

Presenting Partner



ELECTRICAL
& DATA
SUPPLIERS

VICTORIAN
OPERA



LEONARD BERNSTEIN

CANDIDE

Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work and live: the people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. We acknowledge these original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways and their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.

VICTORIAN OPERA PRESENTS

CANDIDE

BROADWAY OPERETTA

Music by Leonard Bernstein, book by Hugh Wheeler after Voltaire, Lyrics by Richard Wilbur, with additional lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, John La Touche, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker and Leonard Bernstein. Orchestrations by Leonard Bernstein and Hershy Kay; Musical continuity and additional orchestrations by John Mauceri. These performances are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd of London.

CREATIVES

Conductor Benjamin Northey	Sound Designer Samuel Moxham
Director Dean Bryant	Choreographer Freya List
Set & Costume Designer Dann Barber	Assistant Conductor Phoebe Briggs
Lighting Designer Matt Scott	Associate Designer Savanna Wegman

CAST

Voltaire / Pangloss **Eddie Perfect**
Candide **Lyndon Watts** Cunegonde **Katherine Allen**
Old Lady **Maria Mercedes** Maximilian **Euan Fistrovic Doidge**
Paquette **Melanie Bird** Cacambo **Eddie Muliaumaseali'i**
Governor / Vanderdendur **Alexander Lewis** Martin **Troy Sussman**

CHORUS

Kate Amos, Jonathon Bam, Paul Batey, Kirilie Blythman, Alastair Cooper-Golec, Irving Dekterev, Eamon Dooley, Shakira Dugan, Olivia Federow-Yemm, Jerzy Kozlowski, Belinda Paterson, Rebecca Rashleigh, Timothy Reynolds, Syrah Torii, Nicole Wallace, Raphael Wong

ORCHESTRA

Presented in association with



Presenting Partner



8-10 FEBRUARY
PALAIS THEATRE, ST KILDA

2 hours and 30 minutes, including an interval
Sung in English

CEO'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our first production for 2024 under our new Artistic Director, Stuart Maunder. It is lovely to be working with Stuart again and we are very much looking forward to giving you a wondrous 2024.

What a joy it is to be able to present *Candide* – a glorious work by one of the world's most talked about composers, Leonard Bernstein. The work has been revised and reworked by so many over the years of its short life, and this performance has been taken from the last revision Bernstein undertook himself.

Our cast come from all walks of theatrical and musical life and combined give a rapturous performance. The creative team has devised a production featuring the orchestra on stage, where we see and hear them proudly playing the Bernstein score whilst supporting the action throughout the night.

As always, we are forever grateful to our funding partners, Creative Australia and Creative Victoria, through the Victorian Government. The Robert Salzer Foundation has been part of the Victorian Opera family since our foundation and we are indebted to the Foundation for its trust in our vision for opera and musical theatre in Victoria.

Finally, we welcome our patrons, trusts and foundations and all who venture to see a Victorian Opera production. We hope that we excite your imagination, that we challenge you to discuss, that we entertain you and that

you are intrigued and tempted to try the next offering. Please come as you are, talk to us about your experience and come on this journey throughout 2024.



ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER
Victorian Opera CEO

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

On my first trip to Melbourne in 1978 as a young stage manager and recently converted Sondheim 'tragic' (a friend had given me the double LP *Side by Side by Sondheim*... addicted), I purchased and devoured the extraordinary output of this giant of music theatre, including some for which he 'simply' wrote the lyrics. The most recent album was *Candide* where Sondheim's name was a post script... to no less than five other lyricists. But what a score! It was a revelation; ebullient, joyous, silly, glorious stuff from the beginning of the dazzling overture to the paen of hope and optimism that is the final chorale '*Make Our Garden Grow*'.

Voltaire's original story *Candide, or Optimism*, published in 1759, is an attack on the complacency of our modern world, on already made, 'self help book' style systems of belief. It's a satire on organised religion, and a gloomy summing up of Man's inhumanity to man... and how, if this is the best of all possible worlds, do you explain the horror of natural disasters? Like all great satires, *Candide* just raises the issues.

The critic Mark Steyn has said, '*Candide* will always occupy a unique niche in the Broadway canon, not least because its dramatis personae include a character with only one buttock. To some of us, the whole show is half-assed – for what could be madder than turning *Candide* into a musical? You're adapting a satire on optimism to a medium where optimism is mandatory.'

In the musical version, Voltaire's scepticism is overthrown in the final moments. Bernstein's incurable optimism turns Voltaire's moral, "Il faut cultiver son jardin" (translated in the operetta as '*Make Our Garden Grow*'), into a stirring and positive anthem, full of hope for a better world.

This is, after all, the same Leonard Bernstein who, in response to the assassination of John F Kennedy, said: 'This will be our reply to violence; to make music more intensely. More beautifully, more devotedly than ever before'.

