

VICTORIAN
OPERA

A man and a woman are the central focus, dressed in elaborate Victorian opera costumes. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing a light-colored suit jacket over a white shirt and a gold chain. The woman, on the right, has dark, curly hair and is wearing a strapless, heavily embellished gown with intricate lace and sequin details. They are standing in a dimly lit room with a red wall and a mosaic pattern. In the background, there are statues of figures, one on the left and one on the right, both illuminated with a blue light. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and theatrical.

THE
CORONATION
OF POPPEA

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 CORONATION OF POPPEA

Music **Claudio Monteverdi** in the version by **Elena Kats-Chernin**

Performing edition realised by **Chad Kelly**

Text **Italian text** by **GF Busenello** in an adaption of the text and vocal lines by **Alan Hicks**

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor **Chad Kelly**

Director **Sam Strong**

Set and Costume Designer **Anna Cordingley**

Lighting Designer **Matt Scott**

Intimacy Coordinator **Amy Cater**

CAST

Poppea **Meechot Marrero**

Nero **Samuel Dundas**

Ottavia **Margaret Trubiano**

Seneca **David Greco**

Ottone **Jeremy Kleeman**

Drusilla **Rachael Joyce***

Arnalta **Louis Hurley**

Liberto **Douglas Kelly**

Nutrice **Bailey Montgomerie***

Amore **Mia Chenea Robinson**

La Fortuna **Alessia Pintabona***

La Virtu **Amelia Wawrzon**

ORCHESTRA

Victorian Opera Chamber Orchestra

Palais Theatre

30 June — 4 July 2026

2 hours and 20 minutes, including interval

**Opera Prize Recipient*

By arrangement with Origin Theatrical. By permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers.

PRODUCTION PATRON

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Hans & Petra Henkell – Henkell Family Fund.

WELCOME

Welcome to Victorian Opera's season of *The Coronation of Poppea*!

This striking new production of Monteverdi's masterpiece has been a year in the making and brings danger, lust and fire to the Palais Theatre with a cast and orchestra pulsing under the musical leadership of conductor Chad Kelly. Elena Kats-Chernin's jazz-infused re-orchestration of the score, as well as some carefully crafted adjustments in the storytelling, will leave you wanting more.

We are thrilled to welcome several Victorian Opera artists back, and equally delighted to celebrate the company debuts of some outstanding early music specialists. Our hand-picked chamber orchestra brings the opera's extraordinary soundscape and its visceral

drama to vivid life. Thank you to the entire Victorian Opera team for realising this vision and bringing this exquisite design to the stage.

Our thanks 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 AM
Artistic Director



ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER
CEO



SYNOPSIS

In a prologue, the goddesses Fortune and Virtue clash over who is superior and a third goddess, Love (or Cupid), asserts her pre-eminence. Ottone, the former lover of Poppea, is devastated when he finds out she is having an affair with Nero. Nero and Poppea are besotted with each other, and he promises to make her Empress. Poppea's servant Arnalta cautions her about the dangers of dealing with royalty. Nero's wife, Ottavia, laments her lot. She rejects the advice of her servant Nutrice to have an affair herself, as well as the philosophical consolations of Nero's mentor, Seneca. After Poppea rejects Ottone he pledges himself to Drusilla, a woman on Ottavia's staff. Nero and Seneca clash over the limits of his power and his desire to marry Poppea. After Poppea suggests that Seneca is usurping Nero's power, Nero decides that Seneca must die. A captain of Nero's guard, Liberto, conveys the order that Seneca should take his own life and Seneca accepts his fate.

In Act Two, Nero and Poppea are more openly together and celebrate their love. Ottavia orders Ottone to kill Poppea and Drusilla lends him her clothes as a disguise. After Arnalta sings Poppea to sleep, Ottone attempts to murder her, but the goddess Love intervenes. Drusilla and Ottone confess to the conspiracy and Nero banishes them as well as Ottavia. Nero and Poppea are married and she is crowned Empress.

CONDUCTOR'S MESSAGE

"Prima le parole, poi la musica" — "First the words, then the music." This was Monteverdi's mandate, one that helped give birth to opera itself. Vocal contour and expression existed solely to colour words and serve the story. The result was a striking purity and immediacy of delivery: performers were not singing so much as declaiming speech.

Apart from occasional instrumental interludes that provided structural coherence, this heightened speech was supported by a continuo group of plucked and bowed instruments. Their music was not fully prescribed in notation, but outlined by a bass line. The players improvised, colouring and enhancing the vocal line; their purpose, too, was to serve the text.

The evolution of this new art form was rapid. While opera was still nascent at the beginning of the seventeenth century, by 1643 — the year *L'incoronazione di Poppea* received its premiere in Venice — it was firmly established. Scholars generally agree that significant portions of the score are the work of apprentices or close collaborators. Such expedient methods of music-making were commonplace, and they have endured through the centuries. As anyone in theatre knows, the pressure of time is never far away.

In this spirit, Australian trailblazer Elena Kats-Chernin was commissioned by the equally trailblazing director Barrie Kosky to reimagine this seminal work for Berlin's

Komische Oper. Unlike the sacrosanct texts of Mozart or Wagner, Monteverdi's operas invite reinvention — indeed, one suspects he would have expected it. The version heard this evening is a further reworking of Elena's original conception prepared — as a labour of love by this conductor — especially for this new production boldly programmed by Victorian Opera. Remember: *prima le parole*.

