

MELROURNE,

CHEREMUSHKI

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVIC / VLADIMIR MASS AND MIKHAIL CHERVINSKY

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.

VICTORIAN OPERA PRESENTS

MELBOURNE, CHEREMUSHKI

AN OPERETTA IN THREE ACTS

Based on Moscow, Cheryomushki by Dmitri Shostakovich

Composer Dmitri Shostakovich Librettists Vladimir Mass and Mikhail Chervinsky

Conductor Simon Bruckard	Lighting Designer Lisa Mibus
Director Constantine Costi	Sound Designer Samuel Moxham
Set Designer Dann Barber	Movement Director Shannon Burns
Costume Designer Sabina Myers	
Alexander Petrovich Bubentsov (Sasha)	Sergey Seryozha Glushkov
Matan Franco	Michael Dimovski
Masha	Lyusya (Lucy)
Syrah Torii **	Leah Phillips
Semyon Semyonovich Baburov	Fyodor Mikhailovich Fedya Drebednyov
Eamon Dooley	Alastair Cooper-Golec*
Lidochka	Vava
Teresa Ingrilli	Amanda Windred
Boris Borya Koretsky	Afanasi Ivanovich Barabashkin
Douglas Kelly	Nicholas Beecher
	COVERS
Masha	Sergey Seryozha Glushkov
Chloe James	Michael Edwards
Semyon Semyonovich Baburov	Lyusya (Lucy)
Tiernan Maclaren	Elizabeth Barrow
Lidochka	Vava
Shania Eliassen	Wei Tang
	CHORUS

Maya Charles Sedergreen, Alisya Irawan, Leyland Jones, Yu-Tien Lin, Tiernan Maclaren, Elise Morton, Sidra Nissen, Phoebe Paine, Kate Pengelly, Caitlin Rowe, Noah Straughan, Wei Tang, Samuel Thomas-Holland, Anushka Tiwari, Michael Zuccala

Victorian Opera Chamber Orchestra

* The appearance of Alastair Cooper-Golec is generously supported by Dr Michael Stubbs & Malcolm Roberts.

** The appearance of Syrah Torii is generously supported by The Family of the late Frederick R Davidson AM. Thank you to Paul Anderson and the team at Imported Theatre Fabrics, Janne and Bro Barber, Harry Gill, David Splat, Alexandra Aldrich, MTC, Neuron Scooters and Visual Solutions.

> 22 – 25 MARCH ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE, PLAYHOUSE

Running time is approximately 110 minutes, plus one interval Sung in English

CEO'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our presentation of Dmitri Shostakovich's *Melbourne, Cheremushki,* reimagined so delightfully by Constantine Costi, Simon Bruckard and our cast and crew of Emerging Artists.

This work brings me great delight as our second offering in our newly devised program, VO Emerges. Designed to give performers, technicians and musicians with less than 10 years' professional experience an opportunity to work professionally with the state opera company, your company, Victorian Opera. All the cast and crew are hungry for knowledge and experience, and it bodes well for the future of our art form.

The premise of the work, a housing crisis, could not be more relevant right now, even if the relevance is slightly different to what our characters are experiencing. It's so lovely to have Con and Simon once more at the helm of this work but equally exciting to have Dann Barber, Sabina Meyers, Lisa Mibus, Sam Moxham and Shannoon Burns join the creative process. Victorian Opera is indebted to our ongoing support from The Australia Council for the Arts, the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria, and the Robert Salzer Foundation, who have supported Victorian Opera since our inception in 2006.

To our Trusts and Foundations, and our patrons and supporters, in particular our Leadership Syndicate and Artistic Director's Circle, we thank you. Without all of you, Victorian Opera would not be able to bring this standard of excellence to all this evening. Please enjoy.



ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER Victorian Opera CEO

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This operetta from 1950s Soviet Russia has a timely relevance in contemporary Melbourne. Hope for the future is sometimes difficult for the current group of teens and twenties (and also for us oldies at times), but the possibility of a place to call a 'room of one's own' is pretty basic to conducting the business of life. Housing has become a trading currency in our major cities, its bizarre price structure placing even modest dwellings forever beyond the capacity of the normal salary earner; the 'Australian Dream' of the '50s and '60s has vanished for many. Our creative team has drawn the telling parallel between the lack of benevolence and the mixture of both subterranean and flagrant mischief that characterised the Soviet housing bureaucracy of Shostakovitch's time and the antics surrounding the real estate activity in our city – a generally unflattering portrait on both accounts, it would seem.