We are proud to present this delicious concoction in Dean Bryant's wildly inventive production, designed by Dann Barber and Matt Scott, featuring Orchestra Victoria 'up front and centre' under Maestro Benjamin Northey and starring an extraordinary group of Music Theatre and operatic royalty. As our young hero and his virtuously challenged consort face an evening of ever-increasing catastrophes – shipwrecks, erupting volcanoes, disease, poverty, treachery, lechery, war, and injustice, all the while insisting that 'all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds' – they finally take stock in the final moments of the musical. Through this gorgeous piece of music we are coaxing to appreciate what we've got, and make the most of it and to 'do the best we know'. Too optimistic? Please heavens not.



STUART MAUNDER
Artistic Director

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

How do we live? This is the fundamental question of every philosophy offered up since we transitioned from pure survival to having time to reflect on what we're staying alive for. *Candide's* journey, like many protagonists in classic stories, is to figure out what he is living for. His world is chaotic, full of war and disaster and corruption and greed; so much chaos that it becomes satirical. Surely no actual person could suffer as much as the characters in *Candide*? And yet, take in the world now – war and disaster and corruption and greed everywhere you look.

Voltaire's novella is chaotic, as is the musical that Bernstein and company adapted from the source. Too much happens as our titular hero attempts to win his love and come to an understanding of how to live. Originally a flop as a Broadway musical in the '50s (considered a confusing bore with a very grand score), the piece was resuscitated in the '70s when Hal Prince leaned into the chaos, cutting out the flab and pushing *Candide* even faster through the merry-go-round of his life. The push and pull of the story versus score continued as opera companies took ownership of the piece, changing focus again by enlarging the cast and orchestra. There have been as many versions of *Candide* as there have been productions.

Why does this chaotic piece of music theatre have such a hold over artists and audiences? Perhaps because *Candide* captures the vitality of life – the desire to see more, have more, love more – to grab as much from life before we disappear. Bernstein's score captures what truly being alive feels like – the passion and love, the fury and despair. Perhaps the chaos isn't a bug but a feature? With that hunger for more, though, comes disaster, and *Candide* finally realises that we need to push back against that and stay in one place. *Il faut cultiver notre jardin*; we must cultivate our garden.

The desire for more that Voltaire satirised has only increased in our times, and we now realise that the progress that lifted so many out of poverty and created a remarkable standard of living is also likely to ruin the world we share. We know we can't continue to consume the way we do if we want future generations to live comfortably, and yet we struggle to stop. When the team and I were planning our approach to *Candide* in 2024, I wanted to bridge the gap between the world Voltaire knew and the consumerist one we're a part of. Dann Barber has designed a physical world that uses trash to make beauty, recreating silhouettes from Voltaire's time with cast-offs from ours, as *Candide* moves and moves until he realises he literally has to put down roots.

Though about serious things, *Candide* is not tonally serious. It's written for a group of clowns with wonderful voices, and I'm thrilled with the cast we've assembled to do the first Victorian production of the piece in decades. Leonard Bernstein, a man famous for his appetites, created a score that captured that, and I can't wait to hear Ben Northey and Orchestra Victoria bring the voracious score alive. Because, after all, while we must spend the day cultivating our garden, we should sing and dance once the work is done.



DEAN BRYANT
Director

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

We open in Westphalia where Voltaire introduces us to *Candide*, who lives in the Baron's castle where he is taught by the optimistic Doctor Pangloss that this is the 'best of all possible worlds'. His fellow students are Paquette and the Baron's children, Maximilian and Cunegonde. When Cunegonde spies Pangloss 'experimenting' with Paquette, she encourages *Candide* to follow suit, and they declare their love for each other. When discovered, the Baron exiles *Candide* from Westphalia. He is roped into serving the opposing army, which attacks Westphalia, destroying the castle and killing the inhabitants.

Candide flees to Holland where the Anabaptist James invites him to recuperate in hospital, and he is reunited with Pangloss. *Candide* learns of Cunegonde's death; however, he is misinformed. We travel to Paris and find her lamenting her lot as the mistress of a merchant and a bishop.

The Anabaptist sails to Portugal when a storm breaks out, with only *Candide* and Pangloss surviving the shipwreck. They struggle ashore in Lisbon and a volcano erupts, inciting an earthquake. To assuage the heavens, the public demand an *auto-da-fé*, and Pangloss and *Candide* are hauled before the Inquisitor as heretics. The Inquisitor has Pangloss hanged and *Candide* flogged.

The Old Lady finds *Candide* and takes him to a villa where he is reunited with Cunegonde. Their reunion is interrupted by the arrival of her lovers, who *Candide* accidentally kills. They flee to Cadiz, where they realise their wealth has been stolen, and the Old Lady attempts to seduce the locals into replenishing it. Cacambo offers to serve *Candide*, telling him money can be made in the New World fighting for the Jesuits. The quartet travel to the New World.

ACT II

In Buenos Aires, the Governor inspects two newly-arrived slaves. He rejects Paquette but falls for the disguised Maximilian, until he realises the deception. *Candide* and his entourage arrive, and the Old Lady realises the Governor is a wealthier match for Cunegonde, so tells *Candide* he is in danger and must flee into the jungle.