Elena's affinity for dance music — Latin, soul, funk, even soft rock — permeates much of her work, and this score is no exception. A battery of Latin percussion leans into the rhythmic vitality already inherent in Monteverdi's ariosi. Today we might call it "groove"; Monteverdi and his contemporaries would have called it *tactus*: a visceral, innate sense of pulse and movement.

Two things have been preserved above all else: Monteverdi's vocal lines, and Monteverdi's mandate.

CHAD KELLY
Conductor

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I was lining up to board a plane when I received an email from Stuart Maunder asking if I was interested in directing a version of *The Coronation of Poppea*. I had replied yes before I'd taken my seat.

As I dived deeper into the opera, I was struck by how contemporary it felt. The intensity (and variety) of the character's appetites was more early 21st century than mid-17th century. The triumph of bad behaviour was as much like Trump's America as the original ancient Roman setting.

All of the stages in the creation of this production have taken this contemporary spirit of the original and run with it. Elena Kats Chernin's re-orchestration doesn't just introduce modern instrumentation, it astutely streamlines the storytelling. Led by Chad Kelly, we have taken this further still, focusing even more sharply on the key relationships and increasing the velocity of the plot.

The next step was creating the visual world of the show, led by set and costume designer Anna Cordingley. We started with the celestial universe that we begin in and selectively return to. Then we wanted a naturalistic single space, one room that people could co-inhabit to help us tell the story of their relationships to each other. And the next question was how to find a contemporary equivalent of ancient Rome in its danger (you can be violently killed at any moment), its sex (people are driven — and driven mad — by desire) and its excess (no

one does things by halves). An answer (or at least an inspiration) arrived quickly — the uniquely potent combination of 1980s Miami, neo-classical kitsch, and organised crime in Brian De Palma's classic film *Scarface*.

Being able to engage with this exquisite work at this scale is such a gift. Thank you to Stuart Maunder for a very happy flight, to Chad Kelly for 12 months of inspiring collaboration, to our designers Anna and Matt for their visual flair, to our intimacy coordinator Amy Cater for bringing safety, sensitivity and sass, to the crew who have wrangled unusual challenges into submission, to our talented and delightful cast who have thrown themselves at the work in a way that would make a young Al Pacino proud, to everyone at Victorian Opera for creating an environment that is as beautiful as the music.

It's relatively rare to encounter *The Coronation of Poppea* in a full staging. I hope you relish experiencing it as much as we have relished creating it.

SAM STRONG
Director

PRODUCTION TEAM

Company Manager
Matt Bebbington

Stage Manager
Finlay Pedler

Deputy Stage Manager
Claudia Howarth

Assistant Stage Manager
Annabelle Rossi

Head Mechanist
Taylor Joynes

Set and Props Builders
Jesse Chabrier-Pope
Tiernan Maclaren
Alex Donnelly

Head Electrician
Jamie Turner

Deputy Head Electrician
Georgie Donnelly

LX Programmer
Jack Willis-Hall

Dome Operators
Ellie Singe

Surtitle Operator
Eleanor Smith

LIGHTING CREW

Max Woods
Will Dillon
Karina White
Marcus Lew
Brayden Bonnell-Huy

WARDROBE TEAM

Costume & Wigs Manager
Cortnee Jarvis
Workroom Supervisor
Xander Reichard

Costumiers
Tim Corne
Ezmerelda Gulian
Rheia Herbert
Ines Kustura
Tilda Luca
Olivia Peters

WHAM
Kartika Stanley

THEATRE CREW

Backstage Wardrobe Supervisor
Xander Reichard
Dressers
Tim Corne
Olivia Peters
Costume & Wig Maintenance
Nicole Serjeant
Kartika Stanley

MUSIC TEAM

Repetiteurs
Phoebe Briggs
Tom Griffiths
Orchestra Manager
Ioanna Salmanidis

VICTORIAN OPERA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Concertmaster
Rachael Beesley

Violin
Marlane Bennie
Natasha Conrau
Anna Freer
Cameron Jamieson
Lynette Rayner
Yuhka Nagai
Meg Cohen

Viola
Gabby Halloran
Momoko Nagayama

Cello
Luke Severn
JiEun Lee

Double Bass
Stuart Riley

Clarinets
Georgia White
Oliver Crofts

Alto Saxophone
Justin Kenealy
Tenor/Baritone Saxophone
Ryan Lynch

Trumpets
Tristan Rebien
Andrew Hemsworth

Cimbasso
Alex Hurst

Harp
Marshall McGuire

Guitars & Theorbo
Samantha Cohen

Piano
Chad Kelly
Keyboard
Phoebe Briggs
Percussion
Alex Meagher

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

Surtitles courtesy of Opera Australia,
text by Brian FitzGerald

Victorian Opera thanks the various Work
Placement Students who worked across this season:

Amelia Oxer
(Melbourne Polytechnic)

Isabella Phillipson
(London College of Fashion)

Iris Donaldson
(Victorian College of the Arts, The University
of Melbourne)

Peter Liptai
(Victorian College of the Arts, The University
of Melbourne)

Freya Taylor
(Victorian College of the Arts, The University
of Melbourne)





ELENA KATS-CHERNIN RE-ORCHESTRATION

One of Australia's foremost contemporary composers, Elena Kats-Chernin's vibrant and distinctive music across all genres has reached millions worldwide.

