

**WEST  
AUSTRALIAN  
OPERA  
2022**



# **OUR LITTLE INVENTOR**

**EMMA JAYAKUMAR**

# 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

# OUR LITTLE INVENTOR

**1, 2 October 2022**  
**His Majesty's Theatre, Perth**

Composer & Co-librettist **Emma Jayakumar**

Original Author & Co-librettist **Sher Rill Ng**

Conductor **Kate McNamara**

Director **Matt Reuben James Ward**

Set & Costume Designer **Matt McVeigh**

Lighting Designer **Kristie Smith**

Sound Designer **Jeremy Turner**

Choreographer **Scott Elstermann**

Digital Content Creator **Roly Skender**

Children's Chorus Master **Perry Joyce**

Children's Chorus Master **Katie How**

Repetiteur **Adrian Soares**

Nell **Grace Chow**

Mum / Lao Shi **Yann Kee**

Mama / Auntie Myra **Xiaoja Zhang**

Mrs Livingston Li **Rachelle Durkin**

The Mayor **Brett Peart**

Di di **Jordan Scott**

Chet **Liam Fitzpatrick**

Declan **Harris Goh**

Hani **Harriett Dawson**

Auntie Myra's Son **Hao Chen-Zhang**

Councilmen **Joshua White, Thomas Lovegrove, Caleb Rochester, Rigby Barnes**

Featuring **West Australian Young Voices**

Featuring **Western Australian Youth Orchestra**

Production Manager **Mandy Farmer**

Stage Manager **Jacinta Wajon**

Assistant Stage Manager **Jack Wilson**

Head of Wardrobe **Brooklyn Rowcroft**

Wardrobe Assistant **Hannah Letizia**

Wardrobe Assistant **Rachel Donegan**

Wardrobe Assistant **Jessica Arrantash**

Dresser **Meg McKay**

Head of Wigs **Virginia Vona**

Head of Make Up **Sharon Kyrwood**

Scenic Art **Michael Betts**

Set built by **Plumb Artsworkshop**

Surtitle Operator **Katja Webb**

*Supported by the Joyce E Young Bequest*

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

Find your voice with WAO  
and commit to something meaningful



Discover WAO's free digital singing lessons  
at [www.learn.waopera.asn.au](http://www.learn.waopera.asn.au)

Join Perry Joyce on a journey of vocal discovery to explore  
rhythm, tempo, pitch, dynamics and form.  
Lessons are suitable for children 8-12 (and adults of all ages!)

Visit [actbelongcommit.org.au](http://actbelongcommit.org.au)  
for ideas on how to keep mentally healthy



## Executive Director's Message



West Australian Opera is proud to commission new work and we congratulate Emma Jayakumar's great achievement in the world premiere of a new opera for young people, *Our Little Inventor*.

Based on author and illustrator Sher Rill Ng's 2019 children's book about a young girl who changes the world with her kindness and brilliance West Australian Opera is proud to be part of the AWESOME Festival with this new work. We welcome and thank the team that takes this to the stage including cast Grace Chow, Rachelle Durkin, Yann Kee, Xiaojia Zhang, Brett Peart, West Australian Young Voices, and Western Australian Youth Orchestra conducted by Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist Kate McNamara.

Thank you for joining West Australian Opera for this performance at His Majesty's Theatre. If this marked the first visit to the opera for you or a young person in your life, we hope it was a memorable experience. We appreciate and value your feedback.

**Carolyn Chard AM**  
**Executive Director**  
**West Australian Opera**

## Chairman's Message



The world premiere of *Our Little Inventor* is an opera for young people inspired by the book by Sher Rill Ng and Western Australian composer Emma Jayakumar.

We recognise Principal Partner Wesfarmers Arts for their 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.

We can only do what we do with this support and our family of 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**

## Composer's Notes



I fell into the world of opera as a teenager because I had a singing voice suited to it. It was a whole new world I never knew existed. I've come to realise as a composer how fantastically compatible opera can be with child audiences, when it considers themes and concepts that truly resonate with them. My 2018 PhD research explored many things about the child-centred creative approach to music drama, and this research methodology was central to the score and adapted libretto planning of *Our Little Inventor*. I hope very much that this opera is one in a long line of new works for young audiences in Australia, for they are worthy of such care and attention.