Candide and Cacambo join the Jesuits, who have taken in Maximilian but after a joyful reunion things take a turn when *Candide* confesses his intention to marry Cunegonde. They flee again and stumble upon El Dorado, where *Candide* and Cacambo rest in this truly rich society.

After a while, *Candide* longs for love, and they leave with sheep laden with riches. In Surinam they meet the pessimistic Martin and calculating Vanderdendur. Cacambo leaves to ransom Cunegonde, and Vanderdendur sends *Candide* and Martin to sea in a leaky skiff in order to steal their remaining sheep. They are rescued by a galley headed to Venice, where they find Pangloss rowing.

In Venice they are reunited with Maximilian and Paquette and Cacambo, who says that Cunegonde is entertaining in a casino with the Old Lady. Discovering her, *Candide* realises she was never the romantic ideal he imagined. In his Venetian villa, *Candide's* companions bicker about the point of life until *Candide* wakes out of his depression and says they're leaving. His final journey is to a small farm where he asks Cunegonde to partner with him in order to cultivate their garden.



IN REHEARSAL (L-R):

Maria Mercedes, Alexander Lewis, Eddie Muliaumaseali'i,
Euan Fistrovic Doidge, Troy Sussman

Photography: Sarah Jackson

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager
Rain Iyahan
Deputy Stage Manager
Marina Milankovic
Assistant Stage Manager
Claudia Howarth
Head Mechanist
Dave Angelico
Costume Manager
Mel Serjeant
Stage Mechanist & Props
Guinevere Rose
Lighting Programmer & Operator
Jack Willis-Hall
Costume Maintenance
Elizabeth Gooden
Dome Operator 1
Robert Pearson
Dome Operator 2
Renata Zanini-Sassani
Radio Microphone Technician
Angus Beaumont

MUSIC STAFF

Head of Music
Phoebe Briggs
Repetiteur
Tom Griffiths

SEASON STAFF

Millinery
Phillip Rhodes
Wig Build
Charlotte Webb
Wigs and Makeup
Gabi Havens
Sally Gracia

Costumiers
Frances Brunton
Justine Coultham
Simon Doe
Jemma Eton
Jo Foley
Carla Noto
Xander Reichard
Nicole Serjeant
Becky Silveira
Francesca Zadra
Dressers
Xander Reichard
Paul Smith

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Monitor City
System Sound
LexAV
Imported Theatre Fabrics

ORCHESTRA

ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

Violin 1
Concertmaster
Sulki Yu
Deputy Concertmaster
Yi Wang
Chair supported by Susan & Leith Campbell
Principal First Violin
Erica Kennedy
Associate Principal First Violin
Tomomi Brennan
Tutti
Rebecca Adler
Chair supported by Mr Andrew Fairley AM
Alyssa Conrau
Chair supported by Leanne Menegazzo
Rachel Gamer
Tony Zhai
Lynette Rayner +

Violin 2
Section Principal Second Violin
Monica Naselow
Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann
Associate Principal Second Violin
William Grigg +
Tutti
Binny Baik
Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation
Matt Hassall
Chair supported by Mr Russell & Dr Jenni Jenkins
Philip Nixon
John Noble
Christine Ruiter
Lucy Warren
Edwina Kayser +

Viola
Section Principal
Paul McMillan
Chair supported by Ms Linda Herd
Associate Principal
Thomas Higham
Tutti
Jason Bunn
Nadine Delbridge
Molly Collier-O'Boyle +
Sandra Ionescu +
Matthew Laing +

Cello
Section Principal
Melissa Chominsky
Associate Principal
Diane Froomes
Tutti

Sarah Cuming
Chair supported by Angela Kayser
Philippa Gardner
Tania Hardy-Smith
Alexandra Partridge +

Double Bass
Section Principal
Stuart Riley
Chair supported by Don & Angela Mercer
Tutti
Matthew Thorne
Samuel Nock +
Flute
Section Principal
Lisa-Maree Amos
Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann
Associate Principal
Jessie Gu
Principal Piccolo
Rebecca Johnson +

Oboe
Acting Section Principal
Joshua de Graaf
Principal Cor Anglais
Jasper Ly +

Clarinet
Section Principal
Paul Champion
Associate Principal
Justin Beere
Principal Bass Clarinet
Robin Henry +

Bassoon
Section Principal
Colin Forbes-Abrams +
Associate Principal
Christopher Martin +

Horn
Acting Section Principal
Evan Williams
Principal Third Horn
Linda Hewett
Tutti
Sharon Hatton +

Trumpet
Section Principal
Mark Fitzpatrick
Associate Principal
Timothy Francis
Tutti
Louisa Trewartha +
Trombone
Section Principal
Scott Evans
Associate Principal
Kieran Conrau
Tutti
Robert Collins +
Tuba
Principal
Karina Filipi +
Timpani
Section Principal
Guy du Blêt
Chair supported by Mr Jim Cousins AO & Mrs Libby Cousins AM with Igor Zambelli
Percussion
Section Principal
Mathew Levy
Associate Principal Timpani / Percussion
Joshua Hill +

Harp
Section Principal
Melina Van Leeuwen +
Associate Principal
Tijana Kozarcic +

KEY
+ Denotes guest musician
For a complete listing of Orchestra Victoria's musicians and staff, visit:
orchestravictoria.com.au



CREATIVE TEAM



BENJAMIN NORTHEY
Conductor

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and the Principal Conductor in Residence of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He has previously held the posts of Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2010-2019), Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002-2006) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007-2010).

