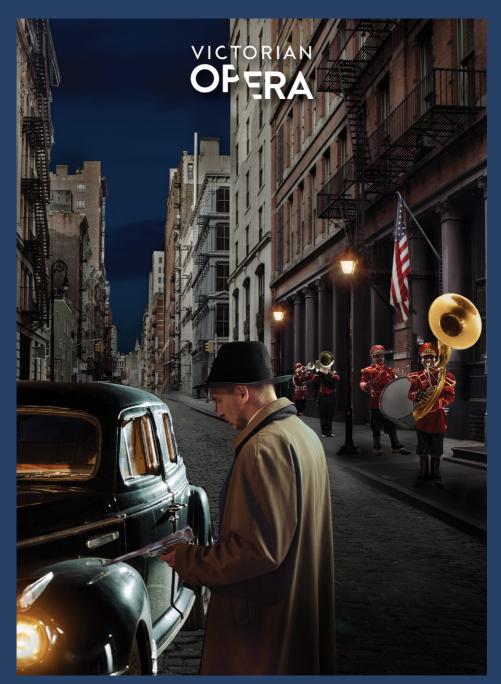
Happy End

ELISABETH HAUPTMANN | KURT WEILL | BERTOLT BRECHT



America, 1919. Gangsters. The Salvation Army. And an unlikely love story.

The Kurt Weill Foundation, Inc. promotes and perpetuates the legacies of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya by encouraging an appreciation of Weill's music through support of performances, recordings, and scholarship, and by fostering an understanding of Weill's and Lenya's lives and work within diverse cultural contexts. It administers the Weill-Lenya Research Center, a Grant and Collaborative Performance Initiative Program, the Lotte Lenya Competition, the Kurt Weill/Julius Rudel Conducting Fellowship, the Kurt Weill Prize for scholarship in music theater, and publishes the Kurt Weill Edition and the Kurt Weill Newsletter. Building upon the legacies of both Weill and Lenya, the Foundation nurtures talent, particularly in the creation, performance, and study of musical theater in its various manifestations and media. Since 2012, the Kurt Weill Foundation has administered the musical and literary estate of composer Marc Biltstein, www.kwf.org.

Victorian Opera presents

Happy End

PLAY WITH MUSIC IN THREE ACTS

Composer **Kurt Weill** Lyrics **Bertolt Brecht** Book **Elisabeth Hauptmann** English Adaptation **Michael Feingold**

CREATIVES

Musical Director **Phoebe Briggs** Director **Matthew Lutton** Set and Costume Designer **Marg Horwell** Lighting Designer **Paul Jackson** Soundscape Designer **David Franzke** Sound Designer **Sam Moxham**

CAST

Bill Cracker Adam Murphy Lieutenant Lillian Holiday Lucy Maunder The Lady in Gray Ali McGregor Mr Truppo Kurt Kansley Sam Wurlitzer Euan Fistrovic Doidge Jimmy Dexter Hamish Johnston Bob Marker Ben Grant Johnny Flint Ras-Samuel Welda'abzgi Major Stone Jennifer Vuletic

Brother Jackson Richard Pyros Sister Mary Emily Burke Sister Jane Olivia Cranwell

ENSEMBLE

Benjamin Barker, Lachlan Bartlett, Alastair Cooper-Golec, Anne Gasko, Chiew-Jin Khut, Adam Lyon, Bridget Mylecharane, Anna-Lee Robertson

Victorian Opera Chamber Ensemble

23 - 26 March Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse

World premiere, Monday 2 September 1929 Running time is approximately 2 hours, plus one interval Sung in English

This performance is funded in part by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., New York, NY

Production

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager Lyndie Li Wan Po Deputy Stage Manager Felicity Hollingbery Head Electrics Rob Harewood Costume Supervisor Mel Serjeant Wig Maker Kate McLeod Head of Wigs and Make Up Taylor-Jade Elliot

Orchestra

Alto Saxophone (Piccolo, Flute, Clarinet in Bb) Lachlan Davidson

Tenor Saxophone (Clarinet in Bb, Bass Saxaphone) Stuart Byrne

Trumpet Callum G'Froerer

Trombone Charles MacInnes

Banjo (Guitar, Hawaiian Guitar (or Mandolin) Doug de Vries

Accordion Joe Chindamo

Piano and Keyboard Phoebe Briggs

Piano Phillipa Safey

Percussion Kaylie Melville

Season Staff

Front of House Engineer Sam Moxham Props Sourcer/Buyer Tiernan Maclaren Fight Coordinator Zev Eleftheriou Armourer Leonard Steel Accent Coach Suzanne Heywood