She has collaborated with well-known artists such as Meryl Tankard, Barrie Kosky, Richard Tognetti, Michael Collins, Katie Noonan, Tamara-Anna Cislowska, Benjamin Northey, Marin Alsop, and many more.

EKC's recent score for the Golden Globe/Oscar-nominated and award-winning Claymation *Memoir of a Snail* from Oscar-winning Melbourne director Adam Elliot was nominated for AACTA 2025 in the category Best Score for a Feature Film. Her piece "Chatterbox Rag" for flute and piano has become a theme for the Late-Night Live show on the ABC Radio National since August 2025.

In May 2026, her first ever large-scale musical *Simsalabim* at the Dresdner Staatsoperette was a great success. She is now writing a grand opera for the Dortmund Opera House, based on Wim Wenders' cult film *Wings of Desire (Himmel über Berlin)* for premiere in 2028, with Rolando Villazon in the main role.



CHAD KELLY CONDUCTOR

Sydney-based British keyboardist and conductor Chad Kelly is currently on the music staff at Opera Australia, following several seasons with the Bavarian State Opera and English National Opera. A specialist in historically informed performance, he has conducted at Göttingen Händelfestspiele, Vienna's Resonanzen Festival, London's Globe Theatre, and the London Handel Festival. He has guest directed the Academy of Ancient Music, and is principal keyboardist of the award-winning ensemble Solomon's Knot, who premiered his reconstruction of Bach's lost *Köthener Trauermusik* at Wigmore Hall.

Chad made his Opera Australia conducting debut with Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and, for Victorian Opera, arranged and conducted a new adaptation of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Abduction)*. He has also led Handel's *Messiah* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

In 2026, Chad appears with the Melbourne, West Australian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras, tours with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and conducts Victorian Opera's *The Coronation of Poppea*.



SAM STRONG DIRECTOR

Sam Strong is an award-winning theatre director and one of Australia's preeminent cultural leaders.

His directing credits include: *Honour* (Red Stitch), Trent Dalton's *Love Stories* (Brisbane Festival/QPAC), *Boy Swallows Universe* (Brisbane Festival/Queensland Theatre/QPAC), *Cassandra, Echo and Narcissus* (Victorian Opera), *Emerald City, Storm Boy* (Queensland Theatre/Melbourne Theatre Company), *Hydra* (Queensland Theatre/STCSA), *Nearer the Gods, Twelfth Night* (Queensland Theatre), *Noises Off!* (Queensland Theatre/Melbourne Theatre Company), *Once in Royal David's City* (Queensland Theatre/Black Swan Theatre Company), *Jasper Jones, Double Indemnity, The Weir, Endgame, The Sublime, The Speechmaker, Private Lives, The Crucible, Other Desert Cities* and *Madagascar* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Masquerade* (Sydney Festival/Griffin/STCSA/Melbourne Festival), *The Boys* (Sydney Festival/Griffin), *The Floating World, Between Two Waves, And No More Shall We Part* and *Speaking in Tongues* (Griffin), *The Power of Yes* (Company B Belvoir), and *Red Sky Morning, Faces in the Crowd* (Red Stitch).



ANNA CORDINGLEY SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Anna Cordingley APDG is an award-winning set and costume designer for theatre, opera, dance, musical theatre and cabaret.

Anna's opera credits include: for Opera Australia: *Idomeneo* (with Victorian Opera, tour to San Francisco Opera in 2025), *The Magic Flute, Carmen, Aida, Opera on the Beach* (costume). For Victorian Opera: *Cassandra, Echo and Narcissus, Salome* (costume), *Sunday, in the Park with George*, and *The Threepenny Opera* (with Sydney Theatre Company and Malthouse). For Opera Queensland: *Don Giovanni*.

Theatre credits include: For Red Line and Sydney Opera House: *Amadeus*. For Melbourne Theatre Company: *Sunday Storm Boy* (with Queensland Theatre). For Bell Shakespeare: *Anthony and Cleopatra, Richard III*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. For Dead Puppet Society: *Peter and the Starcatcher*. For Sydney Festival: *Holding Achilles* (with Legs on the Wall & Dead Puppet Society), *Rapture* (with Turning World), and Meow Meow's *Little Mermaid* (with Malthouse, tour to Edinburgh Festival 2017). For Malthouse: *Hour of the Wolf*, and *Anna K*. For Back to Back Theatre Co: *Multiple Bad Things* which opened at Back to Back Theatre, toured to Malthouse and Brussels' Kunstenfestivaldesarts.



MATT SCOTT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Matt is one of Australia's leading lighting designers with over 30 years' experience in the industry designing more than 300 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 *Candide*, *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*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Xerxes* and *Orphée et Eurydice* for the Company. Other more recent work includes *My Brilliant Career*, *Jacky*, *The Heartbreak Choir*, *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Storm Boy*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Architect* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Candide* (Opera Australia); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Sydney Theatre Company/GWB Entertainment/Redstitch); *Dear Evan Hansen* (Sydney Theatre Company/Michael Cassel Group); *Kimberly Akimbo* (State Theatre Company South Australia/Melbourne Theatre Company); *Fun Home* (Sydney Theatre Company/Melbourne Theatre Company); *Medea*, *Drizzle Boy* (Queensland Theatre Company); *Jacky* (Belvoir/Sydney Festival), *Madama Butterfly* and *The Pearlfishers* (State Opera South Australia).

