

VICTORIAN
OPERA

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE



Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the people of the Eastern Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the unceded land upon which we work and create.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent and their continuous connection in Caring for Country.

We reflect on our shared responsibility to honour and respect this land and its stories, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Victorian Opera presents

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Composer **Arthur Sullivan**

Librettist **WS Gilbert**

CREATIVES

Conductor **James Pratt**
Director **Stuart Maunder**
Set Designer **Richard Roberts**
Costume Designer **Roger Kirk**

Lighting Designer **Trudy Dalglish**
Choreographer **Elizabeth Hill-Cooper**
Revival Choreographer **Anna Tsigotis**
Sound Designer **Samuel Moxham**

CAST

The Pirate King **Ben Mingay**
Ruth **Antoinette Halloran**
Frederic **Nicholas Jones**
Mabel **Nina Korbe**
Major-General Stanley **Richard Piper**

Sergeant of Police **Christopher Hillier**
Samuel **Douglas Kelly**
Edith **Rachael Joyce***
Kate **Alessia Pintabona***
Isabel **Syrah Torii**

ENSEMBLE

Megan Baker
Lachlan Bartlett
Alastair Cooper-Golec
Eamon Dooley
Shakira Dugan
Declan Farr
Genevieve Gray
Georgie Grech
Hanlon Innocent
Chloe James

Luke London
Bailey Montgomerie*
Joshua Morton-Galea
Sidra Nissen
Kiran Rajasingam
Rebecca Rashleigh
Henry Shaw
Nicholas Sheppard
Darcy Wain

ORCHESTRA

Orchestra Victoria

Palais Theatre

31 January – 6 February 2026

2 hours and 10 minutes, including interval

Original Premiere 31 December 1879

The Pirates of Penzance is an original production by Opera Australia.

**Opera Prize Recipient*

WELCOME

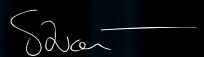
Welcome to Victorian Opera's season of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*!

It has been a joy to stage this glorious piece and we're especially proud to present this season at our home venue, the Palais Theatre. We can't imagine a better location than here, in this historic theatre by the sea, during summer's beautiful balmy weather.

Our thanks to the talented people on stage, behind the scenes and in the pit for their dedication in presenting *The Pirates of Penzance*. Our thanks as well to Victorian Opera's patrons, sponsors and funding partners — your continued support makes everything we do possible.

If this is your first time joining us, we hope you enjoy a truly memorable experience. And if you're returning, welcome back to Victorian Opera!

STUART MAUNDER
Artistic Director



ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER
CEO



SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A rocky seashore.

A band of pirates offer a toast to Frederic, their apprentice, as he is 21 years old and his indentures are almost up. He loathed being a pirate and is looking forward to a more respectable career. The other pirates refuse to join him.

Meanwhile, Frederic's nursemaid Ruth, who had also joined the band as a piratical maid-of-all-work, wants to leave with him and become his wife. Frederic, who has seen very few women, agrees.

That is, until he sees the young daughters of Major-General Stanley arrive. The girls all reject his advances except Mabel. Her sisters are then seized by the pirates and threatened with marriage. The Major-General arrives and plays on the pirates' sympathy by telling them he is an orphan. The pirates release the General and his daughters.

ACT II

A ruined chapel.

The Major-General is troubled by the lie he has told. His daughters comfort him and Frederic reveals a plan to march against the pirates with a squad of police.

The Pirate King and Ruth arrive with news of a technicality concerning Frederic and recall him to service. Frederic's sense of duty is so strong, he agrees to rejoin the pirates and bids farewell to Mabel. And being an obedient young man, he tells the pirates that the Major-General is not, in fact, an orphan.

Attempting to attack the General, the pirates find him defended by police. The pirates win the skirmish and the General is taken prisoner. But when the Sergeant of Police commands the pirates to surrender in the name of the Queen, Ruth reveals yet another secret. The General pardons them and grants his daughters' hands in marriage.

FROM THE CONDUCTOR

WS Gilbert's inspired story telling in *The Pirates of Penzance* speaks to the adventurous and playful child in all of us, just as its precursors *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* did before it. But what are we listening to when we experience Arthur Sullivan's score?

