WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA 2022

LA TRAVIATA

VERDI

As Principal Partner of West Australian Opera, and commissioning partner of Koolbardi wer Wardong, Wesfarmers is helping Western Australian stories take flight.

> Celebrating the indigenous culture of this place on Nyungar Country, Koolbardi wer Wardong speaks uniquely to this land, time and place.

Wesfarmers Arts is privileged to commission major new works that help our arts sector re-emerge from the crisis of COVID-19, resilient, re-invigorated and connecting afresh with audiences around our state.

WESFARMERS ARTS COMMISSIONING PARTNER OF KOOLBARDI WER WARDONG, TOURING WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN 2022



LA TRAVIATA

20, 22, 25, 27, 29 October 2022 His Majesty's Theatre, Perth

Composer Giuseppe Verdi Conductor Christopher van Tuinen Director Sarah Giles Assistant Director Janice Muller Assistant Director Margrete Helgeby Chaney Set & Costume Designer Charles Davis Lighting Designer Paul Jackson Intimacy Director Zoë Warwick Chorus Master Christopher van Tuinen Repetiteur Tommaso Pollio

Violetta Valéry Samantha Clarke Alfredo Germont Paul O'Neill Giorgio Germont Simon Meadows Gastone de Letorières Matthew Lester Baron Douphol Mark Alderson Marchese d'Obigny Lachlann Lawton Doctor Grenville Robert Hofmann Flora Bervoix Fiona Campbell Annina Brianna Louwen Giuseppe Ammon Bennett Messenger Brett Peart Flora's Servant Lachlan Higgins Dancer Luci Young Dancer Macon Riley

Featuring West Australian Opera Chorus Featuring West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Production Manager Mandy Farmer Stage Manager Karen Farmer Deputy Stage Manager Rose Liggins Assistant Stage Managers Erryn Hanson, Jacinta Wajon Head Mechanist Adam Paine Head of Wardrobe Sue Kerr Wardrobe Assistants Nora Stelter, Rose Finlay Wardrobe Maintenance Jessica Arrantash Dressers Meg Badart, Brooklyn Rowcroft, Sacha Mahboub OAM Head of Wigs Virginia Vona Wig Assistants Christopher Lyons, Delia Stanley Head of Make Up Sharon Kyrwood Surtitle Operator Allison Fyfe Surtitle Programmer Joshua Tilson WAAPA Secondment Holly Ballam

Information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to changes.

Wesfarmers Arts













Photo shows Violetta and Alfredo sharing a kiss. Photo courtesy of State Opera South Australia.

Executive Director's Message



Verdi's *La traviata* has long been one of the best loved operas. We are pleased to work with our colleagues in other states to coproduce new productions and we are grateful for this partnership with Opera Queensland and State Opera South Australia.

This season is directed by Sarah Giles who has worked with our cast, chorus and creative team to find something special. We thank Samantha Clarke, Paul O'Neill, Simon Meadows, Matthew Lester, Mark Alderson, Lachlann Lawton, Robert Hoffman, Fiona Campbell, Brianna Louwen, Ammon Bennett, Brett Peart, Lachlan Higgins, Luci Young, Macon Riley, the West Australian Opera Chorus, and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Chris van Tuinen.

I sincerely thank the team behind the scenes who work with passion and commitment, including theatre staff, crew, workshop, and wardrobe. Special thanks to Chris van Tuinen, Mandy Farmer, Karen Farmer, Terasa Letizia, Gabby Ibrahim, Rachel O'Brien, Catherine Noonan, Danielle Barlow, Scott Whinfield, Holly Langford Smith, Daniele Foti-Cuzzola, Debbie Byrnes, Kris Adrian, Kate Larkins, Rachel Sait, Lisa Harper-Brown, Allison Fyfe, Sue Kerr, and Rebecca Bencivenni.

Thank you for supporting West Australian Opera and for your continued understanding as we navigated COVID-19. Please visit waopera.asn.au to view the 2023 offerings.