Matt has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Lighting Design and two Green Room Awards 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).



AMY CATER INTIMACY COORDINATOR

Amy Cater (all pronouns) is part of the first cohort of qualified Intimacy Coordinator practitioners, training and working since 2018 when the profession first arrived in Australia.

Amy has over 20 years' experience working with sexuality, embodiment, consent, and intimacy; specifically, within the adult industry, client therapy and education spaces. Amy was a Director/Senior Photographer of ethical erotica for 4 years. She is a qualified Psychosomatic Therapist, Sexological Bodyworker and Somatic Sex Educator. Amy has a trained background in theatre, dance, and the performing arts. Amy mentors and consults on sexuality and gender best practice. Her work in LGBTQIA+ advocacy and education are a key component of her cultural influence in the Intimacy Coordinator industry.



MEECHOT MARRERO POPPEA

Sydney-based Puerto Rican soprano Meechot Marrero's international career has included appearances with Deutsche Oper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Opera San Antonio, and New Orleans Opera. At Deutsche Oper Berlin, she sang Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Musetta (*La bohème*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Liù (*Turandot*), and the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, as well as Micaëla (*Carmen*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Oscar (*Un ballo in maschera*), Nannetta (*Falstaff*) and Marzelline (*Fidelio*).

In concert, Meechot has performed with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra and Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. She has also appeared at the Edinburgh International and Grand Teton Music Festivals under the baton of Donald Runnicles in *Carmina Burana*, *West Side Story*, *Tannhäuser*, and *La bohème*.

In 2026, Meechot sings the title role in *The Coronation of Poppea* for Victorian Opera and appears in concert in Sydney, Newcastle and Hobart.



SAMUEL DUNDAS NERO

Samuel Dundas, formerly a member of both Victorian Opera's Artist Development Program and Opera Australia's Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artist Program, now performs leading roles with Australia and New Zealand's leading opera companies, symphony orchestras and choral societies.

His most recent and upcoming engagements include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* for West Australian Opera and Opera Australia, Dandini in *Cenerentola* for Opera Queensland, Marcello in *La bohème* for New Zealand Opera and Opera Queensland, playing the title role in *The Barber of Seville* for Opera Australia, Falke in *Die Fledermaus* with West Australian Symphony, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung* and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Sydney Symphony, Simone Young conducting; and the title role *Elijah* with Brisbane Chamber Choir.

Further recent engagements include the title role in Richard Mills' *Galileo* for Perth Festival and Victorian Opera, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Opera Queensland, Horatio in *Hamlet*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, and Marcello for Opera Australia. Beethoven's 9th Symphony for Auckland Philharmonia, WASO and QSO; Haydn *Harmony Mass*, and Mozart and Fauré *Requiem* for Tasmanian Symphony.



MARGARET TRUBIANO OTTAVIA

Hailed as 'stunning' by the New York Times, American mezzo-soprano Margaret Trubiano graduated with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Manhattan School of Music. Her portrayal of the Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd* received critical acclaim for Victorian Opera. She played to sold out crowds in her 'NY Girl' cabaret at Claire's Kitchen & Kurt Weill's *Sins & Mahagonny* at the Old Fitzroy Theatre.

Commanding on both the operatic stage and the musical theatre world, she's appeared as Mrs. Grose in *The Turn of the Screw* at the Hayes Theatre, performed Mercedes in *Carmen*, Princess Clarissa in *Love For Three Oranges* (Opera Australia), Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (DiCapo Opera NYC), Kate in *The Pirates of Penzance* & 3rd Lady in *The Magic Flute* (New Jersey Opera), Second Fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (NYC Ballet), Second Witch in *Dido & Aeneas* (Macau Opera).

Carnegie Hall debut: Gonzales' *Missa Azteca*. Concert appearances include Zurich Opernhaus's Opera Gala, Carnegie Hall debut: Gonzales' *Missa Azteca*. She covered Madame Giry in *The Phantom of the Opera* World Tour, played the title role in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods* & performed Off-Broadway in *Beautiful Girls*.



DAVID GRECO SENECA

ARIA Award-nominated baritone David Greco, described as "one of the foremost singers of his generation" (*Limelight*, 2002), is internationally regarded for his interpretations of Schubert and Bach. He has performed across leading stages of Europe and Australia, and was the first Australian appointed to the Sistine Chapel Choir in Rome.

Recent highlights include acclaimed performances of Britten's *War Requiem* with the Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Papageno in *The Magic Flute* for State Opera South Australia, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and concerts with the Australian Haydn Ensemble.

David has recorded extensively for Naxos, ABC Classics, and Brilliant Classics. His ABC Classics releases include Bach's *Solo Cantatas for Bass*, Schubert's *Winterreise*, *Die schöne Müllerin* (ARIA-nominated for Best Classical Album, 2020), and most recently *Schwanengesang*.

He holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne and is a member of the vocal faculty at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.



