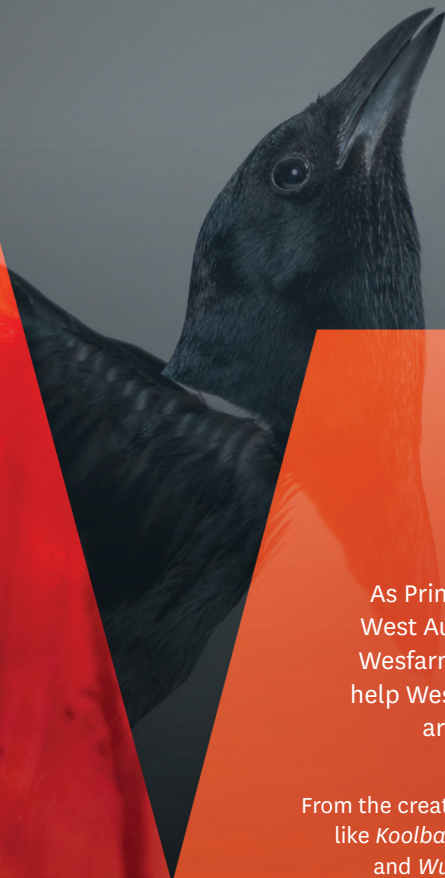


**WEST
AUSTRALIAN
OPERA
2023**

LA BOHÈME

CREATIVITY IN FLIGHT



As Principal Partner of West Australian Opera, Wesfarmers is proud to help Western Australian artists take flight.

From the creation of new works like *Koolbardi Wer Wardong* and *Wundig wer Wilura*, to the compelling reimagining of the world's classic operas, West Australian Opera and Wesfarmers Arts are thrilled to connect audiences with the power of music and voice.

Wesfarmers Arts
Commissioning Partner of
Koolbardi Wer Wardong (2021)
and *Wundig wer Wilura* (2024)
and Principal Partner,
West Australian Opera.



Wesfarmers Arts

PRINCIPAL PARTNER WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA

LA BOHÈME

19 - 28 October 2023
His Majesty's Theatre, Perth

Composer **Giacomo Puccini**
Librettists **Luigi Illica, Giuseppe Giacosa**

Conductor **Christopher van Tuinen**
Director **Matt Reuben James Ward**
Assistant Director **Laura Hansford**
Set and Costume Designer **Charles Davis**
Lighting Designer **Christine Felmingham**
Chorus Master **Christopher van Tuinen**
Repetiteur **Tommaso Pollio**

Rodolfo **Paul O'Neill**
Mimi **Elena Perroni**
Marcello **Sam Dundas**
Musetta **Rachelle Durkin**
Colline **Jake Bigwood**
Schaunard **Lachlann Lawton**
Benoît/Parpignol/Officer **Brett Peart**
Alcindoro **Mark Alderson**
Sergeant **Kyle Garces**
Prune Man **Perry Joyce**
Act II Girl's Solo **Charlotte O'Hara**

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

Production Manager **Mandy Farmer**
Stage Manager **Karen Farmer**
Deputy Stage Manager **Rose Liggins**
Assistant Stage Managers **Jacinta Wajon, Holly Ballam**
Head of Wardrobe **Sue Kerr**
Wardrobe Assistants **Nora Stelter, Rose Finlay**
Costume Art Finishing **Nicole Marrington, Cherish Marrington**
Dressers **Sacha Mahboub, Shani Mulheron**
Wardrobe Maintenance **Laura Hill**
Head of Wigs **Virginia Vona**
Wigs Assistant **Christopher Lyons**
Head of Make Up **Sharon Kyrwood**
Surtitles Operator **Katja Webb**
Child Chaperone **Gabriella Ibrahim**
Head Mechanist **Jeremy McComish**
Senior Mechanist **Glenn Collier, Ian Studham**
Head Technician **Mick Rippon**
Set built by **Plumb Arts Workshop**
Costumes **Opera Queensland**
Scenic Art **Marek Syzler**
Fire by **Alex Stuart**

A West Australian Opera and Opera Queensland Co-Production
Information correct at time of publication but may be subject to change
Set and Costumes Design imagery courtesy of Charles Davis

Vice Regal Patron's Message



West Australian Opera is a key arts organisation in our State and I am proud to be Patron.

