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LA TRAVIATA

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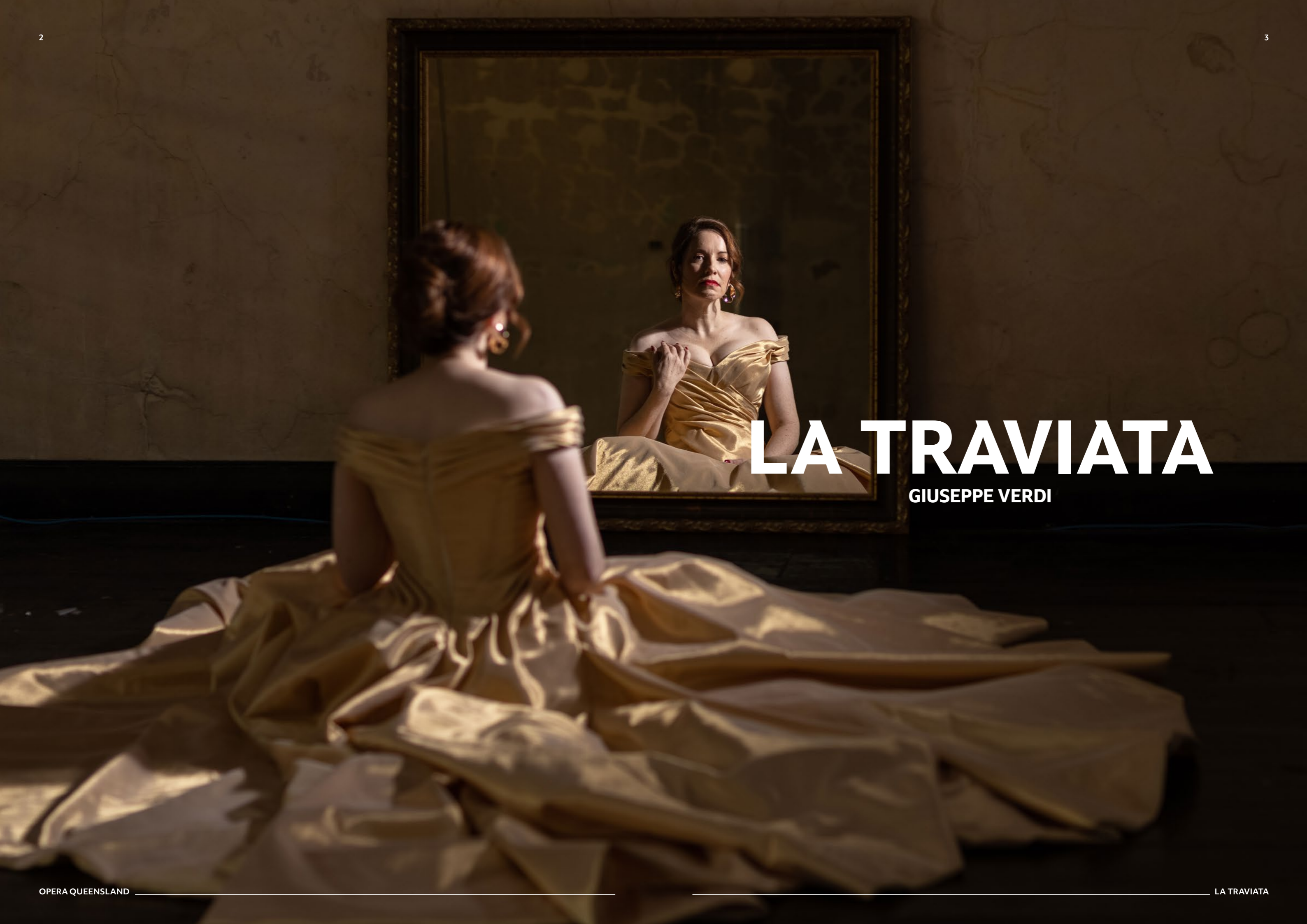
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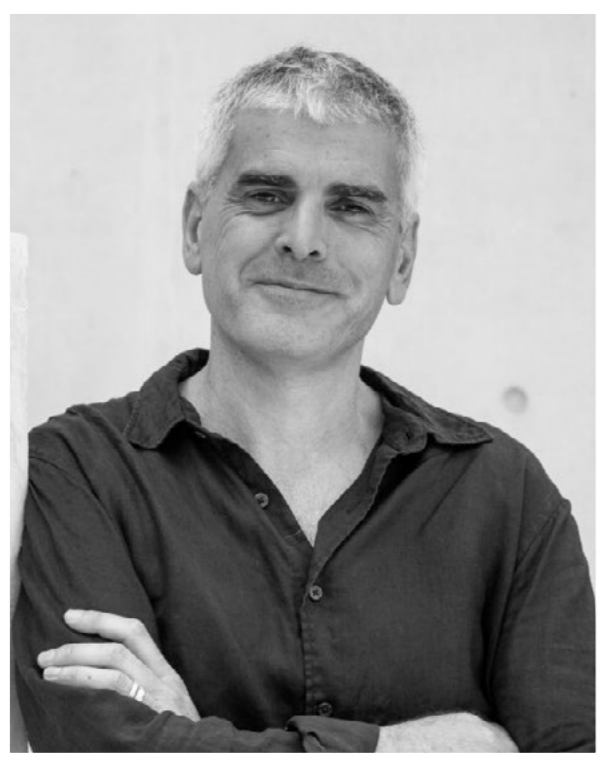
Australia
Council
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Dedicated to a better Brisbane



LA TRAVIATA

GIUSEPPE VERDI



Patrick Nolan
CEO & Artistic Director

WELCOME

When we decided to focus our 2022 season on the representation of women in opera, Verdi's *La Traviata* was immediately placed on the shortlist. One of the most performed operas in the canon, its story about a high-class prostitute falling in love and having to make a choice between the life she wanted and the one society deemed "appropriate" was a dilemma that well expressed the difficult, if not impossible, situations often presented to opera heroines.