Carolyn Chard AM Executive Director West Australian Opera

Chairman's Message



We are proud to coproduce Verdi's *La traviata* with Opera Queensland and State Opera South Australia.

We recognise and thank Principal Partner Wesfarmers Arts for their longstanding support of the State opera company. We thank Major Partners Lotterywest, Healthway, the Minderoo Foundation and Civic Partner the City of Perth for their valued contributions.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Federal Government through the Australia Council and the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

Thank you to our donors, patrons and subscribers. We acknowledge your support which plays an important role in the life of West Australian Opera and its ecology within the arts and cultural landscape of Western Australia.

Andrew Pascoe Chairman West Australian Opera



Photo shows an eclectic mix of party guests. Photo by Jade Ferguson, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

Conductor's Notes



For me, the genius in a score like *La traviata* is not just its wonderful structure and melodic inventiveness, but the remarkable freshness and newness at its heart.

Of course, when you get to your 19th opera you might know a thing or two about keeping our attention but, even with that experience, what Verdi achieves is remarkable. Moments flow into moments in a way that seems inevitable and surprising and delightful nonetheless. So, like all great works of art, they reward a lifetime of study. This is true for those of us behind the curtain as well. My score has constantly changing markings and notations, things discovered as if for the first time but which have always been there.

The story and libretto also provide interest and nuance, but this can be lost in the changing social perspectives of our time. How then can the story about a 19th Century French courtesan be relevant to a modern Australian audience? You need the skills and insights of a wonderful Director and creative team, a group that respects whilst challenging the piece, looking at it through other lenses. Because like all jewels there are many facets, many angles and many versions of the story to be told.

Of course, the singers also bring such personal connection to the story and music. They need to inhabit the characters, work with the Director's and Conductor's viewpoints and embody a performance that is meaningful and powerful. I've been fortunate to work often on seasons where all this comes together, and happily, I feel again this is one of them. We think we've made a new *La traviata*, one that brings our love of the artform and the genius in the music to a stage placed in our time. One where extraordinary singing from the cast is combined with insightful and thoughtful direction from Sarah, beautiful designs from Charlie and Paul, and the nuance, skill and power of our chorus, crew, and orchestra.

Christopher van Tuinen Conductor, Artistic Director

Photo shows an emotional Violetta leaning against the salon wall. Photo courtesy of State Opera South Australia.

Director's Notes



There's a famous 1950s Kurosawa film called *Rashomon*. 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.

The story of *La traviata* came from Alexandre Dumas' novel *The Lady of the Camellias*. It was subsequently turned into a stage show which Verdi and Piave saw and decided to make into an opera. The original story is based on Dumas' real-life relationship with a famous courtesan of the time, Marie Duplessis. The novel is written from the perspective of an impartial third party, an unknown male character, who interviews a young man, Armand, who tells the story of his falling in love with a courtesan Marguerite, and her tragic death.

Our Violetta and Alfredo are another Armand and Marguerite, another Dumas and Marie. 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 known simply as Mogador. Her 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, and perhaps even more remarkable she managed to have her diaries published.

Her accounts are chilling. Women of a certain class had a choice between abuse and abject poverty, or selling their body for money. Once you registered with the local police to sell your body, you could never have your name removed from the register; once a prostitute always a prostitute. The men who visited these brothels had families, wives, high positions in society, jobs. They were able to enter and exit these worlds without "staining" their character. For the women they were prisons, where the only thought was escape.

These double standards and hypocrisy of the time are breathtaking and yet incredibly familiar. Roe v Wade, a case in point. *La traviata* has so much to tell us about contemporary gender politics and society, about what sort of women we think are worthy of "redemption" 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.

Sarah Giles Director

Designer's Notes



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.

Charles Davis Set & Costume Designer



VIOLETTA VALÉRY, Act I



VIOLETTA VALÉRY, Act II





ALFREDO GERMONT, Act I



BARON DOUPHOL, Act I

ALFREDO GERMONT, Act II



BARON DOUPHOL, Act II

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.