I hope that children who watch this opera not only enjoy the fantastic story but are moved by the power of the human voice. I hope they are inspired — as I am — by the awesomeness of their peers in the Western Australian Youth Orchestra. Most of all, I hope they see themselves reflected in the treble and emerging voices of the West Australian Young Voices chorus, in the speaking parts, in the drama of a young person struggling against great odds, and triumphing against adversity (with a little help from friends and family).

I am humbled and honoured to have been offered this rare opportunity to create a new opera for children from Sher Rill Ng's beautiful book. My heartfelt thanks to this extraordinary artist — Sher Rill, thank you for your faith and trust in the collaborative process.

I admire you greatly and am immensely proud of what we have produced together.

Thank you to Carolyn Chard for her leadership at West Australian Opera which makes incredible commissions like this possible. To Chris van Tuinen, for his faith in my capabilities as a composer, his support of the emerging and established artists in this project, and to this oft-neglected genre, I am immensely grateful. To Terasa Letizia, I am so thankful for all that you have done for me, and all you continue to do for artists at WAO. Thank you to Director Matt Reuben James Ward and the entire creative team, it has been a complete delight to share the journey with you. To music staff Kate McNamara, Adrian Soares, Tommaso Pollio, Ben Burgess, Perry Joyce and Katie How, I am eternally grateful for your good humour and beautiful musicianship.

Lastly, profound thanks and admiration to the incredible artists singing and playing my score. It has been my privilege to work with you all.

**Emma Jayakumar**  
**Composer & Co-librettist**

## Director's Notes



I'm a longtime advocate for opera for young people, not only for audiences, but in terms of creating opportunities to facilitate participation. What other artform offers the same scope to enjoy and participate in singing, acting, stagecraft, production design, dance and live music in the same collaborative way as opera? Having directed West Australian Opera's *The Nightingale* and *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, two operas for young people, I can attest to the positive impact inclusive performing arts programs can have on participants and audiences alike. Similarly, *Our Little Inventor* by Sher Rill Ng and Emma Jayakumar, the third production in West Australian Opera's Opera for Young People series, offers exceptional opportunities for young people to collaborate in the creation of a new opera.

Set against an industrial backdrop, *Our Little Inventor* explores themes of environmental conservation via means of technological invention. While our story takes place over a hundred years ago, the parallels to today are all too clear. The same ingenuity that created industrialised societies and the subsequent degradation of the earth can be at play in her preservation. The same intelligence that destroys, can also mend — if we actively choose that path.

For us, our story starts with Nell, our little inventor, braving the big wide world with her invention. Armed with a conviction in her ability and a desire to “save” the environment, she beseeches the establishment to take her invention seriously.

It comes as no surprise she is initially ignored. Dejected, little Nell says “Oh Mum! They didn't even listen! What's the point if they won't even listen?”

As a result, *Our Little Inventor* asks us to question the capacity of children to provide answers in this “grown-up” world, their ability to observe societal needs and actively partake in building healthy communities and environments. What bigger challenge can we adults face, than reconciling ourselves with the notion that our choices today have implications long past our lifetimes?

If we are to take away anything from this production, let us take inspiration from little Nell's ingenuity, resilience, persistence and conviction. With this, I challenge you to look to your circle of family and friends. Perhaps there under your very nose is your own little inventor — full of answers, passion and the potential to make a significant contribution to our shared environment and community.

**Matt Reuben James Ward**  
Director

## Designer's Notes



The set design was inspired by Lithography in the Victorian era. Lithography was the first new method of printing for over three hundred years in the Victorian era. We have chosen to make scenic art look like illustrations and etchings in black and white so that the lighting creates the atmosphere.

The set and costumes are also inspired by the Steampunk movement that incorporates retro-futuristic technology and aesthetics inspired by the 19th century industrial Victorian era. The costumes are an eclectic mix of eras but emphasize the Victorian silhouette.

