

**WEST
AUSTRALIAN
OPERA
2022**

A promotional poster for the opera 'Tosca'. The central figure is a woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a thick, dark brown fur coat. She is holding a dagger vertically in front of her. She wears a necklace with a cross pendant. The background is a solid light pink color. The text 'WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA 2022' is in the top left, and 'TOSCA' is in large white letters at the bottom, with 'PUCCINI' in smaller white letters below it.

TOSCA

PUCCINI

CREATIVITY IN FLIGHT



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**



Wesfarmers Arts

PRINCIPAL PARTNER WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA

TOSCA

14, 16, 19, 21, 23 July 2022
His Majesty's Theatre, Perth

Composer **Giacomo Puccini**
Librettists **Giuseppe Giacosa & Luigi Illica**
Conductor **Rebecca Lang**
Director **Patrick Nolan**
Assistant Director **Matt Reuben James Ward**
Set and Costume Designer **Dale Ferguson**
Lighting Designer **Mark Howett**
Fight Coordinator **Nastassja Kruger**
Fight Coordinator Mentor **Andy Fraser**
Chorus Master **Hugh Lydon**
Repetiteur and Organ **Tommaso Pollio**
Backstage Conductor **Kate McNamara**

Floria Tosca **Maija Kovalevska**
Mario Cavaradossi **Paul O'Neill**
Baron Scarpia **Warwick Fyfe**
Angelotti / Sciarrone **Jake Bigwood**
A Sacristan **Callen Dellar**
Spoletta **Matthew Lester**
Maid **Jillian Halleron**
Gaoler **Mark Alderson**
Roberti **Steve Sherwood**

Featuring **West Australian Opera Chorus**
Featuring **West Australian Opera Children's Chorus**
Featuring **West Australian Symphony Orchestra**

Production Manager **Mandy Farmer**
Stage Manager **Karen Farmer**
Assistant Stage Manager **Jacinta Wajon**
Assistant Stage Manager **Erryn Hanson**
Assistant Stage Manager **Finlay Pedler**
Head of Wardrobe **Sue Kerr**
Head of Wigs **Virginia Hawdon**
Head of Make Up **Sharon Kyrwood**
Wardrobe Assistant **Nora Stelter**
Wardrobe Assistant **Rose Finlay**
Dresser **Sacha Mahboub OAM**
Wigs Assistant **Christopher Lyons**
Head Mechanist **Ian Studham**
Opera Queensland Production Manager **Chris Tollefson**
Surtitle Operator **Allison Fyfe**
Surtitles **Brian Fitzgerald**
Child Chaperone **Gabriella Ibrahim**

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

Through singing, young people

can explore their creativity

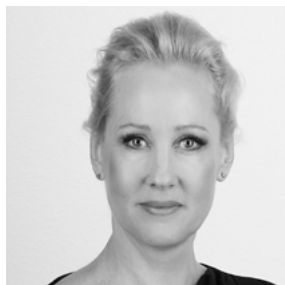
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Executive Director's Message



Puccini's *Tosca* is filled with passion and fiery conviction. First staged in 1900, Puccini's masterpiece of love and sacrifice is brought to life in Patrick Nolan's production which was premiered by Opera Queensland in 2019.

After COVID-19 cancellations in 2020 and 2021 it is wonderful to welcome Rebecca Lang to the company to conduct her first performances with West Australian Opera. We welcome and thank Maija Kovalevska, Paul O'Neill, Warwick Fyfe, Jake Bigwood, Callen Dellar, Matthew Lester, Lachlann Lawton, Jillian Halleron, Mark Alderson, Steve Sherwood, the West Australian Opera Chorus, the West Australian Opera Children's Chorus and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

Thank you for supporting West Australian Opera and joining us for this performance at His Majesty's Theatre.

Carolyn Chard AM
Executive Director
West Australian Opera

Chairman's Message



We are proud to present Puccini's *Tosca* in a production new to Western Australia. We welcome and thank the cast and creative team, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and West Australian Opera Chorus.

We recognise Principal Partner Wesfarmers Arts for their extraordinary and longstanding support, and we thank Major Partners Lotterywest, Healthway, the Minderoo Foundation and Civic Partner the City of Perth for their valued contribution.

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 the Vice Regal Patron The Honourable Kim Beazley AC and Ms Susie Annus for their valued support, encouragement and advocacy of the arts.

Thank you to our donors, patrons and subscribers. We acknowledge your valuable support and encouragement 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

Conductor's Notes



Mario! Mario! Mario! Perché chiuso? (Mario! Mario! Mario! Why is the door locked?)... is the first sentence that comes to my mind when I think of Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*. *What a jealous wretch!* I thought while sitting in the music library in Mainz preparing my score. Upon reading the text, it appears that this woman, this diva, has hardly any redeeming features! She is jealous, self-absorbed, demanding, arrogant and beautiful. *Why is this lovely painter wasting his time with such a woman?* I thought to myself. Upon learning the music, I quickly changed my tune...