But the underlying grim pessimism is leavened by the fascination of character and an underlying sense of the ridiculous – salvation is found in the ironic humour of shared hardships. This is, of course, a discernible thread throughout Russian literature – from the great storytellers of the nineteenth century like Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky to the magic realists of the 20th century like Michael Bulgakov, whose novel *The Master and Margarita* concerns a visitation to Moscow of the Devil in form of a giant cat. Shostakovich is also a great storyteller in music – his symphonies have the vast ambitious canvas and narrative complexity of the Russian novel, as well as ironic humour, wit and thematic character. This love of character and story makes this piece so interesting and approachable for emerging performers, who have been led by a talented and young creative team – all at the thresholds of what, I am sure, will be important careers in the future.

Welcome and enjoy.



RICHARD MILLS Artistic Director

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager Dan Gosling Stage Manager Rain Iyahen Deputy Stage Manager Claudia Howarth Assistant Stage Manager Thor Bjorklund Dam Costume Manager Mel Serjeant Wig Build Linda Cowell

MUSIC STAFF

Head of Music Phoebe Briggs Repetiteur Tom Griffiths

ORCHESTRA

Violin 1 Jaso Sasaki Violin 2 Natasha Conrau Cello Nils Hobiger Double Bass Nicholas Synot Flute / Piccolo Dom Chaseling Clarinet / Eb Clarinet Natasha Fearnside Alto Sax / Soprano Sax Lachlan Davidson Tenor Sax/Baritone Sax Stuart Byrne Trumpet 1 Callum G'Froerer Trumpet 2 Sarah Henderson Trombone Trea Hindley Banjo / Guitar / Ukelele Doug de Vries Percussion Alexander Meagher Piano Tom Griffiths

SEASON STAFF

Costumiers Justine Haselton Nicole Serjeant Kim Bishop Frances Burton Jacinda Hill Jemma Eton Vannessa Roberts Catherine Chan Isaac Lummis

Wigs and Makeup

Charlotte Webb Andrew Dessmann

Dressers Arts Centre Melbourne staff

Costume Maintenance Arts Centre Melbourne staff

Interns Xander Reichard (Costume) Arielle Roberts (Lighting) Sophie Walter (Stage Management)

CONDUCTOR'S MESSAGE

Cheremushki is unlike almost everything else in Shostakovich's vast output. For someone who had, at the time, written 11 symphonies, and the brilliantly dark and disturbing opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, to suddenly turn around and produce the equivalent of a Broadway musical was shocking at the time. Critics didn't know what to make of it.

But the music is undeniably brilliant. Despite its apparent simplicity and tunefulness, it has all the hallmarks of Shostakovich's ironic humour and parody. Its relentless cheeriness, quick tempos and dance breaks (yes, dance breaks) belie a harsh critique of what it was like to live in Moscow in the 1950s. It is extraordinary how easily the concerns of the time translate to contemporary Melbourne, and it actually required very few modifications to modernise the libretto.

Shostakovich wrote his original operetta for a traditional large orchestra, the arrangement we are performing by British composer and arranger Gerard McBurney adds a whole new dimension. It's an unusual combination of instruments, including saxophones, trumpets, banjo and a huge array of percussion. The sound world is brash, contemporary and outright whacky in times – it perfectly suits the surreal and absurd staging and I am certain Shostakovich would approve.

In response to bemused critics at the time, Shostakovich wrote that, "a true composer must try his hand in every genre." Very few composers can say that they actually achieved this. It is an absolute delight to have the opportunity to perform this rarely performed work with a cast of young, emerging talent.

SIMON BRUCKARD Conductor

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The housing crisis across Australia is the worst it's been in decades.

Struggling to find a roof over one's head, coughing up rising rent, and dealing with the greedy miscreance of agents and landlords is pushing renters to breaking point.

But this operetta is a comedy – or maybe a manic dance atop a societal volcano on the verge of financial eruption. Departures into magic realism are the only respites from a dire reality.

