

O|PERA AUSTRALIA

VICTORIAN
OPERA



IDOMENEO

EDUCATION RESOURCE

BY KATE ELLIS

Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the people of the Eastern Kulin Nations as the traditional owners of the land where we honour the continuation of the oldest music practice in the world. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sovereignty never ceded.

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**“In all chaos there is a cosmos,
in all disorder a sacred order”**

CARL JUNG

“I’ve heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason, bringing something we must learn. And we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them, and we help them in return. Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true, but I know I’m who I am today because I knew you...”

WICKED, THE MUSICAL

“It’s always an afterthought, rather than, let’s say, bringing in vulnerable members of the community early to make sure the solution we’re trying to design is inclusive of everyone”

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE FEDERATION OF ETHNIC COMMUNITY COUNCILS AUSTRALIA (FECCA). ABC NEWS

**“This abundance of chaos, is
this your Eden?”**

FILM ‘A LITTLE CHAOS’

“Anything worth doing good takes a little chaos”

MUSICIAN FLEA

**“I think order may be merely an illusionistic imposition.
Perhaps everything is chaos, and we should embrace that”**

ARTIST PAUL YORE (MIEKUS, 2023)

“We’re all in this together. Once we know that we are, we’re all stars. And we see that. We’re all in this together. And it shows when we stand hand in hand”

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

“Make your crew your finest act of curatorial courage. Just as many wise spiritual teachers have argued that our thoughts beget our actions, I would argue that our friends beget our culture. They become the force we measure ourselves against, the source of so much of our joy and courage. They are our respite, and our welcomed responsibility”

IN PRAISE OF CHOSEN FAMILY BY COURTNEY E. MARTIN 2014. ON BEING

**“Nothing we accomplish in life is totally free of the influence of
spirit and community. We do nothing alone.”**

TRICIA HERSEY, REST IS RESISTANCE: A MANIFESTO

ABOUT THE COMPANY



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.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera proudly became an Australian Major Performing Arts company in 2019, and transitioned to the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in 2021.

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.

We exist to reimagine the potential of opera and musical theatre for everyone.

MOZART

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (as he is commonly known) was baptised as Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart. He was born on January 27, 1756, in Salzburg and died at the age of 35 on December 5, 1791, in Vienna.

A child prodigy, he was playing short pieces on the harpsichord at the age of four and composing his own pieces by the age of five. His father, Leopold, a well-known musician in his own right having written a seminal violin instruction manual, identified his son's potential and made plans to showcase this across Europe. In 1763, Mozart and his family embarked on a three-year trip around the major European centres, where he absorbed many music ideas. In London he was heavily influenced by Johann Christian Bach, the younger son of Johann Sebastian Bach, who held much influence in the artistic scene of England's capital. This trip is credited for fostering his craft in balancing patterns and forms in melody and texture.

Mozart is recognised as one of the top four composers of the Classical Period alongside Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert - Haydn is noted as attributing the title of 'genius' to Mozart. The stylistic conventions of this era of music, such as the development of the Sonata Form and the establishment of the Symphony Orchestra, can be attributed to these composers through the 'Viennese Classical School'.

The compositions of Mozart come at the end of the Enlightenment Era, where philosophical rationalism was being challenged by the idealistic early thinkers of the Romantic Era. It is also at this time that the affluent middle class began challenging the privilege and libertinage of the aristocracy. This later influence can be seen in *Idomeneo* when the people of Crete rise-up together to demand action against the sea

monster and in the King losing the throne to Idamante due to his moral failure.

Mozart wrote his first opera at the age of eleven and wrote twenty-two operas in total. *Idomeneo, King of Crete* is cited as his first mature opera and was written during his time in France. It is known for its complexity of phrase but also precise use of form and exploration of character through the manipulation of the expressive music elements. It also harbingers the final decade of his all too short life where we can find his best-known masterpieces.

In all, Mozart is attributed to having written over six hundred compositions, many of which have remained in repertory circulation since the day they were written.



CONTEXTUALISATION

MYTH

When we talk of heroes, Gods like Neptune and Mars, and morals, we are talking about myths. Myths are stories that seek to answer some of our most fundamental questions such as how the world came to be; and teach us how to live responsibly and well.

Something that is important to know is that myths are stories that are true to the culture, people and/or community who tell them. They were inspired by star gazing, planting feet into earth, pondering herds of animals and delving deep into silent caves. They were written at a time when there was no internet, no Google search, not even science. Myths were how people made literal sense of things they couldn't explain and can be very important still to the communities who wrote them eons ago.

One of the most prevalent myths across time and cultures is the Hero Myth, a term coined by mythologist Joseph Campbell in his seminal work 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces'. This work was used to create films like Star Wars and recognises similar character and narrative archetypes across the genre. For example, most hero myths have a wise advisor known as the mentor as well as allies and villains. The hero must also face many tests once they leave their ordinary world to accept the call to adventure, including, fighting a monster!

Sound familiar?

Yes! Idomeneo has a mentor, Arbace; and our other hero, Idamante, must fight a monster. Could Ilia also be a hero? And if Star Wars was based on the hero myth and one of the thematic concerns of the hero's journey is what Joseph Campbell called 'finding the father'... do father, Idomeneo and son, Idamante not go on their own journey to understand each other?

It is important to note that most texts on mythology still look toward Grecian stories. These myths inform a great deal of our opera *Idomeneo*, and Greece of course, has a rich history of storytelling. However, in Australia, we have the richest and oldest of mythologies, that of our First Nations people. Their myths have survived 65,000 years in comparison to Grecian mythologies 3000-year history.

Can you think of an Indigenous myth that aligns with the story of *Idomeneo*? A character in Aboriginal mythology that might be like Elettra, Arbace or Ilia?

If not, guess what? We have Google search where our ancestors didn't. Can you find one after the show?

ARISTOTELEAN PRINCIPLES

Once upon a time there were some great poets and a community who thought that poetry was something that inspired (produced through emotions and ecstasy). At the same time, there was a man who thought poetry was art and therefore something to analyse and critique. In 384–322 B.C.E. this person was Aristotle.

Aristotle or Aristotelean Principles broke drama into 6 main elements to analyse better the work of poets of the time. They were:

- Plot,
- Character,
- Thought (sometimes referred to as Idea or theme)
- Diction,
- Spectacle, and
- Song.

ARISTOTELEAN PRINCIPLES IN THEATRE

Theatre is the physical expression of a story. Though the narrative doesn't have to be linear, a story always contains a plot driven by characters who together, express big ideas or themes. And in opera there is a lot of song. So there are the 1st and last principles taken care of. But what about thought, diction, and spectacle? Let's use *Idomeneo* as an example as we navigate these specific principles.

THOUGHT refers to the psychological journey of the characters. What are the objectives? What does the character want? And how does this motivate their actions? Idomeneo for instance, is deeply distressed when he realises it is his own son he has to kill to fulfill the deal he made with Neptune. As a result, he refuses to kill Idamante and hatches a plan with Arbace to send his son away from the eyes of the Gods.

DICTION refers to how a character achieves their goals through what they say. An interesting character to follow when thinking about diction, is Elettra. She is often critiqued as vengeful and jealous because of what she says, however she has reason to be jealous and concerned, to think and feel the way she does. Is there a lens through which we can look at Elettra's diction with empathy?

SPECTACLE derives from French and Latin words meaning 'to look' or 'public show'. What do we see when we are watching this production of *Idomeneo*? An amazing set (originally designed by Michael Yeargan and now adapted by Richard Roberts) with Video Design by David Bergman. How do the projected images in this iteration of *Idomeneo* contribute to our understanding of the story?