Costumiers

David Anderson Lara Barwick Meredith Clements Tim Corne Emma Ikin Vannessa Roberts

Dressers

Arts Centre Melbourne

Acknowledgements

Arts Centre Melbourne, Melbourne Theatre Company-Kerry Saxby, Leonard Steel, Resolution X, Peter Darby, Sydney Theatre Company-Andrew Tompkins, John Scandret, Ian Haines, Onset Arts, Malthouse Theatre. **Artistic Director's Message**

Happy End was Brecht and Weill's succeeding collaboration after *The Threepenny Opera*, the book was written by Elisabeth Hauptmann (who, after World War Two, became a dramaturg for the Berliner Ensemble Theatre and a publisher). The final text was the result of her collaboration with Bertolt Brecht, which Brecht, for some reason, was unwilling to acknowledge.

Happy End has always lived in the shadows of The Threepenny Opera, which, as the greatest success of the years of the Weimar Republic, subsequently defined Weill's international reputation. In contrast, Happy End opened on September 2nd 1929, closed after seven performances, universally panned by the press, perhaps because it did not quite suit the zeitgeist - its aggressively socialist point of view, with one cast member reportedly reading from a communist manifesto - probably being a locus of irritation for some. Since that time its production history has been, shall we say, a little uneven.

I actually worked on one of the more notable outings of the work which began in Oxford in 1975, subsequently transferring to the West End. This production became famous virtually overnight with the young Bob Hoskins playing Bill Cracker, and was an incredible and universally lauded ensemble achievement. As a result of the critical approval, the Delfont organisation subsequently undertook the transfer of the show to London - and that is where a raft of problems began to surface. The lure of fame, money and celebrity fractured the ensemble spirit which produced a remarkable piece of theatre. Clashes of personality developed, amplified by other mischief, and the show closed in two weeks after its London opening, with tepid reviews from the same critics who had lauded the Oxford premiere. It was left to the 1977 Broadway production, which featured Merlyn Streep, to re-establish the real stature of the piece for succeeding generations.

The real distinguishing feature of the work is the music. Weill's unique compositional personality was formed in the great German tradition. He was a student of Engelbert Humperdinck (who wrote *Hansel und Gretel*) and then later of the composer, pianist Ferruccio Busoni. Weill also had a job as a conductor in the provincial theatre in Ludenschied in 1919, where he acknowledged he learnt everything he knew about theatre. He was a true product of the German Opera House system at the apex of its history and influence, during which it became, literally, the mother of conductors.

Interestingly, Weill also gave private lessons from 1923 to 1927. His list of students includes the legendary pianist Claudio Arrau, the Greek composer Nikos Skalkottas and the conductor Maurice Abravanel, who like Weill, later forged an important career in the USA. Weill's influence on George Gershwin was also considerable.

Happy End is of abiding value and interest above all for its wonderful music, but also for the delightful caricatures of its 'larger than life' characters as well as its message of social compassion and its celebration of the innate human dignity of its unlikely protagonists. The sense of fun in the outrageous plot and the deep humanity and haunting quality - almost elegiac - of the great songs represent a unique achievement by a singular musical voice of immense personality. Weill is a composer who makes work in which art conceals art - in which a narrative in song form stems from the great traditions of Lieder, reimagined in the prevailing dramatic contexts of each successive work, from both the old world and the American milieu where he spent his latter years. His unerring, deceptively simple harmonic sense, with provenance from the classical tradition and the evolving languages of twentieth century popular song, enabled him to forge music of great structural integrity, which stands the test of time to speak with fresh eloquence on the occasion of each revival.

Enjoy.

RICHARD MILLS Artistic Director

Musical Director's Note

Kurt Weill left Germany in 1933 due to the rising threat of Nazism, eventually settling in America in 1935. However, he had a strong interest in 'Amerikanisms', especially jazz, well before leaving his homeland.

Happy End, written in 1929 and revised in 1932, contains music that is sultry, jazzy, declamatory and mock-religious and is clearly influenced by the popular dance rhythms of the time. Styles such as tango (*The Sailors' Tango*), foxtrot (*Prologue* and *Song of the Big Shot*) and the nostalgia of *The Bilbao Song* are used to great effect. The Salvation Army's music sounds either hymnlike or akin to political propaganda with songs such as Brother, Give Yourself a Shove and March Ahead.