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy after being accepted as the highest placed applicant in 2002. He completed his studies at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula in 2006 before returning home to Australia where he has become one of the most sought after conductors in the Asia-Pacific region.

He commenced conducting studies with John Hopkins at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music from 2000-2002. In 2001 he was awarded first prize in the Symphony Australia Young Conductor of the Year Competition under the direction of Jorma Panula.

In 2009/10 he was invited as one of three conductors worldwide to participate in the Allianz International Conductor's Academy with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra where he was mentored by Vladimir Jurowsky and Christof von Dohnányi.

Northey appears regularly as a guest conductor with all major Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia (*La bohème*, *Turandot*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*), New Zealand Opera (*Sweeney Todd*), the State Opera South Australia (*La sonnambula*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*) and Victorian Opera (*Into the Woods*).

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Malaysian Philharmonic and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Northey has collaborated with major artists such as Maxim Vengerov, Anne Sofie von Otter & Wynton Marsalis. He has also collaborated in many genres of music with artists including Tim Minchin, Professor Brian Cox, Lalah Hathaway, Kurt Elling, Anoushka Shankar, James Morrison & Ben Folds.

An Aria Awards, Air Music Awards, and APRA/AMCOS Art Music Awards winner, Northey is highly active in the performance and recording of new Australian and New Zealand orchestral music having premiered over a hundred new works by contemporary composers. He has been a driving force in the performance of orchestral music by Australian First Nations composers and performers having premiered multiple works of composers Deborah Cheetham and William Barton as well as collaborating with composer Paul Grabowsky and Arnhem Land songmen Daniel and David Wilfred.

Northey is active in music education and training through concerts and workshops for the Melbourne, West Australian and Sydney Youth Orchestras, the Australian National Academy of Music, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music & Monash University. He is Artistic Director Designate of the Australian Conductor's Academy, a national position he will commence in 2025.

Northey's many prizes include the 2001 Symphony Australia Young Conductor of the Year, the prestigious 2010 Melbourne Prize Outstanding Musician's Award and the 2002 Brian Stacey Memorial Scholarship. In 2018 he was voted Limelight Magazine's Australian Artist of the Year. He was Creative Director of the 2023 ABC *Classic Top 100* TV special which has become one of the most watched classical music events in Australian history.

He is also the Artistic Director of the Hush Foundation which produces original music for therapeutic use in healthcare settings. His numerous recordings can be found on ABC Classics.

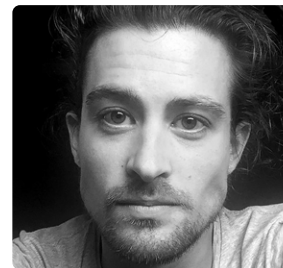


DEAN BRYANT
Director

Dean Bryant is an award-winning writer and director. Recent credits include *A Little Night Music* (Hayes Theatre Co), *Bloom* (MTC), *Giustino* (Pinchgut), *Hubris & Humiliation* (STC), *The Normal Heart* (STCSA), *Show People* (Sydney Festival) and *It's A Sin: Songs of Love and Shame* (Adelaide Cabaret Festival). He won the Sydney Theatre Award and Green Room Award for his direction of *Fun Home* (STC/MTC).

He was Associate Director at Melbourne Theatre Company 2016-2019 where his other credits include *Torch the Place*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Lady in the Van*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Wild*, *Vivid White*, *Born Yesterday*, *Skylight* and *I'll Eat You Last*. Other credits for Hayes Theatre include *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Assassins*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Sydney Theatre Award) and *Sweet Charity* (Helpmann Award). For Opera Australia he directed *Two Weddings*, *One Bride* and *Anything Goes* (with GFO) and has directed for Darlinghurst Theatre, Red Stitch, VCA and The Production Company.

With composer Mathew Frank he wrote the Green Room Award-winning musicals *Prodigal* and *Once We Lived Here*, as well as *Virgins: A Musical Threesome*, *The Silver Donkey*, songs for *Mr & Mrs Murder* and, with Sheridan Harbridge, an adaptation of *My Brilliant Career* which premieres at MTC this year. Dean has created many solo shows, including smash-hit *Britney Spears: The Cabaret*, as well as verbatim plays *Gaybies* and *Well... That Happened*, and made his screen directing debut this year with short film *Rhyme Time*.