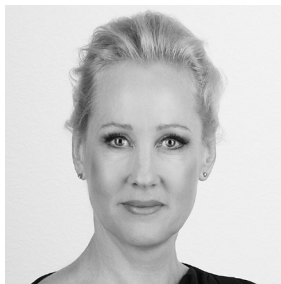
Following the success of *Carmen*, *Into the Woods*, *Oratorio*, and *Otello*, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the theatre for a new production of Puccini's *La bohème*.

West Australian Opera contributes to the arts in Western Australia by presenting world-class opera and musical theatre, offering education and community programs, school workshops, regional touring, and developing young artists through the Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist Program.

I hope you will join me in continuing to support West Australian Opera for future seasons.

The Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM
Governor of Western Australia
Vice Regal Patron
West Australian Opera

Executive Director's Message



With its soaring melodies and reflections on love, loss, and youth, *La bohème* remains one of the world's best-loved operas.

Director Matt Reuben James Ward, set and costume designer Charles Davis, and lighting designer Christine Felmingham have collaborated on this new co-production created with West Australian Opera and Opera Queensland. We are proud of conductor Christopher van Tuinen, the cast and West Australian Opera Chorus, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, stage management, crew, and backstage teams who bring the opera to life.

At West Australian Opera, our dream is to speak to the heart through the human voice and to unite people through the joy of music.

The excitement of taking your seats for a performance, the anticipation of the curtain rising, and the drama that is set to unfold on stage makes live performance such a special experience.

I acknowledge two special people who are retiring following decades of loyal service to the state opera company. Head of Wardrobe, **Sue Kerr**, and dresser, **Sacha Mahboub OAM**, who have been working their magic since the early nineties. Thank you, Sue. Thank you, Sacha.

Carolyn Chard AM
Executive Director
West Australian Opera

Chairman's Message



Thank you for attending West Australian Opera performances.

We are grateful for the continued support of the federal government through the Australia Council, the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and our longstanding and highly valued Principal Partner, Wesfarmers Arts. We thank Major Partners Lotterywest, Healthway, the Minderoo Foundation and Civic Partner the City of Perth for their valued contributions.

Presenting opera and musical theatre is made possible with the support of you, our audience members, our partners, patrons, trusts, foundations, donors and government funders.

The Board, management, company, and artists give thanks to the entire opera family who support and enable us to continue to share the power of music with you.

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



Conductor's Notes



One of the problems in writing program notes about *La bohème* is thinking of something new to say. Which I guess is interesting in itself. So, if you're going to try and write something new about this opera, what is it about the piece that has reached so many people in so many different ways, and continues to engage and move us for over a century after its composition?

I could bore you with the musicological genius inherent in the score, a multitude of examples to demonstrate the fact that it both drives forward the aesthetic innovations of its time while retaining a hearty streak of accessibility. Or we could unpack the story, revel in our own personal excitement by examining the lives of people who live in versions of "otherness", those who have human experiences that are different to one's own. Which is particularly exciting when those experiences are driven by principles and ideals that we might not commit to (even though we might admire or desire them).

We see parallels in the consumption of contemporary culture, for example our interest in the lives of Kardashians or The Real Housewives of XYZ, or even in people who take part in cooking shows or renovate houses in a hurry. This "otherness" intrigues us and maybe it's the sense of life on the edge that excites us, the fact that these people are more interesting or take bigger bites at life.

For me, that ignores the heart of our love for *La bohème*, which is the empathy that arises through great storytelling about people that could be us. It's the similarities that connect. We know these bohemians, this Mimi and Musetta, because in another world we are them, we share their hopes and expectations, we dream of falling in love like that (and many of us have) and we can understand the awful choices that life can make you make. For example, the decision to end a relationship because you choose the head over the heart is just one of the situations that we might know from deep personal experience. The opera is full to the brim of these resonances in a story that is taut and lean, that cleanly shows us three dimensional characters who inhabit an exciting narrative.

And in its conclusion, (spoiler alert), the tragedy at the end is not voyeuristic. It's a simple but hugely powerful reminder that death, however it comes, can bring heartbreak and loss, that it is universal, and sometimes unfair. And that here, being told through incredible singing and extraordinary music, it makes *La bohème* one of the greatest works of opera (and art) of all time.