Opera Queensland acknowledges the First Peoples of the Lands across Queensland upon which we perform. We pay our respects to all of Queensland's First Peoples, their ancestors and Elders and to our shared future.

For Verdi it was a story with some resonance to his own life. Following the early death of his wife and two children, Verdi began a relationship with the singer Giuseppina Strepponi, who despite never marrying, remained his lifelong partner. Unsurprisingly, the largely Catholic society that Verdi lived in struggled with such disregard for the law of the Church.

Verdi often used his works to examine ethical and political questions. Ideas of female liberation are at the centre of *La Traviata*. In Violetta's famous aria at the end of Act 1, "Sempre libera", which translates as "always free", she celebrates the "joy of flowing along the surface of life's path, as I please...".

These were radical ideas in 1853, so much so that the authorities insisted on the production being set in the distant past, hoping this distance would act as a filter, preventing people from seeing the relevance of the story to audiences at that time. This hypocrisy infuriated Verdi, who wanted it set in the present to illuminate how apposite the story was.

We are very fortunate to have this new production being created by Sarah Giles, whose production of *Lorelei* enchanted audiences last year. Sarah and her design team – Charlie Davis, sets and costumes, Paul Jackson, lights – have created a production located in the spectacle of 19th century Parisian society and alive to complex psychological dynamics the drama. It is a thrilling combination, bringing the story to life in a way that speaks very clearly to a world where a woman's right to choose her destiny is still in question.

With Dane Lam at the helm of a cast that includes Lorina Gore in the title role, Kang Wang as her lover and José Carbó his father, supported by a host of exceptional singers and the mighty Opera Queensland Chorus, we are guaranteed a rich and thrilling night at the opera.

This production is born of a partnership between OQ, State Opera South Australia and West Australian Opera. Seeing a common need for new productions that would interrogate and celebrate works from the canon, we are committed to this being the first in a series of productions that will reenergise these works for a modern audience.

Thanks to our producing partners the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and QPAC, who are key to bringing these large scale productions to life. And to our funding partners Arts Queensland and the Australia Council, whose ongoing support enables us to present work to audiences across the state.

And thank you to our audiences, who are at the centre of all our work. The support and enthusiasm you bring to our productions inspire us to keep exploring this extraordinary art form.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Sarah Giles

There's a famous 1950s Kurosawa film called *Rashomon*. The story itself is fairly straightforward. Set in the woods, the plot follows the rape of a woman and the murder of her samurai husband. The same story is told four times, each time from the perspective of a different witness; first from the perspective of the bandit-rapist, then the woman, then the samurai and finally the woodcutter.

Each version of the story is remarkably different and yet they are all telling the same story with the same key events. Perspective changes everything. It's why we revisit the classics over and over.

The story of *La Traviata* is based on the novel *The Lady of the Camellias* by Alexandre Dumas. Dumas wrote this novel based loosely on his real-life relationship with a courtesan of the time, Marie Duplessis. His novel tells the story of a fictional courtesan, Marguerite, and her lover Armand. The story is told from the perspective of this lover, Armand, who is interviewed by another man, an unknown narrator. Verdi and Piave based *La Traviata* on a stage show of the novel they went to see. Our Violetta and Alfredo are another Dumas and Marie, and another Marguerite and Armand. Three times over we have the story of this woman, told three times from the same perspective.

We were missing her perspective. Prompted by this I hunted down a first-hand account of the life of a courtesan from the 1800s in Paris. I came across an extraordinary book, published by a famous courtesan of the time known simply as Mogador. She managed to have her diaries published – an unparalleled achievement for her time. Mogador's story is not dissimilar to that of our Violetta Valéry, or Marie Duplessis, or Marguerite, the point of difference being that she survived against all the odds.

The day she decided to escape her abusive home and become a prostitute Mogador writes:

"I am dealing with an atrocious event and a dreadful day in my life. There has been in my life one really horrid day. In the morning I was pure. In the evening I was ruined. The next day I would have given half my life to take back the step I had taken, but there are ladders we can never go back up... I am going to try to recount, as chastely as possible, the most unchaste life in the world."

Her accounts are chilling. Women of a certain class had a choice between abuse and abject poverty, or selling their body for money.

"For the woman who has fallen so low, there is no family. Your parents disown you and try to forget you... Marriage is out of the question. The man who would want to unite his fate to yours hesitates before the prospect of asking the police prefect for your hand.

Motherhood? Your child's first kiss is torture, its first word a reproach because you cannot identify the father... If it is a boy, when he becomes a man he will scorn you. If it is a girl, you are afraid to keep her near you. Sometimes, tired of self-reproach, I would blame society. I would tell myself that it is barbaric to allow a sixteen-year-old child to enter into such a despicable contract... the law, which does not allow her to manage her property until she is twenty-one, lets a sixteen-year-old girl sell her body."

The men who visited these brothels had families, wives, high positions in society, jobs. They were able to enter and exit these worlds without trouble or "staining" their character. But for the women, they were prisons. Once you had your name registered to sell your body, you could never have your name removed; once a prostitute always a prostitute.

Mogador writes of her first weeks in the brothel:

"It is difficult to believe that human beings could become accustomed to these dreadful prisons. I had not been there a week that I had only one thought: getting out. The visitors were so distinguished and so rich that, deluded... I imagined that right away I would find someone who would help me get out of there. But time passed, and this unknown protector was not coming. On the contrary, each day my chains became heavier."

The double standards and hypocrisy of the time are breathtaking. And incredibly familiar. Roe v Wade, a case in point. *La Traviata* has so much to say to us about our current gender politics and our society, what sort of women we think are worthy of "redemption" and happiness and how they should behave. Examining the present through the prism of another era is extremely useful. It's why we continue to re-stage the classics; we can learn so much about our present selves from our collective pasts.