The second moment that comes to mind for me is Scarpia's *Va, Tosca!* (Go, Tosca!) It is here that we witness one of the most evil masterminds of the operatic literature setting up his game: cashing in on Floria's jealousy and moving pawns, bishops and rooks in his quest for supreme power and control.

Tosca is often considered the pinnacle of verismo (realism). Puccini's brilliant use of the Leitmotiv gives not only each character their own thematic material, but also colours particular moments and thoughts like doubt, fear and betrayal. The opera is so seamlessly and eloquently constructed that the entire drama of the piece is written in the music.

Central to said drama is Floria Tosca's emotional complexity. The exquisite lyricism describing her love for Mario Cavaradossi is reciprocated in his private moments where, despite her irrational nature and uncontrollable jealousy, he professes his unyielding love.

This lyricism reaches its high point in the duet writing between the two lovers, utilising trademark Puccini rubato to highlight emotional intensity. It is Floria Tosca's rawness, honesty and passion which drive not only the plot but also the musical structure. Expertly juxtaposed with the pureness and beauty of Floria and Mario's music is the menacing violence in Scarpia's writing. Making this particularly evil is Puccini's choice to combine Scarpia's innermost thoughts with the music of the church, thus consolidating the corrupt power and status of both.

When Floria is faced with an impossible decision, she must choose between rape, the death of her lover or self-preservation. Familiar phrases of today come to mind: Why didn't she just leave? Why didn't she put herself first? Why would she sacrifice herself for a man? The authenticity of her dilemma is a situation in which too many women have found themselves, proving that men have used sexual violence against women as a means of acquiring and maintaining power for centuries. Despite being written so long ago, the themes of sexual violence, coercion, control and misogyny are more pressing in today's society than ever. Ultimately it is Puccini's music that conveys the emotion necessary for us to place ourselves in Tosca's shoes and feel empathy with the helplessness of her predicament.

Rebecca Lang
Conductor

Director's Notes



Tosca unfolds amidst great political disquiet. People are being imprisoned for their beliefs. Power is being used to manipulate truth. Women struggle to be treated as equal and with respect. This is a story that still needs to be told.

The opera is set in Rome in 1800; we have chosen to set our production in the 1970s. We wanted to set the story in a time resonant with the political tensions of the original story. Just as Rome was in the midst of a period of great political unrest in 1800, the seventies were a decade of great turmoil in Italy. Known as the “Years of Lead” due to the number of bullets fired, the left and right fought a violent war resulting in the deaths of many people.

Our inspiration for the design comes from the work of Italian architect Pier Luigi Nervi, one of the great modernist architects of the 20th Century. We wanted a space that revealed the intimate relationship between church and state. Drawing upon Nervi's simple use of form and line, the design sets out to capture the grandeur of a church and the cell-like repetitiveness that defines so many bureaucratic buildings. In these spaces we can display our virtue and conceal our darkest intents.

From the moment the escaped prisoner Angelotti sneaks into the church looking for refuge, ideas of power, its use and abuse – in public and private – are at play in *Tosca*. This is most explicitly expressed in the character of Tosca, a woman in a world dominated by men.

It's sad to reflect that whether it is 1800, 1970 or 2022 the manipulation and domination she experiences at the hands of Scarpia is neither unusual nor surprising. In the seventies, however, the concerns and challenges of Feminism's second wave were beginning to precipitate real change. Our *Tosca* is inspired by the revolution called for in books like *The Second Sex* and *The Female Eunuch*. She experiences great trauma but she has volition, we wish she had more options, but she does choose her own destiny.

Whilst these political and social concerns provide an important context for the story, *Tosca* is foremost a fiercely dramatic opera. Like some of the great films of the seventies, the pace and compression of *Tosca*'s narrative gives it the quality of an intense thriller. Unfolding over a period of eighteen hours, Puccini weaves the passions and manoeuvrings of the three central characters – Tosca, Cavaradossi and Scarpia – with a precise virtuosity, involving us in the tragedy of their lives in a nuanced and detailed way.

This is what makes *Tosca* a great opera. Puccini's score creates a rich and complex world, with characters that are human, heroic, flawed and evil. This is not a black and white world; the narrative doesn't end in the way we may want it to. It invites us to ask important questions. What is the nature of power and love? What might we be willing to sacrifice for them?

Patrick Nolan
Director



*Photo shows Mario Cavaradossi embracing his lover, Floria Tosca.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*

Italy in the 1970s

During the 1960s, Italy experienced a Golden Age. The post-war international economic boom had led to industrial expansion and massive urbanisation. Urban workers and peasants flocked to the cities in the millions to take part in Italy's economic miracle. However, labour costs remained low as supply exceeded demand; so while the pockets of industrialists and investors were well lined, the workers remained wanting. This broke apart traditional family units and intensified class tensions.

