

VICTORIAN  
OPERA

# LA CENERENTOLA



GIOACHINO ROSSINI / JACOPO FERRETTI

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.

## CEO AND DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to this staged concert version of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* in the glorious Elisabeth Murdoch Hall at Melbourne Recital Centre. This Hall is the perfect location for this production – the acoustics are really lively and bright, perfect for hearing the stunning coloratura passages throughout this work. Having created and presented *The Barber of Seville* here in 2019, it is with great pleasure that we now bring you this next Rossini work.

This work is charming – a wonderful piece where the audience can experience the Rossini coloratura at some of its finest and enjoy a story where love triumphs, kindness is rewarded and bad behaviour is not accepted. Our cast are also some of the finest, and it has been a joy to discover this work through the eyes of both highly experienced performers and newcomers to the score. All are shining brightly here and will surely delight you as our audience.

As always, Victorian Opera could not present these works without the support of many across our network. Firstly, I would like to thank the Victorian Opera staff and Board, who tirelessly work at the highest level on every production, no matter how small or large it may be. We are truly blessed. Secondly, our funding partners of The Australia Council for the Arts, the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria, and the Robert Salzer Foundation. The Salzer

Foundation has supported Victorian Opera since our inception, and we are indebted to your vision for our Company. And finally, our patrons, trusts and foundations and corporate sponsors. It never ceases to humble us at the generosity and willingness to assist Victorian Opera in reimagining the potential of opera and musical theatre, for everyone.

If you think you know opera, think again! Come as you are and enjoy the splendours of a musical fairy tale.



**ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER**

Victorian Opera CEO and Director of  
*La Cenerentola*

VICTORIAN OPERA PRESENTS

# LA CENERENTOLA (CINDERELLA)

A SEMI-STAGED CONCERT IN TWO ACTS

Based on *Cendrillon* by Charles Perrault

Composer **Gioachino Rossini** Librettist **Jacopo Ferretti**

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## CREATIVES

Conductor **Richard Mills**

Director **Elizabeth Hill-Cooper**

Lighting Designer **Peter Darby**

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## CAST

Angelina  
**Margarita Gritskova**

Don Ramiro

**Mert Süngü**

Dandini

**Stephen Marsh**

Don Magnifico

**Teddy Tahu Rhodes**

Clorinda  
**Rebecca Rashleigh**

Tisbe

**Shakira Dugan**

Alidoro

**Michael Lampard**

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## CHORUS

Paul Batey, Paul Biencourt, Nicholas Cowall, Michael Dimovski, Eamon Dooley, Aleksander Pokryshevsky, Kiran Rajasingam, Timothy Reynolds

**Victorian Opera Chamber Orchestra**

*This production is generously supported by Joy Selby Smith.*

*Thank you to Victorian Trades Hall Council and Opera Australia, Melbourne Opera Centre.*

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**10 MARCH**

**ELISABETH MURDOCH HALL, MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE**

Running time is approximately 2 hour 50 minutes, plus one interval

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

# CONDUCTOR'S MESSAGE

Rossini's opera is based on the fairytale by Charles Perrault which had been previously set by at least two composers, Nicholas Isouard (Paris 1810) and Francesco Fiorini (Milan, 1814). Rossini's librettist Jacopo Ferretti certainly knew these two works and based aspects of his new text for Rossini on them. Rossini had previously rejected Ferretti's libretto for *Barber of Seville* – so the initial climate of their working relationship was frosty to say the least. However, the text was finished in 22 days, and the score in only 24 days. Despite an initial cold reception by the critics, the opera went on to become a firm favourite in Italy, London and even arrived in New York in 1826.

Rossini disliked supernatural elements in opera, so the traditional fairy godmother is replaced by the character of Alidoro – a philosopher and a tutor to prince Ramiro. The humanity and wealth of character of the opera find perfect and sparkling renditions in the brilliance of the music. The work speaks to us today, I think, especially because it celebrates the capacity for forgiveness of past wrongs, unconditionally, and with genuine openness of heart. This fable

of human folly and the triumph of true love so perfectly encapsulates the spirit of delight – its virtuosic vocality and dazzling ensembles open a world of enchantment and joyous energy, whose humanity – enlivened by the generous talent of musical genius – has created an enduring and precious legacy for us to marvel at and enjoy today.

Welcome.