Christopher van Tuinen

Director's Notes



Set against the backdrop of bustling 19th century Parisian streets, a vibrant and revolutionary movement emerged. Bohemian artists, a group of free-spirited and unconventional individuals, challenged the status quo, rejecting bourgeois values in favour of authenticity and artistic exploration. These poets, painters, philosophers, and musicians sought to break free from societal norms, embracing a life of artistic and sensual passion. However the sense of “freedom to choose the extraordinary” sought by the bohemians, came at a cost, and that cost was poverty. Both their greatest muse and oppressor, poverty carved the pathways of their lives.

Puccini's *La bohème* was inspired by first-hand stories of bohemians published in Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie de bohème*. Together with design team Charles Davis (Designer), Christine Felmingham (Lighting Designer) and Laura Hansford (Assistant Director), we have brought this action forward in time to 1920s France. Emerging from the wake of destruction of the Great War our setting celebrates the great social change and cultural flourishing of that period. With this as our springboard, we endeavour to offer a fresh perspective of Puccini's masterpiece with every essence of our conviction to interpret, create and express our personal artistry. Our guiding interpretative lens being that of choice - to create, to love, to be.

Visually our world (stage design) presents an escape from the traditional urbanised environment, interrogating what it means to create a sanctuary to share love, away from the norm, as a safe “controlled environment”. A lantern-like greenhouse, set within a wooded snowscape expresses a bohemian

desire to escape, manufacture a parallel reality and inhabit the fringes of accepted society. It's a place where nature is cultivated and lovers meet by moonlight. A fragile vessel of life and decay, uninsulated from the power of sun and snow spun across the cyclical seasons.

*“The first sun is mine.
The first kiss of April is mine.
A rose blossoms in a vase, leaf by leaf I observe it.
So delicate is the perfume of the flower.
But the silk flowers that I make, alas, they
have no fragrance.”*

- Mimi, Act I

Embedded within this natural snowscape, our production inhabits the liminal, transitory zone between house and garden, the urbanised and natural environment and an artistic life that is “other than” mainstream society. It's the place where Rodolfo and Mimi should walk hand in hand when spring breaks through - but of course, she never makes it.

*“Mimi is a hothouse flower blighted by poverty.
To bring her back to life - love is not enough.”*

- Rodolfo, Act III

While freedom to choose is a fundamental human aspiration, it is not without its costs and responsibilities. Rodolfo, racked by guilt at Mimi's illness, works towards separation. In his poverty he cannot care for or restore Mimi. His greatest liberation, bohemian abandon, is also his greatest impediment. Through this, we ultimately discover our inescapable and underlying convictions motivate all our choices - to embark, to submit, to create, to break, to serve, to love and to be loved.

“I wish that this winter would last forever.”

- Mimi, Act III

Matt Reuben James Ward

Program Notes: *La bohème*



La bohème is a difficult title to translate. However, in literary and operatic terms the bohemians were portrayed as aspiring artists eking out an existence in and around Montmartre in 19th century Paris. Living in poverty, suffering hunger, cold and ill-health, their adolescent high spirits fueled their bohemian way of life with warmth and gaiety.

One such bohemian was the writer Henri Murger. To make ends meet, he wrote a number of anecdotal short stories for a Paris newspaper, *Le corsaire*, describing the poor artists' lives. These semi-autobiographical episodes were so popular they soon became a play, *La vie de bohème*, then a best-selling novel, *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (1849).

Even by today's standards, Puccini's four bohemians were pretty outrageous: They didn't have 'proper jobs'; evaded paying rent to their landlord Benoît; sponged off Alcindoro at the Café Momus; and generally acted in a fairly irresponsible manner.

The unexpected arrival of Mimì, their neighbour, was the inspirational catalyst for Puccini and his librettists, Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, to create *La bohème*. Dramatically, Puccini's heroine has a softer profile than Merger's original Mimì, but she is not a passive victim. She (probably) knows that she is mortally ill, but does not want to remain, or die alone.

She craves company, even love, and it is quite possible that she orchestrates her first 'chance' meeting with Rodolfo in Act I. Later the vision of Mimì standing in the moonlight, a luminous figure, inspires Rodolfo to declare his love in 'O soave fanciulla'.