This operetta is also about young people. The immediacy of a young cast (our VO emerging artists) portraying these characters makes profound sense to us, and we were floored by how contemporary the young lovers of this piece feel. Their relationships are far from slick; these couples are awkward, confused, and full of romantic misfires – this could not be closer to the experience of the contemporary dater.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine meant that the whimsical references of the original operetta to Moscow's charming lanes and the overwhelming benevolence of Russian governance did not sit well with us, to say the least. While of course this piece was written before the Putin regime, we felt the glowing references to Soviet nostalgia would ultimately take away and distract from the core of the piece – the corruption of those in power in the housing market. So the publishers kindly permitted us to update references to contemporary Melbourne. And in updating these references, we were shocked to see how easily 'corrupt Soviet bureaucrat' was replaced by 'immoral Melbourne real estate agent'.

Our Melbourne, Cheremushki is a heightened 'Ren and Stimpy meet the Sex Pistols' universe of rascals and ratbags making do and trying to have a good time in the midst of impending financial ruin.

constantinecosti.net

CONSTANTINE COSTI Director

SYNOPSIS

This operetta was originally set in the Cheremushki district of Moscow in the 1950's, but has been recontextualised to modern-day Melbourne. The narrative follows the lives of several residents who are all striving for better living conditions.

Act One introduces us to the characters and their individual dreams. We meet the young couple, Boris and Lidochka, who long to move into a better apartment. The ambitious bureaucrat, Kalenik, is determined to use his connections to climb the social ladder, while the elderly couple, the Bukins, pine for a quieter neighbourhood. As the characters interact, the audience becomes aware of the stark contrast between their hopes, and the reality of their actual living conditions. Act Two sees the characters' dreams and schemes come to a head as they try to secure new apartments through various means, including bribery and trickery. Boris and Lidochka attempt to bribe their way into a better apartment, while Kalenik uses his power to manoeuvre his way into a luxury flat. Meanwhile, the Bukins and other residents resort to trickery and deception to get what they want. As the chaos unfolds, the characters realise that their selfish pursuits have caused them to neglect the importance of love and community. In a moving final scene, the residents of Cheremushki come together to sing a chorus of solidarity. emphasising the importance of community and shared experiences. The operetta is satirical, highlighting stark inequalities and corruption while also celebrating the power of human connection and community.

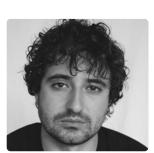


The Melbourne, Cheremushki rehearsal room. Photo by Sarah Jackson

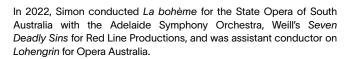
CREATIVE TEAM



SIMON BRUCKARD Conductor



CONSTANTINE COSTI Director



In 2021, Simon's opera *Cassandra* premiered at Victorian Opera, and he also conducted the world premiere alongside *Echo and Narcissus* by Kevin March. Simon's arrangement of *Hansel and Gretel*, commissioned by Victorian Opera, was performed by Lyric Opera of Chicago. Simon's opera *The Selfish Giant* premiered in 2019. It won a Green Room Award for Musical Achievement – New Australian Opera. It had a highly successful return season at the Arts Centre Melbourne in May 2022.

Simon is currently Simone Young's assistant conductor for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Constantine Costi is a writer and an opera and theatre director. His recent projects include directing the revival *La Traviata* in Sydney and Melbourne for Opera Australia, and the Red Line Productions' Kurt Weill double bill *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

Previous projects include the directing of the film A Delicate Fire (Pinchgut Opera), La Traviata on Sydney Harbour (OA), co-directing Werther (OA), the award-winning production of Bittersweet Obsessions, Händel's Messiah and co-directing Karakorum (Australian Brandenburg Orchestra). Constantine also directed Puccini's Suor Angelica for Opera Projects Sydney, directed Puccini's II Tabarro at Alfie's Sydney, and directed The Space Between the Fuel and the Fire for NIDA.



DANN BARBER Set Designer

Dann is an award-winning set and costume designer whose work is heavily influenced by his study of drawing and fine art at RMIT. He is also a graduate in design from NIDA. Recent work in theatre includes *The Crocodile* at Fortyfivedownstairs (2023), *Wittenoom* (2023) and *The Amateurs* (2022), both for the Red Stitch Actors theatre, and Yentl produced by Kadimah Yiddish Theatre at the Fairfax, Arts Centre Melbourne, 2022.