Photo by Jade Ferguson, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

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.



Photo shows Violetta and Alfredo locked in a desperate embrace. Photo courtesy of State Opera South Australia.

Love and Death



Verdi's operatic heroine, Violetta Valéry, is based on the life-story of a famous courtesan named Marie Duplessis, who was born in Nonant, Normandy in 1824. How a poor, uneducated country girl could become so celebrated is one of the marvels of her story. She was beautiful, charming, intelligent and, of course, her tragic death of consumption at twenty three added to her charismatic profile.

The life of a successful Parisian courtesan could be very exciting and rewarding; as long as her health and beauty lasted. Marie took many lovers and in death gained immortality and, renamed Violetta, became Verdi's tragic heroine. The original working title for his opera was *Amore e Morte* or *Love and Death*. Later he renamed it *La traviata*.

The writer Alexandre Dumas had already used Marie's story as the basis of his quasi-autobiographical novel *La Dame aux Camélias* (1847), renaming her Marguerite Gautier. Soon after Marie's death the young author (who had been one of her lovers) wrote his novel while his memories and grief were still poignantly vivid, and later adapted this best-selling story for the stage (1849).

Censorship delayed the premiere of the play for three years, on the grounds that it offended against morals and modesty. Ironically, this whetted public interest and *La Dame aux Camélias* became one of the most successful plays of the nineteenth century. Verdi, who was living in Paris at this time, attended the delayed premiere of Dumas' play at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in 1852, and immediately recognized its musico-dramatic potential. Within thirteen months, he and his librettist Piave had created their iconic Romantic tragedy. *La traviata* premiered at Teatro la Fenice in Venice on March 6, 1853. This title is never translated, but actually means a woman who has been led astray.

Due to censorship demands it took courage to adapt Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélia*'s for the operatic stage. Although based on contemporary mores, the Venetian censors insisted that the opera be set in the Paris of 1700! Verdi also blamed the theatre management for poor casting. The soprano portraying Violetta weighed in at around three hundred pounds and the audience found it ludicrous that she was dying of consumption. Verdi declaimed the opening night "a great fiasco". The following year he had the satisfaction of seeing his opera's triumphant success at another Venetian opera house.

Many attendees of those early performances could have known Violetta's predecessor, Marie Duplessis, and some may have enjoyed her favours. They could also have read or seen Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*. However, it took the genius of Giuseppe Verdi to turn Marie's story, glorifying love and death into a work of lasting popularity.

Annie Patrick October 2022

21 Photo shows Violetta in an elaborate ballgown. Photo courtesy of State Opera South Australia.



Christopher van Tuinen Conductor, Chorus Master

Christopher graduated with a B.Mus from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2001. In 2005 he completed a Masters in Conducting at the VCA.

Experienced in both vocal and instrumental music, he was awarded the John Williams Conducting Scholarship for 2004-5. He also holds a B.A. from the University of Queensland, an LLB from Q.U.T. and an A.Mus.A from the AMEB. He has been nominated by the Musical Theatre Guild for Best Music Direction and received a Green Room Award nomination in the 'Best Conductor' category.

During 2008 and 2009 he was a member of the Young Artists program as a Conductor with Opera Australia. In 2007 Chris was appointed as the inaugural Conducting Fellowship at the Australian Ballet. He has worked with the WASO. Orchestra Victoria, AOBO and the QSO. His previous roles include WA State Manager for Musica Viva, Classical Music Program Manager for Perth Festival. Chorus Director for WASO. Conductor of UWACS, Musical Director of Fremantle Chamber Orchestra and Artistic Director of Lost & Found Opera.

Chris is currently the Artistic Director of West Australian Opera.



Sarah Giles Director

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*; for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, *Kreutzer vs Kreutzer*.