Many are infuriated by the operatic canon; the female characters either die, are raped, or are virgins. This lack of complexity is a question of perspective, because so often, these women have been written from the perspective of men from a bygone era. I don't want to throw away these operas, I simply want to ask when we're staging them, why are we doing this now, and are we looking at it from a new perspective.

Mogador writes of her becoming a prostitute:

"The fall was intentional, so how is it possible to believe in the sincerity of repentance? The world is not inhumane, just incredulous."

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Violetta is unwell. After spending time in a sanatorium to treat her tuberculosis, society's most notorious courtesan marks her return in the heart of Paris with a lavish party, entering on the arm of Baron Douphol.

Alfredo has wanted to meet Violetta for quite some time. He is introduced to her by his confidant Gaston. Upon meeting, she convinces Alfredo to sing a drinking song. He toasts to love. She toasts to freedom.

As the guests make their way to the ballroom to continue the evening, Alfredo confesses his love for her and Violetta considers if a life with financial security is worth risking for true love.

ACT II - SCENE I

Three months later, Violetta and Alfredo are now living together in the countryside, madly in love – but at what cost?

Violetta has been selling her belongings to pay for their expenses. When Alfredo finds out, he is wracked with guilt and leaves for Paris to organise money.

At the same time, Alfredo's father Giorgio Germont visits Violetta asking her to give up her relationship with Alfredo. He makes it clear that Violetta's involvement with Alfredo will be the undoing of the Germont family.

Violetta agrees to sacrifice her happiness for Alfredo's benefit and leaves, writing a farewell message ending their relationship.

Returning to find Violetta gone, Alfredo is devastated. Despite his father's attempts to console him, Alfredo leaves to change the mind of the woman who has broken his heart.

ACT II - SCENE II

Violetta arrives at an opulent party at fellow courtesan Flora's home on the arm of the Baron.

Alfredo enters and joins the gambling party.

Frozen with tension, Alfredo begins to insult the Baron, challenging him to a game of cards where he fails to win a single hand.

Violetta begs Alfredo to leave the party before the Baron seeks revenge, but Alfredo won't leave without Violetta. Knowing the danger he faces, Violetta attempts to save Alfredo by declaring love for the Baron.

A wounded and humiliated Alfredo retaliates by throwing money at Violetta's feet - a payment for her services.

Germont reproves his son for this behaviour, but what's done is done.

ACT III

The doctor has given Violetta just a few hours to live.

Violetta reflects on a letter from Germont telling her that the Baron was wounded in a duel with Alfredo and that his son fled the country.

Germont has revealed Violetta's sacrifice to Alfredo, and he returns to her side only to find her on the brink of death.

To comfort her, Alfredo muses on planning a new life together away from Paris.

Violetta's last thoughts are of freedom, hope and love as she dies in Alfredo's arms.

CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

Dane Lam

Returning to *La Traviata* is like returning to an old friend. Not just any old friend, mind you, but a friend who is ever-unpredictable in her vivacity, invention, and her capacity to speak to our deepest emotions. Verdi was already a famous composer by the time he came to write this work. But, in contrast to his earlier works that depicted kings and queens, warriors and freedom fighters, *La Traviata* is a much more domestic affair. I think that's why it speaks to us today, centuries later. These people grapple with the same emotions, foibles, and human weakness that we all do, and underpinning everything is the music.

Verdi was a master at constructing these domestic scenes – barnstorming parties, country houses, lovers' arguments, filial spats – through command of melody and orchestral colour. We feel the contrasts between the public and the private in the way Verdi fires up the chorus and the full orchestra for the crowd scenes, set against the intimate moments between life and death where an unaccompanied voice, barely perceptible, comes from the depths of the soprano's soul. It is, of course, Verdi's beloved singers who own the drama. Over what can be misconstrued as a simplistic accompaniment, the voices dip and soar, a gossamer thread increasing to cries of human desperation and everything in between. The music's simplicity is what I believe makes the experience so human and authentic to us.

You'll hear Violetta's sickness in the way the composer writes in the character's gasping for breath in the vocal line and the ever-so-slight unease of two solo violins (as opposed to the much more straightforward single instrument) reminiscing on Alfredo's love theme. Alfredo's brashness is similarly put forward musically by Verdi as the young man rails against his own wounded pride. This contrasts with his "puppy dog in love" interjections in our first crowd scene. And then, the two achingly beautiful preludes that open the first and third acts speak more than mere words ever could: they depict Violetta's intensely private world in the drawn out lines in the strings contrasted by the chattering, gossiping masses in the pointed violin figures, finally transformed into the desperation of a young life in its final hours by the final act.

In Verdi's music, we can perceive everything we need to know about these characters and, in turn, about ourselves.

DESIGN NOTE

Charles Davis

The entire first phase of the design process for this production of *La Traviata* was completed in lockdown. It wasn't until some way into the process that Sarah, Paul and I stopped to appreciate the inherent irony in some of the key conceptual ideas that had revealed themselves in our early exchange of notes, artwork and reference imagery; given the social context in which we were working.

In our production, the architecture of the space, while naturalistic in its detailing, is suggestive of Violetta's internal world. In establishing this space, both tangible and psychological, our research took us to portraits of loneliness and isolation captured by artists from the original 19th century setting through to the modern day; Vilhelm Hammershøi, Edward Hopper, Andrei Tarkovsky and Anne-Françoise Couloumy to name a few. We were struck by the opportunity afforded in the voyeuristic lens of these works and how we could bring this to the stage to reveal an honest perspective of Violetta's experience. The compartmentalised layout of the set allows for concurrent views into both Violetta's public and private life. The space is at times labyrinthine and at times open, shifting to support the character's journey.