**RICHARD MILLS**

Artistic Director, Conductor

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Costume Manager

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Wardrobe Supervisor

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Chrapot**

Deputy Orchestra  
Manager **Lexie Jaensch**

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Repetiteur & Chorus  
Preparation

**Phoebe Briggs**

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Concertmaster

**Sarah Curro**

Associate Concertmaster

**Zoë Black**

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**Susannah Ng**

**Cameron Jamieson**

**Phoebe Masel**

**Meg Cohen**

Violin 2

**Michael Loftus-Hills**

**Ben Spiers**

**Robyn Blann**

**David Curro**

**Jack Cross**

Viola

**Molly Collier-O'Boyle**

**Katie Yap**

**Eunise Cheng**

**Isabel Morse**

Cello

**Molly Kadarauch**

**Daniel Smith**

**Nils Hobiger**

Bass

**Jill Griffiths**

Flute 1

**Paula Rae**

Flute 2 & Piccolo

**Taryn Clarke**

Oboe 1

**Emmanuel Cassimatis**

Oboe 2

**Briana Leaman**

Clarinet 1

**David Griffiths**

Clarinet 2

**Georgia White**

Bassoon 1

**Lyndon Watts**

Bassoon 2

**Emma Morrison**

Horn 1

**Josiah Kop**

Horn 2

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Trumpet 1

**Tristan Rebien**

Trumpet 2

**Sarah Henderson**

Trombone

**Joe O'Callaghan**

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# SYNOPSIS

## ACT 1

Angelina, known as Cenerentola (Cinderella) by her family, is waiting on her two spoiled stepsisters, Clorinda and Tisbe, while singing a song about a king who chooses a poor girl for his bride. Alidoro, Prince Ramiro's tutor, arrives dressed as a beggar. While Clorinda and Tisbe tell him to go away, Cenerentola insists that he sit down and have some food; her generosity does not go unnoticed by him.

Soon after, the Prince's courtiers enter and announce that Prince Ramiro, who is in search of a wife, will shortly arrive to take the daughters of Don Magnifico to his palace for a ball. Clorinda and Tisbe, excited by the prospect of being the Prince's bride, begin to prepare for the evening and order Cenerentola around. Don Magnifico realises that a potential marriage to a prince will restore his family's fortune, and hopes that one of his daughters is chosen.

After they all leave, Cenerentola continues her chores about the house. Prince Ramiro enters, but he has disguised himself as a valet, as he is hoping to find a wife who will love him for himself rather than his social status. Cenerentola enters the room and is startled to find him there, but the two instantly fall in love. He asks her who she is, but she struggles to explain.

Dandini, who is Ramiro's valet but is disguised as the Prince, arrives at Don Magnifico's home and invites them all to the ball at his palace that evening. Cenerentola pleads with her father to let her go, but he refuses her permission.

Ramiro sees how poorly they treat Cenerentola, and Alidoro states that there should be a third daughter in the house. Don Magnifico says she has died. Everyone but Cenerentola and Alidoro depart, and when they are alone he promises to take her to the ball, saying her kindness and generosity will be rewarded.

Back at the palace, everyone is trying to persuade Dandini to choose a bride. Clorinda and Tisbe are fawning over him, and Dandini manages to escape to another room where Prince Ramiro is waiting for him. He tells Ramiro that they are truly dreadful, which confuses them both as Alidoro has spoken highly of one of Don Magnifico's daughters. When Dandini tells the stepsisters that the one he does not marry shall be offered to his servant, the sisters are outraged.

Alidoro arrives with a beautiful lady whom no one knows, but Clorinda, Tisbe and Don Magnifico think she resembles Cenerentola. Despite the confusion, they all sit down to supper.

## ACT 2

The arrival of the mysterious lady worries Don Magnifico, and he is concerned that her appearance will ruin his daughters' chance at marrying the Prince.

Meanwhile Dandini, who has taken a liking to Cenerentola himself, tries to impress her. To dissuade his advances, she tells him that she is in love with his servant. Ramiro, who was hidden and listening on, is overjoyed and steps forward. Cenerentola tells him that if he truly loves her, he will come to find her and asks him not to follow as she leaves to go home.

Magnifico confronts Dandini, whom he still believes to be the real Prince, and demands to know which of his daughters Dandini will marry. Dandini reveals that he is not the real Prince and Don Magnifico is furious. He, Clorinda and Tisbe return home and order Cenerentola, now back in her usual attire, to prepare some food.

A storm begins to develop and Alidoro takes advantage of it to organise for Prince Ramiro's carriage to break down in front of Don Magnifico's mansion, so that he is forced to ask for refuge. His plan is a success as Cenerentola and Ramiro come face to face and recognise each other instantly. She learns that he is not a valet, but actually Prince Ramiro.

Ramiro threatens Don Magnifico, but Cenerentola instead asks him to forgive them.