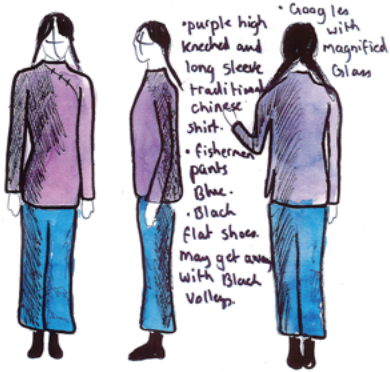
The design has not deviated too much from Sher Rill Ng's illustrations, but for the stage we have gone for a minimal approach, allowing the performers to create a sense of space with the set using one or two elements to place the setting so that the stage transitions have flow.

**Matt McVeigh**  
**Set & Costume Designer**



*Illustration shows Nell with her invention.  
Illustration by Sher Rill Ng, Our Little Inventor (2019).*





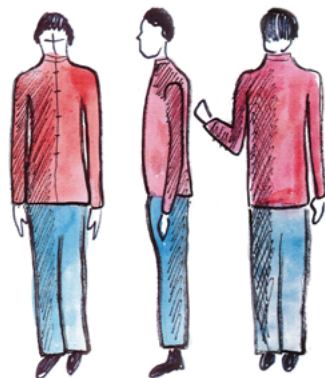
**Nell**, the little inventor.



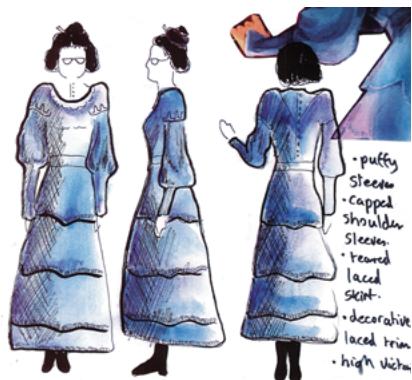
**Mum / Lao Shi**, the local school teacher.



**Mama**, Nell's grandmother.



**Di di**, Nell's younger brother.



**Mrs Livingston Li**, an aspiring politician.



**Aunty Myra**, a city shopkeeper.

## Original Author's Notes



I did not have big plans for Nell and her invention. She was just a little character in a fantasy world I'd created for my personal art project. Very small, very quiet plans. So when Emma Jayakumar reached out to ask if she could adapt *Our Little Inventor* into a children's opera, I was so thrilled but also a little anxious. Would this little picture book be worthy of the stage?

There was no doubt that Emma would compose the most beautiful music. I loved her compositions from the moment I heard them. Our video chat discussions, as we worked on the libretto, were a very welcome distraction during Melbourne's lockdowns. Emma understood and cared about the story and Nell herself. Her emotions, both good and bad, her motivations and her ambition. I could not have asked for a better Composer and Co-librettist.

It has been a privilege to watch Matt Reuben James Ward, Matt McVeigh, Kate McNamara and their creative team bring this production to life. I am in awe of the work that you do. Thank you to Chris van Tuinen and West Australian Opera for your support and for being so welcoming from the start of this journey. My very best wishes to the stunning cast, led by Grace Chow. You've made these characters your own, and your enthusiasm for their stories has made me so happy.

I am so proud to share this production with everyone and am grateful to be a part of it. My biggest hope was that Nell might inspire young girls to create and do great things, but I also hope that our young audience will learn to be kind, to allow themselves to be sad and to not be discouraged when the world tells you, 'No.'

**Sher Rill Ng**  
**Original Author & Co-librettist**



Illustration shows Nell arriving at the Big City.  
Illustration by Sher Rill Ng, *Our Little Inventor* (2019).

## Synopsis

AUSTRALIA, CIRCA 1900.

In a small village, children sing about the little inventor Nell, who often works long into the night. That morning, she announces to her family that she has finished her invention, a machine that cleans the air of pollution. After some hesitation from her Mum, Mama and Di di, she sets off for the Big City.