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

The Enlightenment period (approximately 1600 to 1800) has also been called The Age of Reason. This is because during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, emphasis began to be placed on the intellect and critiquing life in a way as to understand, and therefore better the human condition. This was driven by revolutions in science and a desire to move away from religion so as to find 'real' truth rather than indoctrinated truth.

Synthesising information on The Age of Enlightenment and Aristotelian principles of drama, helps us understand the context surrounding Mozart's opera *Idomeneo* as both ask audiences to understand the universe, analyse and critique so we can better live our lives. We learn from Idomeneo's behavior, that little logic was employed in his dealings with Neptune, and his life erupted into a chaotic mess as a result. We learn to critique the offer of Gods or, perhaps in a modern-day context, read the terms and conditions.

Another contextual understanding we can make through The Enlightenment period is of Mozart himself. *Idomeneo* was considered his first 'mature' opera. Mozart was a 'dramatist, his instinct was to render the action more natural. The audience must believe it is real he wrote, in this way his practices subscribed to the age of reason and are very much a precursor of things to come (Phillips, 1983)'. Think for instance of acting for the camera, where drama is to mirror real life in many modern-day films and television shows.

Can you think of a female who revolutionised science or was important in mythology? What about a person of colour or someone who is part of the LBBTIQA+ community? Many diverse people have influenced the way we think and feel and have made amazing contributions to understanding the world in which we live.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dark visions and radical optimism: thoughts on Mozart's *Idomeneo*

'Myths are stories about people who become too big for their lives temporarily, so that they crash into other lives or brush against gods. In crisis their souls are visible.' - Anne Carson, *Grief Lessons* (2008)

Mozart's *Idomeneo* brings together mighty forces and epic themes. At its heart, expressed with an empathy that betrays the composer's own filial torment, is the troubled yet tender relationship between a father and son. Drawing on the famed mythology of the Trojan War, *Idomeneo* locks a God (Neptune) and a mortal King (*Idomeneo*) in battle and unleashes the magnificence and terror of the natural world. At the work's deep core, we glimpse a monstrous vision: a dark, threatening presence, or void. Then, in a stunning reversal at the end, hope is rewarded with a bright new dawn.

War, and its fallout, is inescapable in *Idomeneo*. Today we'd say the characters all have forms of PTSD. Ilia, the daughter of Troy's King Priam, mourns the loss of her father, brothers and homeland, all destroyed by Agamemnon's army. Elettra, Agamemnon's daughter and Ilia's love-rival, is damaged beyond repair by the horrific violence wrought in her family. She veers between extreme euphoria and acts of self-harm. Pummelled by the elements, *Idomeneo* has the untethered, homeless quality of King Lear or his colleague in war, Odysseus. Obsessive yet unable

to act decisively, he is an ambivalent, fragile King. Yet as one of Agamemnon's generals, for ten years *Idomeneo* was a killing machine. We know he rode in the belly of the famous wooden horse through Troy's gates, so we know he participated in the infanticide, rape, murder and looting that followed, culminating in burning the great city to the ground. In doing so he has earned both the wrath of Neptune and the bloody nightmares that haunt him. The conquering warrior returns to Crete older, bloodstained, debased, ashamed, in psychological pain: flinching at his son's affection, behaving irrationally. Internally compelled to atone, yet publicly lauded, *Idomeneo* is unlike any other of Mozart's characters.

The 'wine-dark sea' of Homeric legend courses through the heart of *Idomeneo*. Manipulating the flawed humans is Neptune (Poseidon in Greek mythology), the God of the sea. Promised a human sacrifice to save *Idomeneo* and his men from drowning, Neptune's anger grows through the opera as the King prevaricates and resists the 'barbarous' and seemingly implacable God. But just as *Idomeneo* is at the point of finally sacrificing his son, Neptune changes his mind. In a *deus ex machina* worthy of Aeschylus, the God releases *Idomeneo* from his vow and humbles him, revoking his power as ruler of Crete. Possibly fearing Neptune, Mozart and Varesco magnificently conjure the sea's power with two stunning sea-storms and a sea-monster before calm is restored. *Idomeneo*'s heroic tenor aria *Fuor del mar ho un mare in seno* ('*Far from the sea, I have a sea in my breast*') expresses his turmoil enduring Neptune's cruelty[1].

DIRECTOR'S NOTE CONTINUED...

Ultimately, like all myths, *Idomeneo* is an exploration of humanity. Its scope encompasses extreme (individual and collective) human psychologies and behaviours, rational vs irrational thought, the trauma and social disintegration that result when crisis threatens the status quo. We have all lived through this very recently with the Covid pandemic and the effects of the climate emergency. Written in 1781 by an idealistic 25-year-old amid epochal social upheaval, *Idomeneo*'s themes are ancient, and also utterly modern. For Australian audiences emerging from a period of darkness, communal trauma and deep reflection, there are surprisingly powerful resonances drawing us to its Enlightenment-era ideas.

Mozart's Masonic lodge was called New Crowned Hope, and indeed this opera ends with hope for a brighter future, a celebration of love and a new King. By Neptune's decree, Idamante will immediately replace his father on the Cretan throne, and beside him will sit Ilia. This union of former enemies moves Crete a generation closer to peace. Suddenly at the end of his struggles, Idomeneo publicly relinquishes the crown with final words that are tender, gracious and tinged with relief: *'Behold: this beautiful couple is a gift bestowed upon you by heaven. You all have reason to hope! O fortunate Crete! How happy I am!'*

There is radical optimism in the final chorus of *Idomeneo*, an idealised vision of renewed community leadership, a reordering of social values and philosophies, a contemplation of what we're handing on (the good and the bad) to the next generation. In this context, this new production seeks to explore concepts of order and chaos, community and empathy.



LINDY HUME

Director

[1] A similar emotion imbues a wonderful phrase by Peter Goldsworthy in Richard Mills' great opera *Batavia* when Pelsaert sings: *'There is nothing in the seven seas more turbulent than the four small chambers of the heart.'*

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*, *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* 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.



BENJAMIN BAYL
Conductor

Co-founder of ARCO and Associate Director of Hanover Band, Benjamin Bayl was born and raised in Sydney. He was the first Australian Organ Scholar of King's College Cambridge, and studied conducting at London's Royal Academy of Music.

He has conducted productions at Wiener Staatsoper, Dutch National Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Royal Danish Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Theater an der Wien, Opera Vlaanderen, Opera Oviedo, Bayreuth Baroque, Budapest Opera, Polish National Opera, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Theater Aachen and Opera Australia.

In the symphonic world he appears with SSO, MSO, QSO, CSO; Auckland, Hong Kong & Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestras, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, and extensively throughout Scandinavia, Germany, Spain and Italy. He also directs period instrument ensembles including Concerto Copenhagen, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Dunedin Consort, Concerto Köln & Collegium Vocale Gent, and has conducted at the festivals of Edinburgh, Melbourne, Cartagena, Savonlinna, Ruhrtriennale, Euro Klassik Berlin & Chopin Festival Warsaw.

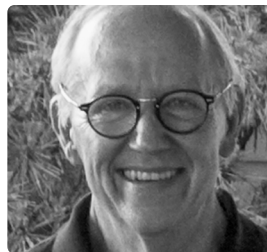


LINDY HUME
Director

Lindy Hume is an opera and theatre director and arts leader who works across Australia and internationally.

She has served as Artistic Director of four Australian opera companies: West Australian Opera, Victoria State Opera, OzOpera and Opera Queensland. As a stage director, she regularly creates new theatre and opera productions in Australia, NZ, Europe, the US and the UK, including major productions for renowned international companies such as Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Royal Swedish Opera Stockholm, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Aldeburgh Festival, Welsh National Opera and eight productions for New Zealand Opera. In Australia she has created more than 80 small-to-large-scale productions, several new Australian works, and won two Helpmann Awards, for best director and best production.

