



Wesfarmers Arts

# SYNOPSIS & CASTLIST

Executive Director Carolyn Chard AM  
Artistic Director Chris van Tuinen

## IOLANTA

6, 7, 8, 9 April 2022

His Majesty's Theatre

**Composer** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
**Conductor / Chorus Master** Christopher van Tuinen  
**Director** Katt Osborne  
**Set and Costume Designer** Tyler Hill  
**Lighting Designer** Michael Rippon  
**Sound Designer** Jeremy Turner  
**Creative Development / Libretto** Katt Osborne  
**Creative Development / Libretto** Zel Iscel  
**Setting of Libretto / Repetiteur** Lea Hayward

**Iolanta** Elena Perroni  
**Queen Iolanta** Grace King  
**Count Vaudémont** Matthew Reardon  
**Brigitte** Chelsea Burns  
**Laura** Fiona Campbell  
**Marta** Brigitte Heuser  
**Duke Robert** Lachlann Lawton  
**King René** Adrian Tamburini  
**Ibn-Hakia (The Doctor)** Simon Meadows  
**Bertrand** Callen Dellar  
**Alméric** Ammon Bennett

*Casting correct at time of publication but may be subject to amendment.*

**WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHORUS**  
**WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
**A/ Assoc Concertmaster** Semra Lee-Smith

Duration 90 minutes. Sung in English with English surtitles.

### SYNOPSIS

Iolanta is blind but does not know it. She lives a sheltered life and knows only those who live with her. For the first sixteen years of her life, she wondered what the world outside her home was like. Why was she not allowed to explore the world? Why were others able to do things she was not? She has always known that something was missing. But what?

King René is Iolanta's father. Iolanta only knows him as a knight, and not a King. She also doesn't know that his greatest concern is for her to never learn that she is blind. He is determined to find a cure for her disability.

While searching for a cure, King René also seeks to conceal awareness of Iolanta's blindness from her future husband, Robert. All those that serve the King and care for Iolanta – Marta, Bertrand and the maids – are sworn to secrecy. A messenger, Alméric, arrives at Iolanta's residence, announcing a visit from the King and a famous Doctor. The Doctor's diagnosis is clear: Iolanta must be made aware of her blindness before deciding on any possible treatment. The King refutes this approach.

Robert and his friend, Count Vaudémont, stumble upon Iolanta's home, unaware of who lives there. They are struck by its beauty but sense danger. They enter and meet Iolanta. Robert doesn't realise she is his betrothed, whom he doesn't want to marry because he loves someone else. Iolanta has not met many strangers in her life and is intrigued by the two men.

Increasingly anxious by the mystery of the place, Robert flees while Vaudémont stays, enthralled by Iolanta's spirit. Vaudémont asks her to give him a red rose as a keepsake. Iolanta hands him a white rose, twice. Vaudémont realises that she can't see. Iolanta has no idea what it means to 'see' in the way that Vaudémont does. They connect over their mutual curiosity and love of nature.

King René catches Vaudémont talking to Iolanta and is furious with him for revealing the secret to her. The penalty for revealing the secret is death. To save Vaudémont from her father's fury, Iolanta agrees to endure any treatment performed by the Doctor.

After Iolanta and the Doctor leave, The King reveals to Vaudémont that he only threatened to kill him in order to inspire Iolanta's desire to see and undergo the treatment. Robert returns to save Vaudémont and realises that the girl he met is his betrothed. King René releases Robert from his commitment and gives Vaudémont his blessing to marry Iolanta if she regains her sight.

Iolanta and the Doctor return and share the news that Iolanta has been cured and can see. Vaudémont and Iolanta have the King's blessing to be married and everyone praises God for the 'miracle' that has occurred...but are they celebrating for the same reason?

### GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



*West Australian Opera is supported by the State Government through the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries and Lotterywest, and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body*