DANN BARBER
Set & Costume 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. After art school, Dann completed a Bachelor of Theatrical Arts at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). Recent work includes *Rent* (LPD Productions), *Melbourne*, *Cheremushki* (Victorian Opera), *Bloom*, *A Very Jewish Christmas Carol* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Crocodile* (Spinning Plates), *Far Away* (Patalog Theatre), *Wittenoom*, *The Amateurs* (Red Stitch Actors Theatre). Dann was the associate costume designer for Gabriela Tylesova for the Australian Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty* and again for Melbourne Theatre Company's *Shakespeare in Love*.

Dann has received and been nominated for numerous awards: including Green Room awards for Best Design in Cabaret for *The Ghetto Cabaret* (Kadimah Yiddish Theatre), Best Independent Set and Costume design for *The Mermaid* (La Mama Theatre) and recently for best set design for *Yentl* (Kadimah Yiddish Theatre).

Dann is a guest lecturer and tutor at the Victorian Collage of the Arts and Melbourne University.



MATT SCOTT
Lighting Designer

Matt is one of Australia's leading lighting designers with 27 years' experience in the industry, designing more than 200 productions for theatre, opera, dance, and musical theatre. His work has been seen and received well both nationally and internationally. He returns to Victorian Opera having previously lit *The Who's Tommy*, *Parsifal*, *Banquet of Secrets*, *Voyage to the Moon*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Nixon in China*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Baroque Triple Bill*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Xerxes* and *Orphée et Eurydice*. Other more recent work includes *Fun Home* (Sydney Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company); *Jacky*, *The Heartbreak Choir*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Storm Boy*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Architect* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Drizzle Boy* (Queensland Theatre), *The Dance of Death* (Belvoir); *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (The Production Company); *Madama Butterfly* and *The Pearlfishers* (SOSA). Matt has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Lighting Design and one Green Room Award for Best Design for an Opera. He is currently a Lecturer in Production (Lighting Design) at the University of Melbourne (Victorian College of the Arts).



FREYA LIST
Choreographer

Freya List is a critically acclaimed choreographer working across theatre, film, TV, company works and music. As well as being a versatile choreographer, movement director and educator, she is passionate about fostering community, and has created valuable platforms for dancers to interact and inspire both locally and abroad.

Freya recently won the Green Room Award (Betty Pounder Award for Original Choreography) for her work on *Cruel Intentions: The 90's Musical* (David Venn Enterprises) and *Next To Normal* (James Terry Collective). Other notable stage credits include the national tours of: *Tick, Tick, Boom* (StoreyBoard Entertainment) and *Chess in Concert* (StoreyBoard Entertainment), *The Children* (MTC/ STC), *Next To Normal* (James Terry Collective), *A View From the Bridge* (MTC), *RENT* (James Terry Collective), *Kabaret Dietrich* (Fringe Festival), *Parade* (Soundworks), *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Sweet Charity*, *Little Women* and *Urinetown* (VCA). As well as choreographing and directing her own full length dance works *Half Full* (Collaboration The Project) and *Sondheim* (Transit), she has been involved in workshops for WAGs (Development) and *I Can Jump Puddles* (Antipodes). Freya was also nominated for the Betty Pounder Award for Excellence in Choreography (Green Room Awards) for her work on *Bright Star* (Pursued by Bear).

Freya is the director of the international outreach program 'Dancing Through India' and the popular event series 'Playing Field Series' that highlights local music artists and dancers. Freya collaborates with many artists through the creation of music videos, live shows, tours and movement coaching. Some of these artists include Hopium, Ben Abraham, Sex on Toast, Thelma Plum, Women of Soul Collective, Hayden Calnin, Woodes, Franco Gonzo, Chealsea Wilson and Braille Face. Other choreographic creative screen credits include *Utopia* (ABC), *Good Morning America*, *The Antidote* (short film) and feature film *Up Here*.

Freya is looking forward to working on the upcoming season of the Australian premiere of *The Grinning Man* (Salty Theatre) and the Sydney season of *Parade* (Soundworks).



SAMUEL MOXHAM
Sound Designer

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 and 2023 Victorian Opera seasons, he returns as Sound Designer for *Candide*.



PHOEBE BRIGGS
Assistant Conductor

BMus (University of Melbourne). Opera Australia music staff 2002 – 2012, Head of Music at Victorian Opera since October 2012.

For Victorian Opera, Phoebe has conducted *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Play of Herod*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cendrillon*, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (Green Room nomination), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Green Room nomination), *Lorelei*, *Black Rider* (Helpmann nomination, VO/ Malthouse), *A Little Night Music*, *Happy End*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Visitors*. Other companies: Opera Australia, OzOpera, Stonnington Opera in the Park, Opera Northwest, IFAC, Ambassador Group, Chamber Made Opera, Melbourne Theatre Company.

Phoebe has appeared in concert in Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Japan.