Dann's work in musical theatre has seen him design for the Opera House Drama Theatre, with *Rent* in 2021. Dann also designed *Barnum the Musical* at the Comedy Theatre in 2019, and *Chess* at the Regent Theatre in 2021. He was the associate costume designer for Gabriela Tylesova for the Australian Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty* in 2016, choreographed by David McAllister, and again for Melbourne Theatre Company's *Shakespeare in Love* in 2019, directed by Simon Phillips.

Dann has won Green Room awards for Best Design in Cabaret for his set and costumes in *The Ghetto Cabaret* at Forty-five Downstairs, 2019, and Best Independent Set and Costume Design for *The Mermaid* at La Mama in 2021.



SABINA MYERS Costume Designer



LISA MIBUS Lighting Designer



SAMUEL MOXHAM Sound Designer



SHANNON BURNS Movement Director

Sabina is a designer, artist and illustrator working in both stage and screen. Originally from Brisbane, where she studied Art History at the University of Queensland, she is now Sydney-based and trained in design at NIDA. Costume design credits for opera include: *The Barber of Seville* (2022/23) and *Werther* (2019), both for Opera Australia, *Orontea* (2022) for Pinchgut Opera, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2021) for Sydney Conservatorium. Other recent work includes: Costume design for AACTA award-winning short film *Finding Jedda* (2021), and costume design assistant on George Miller's *Three-Thousand Years of Longing* (2022).

Lisa Mibus is a Melbourne-based Lighting Designer with a strong interest in the creation of new work. She co-devised *My Lover's Bones* (Brown Cabs Productions/Melbourne Festival), for which her lighting design received a Green Room Association Award. Lisa has designed for many varied independent, as well as mainstage productions, with credits including *Castillo, Bridge,* and *Colour Correction* (Dancehouse), *Caught, Control, Pomona,* and *Sweet Phoebe* (Red Stitch), *Archimedes War, Oil Babies, Whale* (Darebin Speakeasy), *Polite Mammals* (The Wholesome Hour), *Grand Gesture* (The People/LaMama), *The Curtain* (45 Downstairs), *Virgins* & *Cowboys* (Griffin Independent), *Heart is a Wasteland, Normal Suburban Planetary Meltdown, The Orchid and the Crow* (Malthouse Theatre), *Straight White Men, The Distance, The Boy at the Edge of Everything,* and *Music* (Melbourne Theatre Company).

Sam Moxham is a seasoned sound engineer with extensive experience in front-of-house mixing, sound design, broadcasting, recording and post-production. He frequently collaborates with Australia's major Arts Organisations, including The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. After his successful contributions to the 2022 seasons of *The Selfish Giant* and *Happy End*, Sam returns to Victorian Opera as sound designer for *Melbourne, Cheremushki* and will later design for *The Visitors*.

Shannon most recently choreographed *Carmen on Cockatoo Island* (2022) for Opera Australia. Other work for the company includes Handa Opera's *La Traviata* on Sydney Harbour (2021), *Opera for the People* (2021) and the *New Year's Eve Gala* (2020). More choreographic credits include Pinchgut Opera's *A Delicate Fire* (2020), *Platée* (2021), *Orontea* (2022) and *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Mahagonny Songspiel* for Red Line Productions.

Shannon was on the choreographic team for the ICC T20 Cricket World Cup Opening Ceremony (2020), and had featured choreography in the Netball World Cup Opening Ceremony (2016) She was resident movement director for Darlinghurst Theatre Company's return season of *Once* (2021) and has created work for Grayboy the Agency, Kermond Creative Entertainment, Lovegrove Entertainment, David Jones, Icloud and more.



MATAN FRANCO Alexander Petrovich Bubentsov (Sasha)



SYRAH TORII Masha



EAMON DOOLEY Semyon Semyonovich Baburov



TERESA INGRILLI Lidochka

Matan Franco is a multi-faceted vocalist, composer, orchestrator, arranger and voice teacher with a varied and diverse musical background. His first engagement with Victorian Opera was in 2015, when he originated the role of the Dad in the world premiere of Joseph Twist's youth opera, *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. Matan holds a Bachelor of Music (First Class Honours) specialising in composition and classical voice from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, as well as a Masters in Scoring for Film and Visual Media from the Dublin Institute of Technology.