As Italy moved into the 1970s, an economic downturn hit. The 1973 oil crisis affected Italy dramatically during a time already marked by social and political unrest. At the turn of the decade, neo-fascist groups had commenced acts of violence in order to undermine union movements and encourage a right-wing coup. The "strategy of tension" saw a number of bombings, mysterious deaths, and the radicalisation of large sectors of student and workers' movements, culminating in the 1984 bombing at Bologna railway station, which killed 85 people.

The Italian Communist Party reached its height during the 1970s. However, an extreme revolutionary element emerged in response to disapproval of the Communists' collaboration with the Christian Democrats Party and the anti-Communist foreign policy of the United States. This movement attracted many young people, unemployed workers and small left-wing activist groups to engage in terrorism. The "Years of Lead", named for the bullets fired during the decade, saw extremists such as the Red Brigades kidnap and assassinate members of the extreme right-wing opposition. Both sides sought to trigger a military coup in order to take over the government, leading to the loss of almost 400 lives.

The significance of the political and ideological conflict of the 1970s in Italy often overshadows some significant social developments, which saw marginalised groups demand representation in a largely authoritarian and patriarchal system of society and politics. In particular, the shifting social and political climate saw a new wave of feminism emerge in Italy. This was a period where daughters and women rebelled against their fathers and the patriarchy, with the goal of eradicating the system based on masculine authority. Women reflected on their role in the family and began to scrutinise their position as mothers.

These developments are reflected in the female literature of the time, as women writers began to experiment with genres associated with personal experience and rejected literary language in preference for more accessible language. A noteworthy example is the columns of Brunella Gasperini in the magazine *Annabella*, which evolved from a traditional column for women into a discussion of issues such as the benefits of divorce, and the legitimacy of abortion and contraception. Also of influence was Gabriella Parca, whose book *Le italiane se confessano* provided a critical insight into the female condition through the examination of letters from thousands of women, disrupting the traditionally idyllic idea of the wife and mother. *Dalla parte delle bambine* by Elana Gianini Belotti was another widely popular study of the female condition, which owed much of its approach to the works of Simone de Beauvoir, Margaret Mead and Maria Montessori.

References

Cento Bull, A., & Giorgio, A. (2006). *Speaking out and silencing : culture, society and politics in Italy in the 1970s*. London: Legenda.

Synopsis

ACT ONE

A CHURCH, ROME. NOON.

Rome is ruled by an authoritarian government. Forces from the left attempt to overthrow the system. Scarpia, Chief of Police, suppresses all dissent.

Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, takes refuge inside a church. As he hides in a side chapel, a Sacristan appears followed by the artist, Mario Cavaradossi. Cavaradossi is working on a painting of Mary Magdalene, inspired by Angelotti's sister, Marchesa Attavanti.

When the Sacristan leaves, Angelotti comes out of hiding. Cavaradossi barely recognises his old friend and promises to protect him from Scarpia. When Cavaradossi's lover, the famous singer Floria Tosca, arrives, Angelotti hides again.

Tosca wants to spend a romantic night with Cavaradossi but is upset that Cavaradossi's painting of the Madonna is a portrait of another woman. Tosca leaves, Angelotti reappears and a siren is heard signalling the police have discovered his escape. He and Cavaradossi flee to the artist's house.

The Sacristan returns, followed by nuns, clerics, teachers and choirboys, preparing to sing for the evening mass. They are thrilled to hear they will be singing with Tosca that night. Their celebrations are cut short by the entrance of Scarpia, on the trail of Angelotti. When Tosca arrives looking for Cavaradossi, Scarpia plays upon her distrust of the Marchesa Attavanti in the hope she will lead him to Angelotti.



*Photo shows Baron Scarpia and Floria Tosca at a long table set with wine, candles and a crucifix.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*

ACT TWO

SCARPIA'S HEADQUARTERS. EVENING.

In his headquarters, Scarpia anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca for himself. Unable to find Angelotti, Scarpia's henchman Spoletta arrives with Cavaradossi who has been arrested on suspicion of harbouring a fugitive.

Interrogated by Scarpia, Cavaradossi denies any knowledge of Angelotti. Tosca arrives and Cavaradossi is taken away to be tortured. Scarpia challenges Tosca to reveal where Angelotti is, using Cavaradossi's cries of pain to torment her.

Refusing to succumb to the torture, Cavaradossi is furious when he realises Tosca had given away Angelotti's location. News arrives that forces from the left have achieved a major victory. Scarpia orders Cavaradossi's execution.