The City is smoggy and bustling. Citizens wear masks as protection from the thick, polluted air. Overwhelmed, Nell collides with a group of children — Chet, Hani and Declan — but is too shy to talk to them. Moving along, she helps a young boy struggling to breathe by using her invention. A shopkeeper named Myra and children crowd around in astonishment. Myra urges Nell to follow her to the City Council House to show her invention to the Mayor.

Nell arrives at the City Council House where she meets Mrs Lilith Livingston Li, the professionally frustrated Secretary. Though reluctant at first, Mrs Li defies all protocol to allow Nell to speak directly with the Mayor.

The Councilmen are irked by this interruption, and Nell is loudly rebuked and dismissed before she has a chance to talk. She runs from the chamber in great distress, as Mrs Li scolds the men for their behaviour and resigns in disgust.

Nell arrives home. Her family, seeing her dejection, offer her comfort, and Nell gains confidence from their words of wisdom. Chet, Hani and Declan arrive with a letter from the City. Mrs Li has a request for Nell and her invention. The village rally behind Nell as she gets to work making a bigger and better machine. Once complete, Nell leads everyone back to the Big City.

At the Council House, Nell finds herself in the midst of a rally. The Mayor is being drowned out by the crowd as they plead for clean air. Mrs Li calls Nell forward. This is her chance to show the world her invention. As she activates it, the citizens take off their masks and exclaim in joy. They can breathe freely again! Upon Nell's signal, one by one, more machines begin turning on all around the city. Nell stands proudly on the steps, surrounded by her family and friends as they celebrate her success. Finally, the Mayor approaches Nell and shakes her hand in a conciliatory gesture of support.

**Libretto by Sher Rill Ng & Emma Jayakumar**

**Inspired by Sher Rill Ng's 2019 picture book *Our Little Inventor***



*Illustration shows Nell working on her invention.  
Illustration by Sher Rill Ng, Our Little Inventor (2019).*



*Photo shows Conductor Kate McNamara in rehearsal.  
Photo by Franz Bato.*



**Emma Jayakumar**  
**Composer & Co-librettist**

Emma Jayakumar is an Australian composer of opera, ballet and chamber music.

Recent major commissioned works for orchestra and ensemble have included *Four Lost Songs* (2022) for the Darwin Symphony Orchestra with soprano Rachelle Durkin, *Bell Birds Suite for String Quartet* (2020) for the ABC recorded by the Darlington Quartet, *The Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* (2020) for West Australian Ballet and Awesome Festival, *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* (2021) for MusicBook Stories and the Perth City Winter Arts Festival, *The Lost Little Llama* (2022) for Awesome Festival, and *Our Little Inventor* (2022), for West Australian Opera.

Completing a practice-led PhD in composition at WAAPA in 2018, Emma is also an award-winning singer, and an alumna of the Royal Academy of Music, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and WAAPA opera courses.

Upcoming works in 2023/24 include a string quartet for Darlington Quartet, *Mary & Magdalene*, a choral work for soloists and chamber choir, and creative development of a modern chamber opera.



**Sher Rill Ng**  
**Original Author**  
**& Co-librettist**

Sher Rill Ng is a Woi Wurrung/Melbourne-based illustrator. She divides her time between designing for SaaS companies, and illustrating for picture books and middle-grade novels.

Her first author-illustrated picture book *Our Little Inventor* was released in 2019, and she has recently published a new picture book with author Alice Pung, *Be Careful, Xiao Xin!* (2022).

In May 2016, Sher Rill took part in the Imaginism House Workshop. She spent a month completing intensive art training in Montreal, Canada, learning from some of the best artists in the Concept Art industry.

Much of her work is inspired by animated films, the books she reads, the mundane and the causes that help us care for the world we live in.



**Kate McNamara**  
**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 Snugglepot 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 McNamara is a Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist with West Australian Opera.



## **Matt Reuben James Ward** Director

Matt was raised in regional Western Australia in Carnarvon, Katanning and Albany, and went on to study at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Royal College of Music London (Master of Performance, Yvonne Wells Award).