Japanese-Australian mezzo-soprano Syrah Torii (she/her) graduated with a Master of Music (Opera Performance) from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music in 2021. She is a recipient of the 2023 Victorian Opera Emerging Artist Prize, and is a Developing Artist in Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artists Programme. She has performed major roles in *Little Women* (Jo March), *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Ottone), *Hänsel und Gretel* (Hänsel), and *Die Zauberflöte* (Third Lady). With Victorian Opera, she performed in the world premiere season of *The Butterfly Lovers* (Ensemble), *Elektra* (Chorus), and covered the role of La Strega Cattiva dell'Ovest in *Il Mago di Oz*.

A bass-baritone, Eamon Dooley has performed for several years as a professional choral singer and soloist. Theatre roles include Edward Bloom in *Big Fish*, Jesus in *Godspell*, and The Wolf in *Into the Woods*.

Eamon currently sings with Opera Scholars Australia, and placed as runner-up for the 2021-2022 OSA Aria competition. When not performing, Eamon is a designer, recently graduating from The University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Design and a concurrent Diploma in Music.

Perth-born Teresa Ingrilli is a Melbourne-based lyric soprano. Teresa is an emerging artist with Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artist Program, and a Victorian Opera chorus member. She was a semi-finalist for the Herald Sun Aria and the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship. Roles include: The Countess from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Blanche de la Force from Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Suor Angelica from Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, Erste Dame from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Ortlinde from Wagner's *Die Walküre*, and Fiordiligi in scenes from Cosi *Fan Tutte*, as well as soprano soloist for Mahler's *2nd Symphony*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mozart's *Coronation Mass in C*. Teresa graduated with a Masters of Opera (Performance) at Melbourne Conservatorium in 2020.



DOUGLAS KELLY Boris Borya Koretsky



MICHAEL DIMOVSKI Sergey Seryozha Glushkov

Douglas Kelly is a tenor who has extensive experience in opera, oratorio and as a recitalist. Douglas has been a young artist at Victorian Opera as well as being awarded winner at the National Liederfest in 2019. As an opera and oratorio performer, Douglas has performed roles including Basilio in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, tenor soloist in both Handel's *Messiah* and Berlioz' *L'enfance du Christ*, Sellem in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Anfinomo and Eurimaco in Pinchgut Opera's production of Monteverdi's *II Ritorno D'Ulisse In Patria*, and most recently as the title role in Victorian Opera's production of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. As an art song recitalist, he has performed Schubert's *Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin* at the Melbourne Recital Centre, and appeared in concert at Baden Bei Wien Austria, as part of the Schubert Institute.

Michael is a Melbourne-based artist who graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2017. He is the recipient of the 2022 Victorian Opera Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts Opera Prize, which saw him perform a number of roles with Victorian Opera in their 2022 season. Michael was also the recipient of Melbourne Opera's 2022 Rotary NGSE scholarship to travel and perform in Germany.

Michael's most recent engagements include: Vendor in the premiere of *A Christmas Carol* (Koehne), Don Ramiro (Cover) in *La Cenerentola*, Ma Wencai in the premiere of *The Butterfly Lovers* (Mills), Aegisth (Cover) in *Elektra*, Lo Spaventapasseri in *Il Mago di Oz*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Opernakademie Henfenfeld, Germany, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, Froh (Cover) in *Das Rheingold*, and Jaquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio*. In addition to his recent solo operatic performances, Michael has toured nationally throughout Australia as a member of the Australian singing group The Ten Tenors, and was in the chorus for Opera Australia's productions of *Lohengrin*, *Mefistofele*, *Aida* and *Ernani*.



LEAH PHILLIPS Lyusya (Lucy)

Leah Phillips is a versatile soprano who enjoys bringing opera, musical theatre of yesteryear, and art song to life for today's audiences. In 2021 she won the Opera Scholar of the Year aria competition and the Boroondara Eisteddfod Vocal Championship. Leah is currently a member of Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Developing Artists Programme.

Recent credits include covering Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Melbourne Opera), chorus in *II Mago di Oz* (Victorian Opera), Doormouse in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (ACOCo), cover to Dot and Mrs North Wind in *The Enchanted Pig* (ACOCo), and cover to Olive Hargrave in *Fly* (Lyric Opera of Melbourne).