Sarah has directed for companies such as: Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, State Theatre of South Australia, Griffin Theatre, Sydney Chamber Opera, Victorian Opera and Queensland Opera.

At Sydney Theatre Company. Sarah was the Richard Wherrett Fellow, and Resident Director. She received Helpmann Award and Green Room Award nominations for Best Director of an Opera for her world premiere Victorian Opera production of 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 at Opera Queensland. Sarah won Best Direction of an Independent Production for her production of The Ugly One with Griffin at the Sydney Theatre Awards.



Janice Muller Assistant Director

Janice Muller has directed theatre and opera for companies and festivals across Australia and overseas.

She has directed two new Australian operas: *Ned*, composer Luke Styles/libretto Peter Goldsworthy (Lost and Found Opera/Perth Festival) and *Biographica*, composer Mary Finsterer/libretto Tom Wright (Sydney Chamber Opera/Sydney Festival).

Recent theatre credits include Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore (National Theatre St Kilda), Australian Realness, Good Muslim Boy and Revolt She Said. Revolt Again by Alice Birch (Malthouse Theatre) and Lake Disappointment (Carriageworks) which was nominated for 5 Sydney Theatre Awards.

Janice is the recipient of various awards and scholarships including the VCA Keith and Elisabeth Travelling Scholarship, the PWA/Goethe Institute's dramaturgy fellowship and a grant to participate in the Royal Court's international residency.

She is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and the University of New South Wales.



Margrete Helgeby Chaney Assistant Director

Current Chair, and a founding board member of Co3 Australia, West Australia's contemporary dance company, Margrete enjoyed a long career as a dancer in companies within Australia and abroad, including Rambert Dance, West Australian Ballet and the Chrissie Parrott Dance Company, and as an independent artist. She is a graduate of WAAPA.

Throughout her career she also held teaching positions at WAAPA, founded the dance project *Loaded* with Stefan Karlsson which gained national acclaim, and expanded into administration, advocacy, and project management within the Arts sector.

She holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees and recently completed her MBA at UWA. In 2005, she was awarded "Most Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer" by the Australian Dance Awards.

Her previous engagements with opera have included roles as Assistant Director at Opera Queensland, State Opera of South Australia and West Australian Opera and Director at West Australian Opera.



Charles Davis Set & Costume Designer

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

Opera designs include: Seven Deadly Sins & Mahogonny 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 Kellv (Perth Festival/Lost and Found Opera); and Hansel and Gretel design (Queensland Conservatorium). Charles was associate set designer for Carmen and The Merry Widow (Opera Australia).

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 was associate set designer for Muriel's Wedding: The Musical (Global Creatures and Sydney Theatre Company). He designed the set for Melbourne International Comedy Festival's television and stage Galas from 2019 to 2022.

Charles won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Stage Design of an Independent Production for *Happy Days* and is the winner of the Mike Walsh Fellowship.



Paul Jackson Lighting Designer

Paul Jackson is a multiaward-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, Cassandra Echo & Narcissus (Victorian Opera). Lorelei (Victorian Opera, Opera Queensland); Cyrano, Home, I'm Darling (Melbourne Theatre Company); Death of a Salesman (Svdnev Theatre Company): Stop Girl (Belvoir); 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.



Zoë Warwick Intimacy Director

It's a joy for Zoë to return to the Maj. The last time she was here she was opening Downstairs at the Maj as a performance artist with her one woman show *Wanton Women* written and directed by Western Australia's living treasure and theatre archivist, Ivan King OAM.

Zoë is a recognised member of Intimacy Directors International within Australasia & New Zealand and trained under Alicia Rhodis (NYC, USA) and Nigel Poulton (Aus).

After leaving the WAAPA Musical Theatre program in '92 she has accumulated over 25 years' experience working in cabaret and theatre as a performance artist and director.

After working and living in Melbourne for a period, Zoë settled back into the bustling creative scene of sunny Perth in 2016.