JEREMY KLEEMAN OTTONE

A graduate of the Royal College of Music Opera Studio, a former Sambrook Scholar with Melba Opera Trust and a former Victorian Opera Developing Artist, bass-baritone Jeremy Kleeman is known for his versatility across opera, concert and new music.

Most recently, Jeremy made a celebrated debut as Dandini in *La Cenerentola* for Opera Queensland and was Bass Soloist in Christian Spuck's *Verdi Requiem* for Queensland Ballet.

Notable performances include the title role in the world premiere of *Gilgamesh* for Opera Australia and Sydney Chamber Opera, and the title role in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, which he has performed with Opera Queensland, West Australian Opera, State Opera South Australia and Opera Australia.

For Victorian Opera, Jeremy has sung Magus in *Voyage to the Moon* (Helpmann and Green Room nominations), Walter Furst in *Guillaume Tell*, Badger/Parson in *Cunning Little Vixen* and Rapunzel's Prince in *Into the Woods*, and created Albert the Pudding in *The Magic Pudding*.

Recent concert highlights include Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the New Zealand and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras.



RACHAEL JOYCE DRUSILLA

Soprano Rachael Joyce is a current recipient of Victorian Opera's 2026 Opera Prize. She was also a recipient of the 2025 Opera Prize. This scholarship is proudly supported by Dr Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts.

Rachael 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 Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance*, 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.



LOUIS HURLEY ARNALTA

Louis Hurley is an Australian tenor whose work spans opera, chamber music and concert performance. A graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, he was also the recipient of the Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship through Melba Opera Trust and the Humanity Foundation Taryn Fiebig Scholarship at Pinchgut Opera.

Louis regularly appears as a soloist with Australia's leading orchestras and arts organisations, including Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera, Adelaide Festival, Sydney Festival and Musica Viva Australia. A passionate ensemble musician, he performs with some of Australia's finest vocal chamber ensembles, including AVÉ – Australian Vocal Ensemble, The Song Company and Cantillation.

His repertoire ranges from early music through to contemporary works, with performances throughout Australia and internationally.



DOUGLAS KELLY LIBERTO

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 Emerging Artist 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* (Ismaele), Williamson's *English Eccentrics* (Beau Brummell), Cesti's *Oronthea* (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) and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* (Sam).

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



BAILEY MONTGOMERIE NUTRICE

Bailey Montgomerie is an emerging performer, musical and artistic director, and a fierce advocate for the development of local Australian creative arts and artists.

As Co-Artistic Director of Divisi, Bailey prioritises the commissioning, development, and performance of new and innovative works from emerging and under-represented composers, especially those from the LGBTQ+ community.

On the operatic stage, they have solo credits with Melbourne's premier opera companies including Victorian Opera, the Australian Contemporary Opera Company, and in Lyric Opera's production of *Biographica*, for which Bailey was nominated for a 2024 Green Room Award.

In 2026, Bailey is a recipient of Victorian Opera's Opera Prize Scholarship. They were also a recipient of the 2025 Opera Prize. This scholarship is proudly supported by Dr Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts.