Weill wrote the songs independently of the story and they were designed to stand alone from the narrative. In fact, the songs were released prior to the premiere of the musical, so that the public could become familiar with them. Surabaya – Johnny, The Bilbao Song and The Mandalay Song stood the test of time and were all popular long after the musical premiered. Recordings of Weill's songs made by the legendary Lotte Lenya are still considered to be timeless and the benchmark of interpretation.

Weill's orchestrations are inventive, creating a lush soundscape that often belies the fact that there are only 8 players in the band. In *Happy End* the instrumentation includes the accordion, bass saxophone and banjo as well as harmonium, piano, and brass to illustrate the worlds of the Gang and the Salvation Army and their fold. Weill's music has a unique sound and with the use of harmony and rhythm, the vocal Sprechstimme style and clever word outlay, his songs are works of art on their own.

As we tiptoe forward in these times of uncertainty and change, modifying our rehearsals depending on what each day presents, it has been wonderful to be able to work with this incredible group of people, and a real pleasure to collaborate once again with Matthew Lutton.

PHOEBE BRIGGS Conductor

Director's Note

When I first read Happy End it took me a moment to reconcile its contradictions. It's written by a German team of theatre makers for actors yet set in an imagined America. It's a melodrama and work of political ideas, where the songs were written separate to the script. It uses Brechtian archetypal characters (characters who represent 'ideas' rather than psychological authenticity) yet the central characters and the songs themselves are deeply moving. I realised it was a glorious, fabulous concoction, where its humour and heart come from embracing its contradictions.

The story focuses on two tribes in a symbolic capitalist society (America), where both are fighting the wrong enemies. The criminal gangsters and the zealous Salvation Army are both hungry for money and fighting to protect their ideologies and territory. Within these two factions are Lillian and Bill. Both question their way of life, both are expelled by their own tribe, and both find it uncomfortable to face the truth.

The songs in *Happy End* are glorious. The songs have had a life beyond the play. Bette Midler, Marianne Faithfull and of course Lotte Lenya made these Weill and Brecht songs famous. However, within *Happy End*, the songs are stories within the stories, used to express desires or to speak directly to the audience. Like cabaret, the songs break the fiction of the play and speak to the audience directly.

Happy End is not an American musical despite being set in America. It certainly doesn't follow the rules of an American musical; the structure is far more jagged, abrupt, and symbolic. At the premiere in 1929, there where riotous debates about whether Happy End was attacking America or Capitalism. Using America as its symbol struck a nerve; it's hard to separate America from the almighty dollar.

Lastly, *Happy End* is a comedy. It's full of joyful silliness and has a happy ending. Yet it calls out for us to turn our collective sceptical glare on capitalist gods. To stop bickering in the silos capitalism has created around us and to look the real foe in the eye and act.

MATTHEW LUTTON Director

Synopsis

Act One

Bill's Beerhall in America. The gang cheats two gullible out-of-towners, and when Bill arrives, he announces that he has killed his arch-rival, Gorilla Baxley. The gang recall the heyday of another beer hall in Bilbao (*Bilbao Song*). The Lady in Gray (a.k.a The Fly) enters and outlines the next robbery. She asks Bill to light her cigarette, the signal that he is expendable.

Meanwhile, on the street, Lieutenant Lillian Holiday of the Salvation Army leads the soldiers in song (*Lieutenants* of the Lord). The Army marches into Bill's, where Lillian attempts to save the souls of the gang members. Bill returns to save Lillian from insult and orders the Army out of the bar. Lillian stays, and alone with Bill, attempts to convince him that there is not so much difference between the Army and his gang (*Sailor's Tango*). An army member returns as she finishes her song and is appalled at Lillian's conduct. The police arrive and question Bill's recent whereabouts. Lillian lies about being alone with Bill, resulting in Bill's arrest.

Act Two

At the Salvation Army, Lillian is questioned by the Major about her conduct at the bar. The police arrive wanting to confirm her statement. Lillian tells the truth, resulting in her expulsion from the Salvation Army.

Sam, a gang member, enters and takes a seat in the mission. Bill arrives, now released by the police, searching for Lillian. Another Army soldier tries to deliver Lillian's sermon, but the crowd demands Lillian, and Bill disrupts the service.