As a 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, Albany Entertainment Centre, Goldfields Arts Centre & Esperance Civic Centre), *Act Belong Commit* *Hansel & Gretel: An Adventure* for West Australian Opera's education program. He was Rehearsal Director for *Tosca* (His Majesty's Theatre).

Matt is currently Artistic Director of Breaksea, a multi-artform performance company.



## **Matt McVeigh** Set & Costume Designer

Matt McVeigh is an interdisciplinary artist who graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2008, majoring in Design for Live Performance.

Matt's practice is best described as process and collaboration driven, working across theatre, public art and community art. He has worked in the areas of dance, physical theatre, musicals, opera and puppetry. Matt has designed for Black Swan State Theatre Centre, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Steam Works, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, West Australian Ballet, Performing Lines WA and Barking Gecko Theatre. He has been assistant designer for the Australian Ballet and Victorian Opera as well as designing for many other independent companies. He has also worked in correctional facilities, with youth at risk, disability services and remote Aboriginal and regional communities. Matt was the recipient of an Outstanding Costume Design award for his debut show with West Australian Opera, *Koolbardi Wer Wardong*, at the 2022 Performing Arts WA Awards.

Matt continues to work on the Wu Rut Woorat in a studio on a heritage site on the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan on Whadjuk Nyoongar country.



## **Kristie Smith** Lighting Designer

Kristie Smith is a Boorloo/ Perth-based lighting designer for theatre, musical theatre and dance.

Since graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2017 with a Bachelor of Performing Arts, she has worked with companies including Black Swan State Theatre Company, West Australian Ballet, The Last Great Hunt, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Renegade Productions and WA Youth Theatre Company, and has created alongside directors and choreographers including Adam Mitchell, Jeffrey Jay Fowler, Joe Lui, Philip Mitchell, Scott McArdle and Matthew Lehmann. Kristie also acts as a production mentor for the lighting students at WAAPA.

Her most recent lighting designs include: West Australian Ballet: *'Truth' (Platinum: Ballet at the Quarry)* (2022) and *Genesis* (2021/2022); Black Swan State Theatre Company: *Every Brilliant Thing* and *Playthings* (2021); Spare Parts Puppet Theatre: *The One Who Planted Trees* (2021) and *Beanstalk* (2020); The Blue Room Theatre: *Watch & Act* and *Beginning at the End (Of Capitalism)* (2021); WAAPA: *Merrily We Roll Along* (2020).



## **Jeremy Turner**

### **Sound Designer**

Jeremy Turner is a sound designer and engineer, originally from Busselton and now based in Perth, Western Australia.

He graduated from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2010 with an Advanced Diploma of Live Production, Theatre and Events (Sound), and has worked in a wide variety of theatre and live productions since then.

Formerly the Head of Sound & Audio-Visual for Perth Theatre Trust, he is now a freelance designer and engineer. Clients include Perth Festival, West Australian Opera, ABC Classic, Performing Lines WA, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Perth International Jazz Festival, Musica Viva Australia and many more.

Recent sound design work includes *Koolbardi wer Wardong* (West Australian Opera, 2021), *Panawathi Girl* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, 2022), and *Noongar Wonderland* (Perth Festival, 2022).



## **Scott Elstermann**

### **Choreographer**

Scott Elstermann is an award-winning dancer and choreographer.

He is the first Australian and youngest-ever international recipient of the prestigious Pina Bausch Fellowship for Dance and Choreography. This granted Scott a placement with Spanish choreographer Marina Mascarell, accompanying her to some of the world's best dance companies including Nederlands Dans Theater, Skånes Dansteater and Gärtnerplatztheater.

Scott received the Palisade Award for 'Most Outstanding Graduate' of the Bachelor of Arts (Dance) course at WAAPA. He has performed for leading dance artists including the Merce Cunningham Trust, Lucy Guerin Inc., Stephanie Lake Company, Shona Erskine and Brooke Leeder & Dancers.