Alone with Scarpia, Tosca begs for her lover's life and Scarpia names his price: she must give herself to him. She agrees, and Scarpia orders Spoletta to perform a sham execution, granting safe conduct for Tosca and Cavaradossi from Rome.

ACT THREE

A PRISON. THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

Cavaradossi awaits his execution. Tosca arrives and discloses their plan for escape, telling her lover to pretend to be dead when he hears the gun shot. Tosca waits as Cavaradossi is led away.





*Photo shows Majja Kovalevska (Floria Tosca) in rehearsal.
Photo by Owen Gregory.*

The Tragedy of Floria Tosca



Many of Puccini's eponymous heroines die tragically: Manon (1893) died of thirst in the Louisiana desert; Mimi (1896) died of consumption in a Parisian garret; Tosca (1900) jumped to her death from Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome; Butterfly (1904) stabbed herself with her father's dagger in Japan, and the cosmopolitan list continues throughout Puccini's composing life.

In October 1895 he travelled to Florence to see the great actress Sarah Bernhardt in Victorien Sardou's current French 'hit' *La Tosca*; a play that was shocking audiences with its heady mix of passions, plots and political intrigue. Although he understood little of the French dialogue, Puccini was drawn to its musical and melodramatic possibilities and on his return to Rome he asked his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, to commission the rights from Sardou.

Initially Sardou refused. However, after much wrangling between Sardou, Ricordi and rival composers and librettists, permission was granted and Puccini and his librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica started work on what has turned out to be one of the most popular operas in the repertoire.

The story is set in Rome 1800 and political unrest is rife throughout Europe. The Austrian empire under Hapsburg rule is being challenged by republican and anti-royalists in the wake of the French revolution. Both play and opera seethe with a chilling portrayal of sadism, sexuality and connections between sacred/secular ideologies that contain both melodramatic and realistic elements.

The prima donna Floria Tosca (soprano) and her lover Mario Cavaradossi (tenor) are victims of a repressive system personified by the villain, regent of police Baron Scarpia (baritone).

In an historical context, fact and fiction are combined: Floria Tosca had been raised by Benedictine nuns and was taught music by the convent's organist. The composer Cimarosa was so impressed by her singing that he sought her release, but the nuns refused. However, the Pope, after hearing her sing, decreed that she should be free to follow her career. From humble beginnings she rose to sing in all the opera houses in Italy.

Tosca's obsessive jealousy (fatal flaw?) offers Scarpia the vital clue to her vulnerability. Puccini makes this very clear when Scarpia taunts Tosca with the Marchesa Attavanti's incriminating fan and compares it to Iago's use of Desdemona's handkerchief to stir Otello's jealous rage. Ironically his evil musings are interrupted by the church choir (chorus) chanting the victory *Te Deum* he has ordered.

In her aria 'Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore' Tosca sings that she has always lived for art and love. Later, empowered by rage and despair, she seizes a knife and murders Scarpia, her would-be rapist. Sanctimoniously she places a lighted candle beside his body before making her escape. Having innocently witnessed Cavaradossi's 'mock' execution, Tosca is pursued by Scarpia's henchmen seeking revenge. In her last dramatic and tragic gesture she leaps to her death from the battlements of Castel Sant'Angelo. Her final words: "Scarpia, we'll meet before God."

Annie Patrick
June 2022



Rebecca Lang
Conductor

Rebecca Lang is undoubtedly one of the most versatile and vivacious cross-over artists of her generation. Born in country Victoria (she has very little recollection), growing up in Melbourne (still one of her favourite cities in the world), Ms Lang holds (among other things) a Bachelor of Music Performance from the VCA and a Masters in Orchestral Conducting from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg.

Career highlights have included Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (Staatsoper Hamburg), Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* & Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne) & Stravinsky's *L'Oiseau de feu* (Hamburger Symphoniker).

Ms Lang has held various positions including Conductor & Coach (Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landestheater), Head of Music & Conductor (Theater Hof GmbH), Musical Director & Chief Conductor (Stage Entertainment GmbH). In 2018 Ms Lang's collaborative instrumental ensemble, the Kreuzberger Kamerata performed the world premiere of Cyrus Meurant's *Herakleitos* at the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg to critical acclaim.

In October 2018 she was appointed Director of Music at the Leuphana University, Lüneburg.



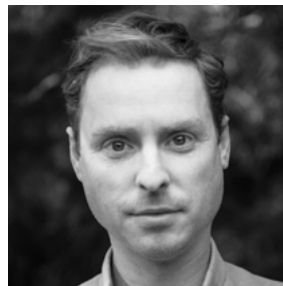
Patrick Nolan
Director

Patrick has created productions for Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, West Australian Opera, New Zealand Opera, Seattle Opera, Sydney Chamber Opera, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir St, Griffin Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, and all the major Australian capital city festivals.