Despite the warmth and gaiety surrounding the bohemians, there is a cold and chilling theme unifying all four acts: Initially it's Christmas Eve, and Marcello burns his "masterpiece" in the stove to keep warm, and later Rodolfo warms Mimì's hands whilst singing 'Che gelida manina'. In Act III, snow is falling, and finally in Act IV, Musetta warms the dying Mimì's hands with her fur muff.

Each act, however, is also balanced with warmth, love and youthful high spirits. Schaubard's generous supply of provisions in Act I balances Colline's sacrifice of his beloved coat to buy medicine for the dying Mimì in Act IV, whilst the explosive love of Musetta and Marcello is contrasted with more profound love of Mimì and Rodolfo.

Understatement is the keynote of Mimì's death scene in Act IV. She has already sung her farewell 'Addio' in Act III and now the bohemians gather around her deathbed. Much of their conversation, or recitative, is reduced to brief questions and answers, thus enhancing the dramatic tension. Rodolfo is the last to realise that his beloved Mimì is dead as the final minor chords sound her death knell.

How was bohemian life finally defined in operatic terms? Marcello sings that it's a beautiful time of false illusions. You believe, you hope, and everything looks beautiful, but it is all an illusion. However, reality decrees that this enchanted life cannot last, and Puccini's four bohemians, Rodolfo, Marcello, Schaubard and Colline learn this tragic lesson as Mimì dies and the curtain falls.

Annie Patrick

Synopsis

ACT I

It is Christmas Eve. Rodolfo, a poet, and Marcello, a painter, are freezing in their studio. Marcello is painting *The Crossing of the Red Sea*. Colline, a philosopher, arrives as the fire Rodolfo has lit with one of his manuscripts, flickers and dies. Schaunard brings reinforcements – food, wine and fuel for the fire, bought with unexpected money from his earnings as a musician. A knock at the door and Benoît, the landlord, arrives demanding the rent. The four bohemians ply him with wine and then bundle him off. Marcello, Colline and Schaunard go off to join the celebrations at the Café Momus. Promising to join them soon, Rodolfo settles down to finish an article he is writing. There is another knock. This time it is a neighbour, Mimì, a beautiful young seamstress, holding her key and an unlit candle. She begs a light and Rodolfo obliges. Mimì departs and drops her key. Together they search for the key, and their hands touch. They tell each other about themselves, and Rodolfo passionately declares his love. The new lovers then set off into the night to join the others.

ACT II

The square in which the Café Momus is situated is the bohemians' favourite haunt, bustling with shoppers and hawkers. Rodolfo buys his new love a bonnet. At the café, Marcello's old flame, Musetta, appears with a new admirer, Alcindoro. To attract Marcello's attention, Musetta bursts into her famous waltz song. Marcello responds and Musetta, pretending that her shoe is pinching, dispatches Alcindoro to a cobbler. She joins in the revelry with Marcello and his friends. When they depart, they leave a reminder for the hapless Alcindoro on his return – a huge bill!

ACT III

It is daybreak just inside a tollgate. Snow lies on the ground. Mimì emerges from the throng of workers. She is looking for Marcello at a nearby inn where he and Musetta have been living for the past month. Pale and agitated, she tells him of Rodolfo's jealousy which has made their life together impossible. Mimì hides as Rodolfo suddenly appears. He declares her to be unfaithful, but then confides to Marcello that Mimì is very ill and blames himself and his poverty for not being able to help her. Mimì's sudden coughing betrays her presence, and the lovers sadly decide it is best that they part. Their parting duet is interrupted by the sounds of a fierce quarrel between Marcello and Musetta. Mimì and Rodolfo decide to stay together until spring returns.

ACT IV

The studio, months later. Both pairs of lovers have now parted. Mimì and Musetta have found wealthy admirers. Rodolfo and Marcello feign indifference, but neither can forget the memory of his love. Schaunard and Colline arrive with meagre food and the four sit down to a mock 'banquet'. While they are acting the fool, Musetta rushes in with news that Mimì is desperately ill and has asked to be brought back to Rodolfo to die. Musetta explains that the Viscount has discarded Mimì and she has been living on the streets for weeks sinking further into poverty and desperation. The bohemians rally to the cause. Musetta pawns her earrings and Colline his beloved coat to buy medicine for Mimì. Alone for a short time, Mimì and Rodolfo recall the past, reliving their short spell of happiness and their dreams together. Mimì, seized by a coughing fit, falls back, exhausted. When the others return, she weakly thanks them for their kindness and falls asleep. It is Schaunard who first notices that Mimì is dead. Rodolfo is the last to realise, by seeing the truth on his friends' faces.