He relents and they all celebrate the wedding between Cenerentola and Prince Ramiro.

## CREATIVE TEAM



**RICHARD MILLS**

Conductor

Internationally recognised composer Richard Mills, AM, pursues a diverse career as composer, conductor and artistic director, with an extensive discography of orchestral works including his own compositions.

Currently Artistic Director of Victorian Opera, and Senior Fellow, Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, Richard's posts have included Artistic Director of both West Australian Opera and the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, Director of the Australian Music Project for Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and Musica Viva's Composer of the Year. His recording of Franz Waxman's film music with the QSO was awarded the Preis der Deutschen Schallplatten Kritik in 1992.

This year, Richard conducts *Glimpses* and *Dialogues* from *Galileo* at Perth Festival, *La Cenerentola*, and the first performances of his new opera, *Galileo*. Recent highlights include *Elektra*, *Butterfly Lovers* (Mills) and *La Cenerentola* for Victorian Opera, *Voss* for State Opera South Australia, and the world premiere of his Christmas oratorio *Nativity* with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.



**ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER**

Director

Elizabeth began her career as a classical ballet dancer with West Australian Ballet. Moving into choreography and directing, she discovered her love of opera. She has created or restaged productions for several state opera companies and Opera Australia. Her credits include *Fledermaus*, *The Gypsy Princess*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Rusalka*, *Lakme* and *Arabella*. Elizabeth regularly collaborates with Stuart Maunder and Roger Kirk.

Joining Victorian Opera in 2012, Elizabeth has directed mainstage productions such as *Pelleas and Melisande* and *The Pearl Fishers*, and was the company's Executive Producer and Artistic Associate from 2014–2019. She was appointed Victorian Opera's CEO in May 2019.



**PETER DARBY**

Lighting Designer

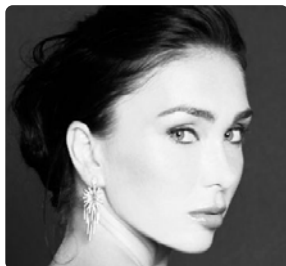
Peter is a Green Room Award nominated Lighting Designer, Head Electrician and Programmer.

Peter is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, having studied under the late John Comedow. Although trained in lighting design Peter has worked in all facets of the arts spanning such jobs as Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Lighting Programmer, AV Design, Sound Operator, Video production and Head Electrician. Having spent 12 years at Victorian Opera personally working on more than 50 productions. Peter is currently serving as the Manager, Lighting at Arts Centre Melbourne.

Victorian Opera Repertoire: Lighting design credits include: *Parrwang Lifts the Sky*, *Alice's Adventures in Operaland*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Magic Pudding*, *Rush Hour*, *The Play of Daniel*, *2011 Regional Tour Gala Performances*, *Brundibár*, *The Cockatoos*, *The Little Sweep*.



# CAST



**MARGARITA GRITSKOVA**

Cenerentola

Russian mezzo-soprano Margarita Gritskova is one of the leading singers of the young generation. Between 2012 and 2020 she was a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera. Here she sang roles such as Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), Isabella (*L'italiana in Algeri*), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*), Krista in the new production of *The Makropulos Affair* staged by Peter Stein, Bradamante (*Alcina*) and Smeton (*Anna Bolena*). A very special experience was her role debut as Mascha in the new production of Peter Eötvös' opera *Tri sestri*, staged by Yuval Sharon. After that, Peter Eötvös dedicated the song "Bitterkeit" to her, based on a poem by Marina Tsvetaeva. With her performance at the Vienna Opera Ball in February 2014, Margarita Gritskova caught the attention of an even larger international audience thanks to worldwide television.



**MERT SÜNGÜ**

Don Ramiro

The young Turkish tenor Mert Süngü was born in Istanbul and is a highly successful singer in the bel canto and Mozart repertoire. In addition to his studies at the conservatory of the Mimar Sinan University in his hometown, and the Scuola dell'Opera Italiana in Bologna, he also finished several Masterclasses with great artists including Maura Trombetta, George Shirley, Luciana Serra, Stefania Bonfadelli, Sonia Prina, Alfonso Antoniozzi and Raul Gimenez, as well as Stefano Giannini, Dolora Zajick, Rudolf Piernay, Edith Wiens and Francisco Araiza. His repertoire includes roles like Ilo (*Zelmira*), Erisso (*Maometto II*), Argirio (*Tancredi*), Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Tonio (*La Fille du Régiment*), Lanciotto (*Francesca Da Rimini*), Ferrando (*Così Fan Tutti*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Nadir (*Les pêcheurs de perles*), Idreno (*Semiramide*), Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*) and Conte Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*).