From 2009 – 2014 he was Artistic Director of Legs On The Wall, creating works that toured Australia, UK, Korea, and Brazil. These included: *My Bicycle Loves You* for the Sydney and Perth Festivals and *The Voyage* for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. He is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Opera Queensland.

In 2015 Patrick was awarded an Australia Council Theatre Fellowship to support research into large scale outdoor performance and the relationship between extreme physicality and storytelling.

As a theatre maker he is driven by a process in which a performer explores the extreme of their capacity to find a way of expressing an idea, a feeling, a sound, that takes the audience to a place of inquiry and perhaps, understanding.



Matthew Reuben James Ward
Assistant Director

Raised in regional WA in Carnarvon, Katanning and Albany, Matt has gone on to lead an international career as a tenor and director. As a performer his credits include the Messenger in Stephen Fry's *Life to Come* (Britten Theatre London), Western Union Boy in English Touring Opera's Olivier Award Winning *Paul Bunyan* (Linbury Studio Royal Opera House, UK tour), Frantz in *The Tales of Hoffmann* (English Touring Opera, UK tour), Giacomo in *L'assedio di Calais* (Armel Operafesztivál Budapest, Arte TV live broadcast, English Touring Opera), Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* (Mid Wales Opera), Borsa in *Rigoletto* (Opera Project), Jiminy Cricket in *Pinocchio* and Carter in *King Tut* (Charles Court Opera London).

As a director Matt has created and directed numerous performances, with commissions from plays to research & development programs, having collaborated with Operasonic UK, Royal College of Music Sparks Family Orchestra & Chorus London, BBC Symphony Family Orchestra & Chorus, BBC Proms Sing Plus and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Glyndebourne. For West Australian Opera, Matt recently directed *Koolbardi wer Wardong* and *The Nightingale*.



Dale Ferguson
Set and Costume Designer

Dale Ferguson's credits for Melbourne Theatre Company include *Emerald City*, *Così*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Born Yesterday*, *The Weir*, *The Speechmaker*, *The Crucible*, *Top Girls*, and *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

Other credits include *A German Life* (Adelaide Festival); *L'Appartement* (Queensland Theatre); *Counting and Cracking*, *Sami in Paradise* (Belvoir); *Because the Night*, *Away*, *Brothers Wreck*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Dance of Death*, *Timeshare* (Malthouse Theatre); *Exit the King* (Broadway); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company).

Opera credits are *Tosca* (Opera Queensland); *The Magic Flute* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Anything Goes* (Opera Australia); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2021 Adelaide Festival, Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera).

Dale received Helpmann Awards for *August: Osage County* and for *Counting and Cracking*. He has also received five Green Room Awards, most recently for *Away*, and Tony and Drama Desk nominations for *Exit the King* on Broadway.



Mark Howett
Lighting Designer

Mark Howett is originally from Busselton Western Australia and is proud to stand on Noongar Boodjar. He went on work experience as a 15-year-old in 1979 to the National Theatre, Perth, with dreams of becoming an actor. After two weeks, he joined the theatre family working as a lighting technician. He was later awarded a scholarship by the Department of Culture and the Arts to study Theatre Design, specialising in Lighting Design under the tutelage of Jennifer Tipton at the School of Drama, Yale University.

Mark is a multi Greenroom and Helpmann Award winner who has worked not only as a lighting designer but a video and set designer for international productions in theatre, film, dance and opera. He has worked on many West Australian Opera productions throughout his career, most recently *Koolbardi* (2021) and *Elijah* (2021).

Many of his works have toured in Australia and overseas. His West End Lighting Design credits include: *Evita* (2014), *Cabaret* (2012), *A Country Girl* (2010), *Three Days in May* (2011), and *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (2009 & 2013).

Mark was the Artistic Director for Ochre Contemporary Dance Co from 2016 to 2019.



Nastassja Kruger
Fight Coordinator

This production of *Tosca* marks Nastassja's debut as Fight Choreographer with West Australian Opera.

A graduate of the Contemporary Performance and Theatre Studies Course at West Australia Academy of the Performing Arts, Nastassja has trained with and assisted Andy Fraser of Stage Combat Perth since 2013 at a variety of companies and institutions, including WAAPA, West Australian Opera, Black Swan State Theatre Company, and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. She has assisted on Black Swan State Theatre Company productions including *Oklahoma!*, *As You Like It*, *Dinner* and *Venus In Fur*, as well as other West Australian Opera productions including *Otello* and *Tosca*.

Nastassja was a regular fixture at the Western Regional Stage Combat Workshops from 2014-2017 and attended the 2016 Paddy Crean International Stage Combat Workshop at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada.



Hugh Lydon
Chorus Master

Hugh Lydon is a teacher, singer and conductor who is passionate about all aspects of choral music. This love was developed by his training as a chorister in Westminster Cathedral from 1992-1997.