ALASTAIR COOPER-GOLEC Fyodor Mikhailovich Fedya Drebednyov



AMANDA WINDRED Vava

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*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Happy End*.

Alastair was a 2021 Herald Sun Aria finalist, in 2022 was a member of Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artists Programme, and is a 2023 recipient of Victorian Opera's Emerging Artist Prize, supported by Michael Stubbs, Malcolm Roberts and the family of Frederick R Davidson.

Soprano Amanda Windred is a graduate of Griffith University with a Master of Music Studies. During her studies, Amanda has trained with some of Australia and America's most notable teachers, directors and repetiteurs, including Dr. Rowena Cowley, Professor Lisa Gasteen, Nic Muni, Alan Hicks, Anthony Manoli and Caren Levine.

Highlights of Amanda's performing career include Nella in *Gianni* Schicchi (Berlin Opera Academy), Mrs Grose in *Turn of the Screw* (Miami Music Festival), Turandot (Cover) in *Turandot* (Opera Australia), Zweite Magd in *Elektra* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra), Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro* (QLD Conservatorium), and Dritte Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* (Pacific Opera). Amanda is looking forward to joining Victorian Opera in 2023 to perform the role of Vava in their production of *Melbourne, Cheremushki.*

iteurs, including Dr. Rowena Cowley, Professor Lisa Gasteen, Nic Alan Hicks, Anthony Manoli and Caren Levine. ights of Amanda's performing career include Nella in Gianni cchi (Berlin Opera Academy), Mrs Grose in Turn of the Screw

adot (Opera Australia), hestra), Marcellina d Dritte Dame in *Die* forward to joining ava in their production

COVERS



CHLOE JAMES Masha



TIERNAN MACLAREN Semyon Semyonovich Baburov

Chloe James is an emerging mezzo-soprano commencing a Masters in Opera Performance in 2023, currently studying under the tutelage of Anna Connolly. She is a seasoned performer with sixteen years of dance experience, as well as having spent ten years with the Australian Girls Choir.

So far, Chloe has been featured in; Angus Grant's Opera Bytes series (2020), Victorian Opera's emerging artist productions, *The Friends of Salamanca* (2021), *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* (2021) and *II Mago Di Oz* (2022), as well as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2022) with the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.

Raised on theatre, Tiernan took their first professional role as Frid in Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (2019, Victorian Opera). Following the disruption of Covid, Tiernan was eager to return to the stage, this time as King Pandion/Captain in *The Love of the Nightingale* (2021, Simran Giria). Most recently, Tiernan performed the role of Tartuffe in Moliere's *Tartuffe/The Imposter* (2022, MUST/Celeste Cody), Wizard in *II Mago di Oz* (2022, Victorian Opera), and Loudspeaker in *Dido & Aeneas/Emperor of Atlantis* (2022, iOpera).

When not performing, Tiernan works as a theatrical mechanist, is undertaking a Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering/Commerce at Monash University, and studies singing with Angela Wasley.



NICHOLAS BEECHER Afanasi Ivanovich Barabashkin

Nicholas is a Melbourne-based musician and teacher, originally from Leeton in country New South Wales. He is about to commence a Master of Music (Opera Performance) at the University of Melbourne after previously obtaining a Bachelor of Music from the Australian National University.

Studying under the guidance of Stephen Grant, Nicholas' past performances include Mr Gedge in Albert Herring, Demetrius in A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as ensemble roles in The Selfish Giant, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny and Otello. Nicholas is looking forward to performing the role of Barabashkin in this production of Melbourne, Cheremushki.



SHANIA ELIASSEN Lidochka

Shania Eliassen is a Coloratura Soprano who completed her Masters of Music (Opera Performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, and her Bachelor of Music at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. She has performed the roles of Barbarina (Le Nozze di Figaro) with Melbourne Opera, Lucia (The Rape of Lucretia) with Opus WA, La Fée (Cendrillon), Suor Genovieffa (Suor Angelica), Königin der Nacht (Die Zauberflöte), Fortuna/Pallade/ Damigella (L'incoronazione di Poppea), Amy (Little Women), and covered Dorothy (II Mago di Oz) with Victorian Opera. In 2022, Shania attended the Lyric Opera Studio Weimar in Germany, performing the Queen of the Night. She was awarded Most Outstanding Senior Vocalist at the North of Perth Music Festival (2018), Maestro Richard Bonynge awarded her the highest prize at a West Australian Opera masterclass (2019), and she won Singer of the Year in the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir Singer of the Year (2022). Shania is a Richard Divall Developing Artist with Melbourne Opera and a Scholar with Opera Scholars Australia.