SAVANNA WEGMAN
Associate Designer

Savanna Wegman is a stage designer, maker and writer working across theatre, opera and dance. She is New Zealand born, of Chinese Malaysian and Dutch descent and is now based on unceded Wurundjeri land in Naarm (Melbourne).

Recent performance design credits include: Set & Costume Designer *Biographica* (Lyric Opera, Theatreworks), Set & Costume Designer *Brittany and The Mannequins* (Fever103 Theatre, Green Room Award Nominated for Best Set & Costume Design 2022), Set & Costume Designer *Climbers* (Fever103 Theatre, fortyfivedownstairs), Set & Costume design *STAUNCH ASF* (Amelia Jean O'Leary, Melbourne Fringe) Set Designer *A Certain Mumble* (Amelia Jean O'Leary, Darebin Arts Speakeasy), Associate Designer *Far Away* (Patalog Theatre, fortyfivedownstairs), *The Crocodile* (Spinning Plates Co. fortyfivedownstairs), *The Dream Laboratory* (Essential Theatre) and *The Mermaid* (La Mama), AudioVisual Designer *Kill Climate Deniers* (Monash Uni Student Theatre), AudioVisual Production Designer *WE ARE AIR* (Melbourne Fringe). Savanna has also completed Assistant Stage Management roles for *The Invisible Opera* (RISING Festival) and *My Dearworthy Darling* (THE RABBLE, The Malthouse). She was the Co-founder of the STRANGEkit Performance Collective and completed her Bachelor of Arts at Monash University's Centre for Theatre and Performance.

CAST



EDDIE PERFECT
Voltaire/Pangloss

Eddie is one of Australia's most respected and prolific writer/composer/performers with his work gaining him worldwide acclaim, including a 2019 Tony Award nomination for Best Original Score for his work as Composer and Lyricist for *Beetlejuice The Musical* on Broadway. As a performer and writer, Eddie has worked with top creatives from Baz Luhrmann and Global Creatures (*Strictly Ballroom the Musical*, *King Kong Alive* on Broadway), Simon Phillips and Neil Armfield (*Shane Warne The Musical*, *Keating! The Musical*) and most recently starred as the lead in *9 to 5 The Musical*.

Eddie's television credits include Ten's *Offspring*, a presenter on *Play School*, host of *The Crack Up*, *Kath and Kim*, *Stingers*, *MDA*, *Spicks and Specks* and as a judge on Australia's *Got Talent*, and most recently in ABC's comedy series *Gold Diggers*.

A regular fixture on the Australian comedy circuit, Eddie's solo music comedy shows (*Angry Eddie*, *Drink Pepsi Bitch*, *Misanthropology*, *Songs From The Middle*, *Introspective*) have received Helpmann and Green Room Awards, touring Australia, New Zealand, Edinburgh and London as well as hosting the 2014 Melbourne Comedy Festival Oxfam Gala. His debut play, satirical black comedy *The Beast*, broke box office records and toured Australia in 2016 and was followed-up by *Vivid White* in 2017.

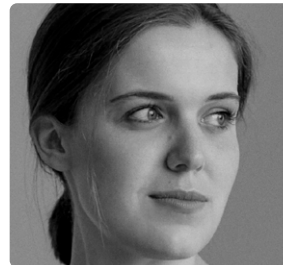


LYNDON WATTS
Candide

Lyndon most recently starred in the original Australian production of *Hamilton* in the role of Aaron Burr, for which he received the Sydney Theatre Award for best leading actor. Lyndon was also one of the lead singers in *Disney 100: The Concert*, which was showcased at the Sydney Opera House. Lyndon has featured in major fashion runways and publications such as Australian Fashion Week, GQ and Vogue Magazine.

Lyndon is a 2014 graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). Since graduating he has toured Australia and internationally in *Sweet Charity*, *Anything Goes*, *Singin' in the Rain* as the Beautiful Girl Production Tenor, Disney's *Aladdin* where he also covered and performed the role of Jafar, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* as Aurelio (Melbourne Theatre Company), Paul in *A Chorus Line* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company), and toured Australia and New Zealand/Europe as Bernardo in *West Side Story*.

Lyndon will next be seen in the TV Series *Paper Dolls*.



KATHERINE ALLEN
Cunegonde

Soprano Katherine Allen made her Australian debut at the Sydney Opera House as Paquette in Bernstein's *Candide* in 2018, and this season made her European debut, performing the role of Adela in Reimann's *Bernarda Albas Haus* at the Musiktheater im Revier, Germany.

Other roles to date include Katerina Cavalieri in *Amadeus* (Sydney Opera House/Red Line Productions), Josephine in *HMS Pinafore* (Hayes Theatre Company), Adele in *Die Fledermaus* (Lyric Opera Studio Weimar), Anushka in Tymon Zgozelski's *Flights* (Tête à Tête Opera Company), and Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Servilia (*La Clemenza di Tito*) with Pacific Opera Company.