In the bar, Babe Face (a gang member) questions why the gang had to frame Bill, and the Governor (another gang member) tells Babe Face he needs to be tough and learn how to stab people in the back (*Big Shot*). The Governor learns that Bill has been released by the police. He arrives at the mission, where he draws a gun on Bill and walks him out of the service. There is a gunshot, and Bill returns with blood on him.

Act Three

After the Governor's death, the gang have reassembled at the beer hall and are planning a new robbery. Sam's disguise isn't going to work anymore (Mandalay Song), and The Fly delivers details of the bank robbery to the gang through a radio. Bill is left alone in the bar. Lillian finds him and tries to help the gangster one more time (Surabaya Johnny). Bill is shaken by the song but won't admit it. Unbeknownst to him, The Fly sneaks in. Bill realises he has failed to fulfil his role in the robbery as The Fly asks him for a light. Lillian, in despair, resolves to return to the Salvation Army.

The gang robs the bank and enters, flushed with success, until they realise that Bill failed to pick up the loot. The Fly reveals that she has the money, but that Bill must die before he blows the whistle on the gang (Ballad of the Lily of Hell).

Lillian returns to the Salvation Army, but they spurn her; likewise with Bill when he arrives. Lillian appeals to their Christian spirit, without success. The gang members enter to finish Bill off. The police return to arrest the gang for the bank robbery and Bill for murder, only to witness the Governor reappearing with just a slight wound. Midnight strikes, and The Fly walks in. As she points her gun at Bill, one of the Salvation Army members recognises her as his long-lost lover. She donates the loot to the Salvation Army, and the Army and the Gang agree to dissolve their differences and to work together to fight for the greater good.

'A musical that needs no recommendation other than itself. It charms, it giggles and it moves.'

- New York Times

Creative Team



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 (Victorian Opera, Opera Queensland), Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets (Helpmann nomination, VO/ Malthouse), A Little Night Music. Other companies: Opera in the Paddock (Opera Northwest), assistant/cover conductor Don Pasquale (IFAC/OA, Tokyo), The Magic Flute, Merry Widow, Fledermaus, The Pearlfishers, Cosi fan tutte, A Little Night Music, The Mikado (OA), Guys and Dolls (Ambassador Group).

Matthew Lutton is Malthouse Theatre's Artistic Director and Co-



Director

CEO. Prior to this, he was Malthouse Theatre's Associate Director. and Artistic Director of the Perth-based independent company, Thinlce. Directing credits for Malthouse Theatre include: Because the Night, Solaris (Lyric Hammersmith London, Royal Lyceum Edinburgh), Cloudstreet (with Perth Festival), Melancholia, Bliss, Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets (with Victorian Opera), The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man, Away (with Sydney Theatre Company), Edward II, Picnic at Hanging Rock (Barbican London, Royal Lyceum Edinburgh), I Am a Miracle, Night on Bald Mountain, The Bloody Chamber, Dance of Death, Pompeii, L.A., On the Misconception of Oedipus, Die Winterreise and Tartuffe. For Sydney Theatre Company he has directed The Trial, The Mysteries: Genesis, and The Duel. Other directing credits include Love Me Tender for Belvoir Theatre and Don't Say the Words for Griffin Theatre Company. His opera directing credits include: Make No Noise for the Bavarian State Opera, Strauss' Elektra for Opera Australia and West Australian Opera, and Wagner's The Flying Dutchman for New Zealand Opera.



Currently tenured with Arts Centre Melbourne, Sam Moxham is a seasoned engineer in all aspects of sound including front-of-house engineering, sound design, recording and broadcast. Sam works with many of Australia's major presenters including The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and has toured internationally with Grammy Award-winning Soweto Gospel Choir.

Sam Moxham Sound Designer



Marg Horwell Set and Costume Designer

Marg is a multi award-winning set and costume designer. Recent credits include Lorelei (Opera Queensland/Victorian Opera), Because The Night (Malthouse Theatre), The Picture Of Dorian Gray (Sydney Theatre Company). Other credits include Salome (English National Opera); Avalanche (The Barbican); Unsere Kleine Stadt (Theater Basel); Leviathan (Circa); The Truth, Sexual Misconduct Of The Middle Classes, The House Of Bernarda Alba, Lilith The Jungle Girl (With Sisters Grimm), Birdland, I Call My Brothers, Peddling, Constellations, Marlin (Melbourne Theatre Company); How To Rule The World, Lord Of The Flies, The Resistible Rise Of Arturo Ui (Sydney Theatre Company); Melancholia, Caravan, Blasted, Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again, The Testament Of Mary, The Real And Imagined History Of The Elephant Man, Edward Ii, I Am A Miracle, The Good Person Of Szechuan, The Histrionic (Malthouse Theatre); La traviata (Sisters Grimm/Belvoir). Marg has won eight Green Room Awards and two Sydney Theatre Awards for her work in theatre and opera.