Singing by yourself or with others gives you a voice that connects you with communities near and far.

Connecting with others contributes to building a mentally healthier WA.



Act



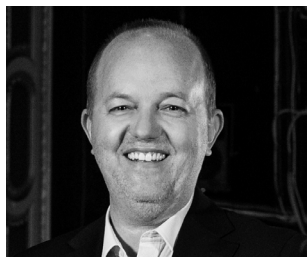
Belong



Commit



For ideas on how to keep mentally healthy, visit actbelongcommit.org.au



**Christopher
van Tuinen**
Conductor

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 Artistic Director of West Australian Opera.



**Matt Reuben
James Ward**
Director

Matt has created and directed numerous performances, with commissions from plays to research and 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 has directed *The Nightingale* (His Majesty's Theatre, Mandurah Performing Arts Centre, Albany Entertainment Centre), *Hansel & Gretel* (City of Perth Opera in the Park), *Koolbardi wer Wardong* (His Majesty's Theatre & state tour), *Our Little Inventor* (His Majesty's Theatre), rehearsal director for *Tosca* (His Majesty's Theatre), *Hansel & Gretel Reimagined* for West Australian Opera's education program. In 2024, Matt will direct *Wundig wer Wilura* for West Australian Opera & Perth Festival.

Matt is currently Artistic Director of Breaksea, a multi-artform performance company and has directed *Fairy Queen*, *Caretaker of Lost Selves*, *Thunderstorm*, *Drift & By Other Eyes*. Matt studied at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Royal College of Music London (Master of Performance, Yvonne Wells Award).



Laura Hansford
Assistant Director

Laura has worked on operatic productions for the last decade as both an artistic and technical collaborator. She directed OQ's most successful touring productions *Lady Sings the Maroons* (2023) and *Are You Lonesome Tonight* (2021), co-directed *The Sopranos* (OQ) and *Home Grown Opera* (for OQ) and *Bleach**, and re-directed *The Sopranos* for OQ's regional tour in 2022. Most recently, she directed Verdi's *Macbeth*.

In 2021/2022 Laura was a resident Director with Circa and was the Project Lead on their inclusive Circus program *Circability*. She was the Associate Director on Circa's *Italian Baroque* presented with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra at Sydney Festival 2022.

Laura is currently Director of Learning, Regional and Community for OQ. She has acted as Assistant Director on a variety of productions – for OQ: *Così fan tutte* (2023), *The Marriage of Figaro* (2021), *Tosca* (2019), *Songs to Die For* (2019).

Laura has worked extensively with companies such as Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand Opera, and State Opera South Australia. In 2020 she was nominated as Emerging Female Artist at the Matilda Awards.



Charles Davis

Set and Costume Designer

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

Charles' designs for opera include: *La traviata* (Opera Queensland / West Australian Opera / State Opera South Australia); *Médée*, *Artaserse*, *The Coronation of Poppea* (Pinchgut Opera); *Seven Deadly Sins & Mahogonny Songspiel* set design (Red Line Productions); *Breaking Glass*, *Biographica* (with Sydney Festival), *Oh Mensch!* Costume design (Sydney Chamber Opera); *Ned Kelly* (Perth Festival/Lost and Found Opera); and *Hansel and Gretel* (Queensland Conservatorium).

Charles' theatre designs include: *The Importance Of Being Earnest* set design, *Do Not Go Gentle*, *No Pay? No Way!*, *Rules For Living*, *The Real Thing*, (Sydney Theatre Company); *Twelfth Night* (Bell Shakespeare); *Buyer and Cellar*, *The Kitchen Sink*, *Widow Unplugged* (Ensemble Theatre); and many others.

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. *Artaserse*, which he designed for Pinchgut Opera, won the International Opera Award for Best Rediscovered Work. A graduate of NIDA, Charles also studied architectural design at Monash University.