In 2021 Lindy received her PhD from QUT, and in the 2021 Australia Day Honours she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the performing arts, particularly to opera.



MICHAEL YEARGAN
Set Designer

Previous designs for Opera Australia are *Werther*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Traviata* and *Béatrice et Bénédict* – all with Elijah Moshinsky – and *South Pacific* with Bartlett Sher. Work with Sher includes productions of *Le Comte Ory*, *Les Contes d'Hoffman* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Two Boys*, *Elisir d'Amore* and *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Romeo et Juliette* for the Salzburg Festival and Teatro alla Scala, the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* for English National Opera and *Mourning Becomes Electra* for Seattle Opera; Broadway productions of *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Awake and Sing*, Joe Turner's *Come and Gone* and the musicals *South Pacific*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and this season's *Camelot*. For *South Pacific* and *The Light in the Piazza*, he was awarded the Tony and Drama Desk Awards in Scene Design. Mr Yeargan has worked extensively throughout the UK at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Opera North and in The West End, as well as internationally. He is also a Professor of Stage Design at the David Geffin School of Design at Yale University School of Drama.



ANNA CORDINGLEY

Costume Designer

Anna Cordingley is an award-winning set, costume and exhibition designer whose work has been seen by audiences throughout Australia, Europe, Britain, and the United States. Stage credits include: for Opera Australia, *Carmen*, *Aida*; for Victorian Opera, *Cassandra/Echo & Narcissus*, *Salome*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *The Threepenny Opera* (with Sydney Theatre Company and Malthouse); for Opera Queensland, *Don Giovanni*; for Melbourne Theatre Company, *Sunday* (sets), *Storm Boy* (with Queensland Theatre), *Jasper Jones*, *Abigail's Party* (sets); for Sydney Opera House and Red Line Productions, *Amadeus* (costumes); for Bell Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Richard III*; for Malthouse, *Anna K*, *Meow Meow's Little Mermaid* (with Belvoir), *Knives in Hens* (with South Australian Theatre Company). Anna won a Helpmann Award for Best Set Design, two Green Room Awards and a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume Design.



VERITY HAMPSON

Lighting Designer

Verity Hampson is an award-winning lighting designer for theatre, dance, opera, and television. A selection of Verity's credits for theatre include: *City of Gold* (Sydney Theatre Company/Black Swan); *Fences*, *a Raisin in the Sun*, *Grand Horizons* 7 Stages of Grieving, *Home*, *I'm Darling*, *Blackie Blackie Brown*, *Machinal* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Wake in Fright* (Malthouse); *Death of a Salesman* (Queensland Theatre); *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bell Shakespeare); *Winyanboga Yurringa*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Sami in Paradise*, *Faith Healer*, *Ivanov*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *The Drover's Wife* (Belvoir); *Lizzie* (Hayes Theatre Co.); *Ghosting the Party*, *Orange Thrower*, *Dogged*, *Superheroes* (Griffin); *Fly Away Peter* and *In the Penal Colony* (Sydney Chamber Opera); *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Spectrum Now Festival); *Daisy Bates at Ooldea*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *King Arthur* (Sydney Conservatorium).

Verity is a recipient of the Mike Walsh Fellowship; three Sydney Theatre Awards; a Green Room Award; and an APDG Award for Best Lighting Design.



CATHERINE PETTMAN

Cinematography

Film producer Catherine Pettman is the co-founder of Rummin Productions, an internationally award-winning Australian production company screening films for audiences around the world. With a commitment to producing dynamic, innovative and striking content, their films are characterised by a strong social conscience with narratives that explore the fragility and determination of the human experience. Rummin collaborates with exceptional talent to create visually compelling imagery and stories which resonate and motivate audiences across cultural and geographical landscapes.



DAVID BERGMAN

Video Designer

David is a video, music and sound designer for theatre, dance, opera, installation, and film. A selection of David's theatre credits include: video design for *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, sound design for *Playing Beatie Bow* (Sydney Theatre Company); video and sound designer for *The Gospel According to Paul* (STCSA/Soft Tread); composer and sound designer for *Scenes from the Client Era*, sound designer for *Into the Woods*, video designer for *Blue* (Belvoir); sound designer for *The Lovers* (Bell Shakespeare); video designer for *Swansong*, *Knowledge Ground* and *Spirited* (Bangarra Dance Theatre); video designer for *Breaking Glass* (Sydney Chamber Opera); video designer for *A Winter's Journey* (Musica Viva); composer and sound designer for *Superheroes*, composer, video and sound designer for *First Love is the Revolution*, sound designer for *Green Park* (Griffin Theatre Company); sound designer for *RENT* (Sydney Opera House); sound designer for *Dubbo Championship Wrestling*, *The Rise and Disguise of Elizabeth R.*, *Catch Me If You Can* (Hayes Theatre Co). David has won two Sydney Theatre Awards for Best Design and Best Sound Design. He is a National Institute of Dramatic Art graduate and teaches at NIDA.



RICHARD ROBERTS

Set Design Consultant

Richard Roberts is an award-winning designer and educator whose work spans theatre, dance, opera, film and television. A selection of Richard's recent designs include: for Opera Australia, *Rigoletto*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Magic Flute* and *Die Fledermaus* (with West Australian Opera); for Victorian Opera, *Cunning Little Vixen*; *Nixon in China*, *The Magic Flute*, *Baroque Triple Bill*, *The Marriage of Figaro*; *The Coronation of Poppea* and *Don Giovanni*; for Opera Queensland, *Ruddigore*; for New Zealand Opera, *Rigoletto*; for the Australian Ballet, *Don Quixote*, *Requiem*, *Molto Vivace*; for Queensland Theatre, *Othello*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Noises Off* (with Melbourne Theatre Company), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Tartuffe*; for TML, *Fiddler on the Roof*; for Melbourne Theatre Company, *Last Man Standing*, *Solomon and Marion*, *Next to Normal*, *The Gift*, *Frost/Nixon/Nixon*, *Macbeth*; for Sydney Theatre Company, *Australia Day* (with MTC), *Trust West*, *Riflewind*; and for Black Swan, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

CAST



STEVE DAVISLIM

Idomeneo

Steve Davislim, among the leading tenors of his generation, is acclaimed throughout the world on both concert and operatic stages for his beautiful lyric voice, strong stage presence and remarkable agility.

His repertoire embraces works from the baroque, classical, romantic and contemporary periods and he has worked with conductors including Claudio Abbado, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Bernard Haitink, Philippe Herreweghe, Lorin Maazel, Christian Thielemann and Sir Georg Solti. His recordings range from Szymanovsky's *Symphony No.3* to Handel's *Rodelinda* to a DVD of Berg's *Lulu*.

This year, Steve also returns to Australia to perform recitals and appear with the Sydney Symphony under Simone Young in *Das Rheingold*.

How might the audience have empathy for your character?

For me Idomeneo the character brings to the audience a classic theatrical dilemma that any human could identify with, in this case, through the lens of a king agonising between choosing his responsibilities as a parent or as leader of his people which directly results in the annihilation of one or the other. Certainly we are all confronted at some point in our lives with a seemingly impossible choice where each decision appears to involve sipping from a poisoned chalice. Whether or not one's life experience has presented such existential personal choices directly affecting our loved ones or that of an entire populace, I think everyone immersing themselves in this story will easily relate to Idomeneo's personal struggle.