The rollicking music, operatic parody, classic oom-pah and infectious patter songs all have unique origin stories. Here's a little list: Sullivan was a boy chorister at the Chapel Royal and later an organist at St Michael's Church in London. From these influences we get Victorian era anthems such as 'Hail Poetry'. In 1856, the Royal Academy awarded Sullivan the Mendelssohn Scholarship, enabling him to study at the Leipzig Conservatory and walk in the compositional footsteps of Mendelssohn. We hear this influence often in Sullivan's orchestration, such as the fluttering woodwind which accompanies the ladies chorus, 'How beautifully blue the sky'. While working at St Michael's in the 1860s, Sullivan recruited extra tenors and basses for the church choir from the local constabulary, his first real-life chorus of policemen.

Both Gilbert and Sullivan enjoyed lampooning the melodramatic opera singing of mid-19th century European operas, cue Mabel's gymnastic soprano entrance in Act 1. In post-industrial England, the rapidly growing boroughs of London became home to Music Halls, a haven for rousing singalongs and comic acts. Music Halls are the birthplace of the call and response style songs,

which regularly feature as the G&S comic character's introduction.

The most commercially successful song of the 1870s was Sullivan's 'The Lost Chord'. A gifted melodist, he reaches these heights again with the *Pirates* Act 2 duet, 'Ah, Leave Me not to Pine Alone'.

Sullivan learned to play all the brass band instruments thanks to his father, a professional bandmaster. He draws on this to great effect when his policemen sing their trumpet call 'tarantara' and in much of the militaristic oom-pah, which features throughout his operas with Gilbert.

The backstory is interesting, but the reality is that the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership created the perfect environment for a brilliant plot and timeless music. I first conducted *The Pirates of Penzance* in a season with Dennis Olsen as the Major-General. His whip-smart stage presence and machine gun patter jump started an enduring love of *Pirates*, which, much like its catchy tunes, will never go away. This interpretation is also influenced by torch bearer Stuart Maunder and arranger Andrew Greene.

JAMES PRATT

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Pirates of Penzance was my first Gilbert & Sullivan experience. It was at Boggabri RSL Hall in 1965, and I so vividly recall the barrel with the skull and cross bones on stage, right as the local vicar Mr Taylor sang 'For I am a Pirate King'. And I loved it! I've loved it ever since — and I'm not alone.

There is no theatrical phenomenon in the Antipodes with the staying power of Gilbert & Sullivan. For generations of Australians, their first Gilbert & Sullivan in a theatre is a kind of formative experience. I have lost count of the number of people who've told me, "My aunt took me to see *HMS Pinafore* or *Pirates* when I was eight..." and how it got them hooked on theatre.

And so, with our 2026 production of *Pirates*, we look forward to building a whole new army of converts. Many will come to this show with absolutely no knowledge of the G&S tradition. G&S is no longer the 'go to' for schools and amateur production. This is no bad thing. We now have the opportunity to reassess and reinvent this repertoire without the weight of a century of performance practice.

The durability of G&S operettas is extraordinary, but not unexplainable. After all, Gilbert's dramatic situations are still funny. The way in which plots hinge on apprentices born on 29 February, or twins exchanged at birth, or ridiculous legal technicalities delighted the Victorians. But let's face it, stranger things happen on *Home and Away*.

Sullivan's music provides a kind of romantic foil to Gilbert's pervasive drollery and cynicism. This kind of friction was very much at the heart of Gilbert and Sullivan's creative relationship. They also shared a sense of humour. Nothing Sullivan wrote with others holds a candle to the music inspired by Gilbert's words. What Sullivan did to those words was to sabotage them and transform them by encasing them in glorious melody.

What other body of work, what other collection of 14 operas, reveals such riches — all of a type, a family, yet all different, thrilling, witty, satiric, gossamer thin, and with real heart. The fusion of gentle satire and genuine heartfelt emotion, so embodied in *The Pirates of Penzance*, is a combination that never ages. Indeed, perhaps it's something we need now more than ever.