Hugh moved to Perth in 2010, having previously studied Music Education at Trinity College Dublin. Whilst living in WA, he has immersed himself in the choral scene, both as a performer and a teacher.

Hugh currently holds the role of Director of the Aquinas College Schola, a choral scholarship program unique within WA where choristers receive nine hours of musical training each week. He is also the founder of the Perth Choral Institute and conducts The Winthrop Singers.

Other conducting opportunities have included the WASO Chorus, The Giovanni Consort, Schola Aedis Christi, St George's Cathedral Consort and John Septimus Roe ACS' Chapel Choir. Hugh also regularly examines singing students in preparation for tertiary study.



Tommaso Pollio
Repetiteur and Organ

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 had been a part of the WA 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 Company of which he has been a part of 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 has also formed the Lark Chamber Opera with composer Emma Jayakumar, Musicbook Stories, the Chimera Ensemble and is currently Music Director of Freeze Frame Opera.



Kate McNamara
Backstage Conductor

Kate McNamara is a conductor, soprano and educator based in Perth, Western Australia. Kate has a rapidly rising profile as a conductor, and hopes to develop a diverse and versatile career, combining her extensive expertise in vocal repertoire with her passion for orchestral conducting.

Currently, Kate is the Artistic Director and General manager of the Giovanni Consort, Perth's professional chamber choir, as well as an Emerging Artist with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. In 2020 she premiered the recording of *The Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie* for the West Australian Ballet, and has participated in Perth Symphony Orchestra's *Women on the Podium* conductor training programs since 2019. In 2020 she also conducted the Giovanni Consort for an EP recording with Andrea Corr.

As a soprano, Kate has a busy performing schedule as a member of the St George's Cathedral Choir and Consort. Kate is a Graduate of the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, where she studied classical voice, focusing on early music.

Kate is currently a Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist with West Australian Opera.



*Photo shows Flavia Tosca and Mario Cavaradossi sharing an embrace.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*



*Photo shows the full company of TOSCA singing from the two-story set.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*





Maija Kovalevska
Floria Tosca

Maija Kovalevska is a Latvian soprano. Born in Riga, she is a graduate of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music.

From 2003, she resided in Italy under the tutelage of Mirella Freni. Most recently, she has sung Mimi (*La bohème*) in Sydney, Melbourne and for Semperoper Dresden, Maddalena (*Andrea Chénier*) and the title role in *Tosca* for the Sigulda Festival, Verdi's *Requiem* in London, Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* in Canada and Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) at Staatsoper Hamburg.

She made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Mimi in Franco Zeffirelli's production of *La bohème* and later as Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Micaëla in *Carmen*. For Vienna State Opera, she has sung Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*, later singing Mimi, Micaëla, The Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Violetta in *La traviata* and Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*.

Other appearances include Mimi and Micaëla for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Liù in *Turandot* for La Scala, Milan.



Paul O'Neill
Mario Cavaradossi

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 Butterfly*) 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.



Warwick Fyfe
Baron Scarpia

Warwick Fyfe is a Helpmann Award-winning singer and is considered one of Australia's finest baritones.

Recent appearances include Beckmesser (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Alberich (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Sancho Panza (*Don Quichotte*), Amonasro (*Aida*), Geronio (*Il turco in Italia*), Barone di Trombonok (*Il viaggio a Reims*) and Klingsor (*Parsifal*) for Opera Australia, Alberich (*Das Rheingold*) for the Japan Philharmonic and Tianjin Symphony Orchestras, Peter (*Hansel and Gretel*) in Singapore, Athanaël (*Thaïs*) and Amonasro for Finnish National Opera, Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) for Victorian Opera, Wotan (*Die Walküre*) in Singapore and Melbourne, Pizarro (*Fidelio*) in Melbourne and Perth, Bottom (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) in Adelaide and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* for the Melbourne Symphony.

In 2022, he sings Scarpia (*Tosca*) for West Australian Opera and The Herald (*Lohengrin*) for Opera Australia.

Warwick was the recipient of a Helpmann Award for his 2013 performance as Alberich in the Melbourne Ring Cycle; he became a Churchill Fellow in 2015.



Jake Bigwood
Angelotti / Sciarrone

Winner of both the Regency Prize and AM Parker award for excellence; Jake Bigwood graduated from the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) with distinction alongside an honorary Diploma of the RAM. During his studies Jake worked with the highly sought after vocal professor and fellow Australian Raymond Connell and performed in the Royal Academy Opera's production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Snug) as well as scenes of Bellini's *I Puritani* (Sir Giorgio), Boito's *Mefistofele* (Mefestofele), Rossini's *Cenerentola* (Don Magnifico), and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Leporello and Commendatore). Jake's final recital contained a program of Mozart, Brahms, Ravel, Wolf, Rachmaninoff, and Gounod and was deemed a "revelation" by the world-renowned Lieder scholar Richard Stokes and also from Linnhe Robertson: "...an excellent vehicle for a genuine bass voice with enormous operatic potential..."