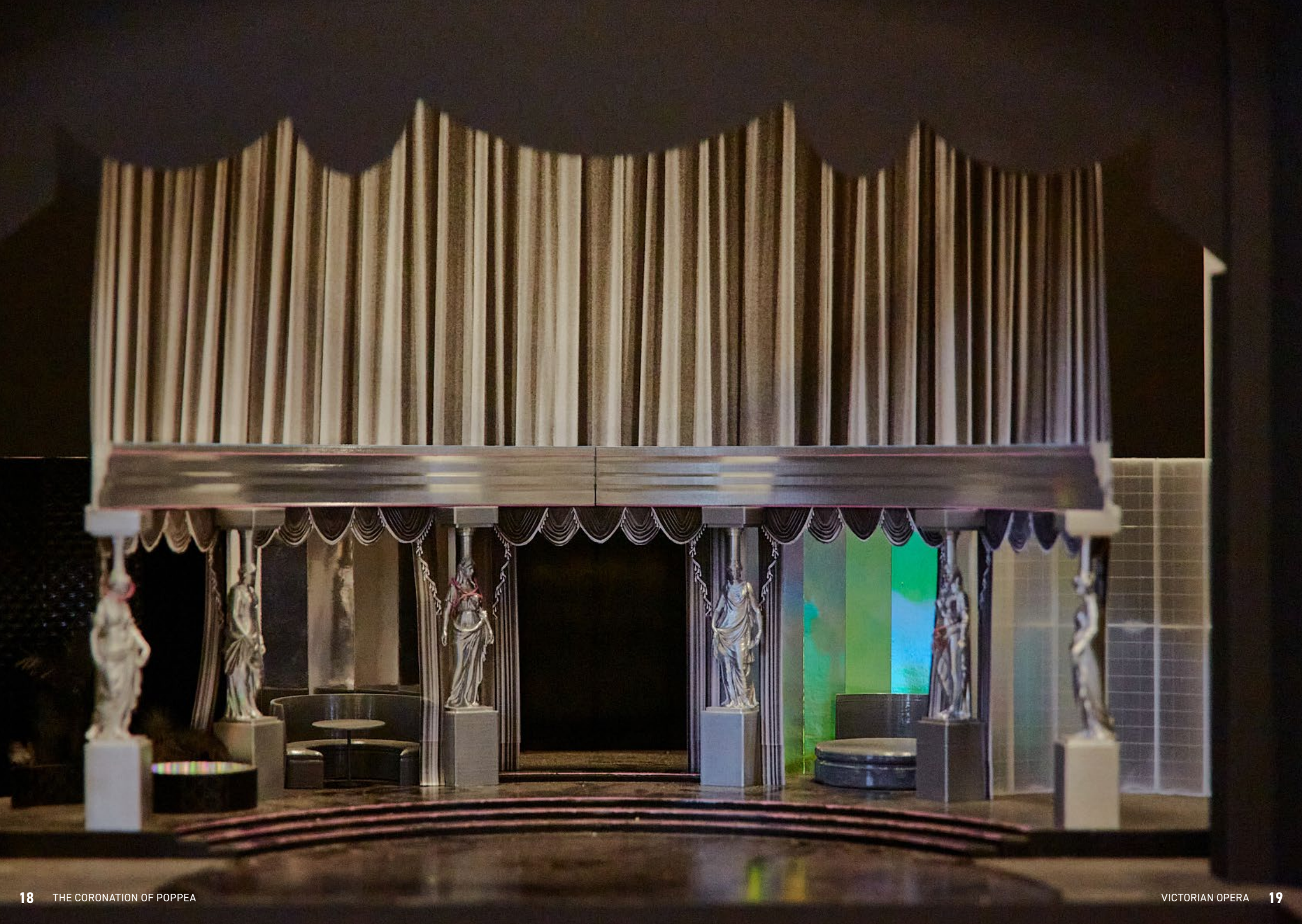


MIA CHENEA ROBINSON AMORE

Award-winning soprano Mia Chenea Robinson is an emerging voice in the Australian classical music scene. At just 19, she made her solo debut with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of Mary Finsterer's *Stabat Mater*, later reprising the work with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. The sold-out Perth performance received the 2024 APRA AMCOS Award for Performance of the Year: Notated Composition.

Most recently, Mia performed the title role in the world premiere of *Eva* at the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. She has also appeared as a soloist with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic, Genesis Baroque, and made her television debut as part of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's *ABC Classic 100* broadcast in 2024.

As an active soloist, chorister, and manager of the Choir of Trinity College, Melbourne, Mia has recorded multiple albums, including the Australian premiere recording of Eric Whitacre's *The Sacred Veil*, and has toured extensively throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, China, and Singapore. Her performances have taken her to prestigious venues including Trinity College Cambridge.





ALESSIA PINTABONA LA FORTUNA

Australian Italian soprano Alessia Pintabona is fast establishing herself as an in-demand young artist. She is a 2026 recipient of Victorian Opera's Opera Prize Scholarship, proudly supported by the company's Opera Prize Syndicate.

A graduate of the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Alessia's most recent credits include Kate in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Maria in *Mansfield Park*, White Rabbit in *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.



AMELIA WAWRZON LA VIRTU

Amelia is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. She was a member of the Melbourne Opera Richard Divall Emerging Artists Programme, the winner of the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Prize in the 98th Herald Sun Aria, and a finalist and grant recipient of the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Bel Canto Award, among several other awards. She made her international debut originating the role of the young heroine, Afira, in the historical world premiere of *Zarqa al Yamama* (Bradshaw), the world's first Arabic Grand Opera, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Other role highlights include The Good Witch of the North in *Il Mago di Oz* at Victorian Opera, Lauretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Soeur Constance in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Miss Wordsworth in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. At the Royal Academy, she performed the roles of Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Adina in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* in the Opera Scenes productions. In concert, she was recently the Soprano Soloist in Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the Maison Symphonique de Montreal.





ABOUT US

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 us in 2026. See you at the opera.

VICTORIAN OPERA TEAM

FOUNDING MUSIC DIRECTOR

The late Richard Gill AO

CHAIR

Genevieve Overell AM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharolyn Kimmorley AM

Sam Redston

Michael Smolders

Patricia Stebbens

The Hon. Heidi Victoria

Amanda Watt

Gillian Wong

Board Observers

Nadia Boyce

Zoi Jahau

EXECUTIVE

Chief Executive Officer

Elizabeth Hill-Cooper

Artistic Director

Stuart Maunder AM

Head of Finance and

Corporate Services

Anna Lewis

ARTISTIC & EDUCATION

Head of Music

Phoebe Briggs

Company Manager

Hannah Bullen

Acting Company Manager

Matt Bebbington

Repetiteur

Tom Griffiths

Artistic and Operations Coordinator

Marco Pezzimenti

VOYCE Director

Angus Grant

VOYCE Administrator

Shakira Dugan

DEVELOPMENT & PHILANTHROPY

Head of Development

Louise Lemke

Community & Government

Engagement Executive

Danica Sekulovska

FINANCE

Finance Manager

Nazia Naveed

MARKETING

Head of Marketing

Scott Whinfield

Marketing and Development Coordinator

Rowan Charlton Everard

SALES

Audience Engagement Manager

Nichole O'Duffy

Ticketing Coordinator

Lindsay Mulcahy

PRODUCTION

Head of Production

Robert Brown

Head Mechanist

Taylor Joynes

Costume Manager

Cortnee Jarvis

Photography credits:

James Terry: Cover

Charlie Kinross: P. 4

Jeff Busby: P.22

Casey Horsfield: P. 5, 8-9, 18, 21, 24-25, 35



IN REHEARSAL

The Coronation of Poppea in rehearsal
Photography: Casey Horsfield



THANK YOU

PATRON-IN-CHIEF

The Governor of Victoria,
Her Excellency Professor
the Honourable Margaret
Gardner AC

FOUNDING BENEFACTORS

The Late Dame Elisabeth
Murdoch AC
Lady Potter AC

LEADERSHIP SYNDICATE (\$40,000+)

Dame Carol Colburn
Grigor DBE
Jane Hemstrich AO
Hans & Petra Henkell
Peter Laver AM
Dr Michael Stubbs &
Malcolm Roberts
Prof Barbara van Ernst AM

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE (\$10,000+)

Ren Barlow
Madeleine Coulombe &
Nigel Simpson
John & Diana Frew
Suzanne Kirkham
Jane Lowther
Stuart Maunder
Tony & Genny Nunan
Michael Rigg & Gerard
Condon AM
Greg Shalit & Miriam Faine
Dr Richard Reed &
Vivienne Reed OAM
Joy Selby-Smith

PLATINUM PATRONS (\$5,000+)

D&T Brown
Nigel & Sheena Broughton
Tony Buzzard AM &
Pamela Craig
Carolyn & Stephen Coffey
Mary Davidson and & Family of
the late Frederick Davidson AM
Lord Ebury
Marg Flatman
Linda Herd
Penelope Hughes
Mary-Jane Gething AO
Peter J Griffin AM &
Terry Swann
Peter & Melissa Hebbard
Peter Lovell & Michael Jan
Kaye E Marion
Grant Powell &
Sally McCutchan
Sage Foundation
Lady Southey AC
Anthony Strahan KC
Chris & Helen Trueman
Secret Admirers (1)

GOLD PATRONS (\$2,500+)

Paulette & Warwick Bisley
Margot Brenton
Diana Burleigh
Pam Caldwell
Alan Chuck & Wendy
Hughes Chuck
Jim Colvin
Jennifer Darbyshire &
David Walker
Dr M Elizabeth Douglas
John & Gaye Gaylard
Nance Grant AM MBE &
Ian Harris
Colin Gunther & Richard Laslett
Ian Kennedy AM & Dr
Sandra Hacker AO
Angela & Richard Kirsner

Greg Noonan
Ruth & Tom O'Dea
George Pappas AO
Elzbieta & Tomasz Romanowski
Ian Baker and Cheryl Saunders
Lisa & Douglas Savige -
in memory of Diane Moseley
Lynne Sherwood
Craig Thomas & Graeme Moody
Patrick Togher & the
late Romola Tyrrell
Raymond Wilkinson
Robert and Diana Wilson
Secret Admirers (3)

SILVER PATRONS (\$1,000+)

Dr Zita Ballok & Andrew Decker
Russell Waters & Marissa
Barter-Waters
Laurie Bebbington & Elizabeth
O'Keefe
Cheryl R. Benson
David Bernshaw & Caroline
Isakow
Maura & Stephen Best
Shirley Breese
Stuart Brown & Lisa Banks
Andrew Buchanan &
Peter Darcy
Susanne Dahn AM
Elise Callander
Margaret Cash
Paul & Sheryl Coughlin
Beatrice & Richard Donkin
Mark Duckworth PSM and
Lauren Mosso
Charles Edmonds
Dr Ian Eilenberg
Professor David Forrest
Dr Marguerite Hancock
Elizabeth Hill-Cooper
Dr Irene Irvine & Prof
Iain Wallace
Simon L Jackson &
Brian Warburton

Jessica Jasper
Mary Kehoe and
Graham McCallum
Susan Kimpton
Dr Peter Kingsbury
Dr Kathy Laster
Joan Lefroy AM &
George Lefroy AM
Selina Lightfoot
Susanna Lobez
Prof Helmut &
Gillian Lueckenhausen
Ian Manning & Alice De Jonge
Ian Marshman AM &
Judi Marshman
Margaret Mayers
Rosemary Meagher
Lawrence McDonald &
Christian Klettner
Anne McLean
Andrew & Jocelyn McLeish
Campell & Christine Penfold
Jude Munro AO &
Louise Kummrow
Dr Paul Nisselle AM &
Sue Nisselle
Merlyn Quaife AM
Dr Garry Joslin & Prof.
Dimity Reed AM
Michael Riordan &
Geoffrey Bush-Coote
Robert Sanderson
Sparky Foundation
Libby Smith &
John Middleton
James & Anne Syme
Rosemary & Dr Alan Tait
Caroline Travers OAM
& Richard Travers OAM
Christina Turner
Ian Watts OAM
Margot & the late
Richard Welton
Ann & Alan Wilkinson
Lyn Williams AC

Sue and Bill Wood
Admirers (3)

BRONZE PATRONS (\$500+)