In deciding when to set the work, Sarah, Paul and I were in lockstep that a period setting need not limit our ability to explore the key ideas of gender and class that permeate the opera and resonate in our modern world. We also felt no pressure to be too specific with setting. The proportions of the set and the silhouettes of the costumes are drawn primarily from the later half of the 19th century. We have maintained the corseted bodices and layered petticoats of the oppressive Victorian female silhouette, but taken license with the detail, fabric selection and construction, referencing couturiers who have reinvented 19th century fashion over the years; Charles James and Dior in the 1950s, Vivienne Westwood in the 90s and Valentino in recent years.

While the design phase of the creative process was spent in a kind of solitude compassionate with the experience of the opera's protagonist, the realisation phase of the process has involved dozens of highly skilled creatives, performers, craftspeople and technicians coming together under one roof. I am incredibly grateful for the tireless work of each member of the team and I hope audiences enjoy the world we have created.



MEMOIRS OF A COURTESAN IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARIS

Céleste Mogador

Paris between 1830 and 1870 was awirl with dinner parties, masked balls, stage productions, and gambling fever. The young men of this society were vying with one another for the chance to be seen with the most beautiful courtesan of the day, the one whose exploits on the stage or in the dance hall has placed her name on everyone's lips. For if a young man was seen with this woman, it meant she was his, and showering her with extravagant gifts of jewellery and fancy carriages was a way to keep her.

Those men were the dandies of the era and they spent their evenings in pursuit of pleasure and intoxication. Some were talented writers or musicians, some were rich aristocrats (prominent among them was Prince Napoleon, nephew of the emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and cousin of Napoleon III), and others were the sons of merchants and high-level bureaucrats. Many of them squandered whole fortunes and often were forced to go into debt, join the army, or emigrate as a result.

The courtesans so in demand were for the most part women who had managed to rise above the level of common brothel prostitutes through their beauty, cleverness, and a lot of good luck. For women whose options were limited because of their poverty or their social status, such a step up seemed to be a dream come true; the reality of their situation, however, was less than glittering.

Once their youthful good looks were gone (no later than age thirty or so in those days) or they became ill (tuberculosis and cholera were still common), they became a burden to their admirer and protector instead of an asset and were cynically discarded. Among these women competition precluded most friendships, so they were left alone to return to the brothel or the streets, or to commit suicide, or to die lacking medical care.

Today we are still fascinated by the lives of these merry rakes and their lovely courtesans, but we are also repelled by the double standard that prevailed. Men enjoyed the freedom to navigate between a life of respectability, possibly including marriage, and a nightlife of promiscuity and revelry without incurring the condemnation of society. However, many of the courtesans were forever reminded of their past as prostitutes by having to appear periodically before the prefect to sign the "vile book" in which they were registered and were unable to appear in respectable company without risking public insult. Unlike the romantic or idealised versions created by the writers of the day, the truth of these women's lives was not glamorous.



CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

CREATIVE

CONDUCTOR

Dane Lam

DIRECTOR

Sarah Giles

SETS & COSTUME

Charles Davis

LIGHTING

Paul Jackson

ASSOCIATE LIGHTING DESIGNER

Alexander Berlage

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Janice Muller

INTIMACY COORDINATOR

Michelle Miall

CHORUS MASTER

Narelle French

CAST

VIOLETTA VALÉRY

Lorina Gore

ALFREDO GERMONT

Kang Wang

GIORGIO GERMONT

José Carbó

FLORA BERVOIX

Hayley Sugars

GASTONE DE LETORIÈRES

Sebastian Maclaîne

BARON DOUPHOL

Shaun Brown

MARQUIS D'OBIGNY

Jason Barry-Smith

DOCTOR GRENVIL

Conal Coad

ANNINA

Susan Ellis

GIUSEPPE

Nick Kirkup

MESSENGER

Samuel Piper

GENTLEMAN

Daniel Smerdon

OPERA QUEENSLAND CHORUS

QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

14 – 23 July 2022

Lyric Theatre, QPAC

This performance lasts approximately 2.5 hours including one 20min interval. Sung in Italian with English surtitles.



Conductor
Dane Lam

Australian-Chinese conductor, Dane Lam, is Principal Conductor of the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra. Operatically, he enjoys a close relationship with London's Opera Holland Park and companies including Opera Queensland, Opera Australia and Scottish Opera. In 2021 he was appointed Resident Conductor and Associate Music Director of Opera Queensland.

Dane made his debut, aged eighteen, with the Sydney Symphony; recent engagements include Angela Hewitt, Stephen Hough, Ning Feng, Barry Douglas, and Kirill Gerstein with XSO; *La Bohème* and *Don Giovanni* at Opera Australia, *L'arlesiana* and *Così fan tutte* for Opera Holland Park, *Giulio Cesare* for Bury Court Opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* for Opera Queensland, *The Rake's Progress* and *La traviata* for Scottish Opera.

In 2021/2022, Dane Lam leads seasons of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *La Traviata* in Brisbane, *La clemenza di Tito* and *La rondine* in Canberra and *Carmen* in Perth; he also conducts the Xi'an, Hawai'i, Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.



Director
Sarah Giles

Sarah Giles is an award-winning opera and theatre director. Opera directing credits include: for Victorian Opera, *Lorelei*; for Sydney Chamber Opera and Sydney Festival, *O MENSCH!*, *Pas à Pas – Nulle Part* and *Into The Little Hill*. Sarah has directed for companies including: Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, State Theatre of South Australia, Griffin Theatre, NIDA, WAAPA, La Mama, The Old Fitz, The New Theatre, Sydney Chamber Opera, Victorian Opera, Opera Queensland and The Australian Chamber Orchestra.