Christine Flemingham

Lighting Designer

Christine is a Queensland based creative who has worked as a lighting designer for the past decade. In 2019 she was presented with the inaugural Emerging Female Leader Award at the Matilda Awards Ceremony, and has Bachelor degrees in Technical Production and Drama from QUT.

Recent credits include *Kuramanunya* (Karul Projects); *Macbeth in Concert* (Opera Queensland); *Bunker* (Lisa Wilson Projects); *Adrift* (Counterpilot); *The Sopranos* (Opera Queensland); *Ishmael* (Dead Puppet Society); *Caesar* (La Boite Theatre Company); *Rising* (Playlab Theatre); *Boyle & Waters in LEOTARD* (debate productions); *Dirty Laundry* (The Good Room); *Conviction*, *Elektra/Orestes*, *The Bull*, *The Moon and The Coronet of Stars* (The Hive Collective).

Christine also spends much of her time working as the lighting designer and production / technical manager for Counterpilot, the award-winning collective of transmedia performance artists responsible for *Not a Cult**; *Adrift*; *Breaking*; *Escape from Monotony*; *Raise The Roof*; *C'est Bon Salon*; *IMB*; *Institute of Light*; *Avoidable Perils*; *Truthmachine*; *Statum*; *Crunch Time*; and *Spectate*.



Paul O'Neill

Rodolfo

Australian tenor Paul O'Neill has forged a compelling international career performing throughout Europe and Australasia. His 2021/2022 engagements included Alfredo (*La traviata*) for Opera Australia, Turiddu (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and Canio (*Pagliacci*) for West Australian Opera. In 2022/23, he sings Don José, Cavaradossi, Alfredo, Rodolfo and Otello for West Australian Opera, Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) for Opera Australia and is tenor soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* and *Die Walküre* for West Australian Symphony.

Most recently, Paul sang Don José, Turiddu (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and Canio (*Pagliacci*) and Cavaradossi for West Australian Opera, Rodolfo, Narraboth (*Salome*) and Alfredo for Opera Australia and the title role in *Faust* for Theater Münster. He has sung Don José at the Glyndebourne Festival; Laca (*Jenůfa*) for Opéra de Lille; Rodolfo for Halle 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; and The Italian Tenor (*Der Rosenkavalier*) for Berlin Staatsoper.



Elena Perroni
Mimi

Elena made her professional opera debut with Opera Philadelphia, singing the role of Doris Parker in Charlie Parker's *Yardbird*, at the Apollo Theatre in New York City. She reprised the role in her English National Opera debut, in 2017.

In 2022 Elena made her Carnegie Hall debut in Schubert's *Mass in G Major* and her Konzerthaus Berlin debut premiering the work *Canti della natura* by Richard Danielpour. Seasons include Schubert's *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* with Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Berlioz *Les nuits d'été* with Philadelphia Orchestra, in concert as Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) and Rusalka (*Rusalka*), Britten's *War Requiem* 2022 and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Maestro Asher Fisch and West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

Other engagements include, Violetta Valéry in *La traviata*, Iolanta (*Iolanta*) 2022 with WAO, Juliet in Tchaikovsky's *Romeo & Juliet* with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Maria in Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* with the Reno Symphony Orchestra, Wyoming Symphony Philharmonic Orchestra and Philadelphia Independence Sinfonia.



Samuel Dundas
Marcello

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

2023 engagements include the title role in the world premiere of Richard Mills' new opera *Galileo* for Perth Festival and Victorian Opera; Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*) for Opera Australia; the Count (*Capriccio*) for Victorian Opera and ANAM, and Donner (*Das Rheingold*) with Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He will also be heard in Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with Auckland Philharmonia, Faure's *Requiem* with the Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* for Festival of Voices and Haydn's *Missa Cellensis* with the Allegri Ensemble, Hobart. Most recently Samuel has performed the title role (Voss) for State Opera, Marcello for Opera Australia, *Mozart's Requiem* for Tasmanian Symphony, *Carmina Burana* for Adelaide Symphony and Ebenezer Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol*) for Victorian Opera.