She is honoured to work with the insightful creatives at the West Australian Opera as their inaugural Intimacy Director as the company embraces consentled practice to support creatives in authentic and safe touch performance in intimate scenes.



Repetiteur Tommaso Pollio

Tommaso Pollio graduated with honours in piano performance from the University Of Western Australia School Of Music and later continued his studies in the United States.

Tommaso's extensive touring itinerary has seen him perform in London, Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, and USA.

He has been a part of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and has recorded several recitals both as soloist and accompanist for the Young Australia and Sunday Live Programs for the ABC.

Tommaso is also sought after as a repetiteur, working for The Lucca Opera Festival, Opera Australia and West Australian Opera, the latter of which he has worked with since 1993, playing for well over 90 production rehearsals.

Tommaso is much in demand as a cabaret pianist for Fringe Festivals around the world. He also formed the Lark Chamber Opera with composer Emma Jayakumar, Musicbook Stories, the Chimera Ensemble and is currently Music Director of Freeze Frame Opera.





Photo shows Violetta Valéry and Alfredo Germont at a party. Photo courtesy of State Opera South Australia.





Samantha Clarke Violetta Valéry

Samantha Clarke won the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and was a prize winner in the 2019 Grange International Festival Singing Competition. She studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, as a Sir John Fisher Foundation and Independent Opera Scholar, under the tutelage of Mary Plazas.

She is a recent graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama Opera School as a Baroness de Turckheim Scholar, Help Musicians, Tait Memorial and Countess of Munster Trust Scholar and studied with Yvonne Kenny.

Recent and future engagements include her Proms debut in Mozart Requiem, Messiah and War Requiem with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in Tasmania. Adina L'elisir d'amore at West Green House Opera. Golden Cockerel at the Adelaide Festival, Marzelline Fidelio and Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young, Flower Maiden Parsifal at Opera North, Tytania Midsummer Night's Dream at the Grange Festival, Fiordiligi Cosi fan tutte at Grange Festival.

Samantha features on the Resonus' newly released album Samuel Barber: The Complete Songs with accompanist Dylan Perez.



Paul O'Neill Alfredo Germont

Australian tenor Paul O'Neill has forged a compelling international career performing throughout Europe and Australasia. In 2022, he sings Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) and Alfredo (*La traviata*) for West Australian Opera and is tenor soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* for WASO.

Most recently, Paul sang Turiddu (Cavalleria rusticana) and Canio (Pagliacci) for West Australian Opera, Rodolfo (La bohème), Narraboth (Salome) and Alfredo for Opera Australia. the title role in Faust for Theater Münster, Pinkerton (Madama Butterflv) throughout China and Cavaradossi in both Perth and Magdeburg. He has sung Don José at the Glyndebourne Festival: Laca (Jenůfa) for Opéra de Lille; Rodolfo for Halle Opera and West Australian Opera: Elvino (La sonnambula) and Laca with Graz Opera.

Other roles include: The Duke (*Rigoletto*) with Opera Holland Park, Opera Australia, West Australian Opera, Staatstheater Karlsruhe and Staatstheater Mainz; Turriddu, Cavaradossi, and Carlo VII (*Giovanna d'Arco*) for Theater Bielefeld; Jason (*Médée*) for Theater Bielefeld and Staatstheater Mainz and The Italian Tenor (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for Berlin Staatsoper.



Simon Meadows Giorgio Germont

Baritone Simon Meadows studied at The Victorian College of the Arts graduating with a BA(Music) and then a Grad Dip(Opera).

He has performed as a principal artist for Opera Australia, West Australian Opera, Victorian Opera and Melbourne Opera.

While living abroad in the UK, he performed as a soloist in London, Berlin and Wexford Ireland in the prestigious festival held annually.

On the concert stage, Simon has been soloist for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic and Sydney Philharmonic orchestras as well as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Highlights include the title role in Verdi's *Macbeth*, Telramund in Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Alberich in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and Escamillo in Bizet's *Carmen*.