STUART MAUNDER AM

PRODUCTION TEAM

Company Manager
Matt Bebbington

Stage Manager
Finlay Pedler

Deputy Stage Manager
Claudia Howarth

Assistant Stage Manager
Annabelle Rossi

Head Mechanic
Radek Rubinski

Head Electrician
Jamie Turner

Deputy Head Electrician
Georgie Donnelly

LX Programmer/Operator
Jack Willis-Hall

Dome Operators
Vivienne Hargreaves
Ella Thompson

Lighting Crew
Sam Victoria
Ellie Singe
Max Woods
Caleb Scott
Renata Zanini-Sassani
Jacob Shears

COSTUME BUILD AND WARDROBE TEAM

Costume & Wigs Manager
Mel Serjeant

Costume Assistant
Becky Silveira

Costumiers
Tim Corne
Ines Kustura
Olivia Peters
Xander Reichard
Vannessa Roberts

Wig Build
Deb Müller

THEATRE CREW

Wardrobe Supervisor
Becky Silveira

Dressers
Ines Kustra
Xander Reichard
Vannessa Roberts

Wig & Makeup Supervisor
Deb Müller

Costume Maintenance
Nicole Serjeant

MUSIC TEAM

Repetiteurs
Phoebe Briggs
Tom Griffiths

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

In recognition of Andrew Greene's
original re-orchestration

Isaac Hayward

Lex Audio Visual

Monitor City

Capricorn Rigging

Resolution X

JPJ Sound

ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

VIOLIN

Concertmaster
Sulki Yu
Chair supported by Lady Southey AC

Deputy Concertmaster
Yi Wang
Chair supported by Susan & Leith Campbell

Section Principal Second Violin
Monica Naselow
Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann

Associate Principal First Violin
Erica Kennedy

Acting Associate Principal Second Violin
Matt Hassall
Chair supported by Mr Russell & Dr Jenni Jenkins

Tutti
Binny Baik
Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation

Rachel Gamer
Rachael Hunt
Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation

Philip Nixon
Chair supported by The Fielding Foundation

John Noble
Rebecca Shirley
Chair supported by Mr Andrew Fairley AM
Lucy Warren
Edwina Kayser*
Ben Spiers*

VIOLA

Section Principal
Paul McMillan
Chair supported by Linda Herd

Associate Principal
Matthew Laing*

Tutti
Jason Bunn
Chair supported by Natalie Delbridge
Nadine Delbridge
Chair supported by Malcolm Delbridge
Edmund Mantelli*

CELLO

Section Principal
Melissa Chominsky

Associate Principal
James Churchill*

Tutti
Diane Froomes
Chair supported by Dr Gareth and Mrs Shoreh Phillips
Gemma Kneale*

DOUBLE BASS

Acting Section Principal
Kylie Davies

Associate Principal
Nic Synot*

Tutti
Ella Evans*

FLUTE

Section Principal
Lisa-Maree Amos
Chair supported by Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann

Associate Principal Piccolo / Flute
Melissa Doecke*

Principal Piccolo / Tutti Flute
Lauren Gorman*

OBOE

Acting Section Principal
Joshua de Graaf

Associate Principal
Jasper Ly*

CLARINET

Section Principal
Paul Champion

Associate Principal
Justin Beere

Tutti
Robin Henry*

BASSOON

Section Principal
Lyndon Watts

Associate Principal
Will Hanna*

HORN

Section Principal
Andrew Young

Associate Principal
Bec Luton*

Principal Third Horn
Linda Hewett

Tutti
Rob McMillan*

TRUMPET

Section Principal
Mark Fitzpatrick

Associate Principal
Timothy Francis

Tutti
Louisa Trewartha*

TROMBONE

Section Principal
Cian Malikides*

Associate Principal
Robert Collins*

Principal Bass Trombone
Benjamin Anderson

TIMPANI & PERCUSSION

Section Principal Percussion
Mathew Levy

Associate Principal Timpani / Tutti Percussion
Buddy Lovett

Associate Principal Timpani
Scott Weatherston*

Associate Principal Percussion
Hugh Tidy*

Tutti Percussion
Robert Allan*

KEY

Guest Artist *

For a complete listing of Orchestra Victoria's musicians and staff visit:
orchestravictoria.com.au



JAMES PRATT CONDUCTOR

James is a recipient of the Brian Stacey Emerging Conductors Award, the first graduate of the University of Adelaide's Orchestral Conducting Master's Degree, and winner of the Edouard Toldra Conducting Competition in Spain. James worked as a conductor at the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden and was invited to conduct at the Impuls Festival, leading premieres of new works with the Zafraan Ensemble in Berlin and Dessau.