Dennis Altman AM
Jenny Anderson
Margaret Astbury
Lesley Bawden
Pamela Baker
Jan Begg
Ruth Bereson
Ines & Dr Donald Behrend
David & Suzanne Browne
Karin Butterfield
Fiona Bunworth
Robyn Byrne
The Hon David Byrne
Malcolm & Marcia Carter
Janice Chen
Vivienne Corcoran
Jane Doyle OAM
Dennis Freeman
Alan Gunther
Victoria Hayes
Anne Houlihan
Gillian Hoysted
Suzanne Hume
Garry Kennedy
Eve Kolar
Dr Shirley Lanning
Roger & Louise Lemke
Kristina & Bruce Macrae
Mary & Paul Reid
Mark Sanders
Dr Gideon & Barbara Shaw
Colin Simson
Dr Rosalynd Smith
Sandra Stein
Hugh Taylor AC &
Liz Taylor AM
Teresa Tjia
Norma Walker
Deborah Whithear

Secret Admirers (6)

BEQUESTORS

Jenny Anderson
Lesley Bawden
Roger Chao
Frank & Danielle Chamberlin
Peter & Jenny Hordern
Peter Hourigan
Jane Kunstler
Richard Laslett &
Colin Gunther
Gregory J Reinhardt AM
Chris & Helen Trueman
Peter Turner
Lorraine Weiner &
Geoffrey Blick
Tony Wildman & Robert Gibbs
Secret Admirers (7)

Current at time of printing.

If you would like information
on supporting Victorian
Opera, please contact Louise
Lemke, Head of Development,
louise@victorianopera.com.
au or by phone on
(03) 9001 6405



CORIOLE

McLAREN VALE

Coriole Vineyards is proud to be the official wine supply partner of Victorian Opera.

Hugh and Molly Lloyd released their first wine under the Coriole label in 1969. Today Coriole Vineyards is still owned and managed by the Lloyd family.

Coriole is situated in the undulating hills of the McLaren Vale wine region - just within sight of the sea, and less than an hour from Adelaide.

www.coriole.com



Awaken your senses where
luxury takes centre stage

A Hotel for the Arts and Official Partner of Victorian Opera

Book your stay now at www.sofitel-melbourne.com.au



SOFITEL
MELBOURNE ON COLLINS

Help us tell the whole story.



By subscribing to *The Saturday Paper*, you help us cover Australia's most pressing issues with depth and clarity.

thesaturdaypaper.com.au/subscribe

The Saturday Paper

Subscribe to Limelight

For over 250 issues, *Limelight* has celebrated and supported the arts. Join our community of readers who value trusted coverage of music, arts and culture.

limelight-arts.com.au





“

For me, the experience of playing the Yamaha SX falls into the category of “rewardingly effortless and limitless”, inviting my imagination to dream big and delivering on its promise at every step. The SX is simply sublime.”

ANDREA KELLER

Australian pianist and composer



au.yamaha.com

Official Piano Partner of Victorian Opera

VICTORIAN
OPERA

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

Nothing is what it seems...

29 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER
THE PALAIS THEATRE



WORLD PREMIERE

THE SPARE ROOM

A heartening and darkly funny adaptation of Helen Garner's acclaimed novel.

7 – 10 OCTOBER
ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE,
PLAYHOUSE



BOOK NOW VICTORIANOPERA.COM.AU



OUR PARTNERS

We acknowledge and thank our partners who make our work possible

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Victorian Opera is assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its arts funding and advisory body.



Victorian Opera is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.



FOUNDATION PARTNER



UNIVERSITY PARTNER



OPERA PRIZE SYNDICATE

Founding Patrons:
Dr Michael Stubbs & Malcolm Roberts
 Dame Carol Colburn Grigor DBE
 Mary Davidson and family of the late Frederick R Davidson AM
 Jane Lowther
 Joy Selby Smith
 Professor Emeritus Barbara van Ernst AM

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS



Gailey Lazarus Foundation
 William Angless Charitable Fund
 Henkell Family Fund
 Sage Foundation
 Ballandry (Peter Griffin Family) Fund

MAJOR PARTNERS



The Saturday Paper

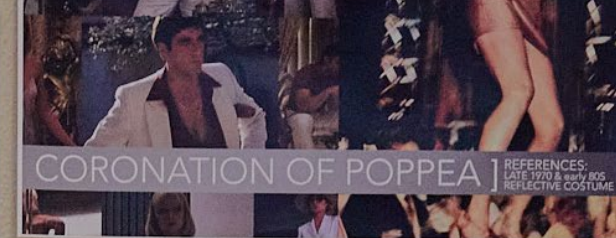
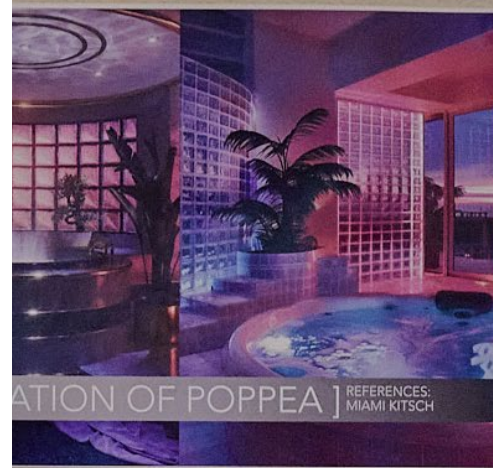
SUPPLY PARTNERS



OFFICIAL PARTNER



PERFORMANCE PARTNERS



VICTORIAN OPERA

Let us know what you thought of
The Coronation of Poppea

VISIT VICTORIANOPERA.COM.AU/SURVEY



CREATIVE
VICTORIA



VICTORIANOPERA.COM.AU