CATHERINE CARBY

Idamante

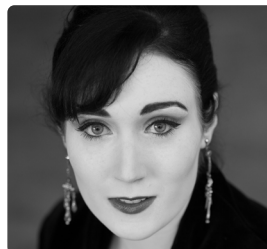
Catherine Carby has performed with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Teatro São Carlos, Lisbon, National Opera Canberra, Opera Australia, Victoria State Opera, State Opera South Australia and Opera Queensland.

This season Catherine returns to the Royal Opera House, Longborough Festival Opera and Buxton International Festival.

She has appeared with the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Philharmonia and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Gardner Chamber Orchestra Boston, Sydney and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras. Her recordings include *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and *Der Rosenkavalier* for Opera Australia, and The Royal Opera's *Die Walküre* (Siegrune).

How might the audience have empathy for your character?

Idamante is a very sympathetic character because we see his boyish longing for parental love, his joy at being reunited with his father and then his sadness and confusion at being rebuffed by him. His willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of his people and his country makes him probably the most likeable of all the characters.



KATHRYN RADCLIFFE

Iliia

Winner of the 2014 Herald Sun Aria, Melbourne-based soprano Kathryn Radcliffe has recently made several important débuts - Delia in *Il viaggio a Reims* for Opera Australia, The Queen in *The Princess and the Pea* for Victorian Opera, and Frasquita in *Carmen* for the Tasmanian Symphony.

In 2021, she sang Leïla in Victorian Opera's production of *The Pearl Fishers*. In 2022, she appeared in *Elektra* for VO and was soprano soloist in Melbourne Symphony's *Messiah* and Melbourne Bach Choir's *Creation*. She made her Vienna debut in *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

How might the audience have empathy for your character?

Iliia was a princess of Troy. She has survived the total destruction of her homeland due to her wits and courage, and now finds herself a prisoner of the enemy (Crete). She has also lost her entire family, and lived the past ten years of her life at the epicenter of a brutal war.

She has now fallen in love, completely against her will, with the prince of Crete. She is traumatised, conflicted, and wracked with guilt. Yet she has retained her strong sense of empathy for the suffering of others, and applies her considerable diplomatic skills to the task of seeking peace.



OLIVIA CRANWELL

Elettra

Olivia Cranwell holds a Master of Music (Opera Performance) from the University of Melbourne and was winner of the Vienna State Opera Award 2020.

While in Vienna, her performances included Ortlinde (*Die Walküre*), which she has since sung for Opera Australia. This year Olivia will also be heard as Helmwig (*Die Walküre*) and 3rd Norn (*Götterdämmerung*) for Melbourne Opera, and Mrs Naidoo (*Satyagraha*), 3rd Norn and Sieglinde (*Die Walküre*) for Opera Australia.

Appearing regularly with Victorian Opera, Olivia has also been heard with Canberra Symphony Orchestra, City of Stonnington, the Murray River International Music Festival, Mildura, In Good Company, More Than Opera and the VCA Symphony Orchestra.

How might the audience have empathy for your character?

Elettra is alone in a foreign country away from anyone familiar and anyone she holds dear. Isolated, she has found comfort and the idea of a hopeful future in her unrequited love for Idamante. I feel the audience can have empathy for this character in that as the daughter of a King, Elettra has been raised with the expectation that she will be respected and be married to a worthy suitor, however she has been shunned in favour of an enemy slave. She is now alone, disrespected and embarrassed having lost her prospective husband to another woman.



MICHAEL DIMOVSKI

Arbace

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, seeing 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, as well as participating in the chorus for Opera Australia's Melbourne Autumn seasons of *Lohengrin*, *Mefistofele*, *Aida* and *Ernani*.

How might the audience have empathy for your character?

Arbace is stuck in this situation trying to come up with and execute an impossible solution to save an entire kingdom. All while seeing everything around him fall into ruins.



JAMES EGGLESTONE

High Priest of Neptune

James Egglestone's roles for State Opera of South Australia have included Laurie in *Little Women* and Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers*; for West Australian Opera, Nadir, Almaviva, Ismaele in *Nabucco*; for Victorian Opera, Don Ottavio, Ferrando and Peter Quint.

Most recently, James has sung Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, Cassio in *Otello* and Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) for Opera Australia, and Rodolfo (*La bohème*) for State Opera of South Australia.

He returned to Victorian Opera in 2020 as Narraboth in *Salome*. James is a dual Helpmann Award and dual Green Room Award winner, most recently for his 2021 Loge in *Das Rheingold* for Melbourne Opera.



SIMON MEADOWS

Voice of Oracle (Neptune)

Award-winning Australian baritone Simon Meadows enjoys a busy opera and concert career throughout Europe, Asia and Australasia.

For Opera Australia, he recently sang Telramund (*Lohengrin*) and The Count (*Le nozze di Figaro*); for Victorian Opera, Priam in Simon Bruckard's *Cassandra* and Jimmy in Stuart Greenbaum's *The Parrot Factory*. Simon was the baritone soloist in the world premiere of Richard Mills' song cycle *In Tempore Bello*.

For Melbourne Opera, Simon has performed the title roles in *Macbeth* and *The Barber of Seville*, Alberich in *Das Rheingold* and many others. In 2021, he sang Alfio/Tonio in *Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci* for West Australian Opera and returned to Perth as Germont (*La traviata*).

CHORUS

Jonathon Bam
Elizabeth Barrow
Paul Batey
Paul Biencourt
Kirilie Blythman
Kerrie Bolton
Emily Burke
Robert Campbell
Alastair Cooper-Golec*
Stephen Coutts
Rebecca Crabtree
Irving Dekterev
Shakira Dugan
Shania Eliassen
Olivia Federow-Yemm
Fraser Findlay
Matan Franco
Lyndon Green
Teresa Ingrilli
Jerzy Kozlowski
Alister Lamont
Kieran Macfarlane
Jane Magao
Hannah Kostros
Ursula Paez
Alex Pokryshevsky
Henry Shaw
Syrah Torii**
Peter Tregear
Emily Uhrich
Nicole Wallace
Lynlee Williams

* The appearance 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

“The Chorus act as characters in the operatic narrative and assist in contextualising themes. Through their acting, and interpretation of the composers music, they will use expressive outcomes to create mood and atmosphere”

JONATHON BAM

“Through the text, vocal colour (volume, dynamics etc.) and acting (reactions to the lead roles and each other)”

PAUL BATEY

“The Chorus is a vital part of any opera. We help support the plot and main characters with musical insights into the themes and emotions of the show”

OLIVIA FEDEROW-YEMM

“By echoing the desired moods of the theme in their singing and acting”

ELIZABETH BARROW

HOW DOES THE CHORUS COMMUNICATE THE THEMES OF AN OPERA TO THE AUDIENCE?

“We comment on the action, we take part in the action, and offer dramatic counterpoint to the action”

ALEXANDRA MATHEW

“The chorus can play many roles to communicate a theme - it can reflect the truth that is in the music - even if the soloists words are not telling that truth. Or the chorus fills in the blanks and helps move the narrative forward. A chorus might harbour on a point to emphasise an emotion or perhaps it's reflecting the emotions the audience experiences. It does this through harmony, rhythm, speed, movement and choreography”

TERESA INGRILLI

“The Chorus can employ foreshadowing and symbolism to enhance the thematic elements of the opera. Through their lyrics and actions, they may hint at future events, emphasise important symbols, or reinforce the overall meaning of the story, helping the audience understand and appreciate the opera's deeper layers”

STEPHEN COUTTS

“We communicate the themes of the opera by drawing on the emotions of the scene and working off other cast members”

ALISTER LAMONT

“We have the unique ability to fill in the gaps for the story, as a chorus we provide commentary for the audience and respond to the drama”

EMILY UHLRICH

“Each member must first have a thorough understanding of the story and libretto so that communication as an ensemble is both unanimous and unambiguous”

LYNDON GREEN

“The Chorus represents a collective voice of the common people. We provide commentary and express various emotions such as awe and fear, and reflect on the moral dilemmas of the various characters”

IRVING DEKTEREV

HOW DOES THE CHORUS COMMUNICATE THE THEMES OF AN OPERA TO THE AUDIENCE?