In 2022, James was appointed as the Music Director for Perth Philharmonic Orchestra and Perth Symphonic Chorus. He has conducted the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Brahms' *Schicksalslied*, the Australian premiere of *Invictus: A Passion* by English composer Howard Goodall, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Faure's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*.

In 2023, James conducted *HMS Pinafore* with State Opera South Australia and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and was the music director for *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* as part of the G&S Festival.



STUART MAUNDER AM DIRECTOR

Stuart Maunder has been directing musical theatre and opera in Australia for 44 years. He joined The Australian Opera as Stage Manager in 1978, becoming a Resident Director in 1981. He returned to Opera Australia as Artistic Administrator in 1999, becoming Executive Producer in 2004.

His OA productions include *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Manon*, *Gypsy Princess*, *Don Pasquale*, *Trial by Jury*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *HMS Pinafore* and *My Fair Lady*. From 2014 to 2018, Stuart was General Director of New Zealand Opera, before joining State Opera South Australia as Artistic Director in 2018. In May 2023, he helmed Australia's first ever G&S Festival for that company.

In 2023, Stuart became Artistic Director of Victorian Opera. His past productions for VO have included *Follies*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd*, *A Little Night Music*, *Cunning Little Vixen*, *English Eccentrics*, *Mansfield Park*, *Boojum!* and *La Rondine*.



RICHARD ROBERTS SET & DESIGNER

Richard Roberts is a Melbourne based award-winning designer and educator whose work spans theatre, dance, opera, film and television. Richard is currently Head of Design and Production at the Victorian College of the Arts. Richard's recent opera designs include: for Victorian Opera, *Idomeneo* (with Opera Australia), *La Rondine*, *The Visitors*, *Parsifal*, *Cunning Little Vixen*, *Nixon In China*, *The Magic Flute*, *Baroque Triple Bill*, *The Marriage Of Figaro*; For Opera Australia, *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Pirates Of Penzance*, *La Sonnambula*, *My Fair Lady*, *Die Fledermaus* (with West Australian Opera); for Opera Queensland, *Ruddigore*; for New Zealand Opera, *Rigoletto*.

Richard's other credits include for Bangarra Dance Theatre, *The Bogong's Song*. For Queensland Theatre, *Othello*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Noises Off* (with Melbourne Theatre Company), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Tartuffe* and *Managing Carmen* (with Black Swan State Theatre Company).



ROGER KIRK COSTUME DESIGNER

Roger Kirk is a Tony Award-winning set and costume designer for theatre, film and television. He has designed costumes for productions such as *The Boy from Oz* with Hugh Jackman, *The King and I* and *King Kong: The Musical*. Roger was the costume designer for the film *Jesus Christ Superstar*, other credits include Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind* (London), *The King and I* (London Palladium), Hugh Jackman's *The Boy from Oz Arena Spectacular*, *Silver Rose*, *Le Corsaire* for Munich Opera House, *Dusty – The Original Pop Diva*, and *Shout!*

His Broadway credits include *The King & I* (Tony Award), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *42nd Street* (Tony Award Nomination). Roger's most recent credits include *Follies* and *Sweeney Todd* for Victorian Opera, *Miracle City* for Luckiest Productions, *King Kong* on Broadway, *42nd Street* in London and the sell-out Australian tour of Hugh Jackman's *Broadway to Oz: Hugh Jackman Live in Concert*, World Tour 2019.



TRUDY DALGLEISH LIGHTING DESIGNER

Trudy Dalgleish is one of Australia's leading lighting designers and a graduate of The National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). She has been nominated and won many awards for her work, including a Mo Award for outstanding contribution to musical theatre, a Helpmann Award, and seven Greenroom awards.

Trudy has worked extensively with most companies around Australia including Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company and the Sydney Dance Company. She is best known for her work in commercial musical theatre and arena spectacles both in Australia and overseas. She has worked in the West End and on Broadway, and extensively in Asia and the Middle East.

Trudy's latest designs include *Grease*, *The Mousetrap*, *The Odd Couple* and *And Then There Were None* for Crossroads Live, *The Tap Pack* on the West End, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Macbeth* and *The Pirates of Penzance* for SOSA, *Eucalyptus*, *Cunning Little Vixen* and *A Little Night Music* for Victorian Opera and *The World of Wearable Art* in Wellington.