Jake is currently a Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist for 2022 and this year sings *The Duel* (The Maestro) and *Tosca* (Cesare Angelotti) for West Australian Opera.



Callen Dellar
A Sacristan

Callen started his studies at WAAPA before moving to Sydney to complete an Advanced Diploma of Opera from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Upon completing his studies he then joined Opera Australia and toured with OzOpera singing the roles of Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* and Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*. He then spent the next 12 years performing in numerous productions for Opera Australia in the chorus for both main stage productions and Handa Opera on Sydney Harbor. Upon moving back to Perth six years ago he rejoined the West Australian Opera chorus where he started his professional career in 1997.

Other roles he has performed include Masetto & Leporello, *Don Giovanni* (Sydney) Mephistopheles, *Faust* (Sydney), Bastien, *Bastien und Bastienne* (Sydney) Antonio & Bartolo, *Le nozze di Figaro* (Sydney) and Papageno, *Die Zauberflöte* (Sydney).

For West Australian Opera this year he sings Bertrand, *Iolanta* and A Sacristan, *Tosca*.



Matthew Lester
Spoletta

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 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* and recently Beppe in *Pagliacci*.

He specializes in operatic roles such as thug, ruffian, pimp, scoundrel and henchman to some of Opera's nastiest leading characters. He has sneered, cajoled, 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.



Jillian Halleron
Maid

Scottish-born Soprano Jillian Halleron graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2017 with a Bachelor of Music majoring in Classical Performance. After graduating Jillian became a member of the West Australian Opera chorus and performed in *Carmen* (2018). In 2019 she re-located to Sydney to join the Pacific Opera Company as an associate artist in their Young Artist Program. Highlights include performing in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, featuring as a soloist with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and being a member of the chorus for the audio recording of George Palmer's Opera *Cloudstreet*. She was also invited to perform for Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC Governor of New South Wales at Government House Sydney. In 2020, Jillian returned to Perth and became a founding member of the online performance platform Couch Opera Live. In 2021 she was a chorus member in West Australian Opera's *City of Perth Opera in the Park*, *Elijah* and *Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci*. She also performed in Freeze Frame Opera's production of *Suor Angelica*. Jillian is currently under the tutelage of Australian tenor Glenn Winslade. Jillian is one of the Wesfarmers Arts Young Artists with West Australian Opera for 2022.

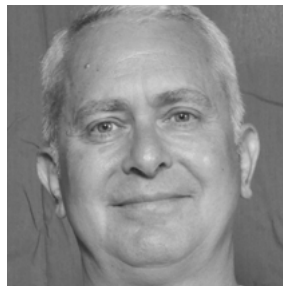


Mark Alderson
Gaoler

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 for 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 *Il 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: Baritone soloist for The University Choral Society, Perth Oratorio Choir, Collegium Symphonic Chorus, St George's Cathedral and Albany Choral Society.



Steve Sherwood
Roberti

Steve discovered choral singing in a local male choir in London. He then joined the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and enjoyed many years of concerts and tours throughout the UK and Europe. Next was the local operatic society, where among several roles he played Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus*.

Moving to Perth, he was requisitioned for the augmenting chorus in WAO's 2002 production of *Nostradamus*. In 2003 he was in the enlarged WAO chorus for *Gottterdammerung*, part of the Perth Festival. Several years of prancing around in G&S light operas followed, usually cast as a military or official type: Sergeant of Police – *The Pirates of Penzance*, Sergeant Meryll – *Yeomen of the Guard*, Private Willis – *Iolanthe*, Colonel Calverley – *Patience*, Emperor – *The Mikado*, and more.

By day working for a well-known local bank, he has also been a member of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra Chorus for 16 years.

He is delighted to be part of another WAO production.



Photo shows the score of TOSCA.
Photo by Owen Gregory.