For West Australian Opera he has performed Alfio/Tonio in *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* and Ibn-Hakia in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*.



Matthew Lester Gastone de Letorières

Matthew is a local tenor who has performed a variety of minor principal roles for West Australian Opera and has been a member of the WAO Chorus since 1999. Since 2013 he has performed as Parpignol and Benoit in La bohème, Roderigo in Otello, Spoletta in Tosca, Gastone in La traviata. Ruiz in Il trovatore. Goro in Madama Butterfly, Gherardo in Gianni Schicci, Alex in Tim Winton's The Riders. Normanno in Lucia di Lammermoor, Malcolm in Macbeth, Beppe in Pagliacci and Basilio in The Marriage of Figaro.

He tends to favour roles as a thug, ruffian, pimp, scoundrel, henchman, enforcer, tormentor and generally unpleasant right hand man for some of opera's nastiest leading characters. He has sneered, caioled, arrested, bound, pimped, ravaged and slain his way through operatic classics. When not performing for West Australian Opera, Matthew works in state government in the area of Public Health. His workplace is accommodating towards his artistic pursuits and his colleagues have developed a strong tolerance to sudden operatic outbursts. He has a great appreciation of the opportunities West Australian Opera have offered him to work with esteemed and talented musicians, singers and conductors.



Mark Alderson Baron Douphol

Mark completed his Bachelor of Music at the University of Western Australia in 1996. He completed further studies at the Opera School Wales in 2001 and The Australian National Academy of Music in 2003.

West Australian Opera:

Mark was a Young Artist with the company in 1998 and 1999. Roles include Schaunard in La bohème, Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro, Wagner in Faust, Betto in Gianni Schicchi. Baron Duphol in La traviata. Morales. El Dancairo and Zuniga in Carmen. Cascada and Pritschich in The Merry Widow, Fiorello in II Barbiere di Siviglia, and Gregorio in Romeo et Juliette, Mark has also been part of the company's regional tours to Kalgoorlie, Mandurah, Geraldton, Broome, the Valley of the Giants, and the Pinnacles. Mark has been a member of the West Australian Opera Chorus since 1994.

Other Companies:

Mark has been a baritone soloist for The University Choral Society, Perth Oratorio Choir, Collegium Symphonic Chorus, St George's Cathedral and Albany Choral Society.



Lachlann Lawton Marchese d'Obigny

Lachlann Lawton is an Australian and English Baritone. He was a 2020/2021 Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist and Bendat Scholarship winner with West Australian Opera.

For WAO in 2022, Lachlann has performed Duke Robert (*lolanta*), The Poet (*Prima la Musica* by Salieri) and Sciarrone (*Tosca*). In 2022, Lachlann also performs Schaunard (*La bohème*) and Sonora (*La Fanciulla del West*) with Freeze Frame Opera.

Previously with WAO, Lachlann has performed the title role in *Elijah*, Fiorello and the Soldier (*The Barber of Seville*), Ben (*The Telephone* by Menotti), and covered the roles of Guglielmo (*Cosi fan tutte*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), and Silvio (*Pagliacci*).

Lachlann completed a Masters of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. At the RNCM Lachlann performed The Pilgrim (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), Marco and cover Gianni Schicchi (*Gianni Schicchi*), Peter (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Escamillo (*Carmen*).

Lachlann completed a Bachelor of Music in Classical Performance and a Graduate Diploma of Music at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) under the teaching of both Patricia Price and Michael Lewis.



Robert Hofmann Doctor Grenville

Robert has sung over 20 roles with West Australian Opera including Don Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Koko in *The Mikado*, Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, John Styx in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Hobson in *Peter Grimes*. He has also performed with Opera Australia in Sydney.