Katherine recently completed her Master of Performance at the Royal College of Music, studying with Janis Kelly. Whilst in England she has performed as a soloist at numerous venues, including the Britten Theatre, Chelsea Theatre, and Goodenough College.

In 2019 she graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Performance) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and was a Young Artist with Pacific Opera from 2017-2020. Katherine was also the 2021 recipient of the Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship, Annie McFarling Opera Scholarship, and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award with Melba Opera Trust.

She was supported in the UK by the RCM's Dangoor Scholarship, the Australian Music Foundation, the Ian Potter Cultural Trust, and the Tait Memorial Trust.



MARIA MERCEDES
Old Lady

Maria Mercedes is one of Australia's most successful and enduring performers, having starred as Luisa Contini in *Nine*, Grizabella in *Cats*, Svetlana in *Chess*, Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, Mama Morton in *Chicago*, Miss Sherman in *Fame*, Madame Giry in *Love Never Dies* and most recently as The Witch in *Into the Woods* (West Australian Opera).

Maria's film credits include *Patrick*, *Head On*, *The Taverna*, *Dreams for Life*. On Television she has appeared in *The Tourist*, *Neighbours*, *Bloom*, *Miss Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*, *Wentworth*, *Fat Tony & Co*, *House Husbands*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Kick*, *Greeks on the Roof*, *Thunderstone* and *Prisoner* to name but a few.

Maria has also made numerous appearances on every major Australian TV Variety Show over her five decades in the biz. Maria is the recipient of a Mo Award, an Aria Award and a Green Room Award for her performance as Maria Callas in *Master Class*.



EUAN FISTROVIC DOIDGE

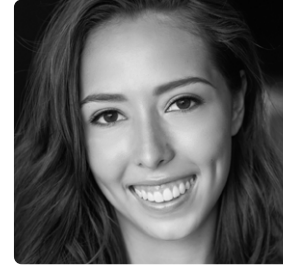
Maximilian

The thrill of being cast as Joseph in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* capped off an incredibly busy last few years for Euan Fistrovic Doidge. Prior to commencing *Joseph*, he had concluded a national tour playing Blaine in the *Cruel Intentions*, and in 2022 had performed for the Melbourne Theatre Company in *Fun Home*, as well as Victorian Opera playing Sam Wurlitzer in *Happy End*. In 2021 he performed in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in Brisbane and Perth and played Lewis in the production of *Pippin The Musical* in Sydney. Euan took centre stage in 2019 playing Tony Manero in GFO's *Saturday Night Fever*. This role followed his reprisal as Felicia in the 2018 Australian tour of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*.

Musical Theatre has been an intrinsic part of Euan's background, starting as a graduate of Patrick Studios Australia under the direction of Andrew Hallsworth. During this year of study, he was cast in his first musical *Anything Goes* (The Production Company). In 2012 Euan appeared in *The Producers* (The Production Company), then went on to play Paul San Marco in the Australian cast of *A Chorus Line* (TML Enterprises), for which he was the youngest ever nominee for the Helpmann Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical.

From 2012-2014 Euan appeared as Nikos/Padamadan in the Australian tour of *Legally Blonde* (ATG/GFO/Farrelly Prods) and *Grease* (GFO) in which he understudied the roles of Kenickie and Vince Fontaine, as well as understudying and performing the role of Teen Angel. He was then cast in the dream role of Marius in the Australian tour of *Les Misérables* (Cameron Mackintosh/Michael Cassel) 2014-2016.

During that time he also released his debut Album *Let It Sing*, and in 2016 Euan had the great pleasure of playing the role of Felicia/Adam in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* and was Lead Singer in *Burn The Floor* (Norwegian Cruise Lines). On returning to Australia he starred in the Australian tour of *Kinky Boots* (Michael Cassel) as one of the Angels and covered the role of Lola, which he performed many times to great acclaim.



MELANIE BIRD

Paquette

Melanie Bird is a Melbourne-based actor, singer and performer. She is a 2020 graduate of Showfit's two year full-time musical theatre course. Prior to Showfit, Melanie completed a year at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music studying classical singing and opera technique.

Her professional theatre credits include GWB and The Old Vic's production of *A Christmas Carol*, and most recently Melanie originated the role of Tiffany in the new Australian musical *Midnight* with Aspect Entertainment. She recently played Anne Egerman in Hayes Theatre Company's production of *A Little Night Music*. Other credits include Hayes Theatre Company's *Jekyll and Hyde* as Nellie/Lucy Cover and James Terry Collective's *Next To Normal* as Natalie Goodman. She has also been part of many developments of new Australian work. These include Kate Miller-Heidke and Kier Nuttall's *Bananaland* with the Brisbane Festival, Dean Bryant and Mathew Frank's *My Brilliant Career*, Miranda Middleton, Grace Chapple and Luke Bryne's *Paper Stars* with Salty Theatre and Sean Donehue and Nicholas Waxman's *Bearded* with the Australian Music Theatre Festival. In 2023 Melanie hosted and performed at Rod Laver Arena in *Australian Open Kids Tennis Day: Arena Spectacular*. Melanie has also been featured on the original cast recording of *My Brilliant Career* by Bryant and Frank as well as *Scarlet: The Original Concept Recording* with DhB Theatrical.