“The uniqueness of opera is the use of music to convey an entire story. The Chorus' singing can convey emotions and reactions better than words or pictures”

LYNLEE WILLIAMS

“The chorus in opera communicates themes through vocal expression, using their collective voices to convey emotions and sentiments. Their movement, gestures, and staging enhance the audience’s understanding and emotional connection. They represent specific groups, act as narrators or commentators, providing background information and broader societal perspectives.”

ALEX POKRYSHEVSKY

“The chorus’s role in opera is to be both the voice, and conscience, of the people. They can both be involved in, and comment on, the stage action”

PETER TREGEAR

“The chorus is in a position to amplify the storyline, the sense of place and the opportunity to provide commentary on past events or even drive the story along further, especially in chamber opera”

JERZY KOZLOWSKI

THE ORCHESTRA

Melbourne Chamber Orchestra

Artistic Director

Sophie Rowell

Executive Director

Richard Jackson

Administration Manager

Catherine Turner

Artistic Operations Manager

Lucien Fischer

Production Assistant

Tarkyn Watt

Violin

Alexandra Osborne

Zoe Freisberg

Madeleine Jevons

Leanne McGowan

Donica Tran

Marlene Bennie

Megan Yang

Arun Patterson

Jenny Khafagi

Meg Cohen

Lara Mladjen

Felix Pascoe

Cameron Jamieson

Jennifer Kirsner

Ruby Paskas

James Armstrong

Viola

Merewyn Bramble

Katie Yap

Ceridwen Davies

Helen Ireland
Syuying Aw
Molly Collier-O'Boyle

Cello

Blair Harris
Alexandra Partridge
Rachel Morton
Isaac Davis

Double Bass

Vivian Siyuan Qu
Hamish Gullick

Flute

Eliza Shephard
Lilly Yang

Oboe

Steph Dixon
Emmanuel Cassimatis

Clarinet

Lloyd Van't Hoff
Clare Fox

Bassoon

Matthew Kneale
Laura Brown

French Horn

Anton Schroeder
Bec Luton
Josiah Kop
Freya Hombergen
Trumpet

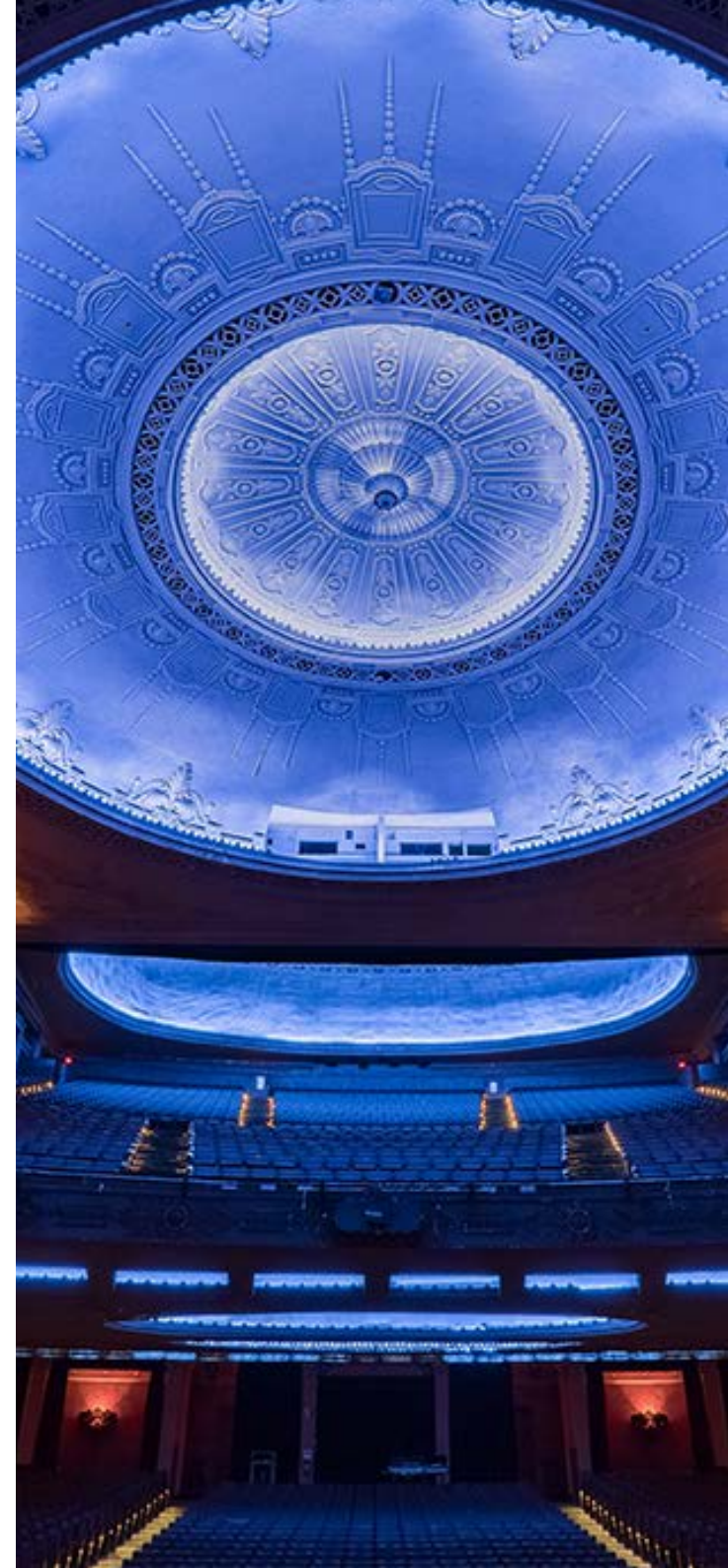
Joel Brennan
David Musk
Trombone
Stuart Brennan
Joshua Dulfer
Bass Trombone
Eric Klay

Timpani

Brent Miller

Pianoforte

Phoebe Briggs



SUPPORT YOUR EXPERIENCE

ARRIVE EARLY AND LOOK AT THE SEA

Take a moment outside the theatre to listen to the ocean and smell the salty air. The Palais Theatre was specifically chosen to house *Idomeneo* because of its close proximity to the sea and the opera's themes and locations. Who knows, maybe the God of Water and a character from our opera, Neptune, might be there to greet you or make an offer you can't refuse...

BRING YOUR AWARENESS TO...

The Palais Theatre is rich in history. Its art deco architectural design is prime for the drama that is our opera with its grand ceiling domes, expansive windows, patterned carpets and leather chairs.

You may notice as you settle into your seat, the revolving stage or the orchestral pit. What does this suggest about the way in which this opera will be told?

During the production you will notice incredible projections across three screens. What do these images from nature do for your understanding of the story? How does it contrast and or compliment the historic architecture of the theatre itself?

And please be mindful of people needing access to aisles and seats. We want everyone to settle in and enjoy the show.

SWITCH OFF PHONES AND DIGITAL WATCHES

Be here, with us, in the theatre during the performance. Switch off phones and digital watches. Feel free to take selfies in the foyer or by the ocean outside, you can even do a pre-show social media post of the stage. And don't forget to tag us! **#victorianopera @victorianopera**

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Prepare for the performance by familiarising yourself with the Central Themes and Elements listed on the right-hand side of this page.

EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC OF *IDOMENEO*

LISTEN NOW

Get to know the sound of *Idomeneo* by learning about some of the well known songs from the opera (<https://www.victorianopera.com.au/musical-gems-from-mozarts-idomeneo/>)

CENTRAL THEMES

RADICAL OPTIMISM

ORDER AND CHAOS

THE NATURAL WORLD AMPLIFIED

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

ELEMENTS

POST TROJAN WAR

GODS AND MONSTERS

ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

BEING MORTAL

THE NATURAL WORLD

THEMES

RADICAL OPTIMISM

Radical – advocating for change

Optimism – wanting positive outcomes

Idomeneo has a happy ending. It puts forward a desire for positive change, or 'radical optimism' as our director Lindy Hume states.

This theme plays out through a few characters, for instance, Neptune's own wish for a shift in power when a King shows that they are unworthy. Neptune acknowledges the need for change, from a king who commits atrocities at war, to a son who releases prisoners. To a son who chooses love as a reason to get married. To a son who would give their own life for the people of Crete, even if it's because his father didn't read the fine print when making a deal with a God.

The call for radical optimism is mirrored symbolically through the design features of the production, where slowly skewed and darkening images are replenished at the conclusion of the opera with clear skies and peaceful, expansive horizons.

Idomeneo can teach us that, though times might be complex and dark, advocating for change and wanting positive outcomes, can fuel action into the desired life we want for ourselves and our community.

THE NATURAL WORLD AMPLIFIED

No CGI has been used in the stunning images projected on the stage of *Idomeneo*. All images are directly from nature. They may be manipulated at times through colour changes or by zooming in, but otherwise they are directly from the Tasmanian landscape. Nature, amplified, is passionate enough.

What does a backdrop awash with nature do for our opera? How does nature amplified help us understand the characters in *Idomeneo* and its impact on human life? Why should nature need to be amplified at this time through story?

- Consider the force of the ocean and its impact on traumatised soldiers returning home. They have just fought in the Trojan war but may now die at the hand of nature.
- Consider Ilia's character and the opening of Act 2. Here she is surrounded by a groaning forest as she speaks of love. How does this foreshadow things to come or at the very least, communicate the expanse of her feelings?
- Consider designer Richard Roberts' adaptation of a recycled, reused and repurposed set design for *Idomeneo*'s setting.

In Australia we know very well the privilege of living with and at the mercy of nature. From drought to bushfire, to incredible surf and sunshine. It is imperative we respect it if we and the following generations are to enjoy it. When we don't, *Idomeneo* could argue, storms rage and monsters come from the sea. Even greater battles have to be fought.

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

Even in times of war there is an opportunity to come together. Watch, for instance as costumes eb and flow with the tides of community in post war *Idomeneo*. Costume designer Anna Cordingley, showcases touches of where people have come from in the costumes they wear, and who they are in a state of becoming as they welcome in their new homeland and create new community.

For the refugees in our story (those migrating to Crete or prisoners of war released into Idomeneo's kingdom), you might notice the dusty, tattered clothes they wear after their long journey. This is mirrored in Idomeneo's costume design returning from the Trojan War. They are now united in their struggles.

How else might we see Community and People emerge as a theme in *Idomeneo*?

Look to the business attire of the people of Crete for instance. What does the monochrome palette and harsh cut of each piece say about their community?

In ACT 3 we also see the people rise alongside the High Priest Of The Seas to demand action and change. There is a call to those in power to honour their policies, their duties, and their commitments to the God Neptune. In turn, they honour those they truly serve, the people.

ORDER AND CHAOS

The binaries of Order and Chaos are linked by the tensions between them and the inherent or implicit relationship between them – one cannot exist without the other. This theme of Order and Chaos in *Idomeneo* suggests a reckoning with that which we have no control over and that we should work with to dissuade.

It seems no accident in this regard that, in one of most chaotic characters, Idomeneo, waves of colour spill from the monochrome suit he wears. His true nature and place of origin will not be tamed.

We must look too to the reddened sea water tumbling behind Elettra as she sings her infamous 'rage aria' at the conclusion of the opera. This chaotic furore has come as the love between her betrothed Idamante, and another woman, Ilia, settles into marriage. Could Elettra have also enjoyed a happy ending if there had been open communication and transparency?

How else does Order and Chaos reveal itself in the opera *Idomeneo*? Look at Video Designer David Bergman's symbolic images. When are there clear skies? When is the ocean literally turned upside down? And, what has happened in-between to make it thus?

THEATRE VOCABULARY

Myth: a story that seeks to answer some of our fundamental questions or provide rules or aspirations to live by. Myths are true to the people and communities who created them.

Troy: a famous city in Türkiye (Turkey) and in Greek legend.

Trojan War: a war that led to the destruction of Troy.

Gods: (Singular) A creator, ruler and/ or guide of a spiritual nature.
(Plural) Spiritual beings in charge of aspects of the world whether natural, moral or unseen.

Minerva - Goddess of wisdom in ancient Troy

Aphrodite or Cytherea - Greek God of Beauty

Amor or Eros - Greek God of love

The Furies - Goddesses of vengeance and the Roman

Daughters of Night (The Avenger of Blood, The Jealous One and The Implacable).

Mars: God of war

Hymen - God of marriage

Neptune - God of waters and seas

Monster: A frightening imaginary creature.

Context: Context refers to the historical, cultural, or social circumstances that help to provide the backdrop for a situation or event.

Recontextualisation: Shaping the way a text is understood by giving it a new context. This can include information about the location, time, people involved in a situation.

Symbolism: A visual or textual representation of an object, action, or idea that stands for something else, often an abstract idea or emotion. Symbols convey deeper meanings or messages beyond the literal level of the story or image.

MUSIC VOCABULARY

Adagio: A gentle, slow and stately tempo, 55 - 65 BPM

Andantino: Slightly faster than moderately slow, 78 - 83 BPM

Andante Agitato: A moderately slow tempo played with excitement or agitation, around 98 BPM

Andante con moto: Slowly but with movement, 90 - 108 BPM

Allegro: A fast and bright tempo, 109 - 132 BPM

Classical Era: The period of music that falls after the Baroque Era and before the Romantic Era, roughly between the years 1750 - 1820.

Col legno battuto: An instruction for bowed stringed instruments to strike the strings with the stick of the bow.

Obbligato: In Western Music this generally means a musical line that cannot be dispensed with. However in the Classical Era it also referred to alternate harmonic lines that were considered as important as the melodic line.

Overture: A piece of music played by an orchestra at the beginning of an opera or other form of theatre. It generally introduces the key pieces and moods.

Recitative: A moment in opera when the singer adopts the rhythm of natural speech and is often on a repeated pitch. During this the accompaniment will be minimal to allow the singer the freedom to move.

Sforzando: An expressive term to provide a sudden accent to a note or chord whilst staying at the indicated dynamic level. It can be abbreviated as *sf* or *sfz*.

VISUAL STORY



OVERTURE

A grand swell of music erupts as equally striking images of an expansive sky appear on the stage. We meet a large albatross who soars effortlessly in the sky in and amongst a flock of birds. We cruise around the edges of bold landscapes and crash with the ocean against monumental cliffs. Here, on an island, where our opera is set, the natural world is amplified.

ACT 1.

It is the end of the Trojan war. A lone woman mourns the loss of her father King Priam, and her city. These would be reasons enough to be tormented. But at the time we meet Ilia, at the beginning of our opera, grief pulls in another direction. For she has fallen in love with an enemy - the son of the King who has brought her country down. Ilia is in love with her captor Idamante, son of Idomeneo, the King of Crete.