In 2011 Sarah was the Richard Wherrett Fellow at Sydney Theatre Company and was their Resident Director in 2013. In 2013 she was awarded a Mike Walsh and a Glorias Fellowship. In 2009 Sarah was the Affiliate Director in Residence at Griffin Theatre.

Sarah won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Direction of an Independent Production for her production of *The Ugly One*. She received Helpmann Award and Green Room Award nominations for Best Direction of an Opera for *Lorelei* which won Best New Australian Work and Best Design at the Green Room Awards where it was nominated in five categories. *Lorelei* was remounted at Victorian Opera and toured to Opera Queensland.



Sets & Costume
Charles Davis

Charles is an award-winning set and costume designer for opera, theatre, dance, and film.

Charles' designs for opera include: *Seven Deadly Sins & Mahagonny Songspiel* set design (Red Line Productions), *Artaserse*, *The Coronation of Poppea* design (Pinchgut Opera); *Breaking Glass* set design, *Biographica* design, *OH MENSCH!* costume design (Sydney Chamber Opera/Sydney Festival); *Ned Kelly* (Perth Festival/Lost and Found Opera); *Hansel and Gretel* design (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University). Charles was associate set designer for *Carmen* directed by John Bell and *The Merry Widow* directed by Graeme Murphy (Opera Australia).

Charles' theatre designs include: *No Pay? No Way!*, *Rules For Living*, *The Real Thing*, *The Wharf Revue* 2018-2020 (Sydney Theatre Company); *Buyer And Cellar*, *The Kitchen Sink* (Ensemble Theatre); *Happy Days*, *The Whale* (Red Line Productions); *Fly and Moby Dick* Lano and Woodley national tour.

Charles won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Stage Design of an Independent Production for *Happy Days* and was awarded a 2018 Mike Walsh Fellowship. *Artaserse*, which he designed for Pinchgut Opera, won the International Opera Award for Best Rediscovered Work.



Lighting
Paul Jackson

Paul Jackson is a multi-award-winning designer who has worked with Australia's leading arts organisations and internationally. His work has featured in festivals and programmes in the United States, Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom. Paul's recent work includes: *Carmen* (Opera Australia), *Happy End*, *Echo and Narcissus / Cassandra* (Victorian Opera), *Lorelei* (Victorian Opera, Opera Queensland); *The Sound Inside*, *Cyrano*, *Home*, *I'm Darling* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Death Of A Salesman* and *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Stop Girl* (Belvoir); *The Return* (Malthouse), *Cloudstreet* (Malthouse, Black Swan State Theatre Company).

Paul was Artistic Associate at Malthouse Theatre from 2007-2013. In 2017, he received an Australia Council of the Arts fellowship. Paul has won a Helpmann Award, two Sydney Theatre Awards, seven Green Room Awards, a Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland, and four Australian Production Design Guild Awards. He has also received a further four Helpmann Award nominations and thirty-two Green Room Award nominations. He has taught design at the University of Melbourne, RMIT University and the Victorian College of the Arts.



Associate Lighting Designer
Alexander Berlage

Alexander is a director and lighting designer and is co-artistic director of the Old Fitz Theatre. His smash-hit production of *American Psycho* won nine Sydney Theatre Awards including Best Direction of a Musical, Best Production of a Musical, Best Lighting Design of an Independent Production. Alexander's production of *Cry-Baby* won four Sydney Theatre Awards including Best Direction of a Musical, and Best Production of a Musical. The same year, his productions of *There Will Be A Climax*, *Home Invasion* and *Cry-Baby* received a combined total of 12 Sydney Theatre Award nominations. Alexander's production of *Gloria* was nominated for two Sydney Theatre Awards.

As a lighting designer, Alexander has designed for companies including: Opera Queensland, Circa, Sydney Theatre Company, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Sydney Chamber Opera, Sydney Dance Company, Griffin Theatre, Ensemble Theatre, Belvoir Theatre, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Hayes Theatre Co., Australian Theatre for Young People, and Red Line Productions.



Associate Director
Janice Muller

Janice Muller is a stage director who has worked across Australia and internationally for companies including Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir, Carriageworks, Sydney Festival, Sydney Chamber Opera and Berlin's Hebbel Theater.

Janice also collaborates as a dramaturg and writer and has devised several site-specific performances. She has directed two new Australian operatic works: *Ned*, composer Luke Styles/libretto Peter Goldsworthy (Perth Festival 2019) and *Biographica*, composer Mary Finsterer/libretto Tom Wright (Sydney Chamber Opera/Sydney Festival 2017).

Recent theatre directing credits include *Good Muslim Boy*, co-adapted with Osamah Sami (Malthouse, Queensland Theatre), *Revolt She Said. Revolt Again* by Alice Birch (Malthouse) and *Lake Disappointment* (Carriageworks) which was nominated for five Sydney Theatre Awards.

In 2016 Janice was Director in Residence at the Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne. She is the recipient of various awards and scholarships including the VCA Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Travelling Scholarship and a grant to the Royal Court Theatre's International Residency. Janice is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (1998) and the University of New South Wales (1996).



Intimacy Coordinator
Michelle Miall

Michelle is an Intimacy Coordinator & Director (under mentorship, Intimacy on Set), and an award-winning Theatre Director, Producer, Teaching Artist and Playwright.

Intimacy Coordinator for screen: *Deadloch* (Amazon), *Troppo* (ABC), *Darby & Joan* (Acorn TV), *All My Friends Are Racist* (ABC iview); feature films: *The Possessed* and *Great White*. For stage: *GREASE* (QPAC/QCGU), *Fourthcoming* (shake & stir theatre co), *Horizon* (Playlab Theatre), *Zigzag St*, *Spike Heels* (AdAstra), *Against the Wall* (Passion Productions) and *Genesis* (A Very Theatre Company).