Scott has choreographed various works for organisations such as the Western Australian Youth Orchestra, Breaksea, LINK Dance Company and WAAPA.

He won 'Best Performer (Male)' and 'Best New Work' at the 2020 Performing Arts WA Awards and was named the 2020 7NEWS WA Young Achiever of the Year (Arts & Culture).



## **Roly Skender**

### **Digital Content Creator**

Roly Skender is a Western Australian audiovisual artist, producer and musician working with digital design, video projection and new media technologies.

His video projection work augments urban and natural environments, capturing the public imagination via mesmerising light-powered spectacles.

Public artworks such as the award-winning interactive digital performer *The Virtual Busker* and the large-scale projection intervention on local landmarks, *If Buildings Could Speak* use video projection to provoke curiosity and conversation as ephemeral public displays.

Under the umbrella of his personal production studio, Frankensound, Skender also creates visual design for theatre and performance while continuing to explore large-scale installations in public, private and in-between spaces.



Photo shows the principal cast of *Our Little Inventor*.  
Photo by Franz Bato.







**Grace Chow**  
Neill

Grace Chow is an award-winning and published Asian Australian theatre-maker, playwright and actor with a Bachelor of Performing Arts from WAAPA (2020), graduating as *dux* in the categories of performance, writing and final works. Her recent TV highlights include playing series regular Constable Cindy Cheung in the hit series *Mystery Road* on the ABC. As an emerging artist, Grace's recent theatre writing credits include *Dance Ourselves to Death* as part of Australian Theatre for Young People's published 2019 National Studio Residency, *Hell On Earth* at the Blue Room Theatre and her solo shows *Gracisms* and *Noodle Shop on the Corner of Fifth Street*. Her work *The Promise Land* won the prestigious Griffin Award in Sydney. In actor/deviser capacities, she has worked with a variety of theatre companies, notably Barking Gecko Theatre, West Australian Opera and *The Last Great Hunt*, also starring in Yirra Yaakin and Black Swan State Theatre Company's Perth Festival shows in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Grace also works as an advocate for accessibility, diversity and inclusion in the arts as an artist advisor, currently at the Blue Room Theatre and previously at The WA Youth Theatre Company and Performing Lines WA.



**Yann Kee**  
Mum / Lao Shi

Yann Kee, Malaysian Soprano, is a graduate of the University of Western Australia, having majored in Classical Vocal Performance, with High Distinction.

She was awarded numerous vocal prizes in Malaysia, including the inaugural 'Singer of the Year' and continued her success in Perth.

Yann was selected to be an Emerging Artist for Art Song Perth, and as a Soprano has performed in many concerts and recitals including for Queen Elizabeth II, during Her Majesty's visit to Western Australia.

Yann has performed solo recitals in Malaysia and with the Grove Classic Series in Western Australia. She also performed in the Australian premiere of Thomas Arne's *The Oratorio of Judith*.

Yann is currently a soprano with West Australia Opera, St. Marys Cathedral and is a vocal coach at Perth College. She has her own private singing studio 'Connexion' which continues to achieve successes with young singers. She has also adjudicated many vocal competitions since 2004. In 2016, she was an invited adjudicator for the Perth region of the prominent Chinese television show *China The Voice*.



**Xiaojia Zhang**  
Mama / Auntie Myra

Xiaojia Zhang received her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in vocal and opera studies in China. Before she came to Australia in July 2006, she was a university vocal teacher at Ningbo University, China. Xiaojia received many awards in singing competitions at national and provincial levels in China, including the Silver Screen Prize in the 2002 National Competition of Young Vocalists, Beijing. She regularly performs on stage as both a soloist and as a chorus member. Xiaojia joined West Australian Opera in 2007.

Awards received in China include: national level: Silver Screen Prize in the 2002 National Competition of Young Singers, Beijing; provincial level: numerous prizes and awards in competitions of vocalists in Ningbo City and Zhejiang Province, 1995-2005.