An award-winning cabaret performer, Robert has appeared at Perth Writers' Festival, Downstairs at the Maj, Fringe Festivals (of Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Edinburgh) and off-Broadway New York. For Freeze Frame Opera he has performed the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*, the Sacristan in *Tosca* and Jake Wallace in *Fanciulla del West* as well as their annual Christmas at the Quarry concert.

In December he will be a soloist in WA's first professional performance of Handel's Samson with the St Georges Cathedral Consort under the direction of Dr Joseph Nolan having previously appeared with them as soloist in Messiah, Carmina Burana, Mozart's Requiem and Mass in C Minor. Bach's Passions and Mass in B minor and Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle. He has also been engaged by UWA Choral Society, Perth Symphonic Chorus and Perth Symphony Orchestra.



Fiona Campbell Flora Bervoix

Fiona Campbell is one of Australia's most versatile and beloved classical singers the winner of the national Limelight Award for Best Solo Performance 2011 and vocal winner of the ABC Young Performer of the Year Award and the ASC Opera Awards.

Fiona sings regularly as a principal artist with all of the major ensembles and orchestras in Australia and with Opera Australia, Opera Queensland and West Australian Opera.

Her international collaborators have included the Brodsky Quartet, Tokyo Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

She was Associate Artist for José Carreras in Japan, Korea and Australia and for Barbara Bonney in Tokyo and London.

In 2021, she sang Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for The Adelaide Festival and was soloist with the Australian String Quartet and the Queensland and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. In 2022, she returns to WASO and the QSO and appears as Laura (*Jolanta*) and Flora (*La traviata*) for West Australian Opera.



Brianna Louwen Annina

Brianna Louwen is a Perth-born soprano. She was a Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist with West Australian Opera from 2019-2021, and is a graduate of the University of Western Australia and the University of York (UK).

Brianna has appeared with Pinchgut Opera, the choirs of St James' King St, St Mary's Cathedral, St Paul's College, Cantillation, and is engaged for future projects with the Song Company, Pinchgut Opera and Bach Akademie Australia.

With WAO, Brianna has sung Barbarina in Le Nozze di Figaro (Mozart), and The Kitchen Maid in The Nightingale (Raminsh). With the West Australian Symphony Orchestra she has sung Musetta in Act III of La bohème (Puccini), and been a featured soloist in Maximus Musicus Joins the Choir and the BBC Planet Earth II Arena Tour. In Perth, Brianna performed as soloist and chorister with the choirs of St George's Cathedral and The Giovanni Consort. She has recorded with Australian Baroque for the ABC.

Awards: Young Person and the Arts International Travelling Scholarship (2016), first place in the Fremantle Eisteddfod Open Aria (2016), Finalist in the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Competition (2018,19), Semi Finalist in the Herald Sun Aria Competition (2022).



Ammon Bennett Giuseppe

Ammon is a Classical Tenor from Rockingham, Western Australia, In 2017, Ammon left his job as a mechanical fitter in the mining industry and decided to audition for WAAPA in the classical voice program. In 2018, Ammon was accepted into WAAPA and began studying as a classical singer. During that time Ammon has performed a variety of opera roles such as the Dean of the Faculty in Cendrillion, Alfredo in Die Fledermaus, and he recently performed the role of Frederic in WAAPA's production of The Pirates of Penzance.

During his time at WAAPA, Ammon has worked under the tutelage of Fiona McAndrew and Michael Lewis. Ammon has also performed as a soloist in the *Mozart Requiem*, performed the duet "Ah, non cridea mirarti" (Bellini) with Emma Matthews at Government House Ballroom, and performed for Richard Bonynge when he visited Perth in 2019.

In 2022, Ammon is a Young Artist in West Australian Opera's Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist Program and performed the role of Alméric in the company's production of *lolanta* at His Majesty's Theatre.

In his spare time, Ammon trains in Brazilian Jiu jitsu, and tutors in his current hometown, Mandurah.



Brett Peart Messenger

Brett Peart is an emerging Western Australian operatic baritone who is "especially successful in getting into his vocal stride" (Seesaw).