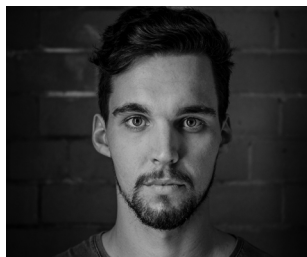


Rachelle Durkin
Musetta

Australian/American soprano Rachelle Durkin became an established solo artist at The Metropolitan Opera singing leading roles for many years - most notably Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Lisa in *La sonnambula*, Clorinda in *La cenerentola*, Miss Schlesen in Phillip Glass' *Satyagraha*, Frasquita in *Carmen* and many others.

Most recently, she sang Violetta in *La traviata* for Victory Hall Opera, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for Pittsburgh Opera and the title role in *Tosca* for Opera Queensland. 2021/2022 engagements included Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) in Adelaide, Morgana (*Alcina*) in Canberra and Musetta (*La bohème*) in Perth; in 2023, she returns to Opera Australia as Mrs Schlesen, to Perth as Musetta and is soloist with the Sydney, Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras and The Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

She was in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Detroit Symphony Orchestra (c: Leonard Slatkin) and West Australian Symphony Orchestra (c: Asher Fisch) and has starred in Gala Concerts with Plácido Domingo and José Carreras.



Jake Bigwood

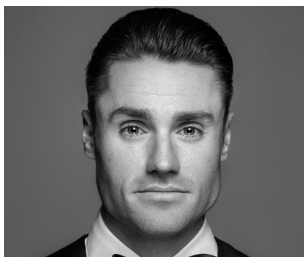
Colline

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.

In 2023 Jake is part of the Roberts Emerging Artist Program at West Australian Opera.

In 2022 Jake joined West Australian Opera as a Bendat Scholar and Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist and he sang the roles of Il Maestro in *The Duel* and both Angelotti and Sciarone in *Tosca* due to cast illness. He also sang the roles of Colline and Ashby for Freeze Frame Opera and was named a finalist in both the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, winning the Nelly Apt prize, Joan Sutherland Richard Bonyngé Bel Canto Competition where he was awarded the Friends of the Foundation award, and the Australian International Opera grant.

In 2023 Jake travelled to Montreal to sing Colline with the Canadian vocal arts institute, was a semi-finalist in the German Australian Opera Grant, and sings Zuniga and Colline for West Australian Opera.



Lachlann Lawton

Schaunard

Australian/British Lyric Baritone Lachlann Lawton is a 2022 Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Bel Canto Award Finalist and John Wegner Award recipient. He is a former Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist, Bendat Scholarship winner, and is currently part of the Roberts Emerging Artist Program at West Australian Opera.

He is a recent graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music's Master's program as a Waverly Scholarship recipient and studied with Quentin Hayes. He was a 2019 finalist in the Joan and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss.

Recent engagements include the title role in a staged production of *Elijah*, Morales (*Carmen*), Cinderella's Prince and The Wolf (*Into the Woods*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), Duke Robert (*Iolanta*), The Poet (*Prima la Musica by Salieri*), Sciarone (*Tosca*) and Marchese d'Obigny (*La traviata*) for West Australian Opera. Marcello (*La bohème*) and Sonora (*La fanciulla del west*) for Freeze Frame Opera.

Lachlann also has a Certificate 3 and 4 in Personal training from the Australian Institute of Personal Trainers.



Brett Peart

Benoît/Parpignol/Officer

Brett Peart is an emerging Western Australian operatic baritone whom Seesaw magazine describes as being "especially successful in getting into his vocal stride" and having a "stentorian baritone voice". He holds a Bachelor of Music majoring in classical vocal performance from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and, valuing versatility, Brett has also trained in both contemporary music performance and musical theatre. Brett has shared stage and scene with Teddy Tahu Rhodes, Rosario la Spina, Paul O'Neill and José Carbó. Brett regularly performs with West Australian Opera and Freeze Frame Opera. In July, Brett joined the principal cast of WAO's *Otello* as the dutiful Montano. August saw Brett perform as the baritone soloist in *Carmina Burana* for UWACS at Perth Concert Hall as well as The Prince in Freeze Frame Opera's *The Princess and the Showgirl (Adriana Lecouvreur)*. Later this year, Brett will be joining West Australian Opera's *Opera in the Regions* tour, performing in Kalgoorlie and Margaret River.



Mark Alderson
Alcindoro

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.

Mark was a Young Artist for West Australian Opera in 1998 and 1999. Roles for the company 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 Dancaïro 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.