Xiaojia studied at the China Central Conservatorium and played roles in Chinese stage shows, such as Cousin Mei in *Family*. She performed Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* whilst studying her Master's Degree at Shanghai Normal University. Other credits include *The Magic Flute* (understudy Queen of the Night) in 2008, Thibault in *Don Carlos*, and numerous performances with the West Australian Opera Chorus.



**Rachelle Durkin**  
**Mrs Livingston Li**

Rachelle Durkin's most recent performances include soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Detroit Symphony under Leonard Slatkin, Musetta (*La bohème*) and Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) with West Australian Opera and Opera Australia, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra under Asher Fisch, Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Norina (*Don Pasquale*) with Opera Australia and The Metropolitan Opera, New York and a Gala Concert with Bryn Terfel at Leeuwin Estate, Western Australia.

Other appearances have included Lisa in *La Sonnambula*, Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* and Miss Schlesen in *Satyagraha* at The Met and Violetta, Fiordiligi, The Countess, Armida (*Rinaldo*), Alcina and Tytania for Opera Australia.

2021/2022 engagements include Titania 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. She will appear in recital at Ukaria and as a soloist with the Australian Baroque, Darwin and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

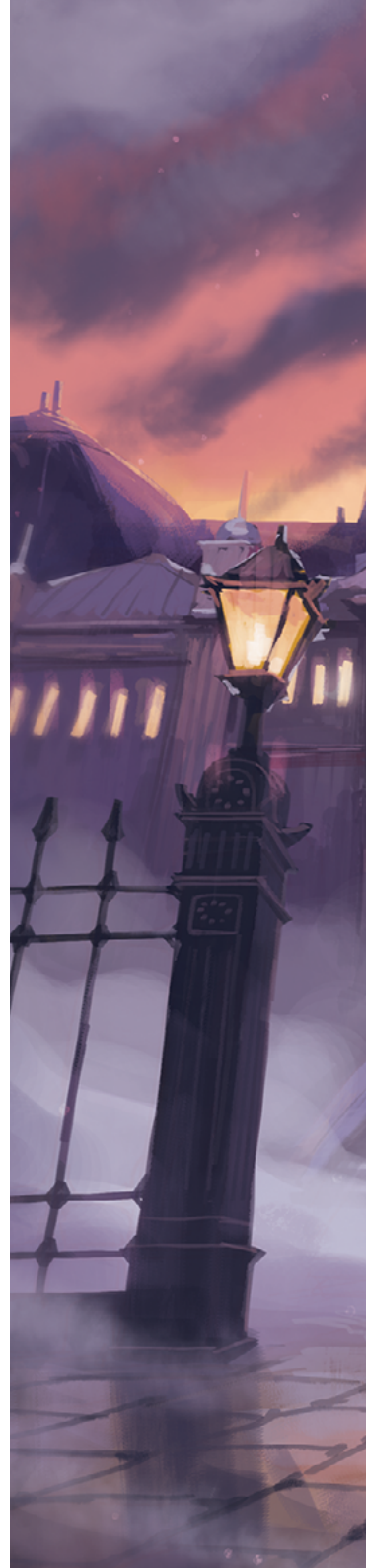


**Brett Peart**  
**The Mayor**

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 *Iolanta* and *Tosca*. In August, he performed the role of Ashby alongside Teddy Tahu Rhodes' Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* (FFO). Brett will next be performing in WAO's *La traviata*, opening on the 20th of October.



# WEST AUSTRALIAN YOUNG VOICES

## CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTERS

Perry Joyce  
Katie How

## ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Nick Schurmann

Rigby Barnes\*  
Ella Byers  
Hao Chen-Zhang\*  
Yang Chen-Zhang  
Aida Choo  
Ashley Croft  
River Davies\*\*  
Harriett Dawson\*  
Josephine Ellis\*\*  
Liam Fitzpatrick\*  
Domini Foss  
Amelia Foster  
Harris Goh\*  
Denver Havercroft\*\*  
Sophia Healdgrove\*\*  
Leandro Holmes  
Miso Jung\*\*  
Olivia Kenny  
Genevieve Morgan Kessey