He holds a Bachelor of Music in classical vocal performance from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Valuing versatility, Peart has also trained in both contemporary music performance and musical theatre.

During his time at WAAPA, he performed the roles of Cinderella's father, Pandolfe in *Cendrillon*, the title role of Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, The Director in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles des Tiresias* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*.

In 2021, Brett performed Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* (Freeze Frame Opera), Marchese D'Obigny in *La traviata* (Albany Entertainment Centre) and Mr. Hosking, Mr. Tippett, Mr. Drysdale and Dad in Emma Jayakumar's *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* (Music Book Stories).

This year, Peart has sung in the choruses of West Australian Opera's *lolanta* and *Tosca*. In August, he performed the role of Ashby alongside Teddy Tahu Rhodes' Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* (FFO).



Lachlan Higgins Flora's Servant

Lachlan Higgins is a Perth-based Baritone who graduated from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) at the end of 2021.

After receiving his Certificate IV in Musical Theatre in 2017, Lachlan then went on to complete his Bachelor of Music degree specialising in Classical Voice. During this time he has studied under the tutelage of Megan Sutton. Lachlan currently holds a chorus position with West Australian Opera and is the Young Artist of Freeze Frame Opera and the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.

Over the last few years Lachlan has been actively involved in the performance scene in Perth. He has worked alongside West Australian Opera, Freeze Frame Opera as both Schaunard in *La bohème* and Bello in *La Fanciulla del West*, Perth Symphonic Chorus, UWA Choral Society, Lost and Found Opera Company, WASO Chorus, and many more.

Additionally, he works as a freelance vocalist for events, ceremonies, and performances.



Luci Young Dancer

Luci Young is an emerging contemporary dance artist who has recently returned to Perth after completing her advanced diploma in dance as part of Sydney Dance Company's Pre Professional Year.

Luci was a part of Co:3's Youth Program growing up, to later perform with the company in numerous productions. Luci performed the leading role of Liz in a Co:3 production in collaboration with The Farm, *Frank Enstein* (2018), and won the Performing Arts of Western Australia Award 'Best Newcomer' for her performance.

In 2021 Luci performed with Co:3 again in Raewyn Hill's Archives of Humanity. In 2020 Luci received the Propel Youth Arts YCulture Metro Grant to coproduce and dance in December Project at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

Luci is very excited to perform in her first opera performance *La traviata* with Western Australian Opera.



Macon Riley Dancer

Macon is an Australian-Filipino dancer and performer.

Since graduating from tertiary study at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Macon has worked on a varied range of projects with independent practitioners and contemporary dance companies.

He has performed in Co:3 Dance Company's season of Archives of Humanity (Perth Festival 2021) and GLORIA (2022), Off-base Dance's season of You Are (Perth Fringe Festival 2022), and most recently joined the team of performers in Marrugeku's production of Jurrunga Nganga, touring nationally and internationally.

His practice has a focus on exploring the duality of identity and is inspired by spontaneity, lineage, and evolution.

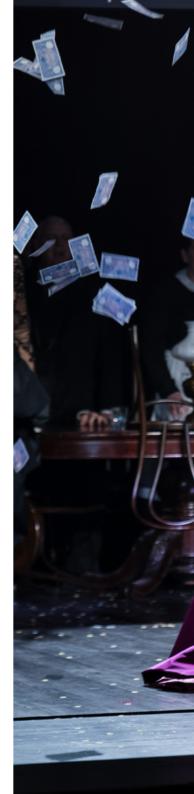




Photo shows a confrontation between Violetta and Alfredo. Photo by Jade Ferguson, courtesy of Opera Queensland.

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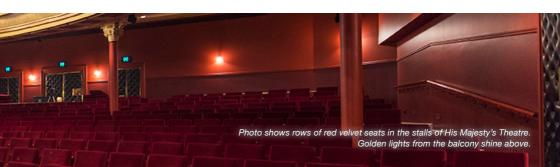
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