In another part of the kingdom, Idamante celebrates in the knowledge his father, King Idomeneo, has won the war. He releases all prisoners, including Ilia.

In this gesture of freeing all Trojan prisoners, Idamante reveals himself as a great future king. In loosening the chains of captives, Troy and Crete may be united. All sing to Ilia's eyes and Idamante proffers her loveliness as the cause of this happy union between countries.


Elettra, the woman promised to Idamante, walks in. She becomes agitated with jealousy as she watches him lead a chorus, singing Ilia's praise.

The king's confident Arbace now approaches with a heavy heart.

Although the God of war, Mars, has spared Crete's beloved Idomeneo, he tells us that the God of the ocean, Neptune, has claimed him. King Idomeneo is dead. Idamante turns to Ilia, not Elettra, to sing of his despair and cruel fate.

If Idomeneo is dead, Idamante becomes king. He then gets to decide who his bride will be. Elettra now sings to fate and the Furies of Hades. She despairs of the impending humiliation she will suffer. She feels betrayed by Idamante and sings that he and Ilia feel the full fury of her vengeance and cruelty.





Meanwhile... a crew upon a ship in a terrible, stormy sea, plead that
the gods spare their lives.
But Neptune, the God of water and seas is as bold as the gargantuan
waves swallowing them.
Idomeneo, still bloody from war, implores - leave them be.
An offer is made. The storm subsides.
But what deal did Idomeneo make with Neptune?

Saved, and safe on his native shores, where everything is at peace, Idomeneo admits to the gods his inner anguish. His promise to Neptune, in exchange for sparing him and his crew, is most atrocious and cruel. There will be an innocent who will suffer. The first he sees on the shore will have to die.

He sees a person approaching him...

Idamante has taken his sorrows to the shore where he sees an unknown warrior. Given solidarity might help with despair, he decides to speak with him.

Meanwhile Idomeneo wrestles talking with this young man whom he will have to kill...

Each talks of their woes, but it is only when Idamante uses Idomeneo's name (that his sorrow is related to his *father's* loss), that they recognise each other. Father and son are aghast! Idomeneo reacts with anger and pushes his son away. It is not the happy reunion either of them had wanted.



ACT 2.

Idomeneo confides in Arbace. He knows full well he was in the throes of ego and adrenaline after winning the war, when he faced Neptune. He despairs knowing that this, in part, has led to the terrible predicament he is in. Idomeneo did not ask Neptune of the 'terms and conditions' of his proposal, and now finds he must kill his own son, Idamante, to honour his contract with Neptune.

Arbace is stricken with horror and has a multitude of questions about the meeting on the shore. From here, he comes up with an idea - to send Idamante away with Elettra so he can hide from immortal eyes. Idomeneo agrees as Ilia approaches.

Ilia sings to Idomeneo - she has mourned for her father and country, but she now has great joy as his son released her and her people. She is now devoted to his father, the King, and his son, Idamante.

Idomeneo questions Ilia's joy as she leaves. It is too great and unexpected and then he realises, it is love.





Idomeneo knows he will now cause suffering to many people in sending Idamante away. He sings of the harsh destruction he and Neptune have created. He sees Elettra approaching and leaves. Alone, Elettra revels in how sweet the pleasure of this happy news is. That Ilia will have no influence on Idamante's heart if they move away. She rushes to the shore where the sound of Trojan and Cretan troops and sailors can be heard. The seas are placid, and all could be well! But of course, it is not.

Idomeneo is blunt and harsh toward Idamante as people board the boat – he wants him to leave immediately. Idamante and Idomeneo express their inner turmoil.

Idamante and Elettra are about to board the ship in this unhappy farewell when... a storm suddenly breaks out. Neptune is not happy, the chorus tells us. Who is the guilty one who makes this God so angry?

People flee in terror as a monster appears on the shore. Idomeneo admits that he is guilty but he will not kill the innocent victim...

INTERVAL





ACT 3

As we found Ilia at the beginning of our opera, we now find her again, this time singing in a lush and groaning forest. She sends her hopes and wishes out through the breezes. She speaks in the hope nature will carry her love to Idamante.

It is at this time Idamante approaches. Was he not to be sent away? Is this her chance?

Idamante confides in Ilia. His father is angry with him but won't tell him why and now he must go and fight a monster. He would rather be with her. And with this, they admit their love to each other.

Idomeneo and Elettra walk in and discover Ilia and Idamante, happy. Elettra curses Ilia and wishes vengeance. All sing to the cruel fate they're suffering.

Arbace enters and sings of the great misfortune of their city. So much misery and death and destruction. But he believes the King and his son should be saved.

Enter the High Priest who addresses Idomeneo alongside the people. They talk of the horrendous destruction inflicted by the cruel monster, that everyone is being afflicted. Thousands have perished! He urges Idomeneo to make a sacrifice. Who is the victim?



Idomeneo finally confesses that it is his son he has to kill. The chorus erupts with horror.

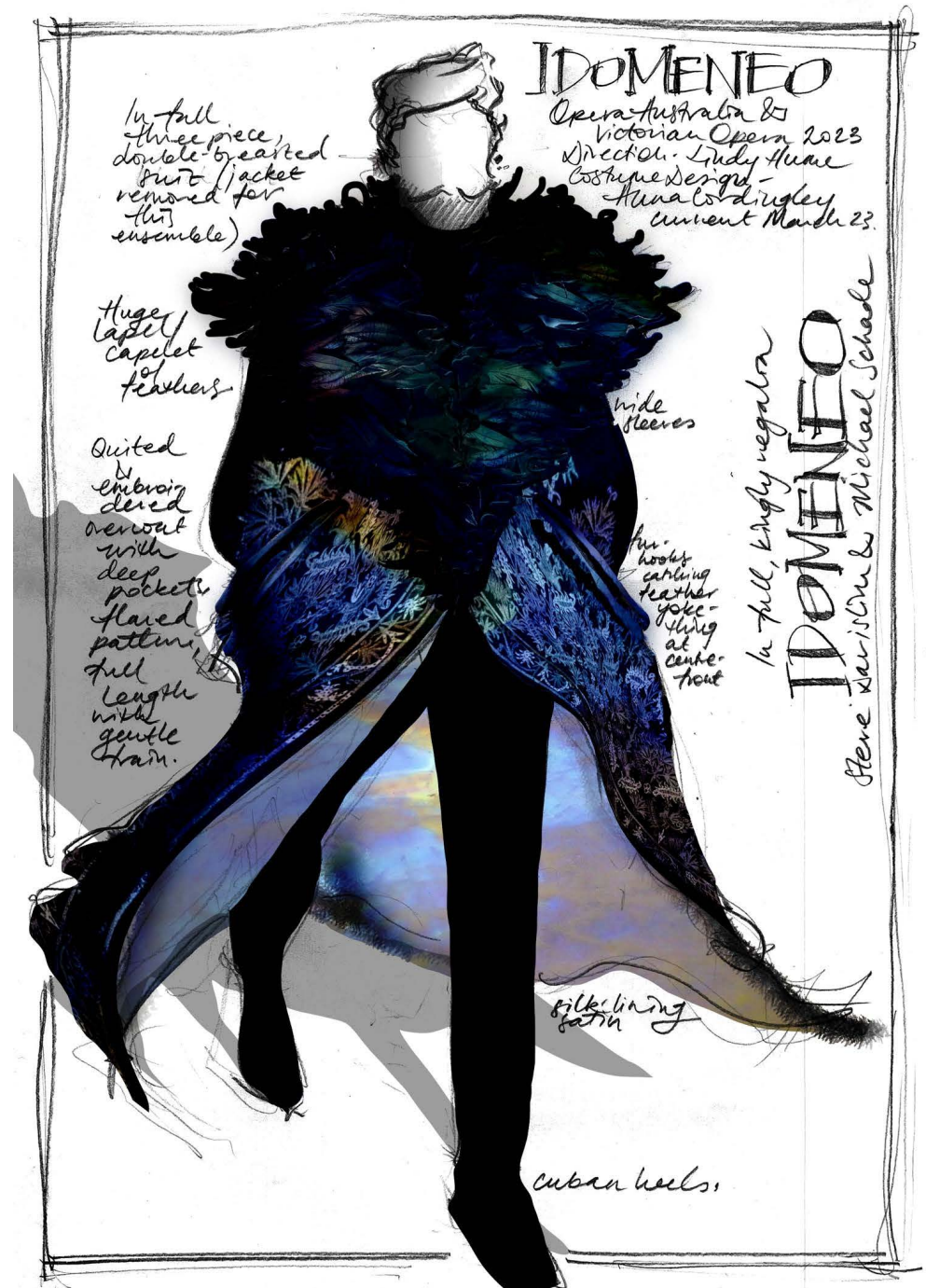
Idomeneo wishes for peace amongst the tides now that this great secret is out. But he is drowned out by a rupture of applause from the people. Arbace enters to speak of Idamante, the hero, who has killed the monster.