## REHEARSAL MANAGER

Brylee Butterworth

\* *Minor Principal*  
\*\* *Understudy*

Hudson Kitney-Koek  
Ava Laurie  
Ian Leeks  
Thomas Lovegrove\*  
Eva McDonald  
Lily McDonald  
Sofia McDonald  
Linley Nevin  
Charlotte O'Hara  
Caleb Rochester\*  
Anya Rozenkevich  
Jordan Scott\*  
Allan Tan\*\*  
Fiona Tan\*\*  
Alaia Torralbo Straton  
Holly Westlake\*\*  
Joshua White\*  
Matilda Wilson  
Ehrel Yedid



Photo shows WAYV Performers in rehearsal.  
Photo by Holly Langford-Smith.

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Benjamin Burgess

## OPERATIONS MANAGER

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William Wu

Arwen Ooi

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### TROMBONE

Jeremy Alderson

### TUBA

Nicholas Ingram

### TIMPANI / PERCUSSION

Zachariah Skelton\*

Nathan Herbert\*

**Principal  
Section Leader**

\* Percussion instruments  
supplied by WA Academy  
of Performing Arts (WAAPA).



Photo shows WAYO String Musicians in rehearsal.  
Photo by Edify Media.



*Photo shows Composer & Co-librettist Emma Jayakumar in rehearsal.  
Photo by Franz Bato.*

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Dylan Crosbie

### Audio Supervisor

Kieran O'Regan



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



Photo shows soprano Grace Chow in rehearsal.  
Photo by Franz Bato.



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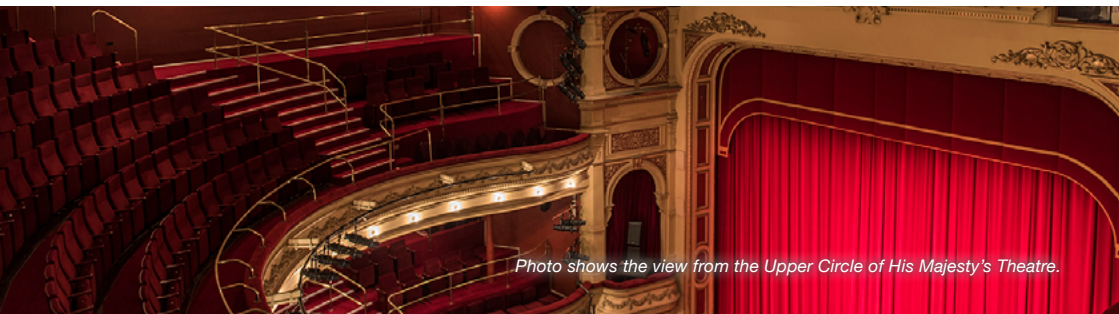
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*Photo shows the view from the Upper Circle of His Majesty's Theatre.*

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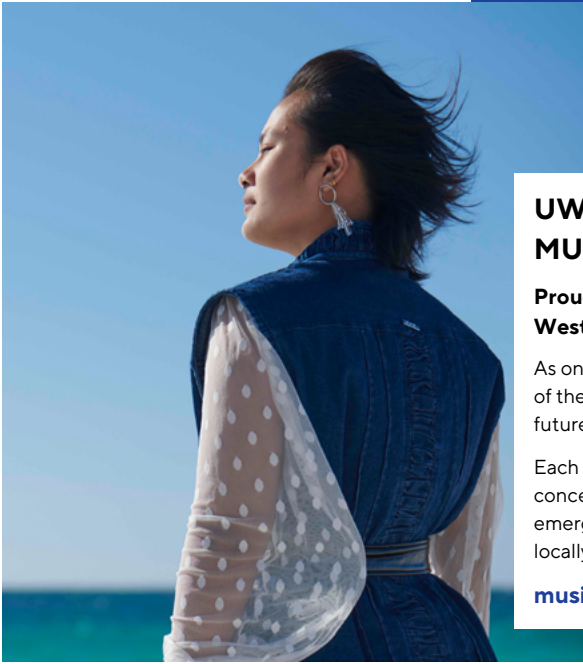
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