David Franzke Soundscape Designer



Paul Jackson Lighting Designer

David Franzke is a composer and sound designer, music mixer and producer. His primary work is composing and designing for live performance in theatre. This also includes film, visual art installations as well as the production of albums.

Known for his bold and idiosyncratic scores, Franzke has worked with some of Australia's most influential directors including Simon Phillips, Matthew Lutton, Peter Houghton, Marion Potts, Michael Kantor, Pamela Rabe and Richard Lowenstein

Paul Jackson is a multi-award-winning designer who has worked with Australia's leading arts organisations and internationally, lecturing in design at the University of Melbourne, RMIT University and the Victorian College of the Arts. His work has featured in festivals and programs in the United States, Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom. Paul's recent work includes: Cassandra/Echo & Narcissus, Don Giovanni, Marriage of Figaro (Victorian Opera), Lorelei (Victorian Opera, Opera Queensland), Carmen (Opera Australia), The Truth, I'm Darling, Arbus and West, Gloria, the Children, Home, I'm Darling (Melbourne Theatre Company), The Beauty Queen of Leenane (Sydney Theatre Company), Stop Girl (Belvoir), Cloudstreet (Malthouse). Paul was Artistic Associate at Malthouse Theatre from 2007–2013. Paul has received a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, three APDG Awards, seven Green Room Awards and a Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland.

Cast



Adam Murphy Bill Cracker (Beerhall Bill)



Lucy graduated from WAAPA in 2006. Theatre highlights include Fun Home (MTC/STC), Pippin (CrossRoads Live), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (CrossRoads Live), Beautiful: The Carole King Musical (Michael Cassel Group), Matilda the Musical (Louise Withers/RSC), Grease and Doctor Zhivago (GFO), Into the Woods (Victorian Opera), A Little Night Music (Opera Australia), The Threepenny Opera (Victorian Opera/ Malthouse/STC), Jekyll and Hyde and The Rocky Horror Show (TML Enterprises), Noel and Gertie (CDP Theatre Producers), Gale Edwards' new Rocky Horror Show (Newtheatricals), Songs In The Key Of Black (Neil Gooding Productions). Film highlights include Identical (Nick and Lincoln), The Eternity Man (ABC/ Channel 4 UK).

Adam appeared most recently in the STC/MTC production of *Fun Home*. Career highlights include leading roles in: *Ragtime*,

Guys and Dolls, The Pirates of Penzance, 42nd Street, Carousel

Drowsv Chaperone, Urinetown (MTC), A Funny Thing Happened

(Dainty Consolidated), Les Misérables (Cameron Macintosh),

Caesar and Cleopatra, Someone Who'll Watch Over Me, Mother Courage (Theatre NZ); Beautiful Losers Melbourne (Comedy

Mychonny Moves In (webisode), House Husbands, Utopia and The

Weatherman. Adam has received a Green Room Award for Best

on the Way to the Forum (Skyline Theatricals), Mamma Mia

Blue Sky Boys, Travels With My Aunt, Desire Under The Elms,

Festival/Adelaide Cabaret Festival). TV credits include

Ensemble in Cabaret.

(The Production Company), Aladdin, Mary Poppins (Walt Disney Company), Shakespeare in Love, True Minds, His Girl Friday, The

Lucy Maunder Lieutenant Lillian Holiday (Hallelujah Lil)



Ali McGregor The Lady in Gray (The Fly)

Ali McGregor started her career as a principal soprano with Opera Australia performing over 26 roles. She has performed the title role of *The Merry Widow* for Melbourne Opera. and Desiree in A Little Night Music for Victorian Opera. As an award-winning cabaret performer, she has performed everywhere from Glastonbury to Carnegie Hall and was Artistic Director of Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2016-2018. She was nominated for an ARIA award in 2014 and in 2015 was awarded a Green Room Award for her contribution to cabaret. Most recently Ali won a Helpmann Award for her cabaret show Yma Sumac - The Peruvian Songbird after successful seasons at Adelaide Cabaret Festival and the Sydney Opera House. Ali played one of the title roles, and was concept creator of Victorian Opera's ground breaking new work Lorelei in 2018 & 2020. Building on this success she recently founded FLUXUS -Concept Creation that currently has three new operatic works in development.