She was also Associate Lighting Designer for *Hadestown* for Opera Australia.



ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER CHOREOGRAPHER

Elizabeth began her career as a classical ballet dancer with West Australian Ballet. Moving into choreography and directing, she discovered her love of opera. She has created or restaged productions for several state opera companies and Opera Australia.

Her credits include *Fledermaus*, *The Gypsy Princess*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Rusalka*, *Lakmé* and *Arabella*. Elizabeth regularly collaborates with Stuart Maunder and Roger Kirk.

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



ANNA TSIRIGOTIS REVIVAL CHOREOGRAPHER

Anna graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) with a degree in Musical Theatre. At the age of 16, she made her professional debut in New York performing in Dein Perry's *Steel City* at Radio City Music Hall. Performing credits include the Australian and New Zealand tour of *My Fair Lady* (Opera Australia), *Irene* starring Debbie Reynolds, *The Boy from Oz Arena Tour*, *Putting it Together*, *Shakers*, *Bat Boy*, *Pal Joey* and the Australian premiere of William Finn's *Elegies*. Anna has worked as a choreographer for the Stage School Hamburg, and on productions of *Blood Brothers*, *Guys and Dolls* and *42nd Street*.

Other credits include Revival Choreographer for *HMS Pinafore* (SOSA) and *The Pirates of Penzance* (SOSA, WAO), Choreographer for *Madama Butterfly*. In 2026, Anna will be the assistant director for *La traviata* and *Romeo and Juliette* with West Australian Opera.



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 Victorian Opera's 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 seasons, he returns as Sound Designer for *The Pirates of Penzance*.



BEN MINGAY THE PIRATE KING

Ben Mingay is one of Australia's most dynamic performers, celebrated for his powerhouse voice and captivating presence across stage and screen. Originally a construction worker in Newcastle, Ben's journey changed forever after a dare led him to audition for the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he won a scholarship to study classical voice.

Ben has since starred in acclaimed television and film projects, including *Frayed* (ABC/Sky UK/HBO Max), *Hacksaw Ridge* (with Mel Gibson), *House of Bond* and *Amazing Grace* (Nine Network), *The Twelve* (Foxtel), *Home and Away*, *Packed to the Rafters* (Seven Network), and three seasons of *Wonderland* (Network Ten).

On stage, Ben's leading roles include Shrek in *Shrek the Musical*, Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, The Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Tommy DeVito in *Jersey Boys*. He also originated Billy Kostecki in *Dirty Dancing*, a role he performed worldwide for six years.

With his unique blend of classical training, raw talent, and charisma, Ben Mingay remains a force in Australian and international entertainment.



ANTOINETTE HALLORAN RUTH

One of Australia's most accomplished sopranos, Antoinette Halloran returned to Victorian Opera in 2025 to star as Sally (*Follies*) and sing Kabanicha (*Katya Kabanova*). Previous seasons have seen Antoinette perform Mrs Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*) across Australia and New Zealand, Brünnhilde in Melbourne Opera's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the title roles in *Tosca* for West Australian Opera and *The Merry Widow* for State Opera South Australia, and Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*) in Perth. She also appeared as the associate artist for José Carreras' National Tour.

For Opera Australia, Antoinette has performed the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rusalka*, Mimì in *La bohème* and Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Green Room Award); for Opera Queensland – the title role in *The Merry Widow*; for New Zealand Opera – Mimì and Cio-Cio-San.

In 2026, she sings Ruth (*The Pirates of Penzance*) and originates the role of Nicola in *The Spare Room* for Victorian Opera.



NICHOLAS JONES FREDERIC

Australian tenor Nicholas Jones is currently a principal artist with the Paris Opera, where he has performed a wide range of roles across the repertoire. He is also closely associated with Opera Australia, where his appearances have included Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), Laertes in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Michael Driscoll in the world premiere of *Whiteley*, and Tamino (*The Magic Flute*). Nicholas won a Green Room Award and was nominated for a Helpmann Award for his portrayal of David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Elsewhere, he has performed Cassio (*Otello*) for West Australian Opera, Tamino, Ralph Rackstraw (*HMS Pinafore*) and Tsarevich Gvidon (*The Golden Cockle*) for State Opera South Australia, and Male Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) for Victorian Opera.