Graduating from QUT with a Bachelor of Arts Honours (Drama), Michelle is a former Associate Artist with the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble and Creative Resident with Queensland Theatre (QT), and has worked as a Director and Teaching Artist for QT's Artist in Residence Education Program and Youth Ensemble, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (Musical Theatre, Acting and Classical Music), QUT, USQ and ACPA. She is currently a Lecturer in Acting at the Australian Performing Arts Conservatory.

Michelle's awards and accolades include the 2009 Gold Matilda Award for Directing & Producing Outstanding Independent Theatre in Queensland, Best Emerging Artist and Best Director, the 2011 Brisbane Lord Mayor's Young & Emerging Artist Fellowship, and Australia Council's national Mentoring Program JUMP.



Chorus Master
Narelle French

One of Australia's most respected and versatile pianists and musicians, Narelle joined Opera Queensland in 1999 encompassing roles including Head of Music, Director of Young Artist Program and Chorus Director.

Narelle has appeared as conductor, performer, arranger, librettist and translator, has co-created and performed for numerous touring productions, special events, concerts and workshop programs, and has led the Opera Queensland Chorus for over forty main stage productions, concerts and events.



Violetta Valéry
Lorina Gore

Australian soprano Lorina Gore completed her postgraduate voice studies at the Australian National University in Canberra and at the National Opera Studio in London. She has won numerous prestigious opera awards, including two Helpmann Awards (2017 and 2018), a Green Room Award (2018), the Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship (AOAC), the Opera Awards, the Covent Garden National Opera Studio Scholarship, second prize in the Herald-Sun Aria (2002 and 2004), and first place in the Australian National Aria Competition.

Lorina joined Opera Australia as a principal artist in 2008 and has since performed many roles for the company including: Violetta (*La Traviata*), Marie (*Wozzeck*), Leïla (*Les pêcheurs de perles*), Amina (*La sonnambula*), and Musetta (*La Bohème*).

Lorina won a Helpmann Award and Green Room Award for her role as Roxana in Opera Australia's *King Roger*, and was subsequently awarded her second Helpmann Award for the role of Ophelia in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Adelaide Festival.

Recordings include: *A Toast to Melba* and also *Johann Strauss: Waltzes and Arias* with Marko Letonja and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra for ABC Classics, highlights from Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* with Yvonne Kenny, *Bliss* with Opera Australia, and Handel's *Rodelinda* conducted by Maestro Richard Bonyngé.



Alfredo Germont
Kang Wang

Australian-Chinese tenor Kang Wang is one of the most sought-after young lyric tenors in the opera world. He is a former member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program of the Metropolitan Opera and was a finalist in the 2017 Cardiff Singer of the World competition.

This season, Kang makes his house and role debut at Washington National Opera as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. He also makes his house debut at Seattle Opera as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Opera Australia in the same role. In concert, he joins the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra for a performance celebrating the Chinese New Year and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra for a concert of arias.

Highlights of recent seasons include house debuts at Opera Australia as Alfredo and at Pittsburgh Opera as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, as well as performances of Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. Kang makes his Opera Queensland main stage debut in the role of Alfredo in *La Traviata*.



Giorgio Germont
José Carbó

Argentine-Australian baritone José Carbó is one of the most exciting operatic artists of his generation; he has performed in the leading houses of the world including Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Real Madrid, Los Angeles Opera, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Seattle Opera and Opera Australia. In 2021, he sang Germont (*La Traviata*) for Opera Australia and The Count (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Opera Queensland.

His triumphant Verdi debut in 2013 as Renato in *Un ballo in maschera* for Opera Australia led to further important Verdi role debuts including the title role in *Rigoletto*, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and his now-signature role of Germont.

In 2018, José toured Australia with superstar Sumi Jo and sang Germont for Opera Australia; he returned to OA in 2019 as Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*). In 2017, he sang Germont opposite Ermonela Jahovcic and Alfio/Tonio (*Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci*) for Opera Australia – receiving Helpmann Award and Green Room Award nominations for his work. Other recent appearances include Riolo (Florença) in *Florença en el Amazonas* for Los Angeles Opera, Germont and Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for Victorian Opera and Zurga (*The Pearlfishers*) for Opera Australia.

In 2015, José joined the roster of principal artists at The Metropolitan Opera, New York.



Flora Bervoix
Hayley Sugars

Hayley was a member of the Opera Queensland Young and Developing Artist Program (2007-2009) and has enjoyed success in many national competitions, including winning the German-Australian Opera Grant in 2010. This success resulted in contracts with the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden and the Landestheater Coburg.

Operatic repertoire includes Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Rinaldo*, Mrs Grose in *The Turn of the Screw*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Varvara in *Katja Kabanova*, Flora Bervoix in *La Traviata*, Mirabella in *Der Zigeunerbaron*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Prince Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Brangäne in *Tristan and Isolde*, Auntie in *Peter Grimes* and Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Since returning to Australia, Hayley has performed to great acclaim for Opera Queensland, New Zealand Opera and Brisbane Festival. Most recently, she has performed in Opera Queensland's new production of *The Sopranos* and took part in the highly successful Festival of Outback Opera.



Gastone de Letorières
Sebastian Maclaine

Sebastian Maclaine completed his Bachelor of Music at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University in 2008, where he featured in a number of productions including the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Valletto in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Autumn in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.

Sebastian has had a wide variety of musical experiences, including singing with the popular Australian touring and recording group, *The Ten Tenors*. With the group, Sebastian has performed extensively in 16 countries, most recently in 2022, and recorded a number of albums.

In 2017, Sebastian was nominated as the recipient of an Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music to study at the Royal Northern College of Music. He graduated from the RNCM in 2018 with a Master of Music (Intensive). Also in 2018, he featured at the Glyndebourne Festival, where he appeared in the chorus for *Giulio Cesare*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Vanessa*, and understudied the High Priest in Barrie Kosky's *Saul*. He subsequently moved to Hildesheim, Germany, performing with Theater für Niedersachsen as soloist and chorus member.