Kurt Kansley Mr Truppo (The Governor)



Euan Fistrovic Doidge Sam Wurlitzer

Kurt floats between Australia and the UK and he is so thrilled to be back home in Melbourne for his debut with Victorian Opera. Kurt's Australian theatrical credits include; *Ragtime* (Green Room nomination), *Evita* (Green Room nomination), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Lion King*, *Hair*, *RENT*, Showboat, Godspell, *The Grand Hotel* and others. Kurt's theatrical credits in the UK, the West End and Europe include; *Heathers*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Fanny & Stella*, *The Nutcracker*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Exposure*, *Wirework*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Miss Saigon*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Ragtime*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hair*, *The Lion King* and others. Kurt is a co-writer of new theatre and works created by Kansley & Lidert are in current development for UK and Australian productions. www.kansleyandlidert.com

Euan has recently appeared in Fun Home (Melbourne Theatre Company) after performing in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Crossroads Live Australia) and playing Lewis in Pippin (GFO) in 2021. He played Tony Manero in Saturday Night Fever (GFO), and starred as Felicia in the 2018 (Michael Cassel) and 2016 (NCL) production of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. Euan played Angel and covered the role of Lola in Kinky Boots (Michael Cassel Group), was the lead singer in Burn The Floor (NCL); Marius in Les Misérables (Cameron Mackintosh Australia); various roles including the cover for Fontaine in Grease (GFO); Nikos and Padamadan in Legally Blonde (Legally Blonde Australia). In 2020 he played Kaspar Perry in Neighbours (Fremantle Media). In 2012 he was the youngest ever nominee for the Helpmann Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical, for his role of Paul San Marco in the 2012 production of A Chorus Line (TML Enterprises).



Hamish Johnston Jimmy Dexter (The Reverend)

Hamish Johnston began his training at the Western Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) where he completed a Certificate IV (Music Theatre). He was then selected to train at the Victorian College of the Arts where he completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music Theatre) in 2018. Roles at VCA included Don in A Chorus Line and The Baker in Into the Woods. Hamish made his mainstage debut with the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of Eddie Perfect's Vivid White. In 2018, during his final year at VCA, Hamish was cast in Harry Potter and the Cursed Child where he performed the roles of Karl Jenkins and Dudley Dursley, covered Cedric Diggory and James Potter Jnr/Snr and was also a Movement Captain.

Cast



Ben Grant Bob Marker (The Professor)

Ben's most recent stage credits include My Dearworthy Darling (Malthouse), Hir (Red Stitch) and This (Rising Festival). Other stage credits include his collaboration with Robert Lepage on Ex Machina's Jeux De Cartes: Coeur, The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland (Ridiculusmus), Circle Mirror Transformation (MTC) and Macbeth (Bell Shakespeare). Ben has created several solo shows including The Rug (La Mama). Screen credits include Paul Cox's Force of Destiny, The Cup and Superwog. Ben received a Green Room Award for Best Performance in Independent Theatre for his role of Alfie in Save for Crying by Angus Cerini.



Ras-Samuel's recent screen works include The Last Supper, BLVCK GOLD, Jebena Genie, Breath, Found in a Dream, and consulting for a Netflix Series. He holds theatre dear to his heart, with stage credits including Because the Night (Malthouse Theatre), Twelfth Night (Melbourne Shakespeare Company), Romeo & Juliet, The Importance of Being Earnest, Graceful Giraffe, Oklahoma, and Huckleberry Musical. Ras-Samuel is also part of the Sub30 Collective, an established collective with a residency at The Malthouse. In 2020 they created The Retreat, a hybrid of film and theatre that was shot cinematically (Hamilton-style). When working, you can find him training and working on his craft at Brave Studios where he received a full, long-term scholarship to train since 2012.

Ras-Samuel Welda'abzgi Johnny Flint (Baby Face)



Jennifer Vuletic Major Stone

Jennifer appeared most recently as Queen Gertrude in Malthouse's Because the Night. Other stage credits include the Malthouse/STC Co-productions of The Histrionic and Women of Troy, Arbus & West (MTC), and Mamma Mia. Awards include the Sydney Theatre Critics Circle Award for the Baroness in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and a Green Room Award for Merciless Gods (Little Ones Theatre/griffin Theatre). Recent television roles include Mandy the Mullet in Wentworth and Enid Holdstock in Ms. Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries. A multiple awardwinning audio narrator, Jennifer is best known for the multiple international award winning Once My Mother.