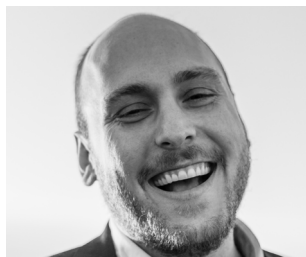
Mark has been a baritone soloist for The University Choral Society, Perth Oratorio Choir, Collegium Symphonic Chorus, St George's Cathedral and Albany Choral Society.



Kyle Garces
Sergeant

Kyle Garces is a Perth-based bass baritone. In 2021, he received his Bachelor of Music in Classical Vocal Performance from WAAPA. During his studies, he performed with OpusWA & ICW Productions and had the opportunity to perform "Collatinus" from *The Rape of Lucretia* by Benjamin Britten and to be the soloist in choral works such as *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Ralph Vaughn-Williams. He debuted the titular role of *Silas Marner* in the world premiere of the musical by John Taylor and had the privilege of performing in a masterclass for the legendary Richard Bonyng AC, CBE.

Since graduating, he has been a member of the West Australian Opera Chorus, performed "Dottore Grenvil" in *La traviata* for a concert production by Jenna Robertson and recorded a selection of original pieces by Tony Noakes for his CD, *The Enclosed Garden*. In December, he is delighted to join the Perth Symphonic Chorus for their 2023 performances of Handel's *Messiah*.



Perry Joyce
Prune Man

Perry is a singer, composer, conductor, and teaching artist who is actively involved in the Perth classical music scene. In 2018 he was nominated for the West Australian Young Achiever Awards for his achievements in music and community outreach.

As a soloist Perry has performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (*Claremont Carols in the Park 2022*, *Carmina Burana* - Orff 2020, *Choral Fantasy* - Beethoven 2018), West Australian Opera, Freeze Frame Opera, Lost and Found Opera, and many ensembles around Perth including as a member of St George's Cathedral Consort. He has also appeared as soloist for UWA Choral Society, Collegium Symphonic Chorus (*Messiah* - Handel) and West Coast Philharmonic Orchestra (*Requiem* - Rebecca Dale) and the *Magical Music of Animation* (MM Productions).

In 2014 Perry founded the West Australian Young Voices (WAYV) and has established and conducted many choirs since. Perry is passionate about working with choirs and currently directs and conducts WAYV and Quire Vocal Addiction. Perry has also worked as Children's Chorus Master for West Australian Opera (*Our Little Inventor*, *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, *Hansel and Gretel*) and in 2018 was Chorus Master for *Don Giovanni*.

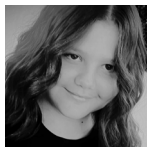
WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHILDREN'S CHORUS



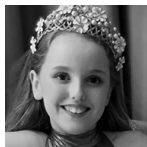
Romilly Jones



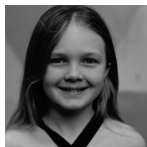
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* Celebrating over 10 years

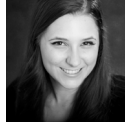
** Celebrating over 20 years

*** Celebrating over 30 years

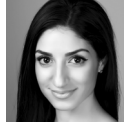
SOPRANOS



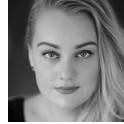
Alexandra Bak*



Chelsea Burns



Claire Condipodero



Lellah Fox*



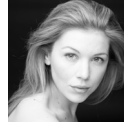
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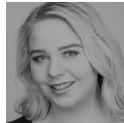
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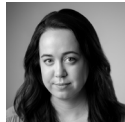
Morgan Halket



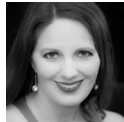
Brigitte Heuser



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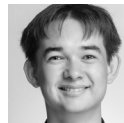
Jonathan Brain*



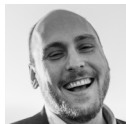
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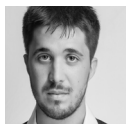
Ben Del Borrello



Callen Dellar**



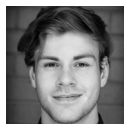
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Kylie Liang
Sarah Blackman
Emma Hunt
Sunmi Jung
Melanie Pearn
Jane Serrangeli

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Daniel Schmitt
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Tim South

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Louise Elaerts
Mark Tooby
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Mary-Anne Blades
Chelsea Davis
Sonia Croucher
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