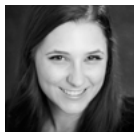
WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHORUS

* Celebrating over 10 years
** Celebrating over 20 years

SOPRANOS



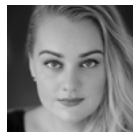
Alexandra Bak *



Chelsea Burns



Claire Condipodero



Leilah Fox *



Jillian Halleron



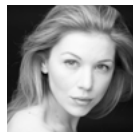
Yann Kee



Bella Marslen



Lucy Mervik *



Prudence Sanders



Xiaojia Zhang *

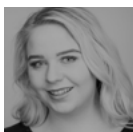
MEZZO SOPRANOS



Helen Brown *



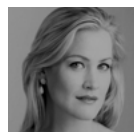
Caitlin Cassidy



Morgan Halket



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Katie How



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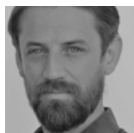


Elizabeth Vale **

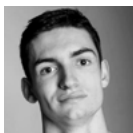
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Steve Sherwood

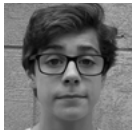


Keaton Staszewski-Hose



Laurence Westrip

WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHILDREN'S CHORUS



Xavier Biachini



Ariel Brain



Liam Fitzpatrick



Aidan Griffiths



Jimmy Jurjevich



Oliver McKinnon



Thomas O'Neill



Luka Patak



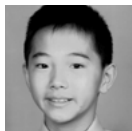
Sebastian Robinson-Cook



Dashiell van Ingen



Nathan Veitch



William Zhu



*Photo shows the Children's Chorus of TOSCA singing in their choir regalia.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*



*Photo shows Baron Scarpia in church, kneeling to kiss the hand of the Bishop.
Photo by Stephanie Do Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*

WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

Riley Skevington

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Semra Lee-Smith

Assistant Concertmaster

Kylie Liang

Assoc Principal 2nd Violin

Kate Sullivan

Assistant Principal 2nd Violin

Marlene Crone

Sunmi Jung

Christina Katsimbardis

Akiko Miyazawa

Lucas O'Brien

Louise Sandercock

Jolanta Schenk

Jane Serrangeli

Bao Di Tang

Cerys Tooby

VIOLA

Alex Brogan

Kierstan Arkleysmith

Nik Babic

Elliot O'Brien

CELLO

Rod McGrath

Nicholas Metcalfe

Fotis Skordas

Tim South

DOUBLE BASS

Mark Tooby

A/ Assoc Principal Double Bass

Louise Elaerts

Giovanni Vinci°

FLUTE

Andrew Nicholson

Anonymous

Mary-Anne Blades

Anonymous

PICCOLO

Michael Waye

OBOE

Liz Chee

Annabelle Farid°

COR ANGLAIS

Stephanie Nicholls^

CLARINET

Allan Meyer

Lorna Cook

BASS CLARINET

Alexander Millier

BASSOON

Jane Kircher Lindner

Adam Mikulicz

CONTRABASSOON

Chloe Turner

Stelios Jewellers

HORN

Margaret & Rod Marston

David Evans

Ben Messenger°

Robert Gladstones

Principal 3rd Horn

Julia Brooke

TRUMPET

Jenna Smith

Peter Miller

Daniel Henderson^

TROMBONE

Joshua Davis

Dr Ken Evans AM &

Dr Glenda Campbell-Evans

Liam O'Malley

BASS TROMBONE

Philip Holdsworth

TUBA

Cameron Brook

Peter and Jean Stokes

TIMPANI

Alex Timcke

PERCUSSION

Brian Maloney

Francois Combemorel

Assoc Principal Percussion &

Timpani

Joel Bass^

Robyn Gray^

HARP

Yi-Yun Loei^

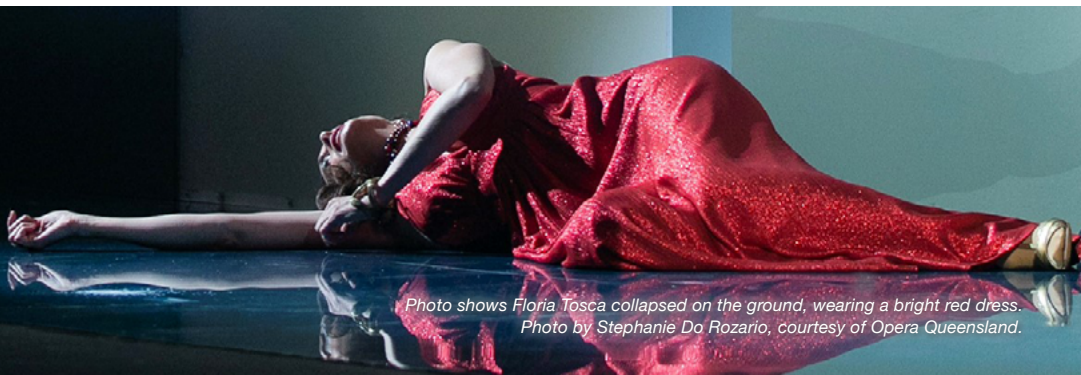
Principal

Associate Principal

Assistant Principal

Contract Musician°

Guest Musician^



*Photo shows Floria Tosca collapsed on the ground, wearing a bright red dress.
Photo by Stephanie De Rozario, courtesy of Opera Queensland.*

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*Photo shows rows of red velvet seats in the stalls of His Majesty's Theatre.
Lights from the golden balcony sit above.*

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