Richard Pyros Brother Jackson



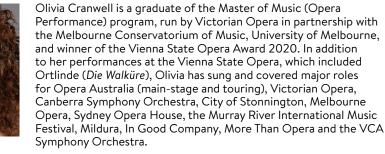
Emily Burke Sister Mary



Olivia Cranwell Sister Jane

Richard started out as a lead performer and writer on Channel Seven's sketch comedy, *Big Bite*, whilst studying at VCA Drama School at the University of Melbourne. He has performed with many of the main-stage theatre companies around Australia, including Bell Shakespeare, Malthouse, Belvoir and Sydney Theatre Company and was nominated for Best Actor at the Green Room Awards for his performances as *Oedipus* at the Malthouse Theatre. He has many on screen credits, more notably in Mel Gibson's feature film, *Hacksaw Ridge*. Richard has also directed two immersive operas in London: *Dido and Aeneas* and *Hansel and Gretel* and most recently directed and co-wrote, *Chopin's Piano* for Musica Viva at Melbourne Recital Centre, as well as directing the filmed version of the show.

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 *Cosi 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.



Ensemble



Benjamin Barker

Originally from Melbourne, Benjamin graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2019 with a Bachelor of Music Theatre. During his time at WAAPA, Ben's roles included Stacee Jaxx in *Rock of Ages*, Rico in *Strictly Ballroom*, Rudge in *The History Boys* and David in *Company*. Since graduating he has worked with the Australian Shakespeare Company and is excited to be making his professional debut in *Happy End* for Victorian Opera.



Lachlan Bartlett

Hailing from the Hunter Valley, Lachlan graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2019 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music Theatre). While at the VCA, he was a featured soloist in *Morning Melodies* at Hamer Hall and played Judge Pitkin in *On the Town*. Lachlan's cabaret credits include *And I*, *In My Chair* (Melbourne Cabaret Festival), *At Hand with Iva Rosebud* (Melbourne Cabaret Showcases), and *Iva's Grand Opening* (Tusk High Bar). Described as 'more than earning its standing ovation' (The Arts Review), Lachlan was recently awarded a cabaret scholarship by the Ron and Margaret Dobell Foundation to work with avant-garde cabaret creators Finucane & Smith. Lachlan is thrilled to be debuting with Victorian Opera this season.

Alastair Cooper-Golec

Alastair holds a Master of Music (Opera Performance) degree from the University of Melbourne. Performance credits include *Tamino* (The Magic Flute), *Rinuccio* (Gianni Schicchi), *Pluto/Mercury* (Offenbach's Orpheus) and *Albert* (Albert Herring). Other Victorian Opera appearances include *The Pearl Fishers* and *The Barber of Seville*. Alastair was a 2021 Herald Sun Aria finalist, and this year is a member of Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artists Programme.



Anne Gasko

Anne graduated with a Bachelor of Music theatre from Ballarat University in 2008, and since then has performed across Australia in workshops, concerts and shows. Recent credits include Joanie in *The Full Monty* (StageArt), *Paris – A Rock Odyssey* (MTM) and *Hashed Out* (Kansley and Lidert). Anne has a passion for new works and has been involved in the development and performance of several new shows including *Electric Dreams*, *Post – A New Australian Musical* and the world premiere of *Songs of the Northern River* at the MC Showroom. She most recently performed in the actors ensemble of *Ernani* with Opera Australia, a co-production with La Scala. Anne would like to thank Katie and the UE Agency team for all their ongoing support.



Chiew-Jin Khut

Chiew-Jin Khut is a musical theatre graduate of Central Queensland University (2012) and APO Arts Academy (2015). She has performed in *Legacy of the Tiger Mother*, Adelaide Fringe (2012); *The Red Pinafore*, *Various People Inc* (2014); and a self-devised piece for The Cabaret Showcases, Melbourne (2019). She is thrilled to be working with Victorian Opera.

Adam Lyon

Happy End marks a grateful and long-awaited return to the stage for Adam. Best known for originating the role of Carl Denham in the World Premiere of King Kong Live on Stage with Global Creatures, Adam began performing in his hometown of Bendigo with the Bendigo Theatre Company, playing everything from Jean Val Jean to The Chauffeur in Annie. Adam moved to Melbourne and gained his BFA (Opera) under Stephen Grant and Anna Connolly at the VCA. Adam is a highly qualified vocal pedagogue. In 2015 he returned to Bendigo to compose and produce NED a New Australian Musical. He is thrilled for the opportunity to explore the work of Kurt Weill with Victorian Opera.