In 2026, Nicholas sings Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*) for Victorian Opera and Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) for Opera Australia, and appears with Pinchgut Opera and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.



NINA KORBE MABEL

Award-winning soprano Nina Korbe is fast emerging as one of Australia's most exciting young voices. Acclaimed for her creamy tone and expressive artistry, Nina is a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium and London's Royal Academy of Music, both with distinction.

Her operatic highlights include making her professional debut as Maria in *West Side Story* with Opera Australia, Musetta in *La bohème* with Opera Queensland, Tina in *Flight* with State Opera South Australia, and with Victorian Opera as Lisette in *La Rondine* and Young Heidi in *Follies*. Nina also maintains a busy concert schedule, performing with Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Southern Cross Soloists, Camerata, Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra and internationally at the Musikverein with Queensland Youth Symphony.

As a proud Koa, Kuku Yalanji, Wakka Wakka woman, she is actively involved in the championing of Indigenous Voices; Nina sits on Queensland Symphony Orchestra's First Nations Advisory Board, the board of Playlab Theatre, is a board observer of Australian Women in Music and is the First Nations advisor to the Australian Music Foundation.





RICHARD PIPER MAJOR-GENERAL STANLEY

Richard has spent forty-four years of his career on stage. Trained in London, he was soon performing on the West End in *Grease* and *Elvis*, and came to Australia in 1987 with cult cabaret band The Bouncing Czecks. Most recently, Richard appeared in *Seventeen* for Melbourne Theatre Company and *Death of a Salesman* for Red Line Productions. For Melbourne Theatre Company, he's appeared in over forty productions, including: *As You Like it*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Twelfth Night*, *Born Yesterday*, *Double Indemnity*, *Ghosts*, *Music*, *The Gift*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Daylight Atheist* (Green Room Award for Best Actor). For Melbourne's Malthouse: *The Black Rider*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. For Sydney Theatre Company: *The Secret River*, *Gross und Klein*, *Great Expectations*, *Moby Dick*. Bell Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The War of the Roses*, *Henry V*, *Henry IV*. STCSA: *Moby Dick*, *Marat Sade*, *Restoration*. Also, an accomplished musical theatre performer, Richard played the mayor in the award-winning, *Come from Away* and Dad in *Billy Elliot*.



CHRISTOPHER HILLIER SERGEANT OF POLICE

Australian baritone Christopher Hillier has a long-standing relationship with Opera Australia, where his roles have included Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), Belcore (*L'elisir d'amore*), and Ping in *Turandot*. For the company's national tours, he sang the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Christopher is also committed to Australian contemporary opera, creating the role of The Convict in *The Rabbits* (Melbourne Festival and Opera Australia), and appearing with Victorian Opera as Sir Thomas Bertram in *Mansfield Park* and in the world premiere of Richard Mills' *Gallileo*. Other credits include Gunther (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) and Beckmesser (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) for Melbourne Opera, and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) for Opera Queensland and State Opera South Australia.

In 2026, Christopher sings Sargeant of Police (*The Pirates of Penzance*) for Victorian Opera and Count Capulet (*Roméo et Juliette*) for West Australian Opera.



DOUGLAS KELLY SAMUEL

Douglas Kelly is an internationally performing tenor with extensive experience in opera, oratorio and as a recitalist. He won a 2025 Green Room Award for his performance as Prunier in Victorian Opera's *La Rondine*; he was a prize winner at the 2018 Australian Herald Sun Aria and the National Liederfest in 2018 and 2019; and was a 2024 Opera Prize winner with Victorian Opera.

Douglas was also nominated for Green Room Awards for his performances in Ulmann's *Kaiser von Atlantis* and Kats-Chernin's *Iphis*. His other operatic credits include Mozart's *Abduction* (Pedrillo), Verdi's *Nabucco* (Ismalele), Williamson's *English Eccentrics* (Beau Brummell), Cesti's *Orontea* (Corindo), Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse in Patria* (Anfinomo and Eurimaco), Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Basilio), Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Sellem), Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* (Gherardo), Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Aeneas) and Jonathon Dove's *Mansfield Park* (Henry Crawford).

He has been described as "charismatic in voice" and "powerfully convincing" (ArtsHub), "a splendid Tenor" and "suitably fresh and ardent of voice" (Limelight).