She would like to thank the team at Ian White Management for their continual support.



EDDIE MULIAUMASEALI'I

Cacambo

Playing the role of Wotan in Melbourne Opera's production of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* was the highlight of Eddie Muliaumaseali'i's 35-year career in opera, musical theatre, television and drama.

He has sung roles in New Zealand, Australia, Asia, Europe and the USA. Eddie was a member of the Tiroler Landestheatre of Innsbruck, Austria, after being chosen by the intendantin, Brigitte Fassbender, which enabled him to achieve his goal of being an operatic soloist in Europe.

Versatility in the arts has seen Eddie play roles in musical theatre culminating in a Helpmann Award nomination for playing the role of Joe in *Showboat*, singing the famous song 'Old Man River'. He has recently sung with the Toshi Clinch Big Band in the Duke Ellington Sacred Concerts, and performed the role of Albert in Victorian Opera's production of *The Visitors*.

From Porgy to Mephistopheles to Sarastro and Leporello, Beggar, Devil, High Priest to servant, this bass has enjoyed an adventurous journey on the stage.



ALEXANDER LEWIS
Governor / Vanderdendur

Alexander Lewis has forged a unique career, having performed around the world in both opera and musical theatre. He is a graduate of The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts' acclaimed Music Theatre Program, the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco, and The Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Alexander's musical theatre credits include: Tony in *West Side Story* for Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour (Helpmann Award Nomination); Tateh in *Ragtime* for The Production Company; George in *Sunday In the Park with George* for Victorian Opera in Melbourne; Candide in *Candide* with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs; Enoch Snow in *Carousel* for Houston Grand Opera; Raoul in *The Phantom of the Opera* for the Really Useful Group (as well as The Phantom understudy); Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd* with Opera Australia and Frederick Barrett in *Titanic* with Seabiscuit Productions.

Operatic performances include: Laca in *Jenufa* for The Santa Fe Opera; Count Danilo in *The Merry Widow* with West Australian Opera, Opera Australia and State Opera South Australia; John Wormley in the world premiere and return seasons of *Crossing* for The American Repertory Theatre in Boston and BAM's New Wave Festival in New York; the title role of *The Nose* with Opera Australia, the Komische Oper Berlin, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and The Metropolitan Opera (HD Live Broadcast); Hoffmann in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Gritsko in *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* with the Komische Oper Berlin; Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with West Australian Opera; Flask in *Moby Dick* with Washington National Opera; St. Brioche in *The Merry Widow* (HD Live Broadcast) and Borsa in *Rigoletto* (HD Live Broadcast) for The Metropolitan Opera.

Most recently, Alexander re-created his role of Danilo in Opera Australia's production of *The Merry Widow* at the Sydney Opera House and performed the role of Anatoly in the national tour of *Chess*.



TROY SUSSMAN
Martin

Troy has worked for over 30 years as a professional performer and in those years, he has been one of the most prolific artists in the industry, working throughout Australasia and the West End. Most recently he was seen in the OA production of *Phantom of the Opera* and MTC's *Bloom*. Theatre credits also include *Aladdin*, *Who's your Baghdaddy*, *25th Anniversary Concert of Jekyll & Hyde*, *Les Misérables* (Original & 10th Anniversary, Australia & West End, London), *City of Angels*, *Passion*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Mary Poppins*, *Donmar Warehouse's Guys and Dolls*, *Mame*, *Sweet Charity*, *Mack and Mabel*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *We Will Rock You*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Noises Off*, *Jolson*, *Chess*, *Miss Saigon*, *The Secret Garden*, *Original The Phantom of the Opera*, *Hair*, *Honk!*, *Chang and Eng*.

On television Troy has appeared in *Love Me, Fires*, *Les Misérables at Windsor Castle*, *Forensic Investigation*, *Denise*, *Good Morning Australia* and *Saturdee*. Troy can be heard on the Australian Cast Recordings of *Mary Poppins* and *Hair*, *South Pacific* Soundtrack and solo vocals on Rob Guest's *Standing Ovation*.

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Victorian Opera is the state opera company of Victoria. Your state company. We make creative, accessible and relevant work for everyone while acknowledging the traditions and evolving our artform.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera joined the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in 2021. Alongside other companies, Victorian Opera holds its rightful position in the national performing arts arena.

Commitment to the development and presentation of new Australian opera and musical theatre is forefront to our mission. We identify relative and topical material, commission and workshop new scores and librettos, and ultimately produce new productions. Victorian Opera premieres at least one new Australian opera or music theatre work each year, and have commissioned 39 new works since the company's formation.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through our Emerging Artists Programs – The Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE), our VO Emerges project and our Emerging Artists Opera Prize scholarship. Creating future pathways for artists, artisans and technicians has become a driving focus for our organisation.

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

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