**STEPHEN MARSH**

Dandini

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 and 2018 seasons. He has performed several roles with the company, including: 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 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.



**TEDDY TAHU RHODES**

Don Magnifico

New Zealand bass Teddy Tahu Rhodes has performed with the international opera companies of San Francisco, Austin, Washington, Philadelphia, Dallas, Cincinnati, Houston, New York, the Hamburg Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper (Munich), Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris), Theater an der Wien (Vienna), Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera. On the concert platform, he is a regular guest with all the major Australasian orchestras. Other engagements include recitals in Washington DC, three national tours with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the BBC Proms. He debuted at New York's Carnegie Hall in 2009. Awards include an ARIA award, two Helpmann Awards, the Limelight Award, a Green Room Award plus a MO Award (Operatic Performer of the Year).



**REBECCA RASHLEIGH**

Clorinda

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Rebecca has performed many roles with several opera companies within Australia and Asia such as Parrwang (*Parrwang lifts the Sky*), Woglinda (*Das Rheingold*), Marzelline (*Fidelio*), Blonde (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Liu (*Turandot*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Poppea (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*). Rebecca has received several awards, one being the prestigious Herald Sun Aria in 2018. She was nominated for a Green Room Award for her portrayal of Marzelline in *Fidelio* (2020).



**SHAKIRA DUGAN**

Tisbe

Shakira made her professional operatic debut with Victorian Opera, playing the role of Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* in 2017. Since then, she has had 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* and *Parsifal*, as well as numerous concert performances, and made her international debut as Cherubino in Australian International Production's *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 LAMPARD**

Alidoro

At only twenty-one years of age, Michael was a finalist in Plácido Domingo's international Operalia competition. His past performances for Victorian Opera include Dr. Kanzler in *The Princess & The Pea* and The King in *Sleeping Beauty*. For Opera Australia, he has appeared as Schaunard in *La bohème* and Bartolo in *The Barber Of Seville*. Other roles have included Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* for the Rome Opera Festival and Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, Morales in *Carmen*, Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers*, Killian in *Der Freischütz* and Kurwenal in *Tristan & Isolde* for Melbourne Opera.

# CHORUS



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**PAUL BIENCOURT**



**NICHOLAS COWALL**



**MICHAEL DIMOVSKI**



**EAMON DOOLEY**



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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 37 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.

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



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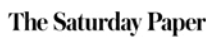
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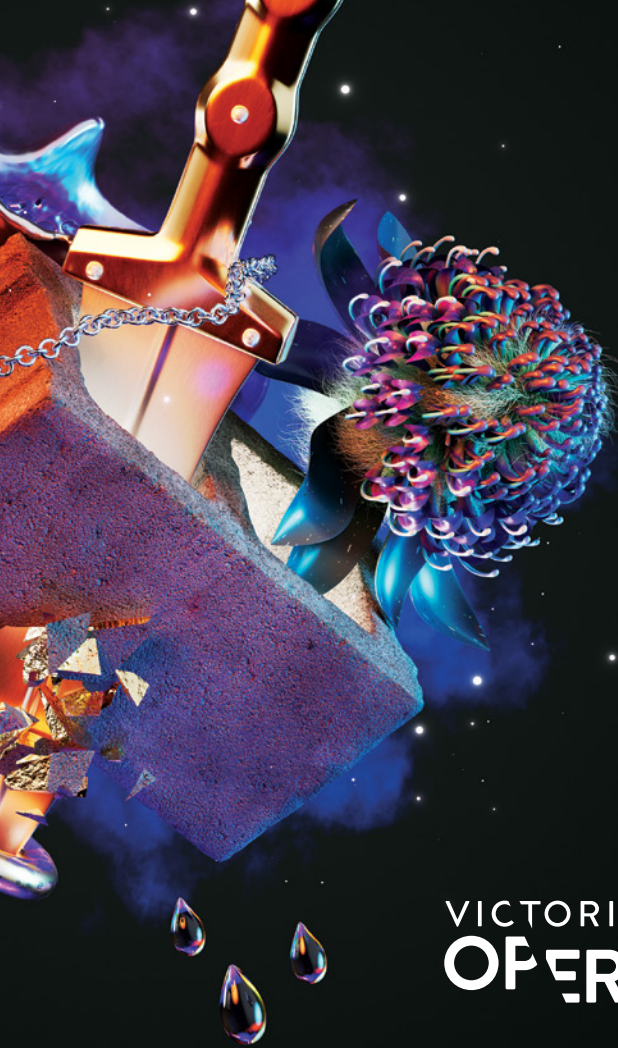


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