RACHAEL JOYCE EDITH

Soprano Rachael Joyce is a current recipient of Victorian Opera's 2025/2026 Opera Prize. She was previously a member of both Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artist Programme and Opera Scholars Australia. A Monash University graduate, Rachael received First Class Honours after completing a Bachelor of Arts (French) and Music (Honours).

Her recent roles include Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*, the Lyrebird in *The Lyrebird's Voice*, Princess Caraboo in *English Eccentrics* (Victorian Opera); Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Melbourne Opera) and Chiara in *Biographica* (Lyric Opera of Melbourne).

Notable accolades include First Prize in the 99th Herald Sun Aria Competition, runner-up in the Opera Scholars Australia Aria competition and Boroondara Eisteddfod Vocal Championship Winner. In 2024, Rachael travelled to Germany as the recipient of the Melbourne Opera & Rotary New Generations Service Exchange, where she made her concert debut at the Bayreuth Festival.



ALESSIA PINTABONA KATE

Australian Italian soprano Alessia Pintabona is a 2026 recipient of Victorian Opera's Opera Prize Scholarship and fast establishing herself as an in-demand young artist.

A graduate of the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Alessia's most recent credits include Maria (*Mansfield Park*), White Rabbit (*Boojum!*) and Johanna in *Sweeney Todd* for both Victorian Opera and Dubai Opera.

She was awarded the 2025 Welsh Male Choir Singer of the Year, and the 2024 Bettine McCaughan Scholarship. She has also been the grateful recipient of The Graff Family Scholarship, Barbara MacLeod Scholarship, Haselhurst Scholarship, and the Royal Overseas League Western Australia Art Song Prize.



SYRAH TORII ISABEL

Japanese-Australian mezzo-soprano Syrah Torii holds a Master of Music (Opera Performance) from the Melbourne Conservatorium. She is an alumna of the Melba Opera Trust, Australia's premier opera training program, and was the 2023 recipient of Victorian Opera's Opera Prize.

Syrah's credits with Victorian Opera include *Boojum!* (Clarrie), *Il tabarro* (La Frugola), *La Rondine* (Suzy/Lolette), *Idomeneo* (Idamante cover), *Melbourne*, *Cheremushki* (Masha), and the world premieres of Richard Mills' *Galileo* (Diavolo 1) and *The Butterfly Lovers*.

Syrah has appeared as a guest soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, and the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra. She has sung in MSO masterclasses with Joyce DiDonato and Raehann Bryce-Davis.

Syrah was awarded the John Wegner Award in the 2024 Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonyngel Bel Canto Award, and was a semi-finalist in the German-Australian Opera Grant in 2025.

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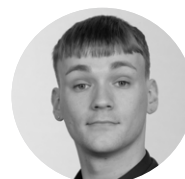
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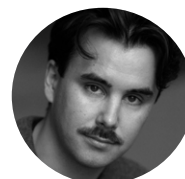
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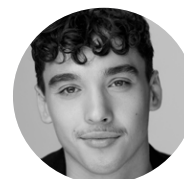
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Victorian Opera is Victoria's state opera company.

We honour the centuries-old history of opera's boundless creativity while captivating audiences with relevant, creative and accessible work.

We create productions that inspire, challenge and stir the soul. Since our inception in 2005, our annual commission program has seen more than 40 new Australian works written, produced and performed.

In 2021, Victorian Opera was admitted to the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in recognition of our outstanding contribution to Australia's artistic landscape. This acknowledgement and added financial investment enable us to deepen collaborative ties throughout the industry, and stage productions across the state, the country and beyond.

In 2026, our 21st anniversary, we are delivering more productions and concerts that showcase and promote Australia's vibrant performing arts scene.

We employ hundreds of singers, instrumentalists, theatre-makers and technicians to bring our creative vision to life, and engage audiences with this glorious art form.

A key focus of our organisation is to uncover and develop the talent of emerging artists, both on-stage and behind-the-scenes. From singers to prop makers to costumiers and everyone in between, artists work on productions with Victorian Opera to enrich their career. We delight in the hunger of these practitioners to learn and, ultimately, give back to the future of opera and music theatre.

Our community of Patrons, funding partners and creative industry professionals is truly remarkable. This vibrant network continues to champion Victorian Opera's artistic vision in its vital role sustaining and advancing our creative practice.

We invite you to join Victorian Opera in 2026. See you at the opera!

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