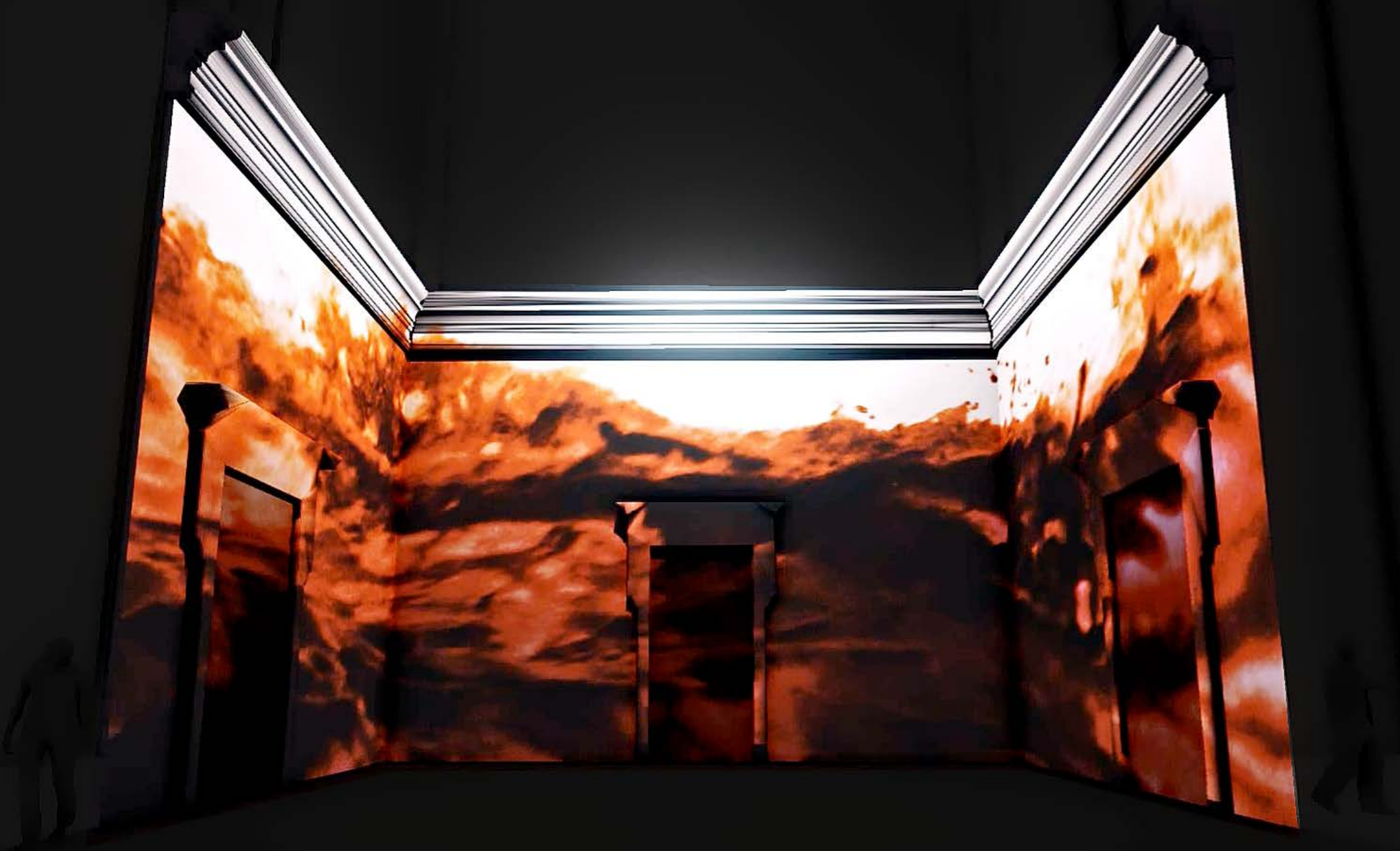
Idamante enters, with full understanding now of his father's agitation, and offers himself up so as to fulfil the deal Idomeneo made with Neptune. He will die happy knowing his father loves him and that there will be enduring peace for his people. Idomeneo begs Idamante to understand that it's not him, it is fate.

They both wish the final blow, that will end both their suffering, will be quick. Idomeneo and Idamante swear their love.

As Idomeneo goes to kill his son in anguish, Ilia stops him. She offers her life instead.

A voice is suddenly heard from the sea. Everyone stands aghast in terror... What new disaster awaits? Neptune's voice resounds, 'Love has won'. Touched by the display of love and affection from all parties, Neptune states that no one needs to be sacrificed. As a punishment, Idomeneo must give up the throne immediately to such a worthy son as Idamante; and Ilia will rule beside him.





Neptune is satisfied, but Elettra is bitter.



Peace is returned to Idomeneo's heart, and the only God left to sing
to is... a goddess, the goddess of marriage.
Our once lone woman on the shore now stands with her love,
Idamante.
She and Idamante are to rule together as equals.
Former enemies, now co-rulers.

“...For me, (it’s about) re-imbuing that idea of both the seductive nature of the desert landscape but also the potential fatality, and that it can lull you into this false sense of security, and it can also nurture you”

ARTIST AND BIDJARA MAN CHRISTIAN THOMPSON
(VOS, JUNE 4, 2019)

“Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so”

NOAM CHOMSKY

“I never really understood the word ‘loneliness’. As far as I was concerned, I was in an orgy with the sky and the ocean, and with nature”

BJORK

“It is my experience that the world itself has a role to play in our liberation. It’s very pressures, pains, and risks can wake us up -- release us from the bonds of ego and guide us home to our vast, true nature. For some of us, our love of the world is so passionate that we cannot ask it to wait until we are enlightened”

JOANNA MACY, WORLD AS LOVER, WORLD AS SELF

“Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not”

GRETA THUNBERG

“In our way, with all knowledge, we defer to the people who have that knowledge...to the people who have expertise in that knowledge. I defer to people who are better and more knowledgeable than me about optimism. And that makes me optimistic”

TYSON YUNKAPORTA (THE CENTRE FOR OPTIMISM INTERVIEW)

“It is a difficult time I must say, but I stay hopeful and optimistic because it has to change one day. I believe that change does not occur itself, somebody has to step out and say something and do something, and that’s how change happens”

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

“The future has several names. For the weak, it is impossible; for the fainthearted, it is unknown; but for the valiant, it is ideal.”

VICTOR HUGO, LES MISÉRABLES

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