MICHAEL EDWARDS Sergev Servozha Glushkov

Michael began singing at age 8 when he joined the Australian Boys Choir. A graduate of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Michael has also sang with ensembles such as The National Youth Choir of Australia and The Consort of Melbourne.

In 2014 Michael joined The TEN Tenors and has toured extensively across the globe. He is currently the Touring Musical Director and is featured on their albums Our Christmas Wish, Wish You Were Here and Love is in the Air. For Victorian Opera Michael has appeared as a chorus member in Nixon in China, La Traviata, I Pagliacci and Remembrance.



ELIZABETH BARROW Lyusya (Lucy)

Elizabeth Barrow, a high coloratura soprano, has been performing with Victorian Opera for 9 years. In 2018, Elizabeth travelled to Cardiff, Wales, to undertake a Masters in Music Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where she gained a scholarship with the BBC National Chorus of Wales and sang at the BBC Proms.

Since completing her Masters and returning to Australia, Elizabeth has recorded two CDs alongside Dr Robert James Stove: The Undertones of War and French Romantic Church Music and has also recently performed in Victorian Opera's production of The Butterfly Lovers.



WEI TANG Vava

Wei Tang is a Mezzo Soprano and piano teacher. Before migrating to Melbourne, Wei had been working with Shanghai Opera House (China) for six years as a Mezzo Soprano and piano accompanist, teaching at the Communication University of China.

Wei's professional roles include Despina (Cosi Fan Tutte), Marcellina (Le Nozze di Figaro), Annina (La Traviata), Emilia (Otello), Dolcina (Suor Angelica), Mercedes (Carmen), Praskvia (The Merry Widow), Mother Jiao (Field), ZhiLv (King Chu), Fantine (Les Misérables) and others.

Wei was a member of the selected team invited to perform in international music festivals in Italy, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Singapore, India and in different parts of China (Hong Kong, Macau, Shanghai and Beijing international music festivals) where she worked with conductors Lorin Maazel, John Nelson, Long Yu, Guoyong Zhang and others. Wei has also attended master classes at the Conservatory of Music, Santa Cecilia, Italy.

CHORUS







MAYA CHARLES SEDERGREEN

ALISYA IRAWAN

LEYLAND JONES

YU-TIEN LIN





ELISE MORTON





TIERNAN MACLAREN

SIDRA NISSEN

PHOEBE PAINE







KATE PENGELLY

NOAH STRAUGHAN

WEI TANG



SAMUEL THOMAS-HOLLAND



MICHAEL ZUCCALA

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The late Richard Gill AO

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REIMAGINING THE POTENTIAL OF OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATRE, FOR EVERYONE.

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 38 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.



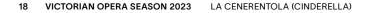
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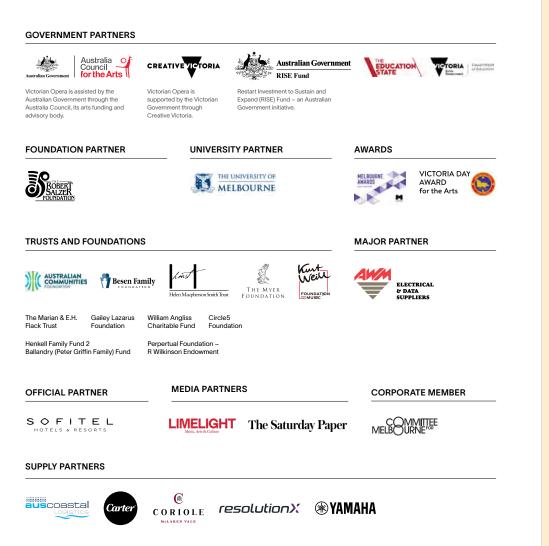
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All details current at time of printing.

If you would like information on supporting Victorian Opera, please contact Peter Garnick, Philanthropy Executive at peterg@victorianopera.com.au or on 0423 068 833.

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