Sebastian returned to Brisbane in 2021, performing with Opera Queensland (OQ) in the schools touring productions of *La Bohème* and *The Frog Prince* (co-production with shake & stir theatre co.) and OQ's Vocal Ensemble. In 2022 for OQ, he joins the Young Artist Program and performs the role of Gastone in *La Traviata*.



Baron Douphol
Shaun Brown

Australian baritone Shaun Brown has performed and studied in England, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States of America, where he completed a Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of North Texas.

A former Opera Queensland Young Artist, Shaun is known to Queensland audiences for his many appearances including roles in *Don Giovanni*, *The Merry Widow*, *Carmen*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and the Brisbane and touring productions of *La Bohème*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Ruddigore*, or *The Witch's Curse!*

Internationally, Shaun has sung for Opéra de Lyon at the New Zealand International Arts Festival, Freiburg Opera, The Atelier du Rhin, and has performed in New York at the Center for Contemporary Opera in operatic works by Jake Heggie. He has performed to critical acclaim as a concert soloist, covering repertoire including Britten's *War Requiem*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Currently, Shaun is Director of Performance at The University of Queensland, School of Music and is in high demand as an adjudicator for vocal and choral competitions across Queensland.



Marquis d'Obigny
Jason Barry-Smith

Jason Barry-Smith's study in Brisbane, Munich, London and Rome led him to a singing career on the Australian operatic stage, and he's equally in demand as a singing teacher, conductor, arranger, and compere.

Jason has performed in some of Opera Queensland's most successful productions over the past 28 years, and he's also performed the title role in *Billy Budd* for the Brisbane Biennial, Papageno in *The Magic Flute* for Opera Australia (Opera on the Beach), Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* for the Tokyo Arts Foundation, Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier* and Belcore in *The Elixir of Love* for State Opera South Australia, Mamoud in *The Death of Klinghoffer* and the title role in *The Barber of Seville* for New Zealand Opera, Tony in *West Side Story* for Brisbane Festival, and Major-General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance* for Essgee Entertainment.

Jason has also created the roles of Aldo Marini in *Mimma – A Musical of War & Friendship*, Samuel in *Electric Lenin* for NORPA and Julian in *Quartet* for the New Zealand Arts Festival.



Doctor Grenvil
Conal Coad

Conal was born in Fielding, New Zealand. He studied at the Sydney Conservatorium before joining the Young Artists' Programme with Opera Australia. He also studied in New York and Europe. He has performed in Brussels, Ghent, London, New York, Washington, Madrid, Valencia, Venice, Bologna, Naples, Frankfurt, Paris, Nantes, Bordeaux, Leeds, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Auckland, Wellington, Tel Aviv, Royal Opera House, Leeds, Garsington, Aldeburgh, Holland Park, Geneva and Tokyo.

Conal sings the bass repertoire, having performed over fifty roles.

Concert engagements include work with all major Australian orchestras, Israel Philharmonic, Royal Opera House, La Monnaie Brussels, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as festivals in France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, UK, Australia and NZ. Conal supports many charities and has been a guest artist in London (Kensington Palace), Australia, Belgium (Brussels and Mechelen), Tokyo and New Zealand.

Previously Conal has performed in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Don Giovanni* and *Don Pasquale* for Opera Queensland.

Recordings/DVDs: *Mozart Bass Arias*, *New Zealand at Covent Garden*, *Mozart Opera Arias*, *My Beloved Father*, *Ruaumoko*, *Orakau*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale* and *Turandot* for Opera Australia.



Annina
Susan Ellis

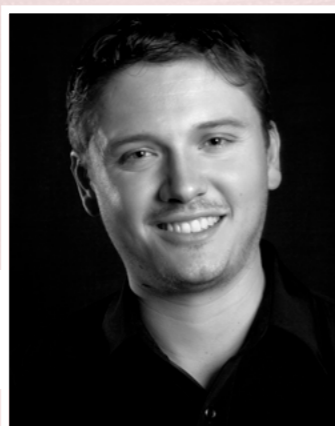
Soprano Susan Ellis has performed various roles and concerts throughout Australia, Asia and in Europe. A past member of Opera Queensland's Young Artist Program and an enthusiastic Teaching Artist, she enjoys a balance between mentoring and performing, and has a passion for opera outreach in Queensland.

Since 2010, Susan has been the vocalist of the innovative chamber music ensemble, Griffyn Ensemble, with whom she has performed at various Australian music festivals, ABC Sunday Live concerts, and on tour for organisations including Musica Viva Australia, and Sound Festival Scotland.

A diverse soprano, her roles include the title roles in the melodrama *Medea* by Georg Benda and *The Plaint of Mary Gilmore*, written by Vincent Plush, and most recently Elizabeth Woodville, from an opera composed for her by Australian composer A.D.K. Voltz, *The True Story of the Princes in the Tower*.

Roles sung or understudied for Opera Queensland include Rosalinda and Ida in *Die Fledermaus*, Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw* and the Witch and Mother in the schools' tour of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Susan is a recipient of a CAPO Fellowship and the Singapore Airlines Travelling Scholarship with which she studied and performed in Germany. She is a past recipient of the Kornfeld Scholarship (MMus, ANU School of Music), and was awarded a teaching fellowship to work with Robert Alderson at Royal Northern College of Music.



Giuseppe
Nick Kirkup

Nick Kirkup has been an active performer in and around Queensland since 2005. During this time he appeared in many roles for the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Opera Studio and the Queensland Conservatorium Opera Studio.