Bridget Mylecharane

Bridget graduated with a Bachelor of Music Theatre from Federation University in 2016 and has since performed at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the Melbourne Fringe and the Ballarat Cabaret Festival. While spending two years living in London, she performed in several Fringe shows and played the role of Ugly Stepsister Rose in What's in a Name's Pantomime production of *Cinderella*. She is thrilled to be making her Victorian Opera debut.



Anna-Lee Robertson

Anna is a graduate of the University of Melbourne. Her Australian and London's West End credits include Mary Poppins, The Phantom of the Opera, Fingask Follies, The Light in the Piazza, Man of La Mancha, Annie, Trial by Jury, Paternity and more. Anna is delighted to be part of Happy End.

About Us



Reimagining the potential of opera and musical theatre, for everyone

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 32 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.

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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.

Be it live or online, Victorian Opera is here to inspire you.

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Our Team

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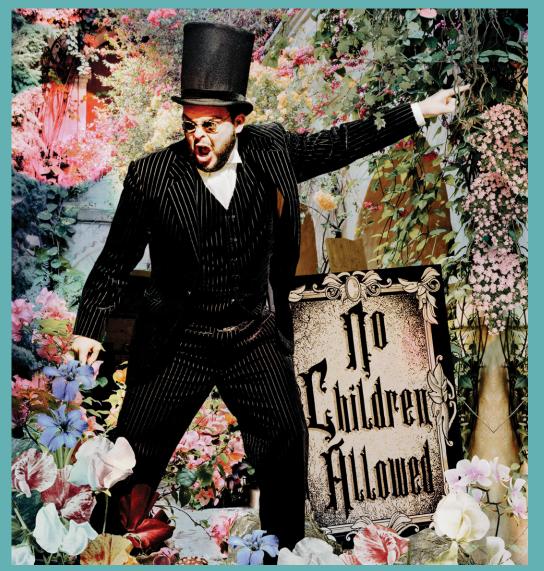
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Your Patronage: The Energy that Fuels our Optimism

As we emerge from two years of often overwhelming challenges, our determination that the show must go on is undiminished. Despite the cycle of lockdowns in 2021, we presented five productions live onstage plus our education program via livestream. Over the past 18 months this has been complemented by dozens of recitals, interviews, and peeks behind the scenes via our Virtual Victorian Opera series.

The loyal and generous support from our Patrons has been our lifeblood throughout this period, and now underpins our confidence to be able to take to the stage in 2022.

We are immensely grateful for the trust in Victorian Opera that is demonstrated by every gift, and by the increasing number of supporters joining this extraordinary community. Your donations are invested in our mainstage productions, our education programs, and our emerging artists program. The next generation of artists nurtured through these activities will ensure that this significant and relevant art form flourishes for future generations to enjoy.

We invite you to join our growing family of Patrons by considering an annual, tax-deductible gift of \$500 or above.

Our 2022 Patrons' Engagement Program has been reinvigorated to help ensure that Patrons can experience firsthand the impact of their support. Program activities are included on our website and will be shared with Patrons in our monthly Patrons' Prelude e-newsletter.

MORE INFORMATION

victorianopera.com.au/patrons-engagementprogram

Peter Garnick, Philanthropy Executive 0423 068 833 peterg@victorianopera.com.au





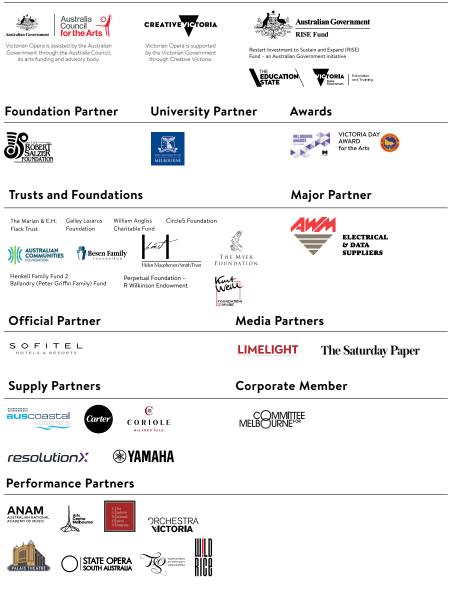




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