In 2010 Nick was the recipient of the prestigious \$20,000 Joyce Campbell Lloyd scholarship which allowed him to undertake further study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

On the concert stage Nick has been the tenor soloist on numerous occasions for all of South East Queensland's major choral societies. He was the tenor soloist on the Queensland Symphony Orchestra's 2016 state tour of Handel's *Messiah*. In 2019 he was the tenor soloist for the Canticum and Brisbane Chorale performance of *Israel in Egypt*. In 2020 he performed as the Evangelist in Canticum's performance of Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

Nick joined the Opera Queensland (OQ) Chorus in 2016 and has appeared in numerous productions for the company as well as working as a facilitator for OQ's Learning, Regional and Community programs. In 2018 he understudied the role of Reverend Horace Adams in *Peter Grimes* for the Brisbane Festival. Other understudy roles include Spoletta in *Tosca* and Basilio/Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*. He has also been featured in many other performances by the company.



Messenger
Samuel Piper

Samuel has been a regular with Opera Queensland over many years. Recently he joined the company for VERDI at QPAC, as Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and for Opera Queensland Under the Stars at Riverstage. He made his role debut with the company in *Don Giovanni* as Masetto.

Samuel has worked with Opera Queensland on numerous other productions alongside his work with Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Victorian Opera, Melba Opera Trust, Lisa Gasteen National Opera School, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Choir, Brisbane Baroque, and many other companies across Australia.

Samuel has furthered his development through opportunities with the Melba Opera Trust and Lisa Gasteen National Opera School and is grateful for the support of John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith, Dr John Casey, and Stephen Pellegrino. As the recipient of a grant through Arts Queensland and the Brisbane City Council he was able to travel to Italy to undertake further study into the Bel Canto repertoire.

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Over the next three years, The Chair's Circle will focus on an important new fundraising strategy led by Opera Queensland's new Chair, Ms Linda Apelt. We continue to invite our donor community to join us on this important journey and thank our existing members for their continued support.

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For more information, please visit:
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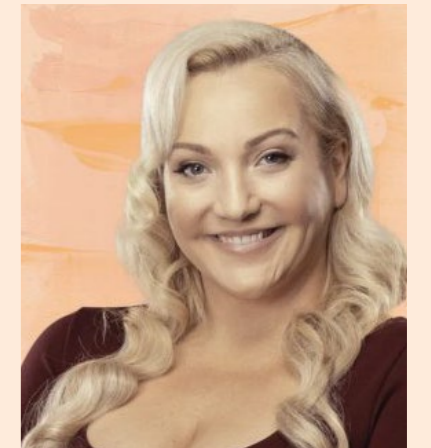
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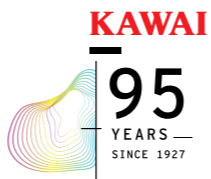
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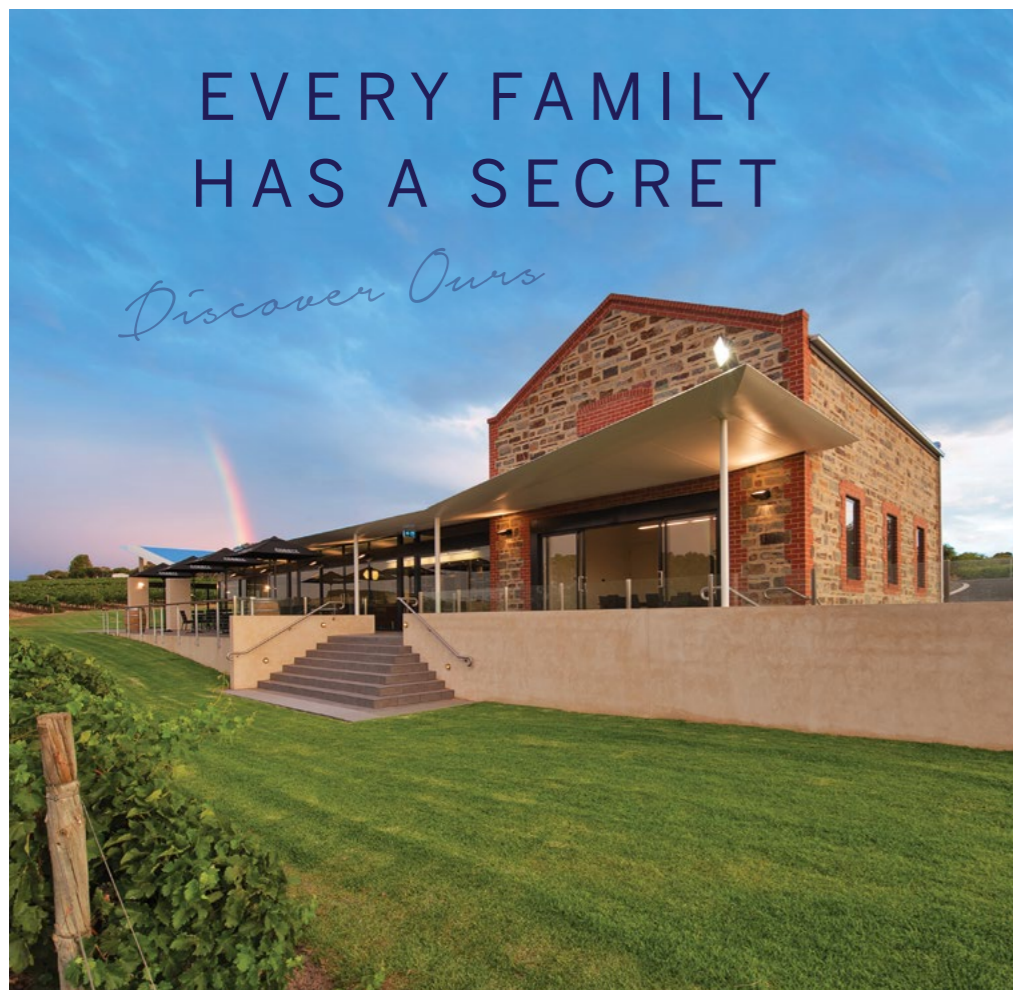
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