

## MEDIA RELEASE

29 April 2022

## World's best tenor, Jonas Kaufmann stars in Australian premiere of 'audacious' new production of *Lohengrin*

May 14-24, 2022 | State Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne



A new production of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* by French director Olivier Py, will have its Australian premiere at Melbourne's State Theatre on Saturday 14 May, with an exceptional cast featuring the world's most in-demand tenor, Jonas Kaufmann, performing in his first fully-staged opera in Australia.

Kaufmann has performed *Lohengrin* to great acclaim since his role debut at Bayerische Staatsoper in 2009, and has sung in concert performances of *Parsifal* and *Andrea Chénier* for Opera Australia, however, in an exciting coup for Melbourne, this is the first time he will perform in an opera production, not just in Australia but the entire Asia Pacific region.

Exclusive to OA's Melbourne season, this is the first outing of Py's production since it premiered in Brussels in 2018, described at the time as "*undeniably a thoughtful and audacious piece of theatre*" (Opera Traveller).

A co-production with Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Py sets the battle between good and evil in the ruins of Berlin in the aftermath of World War II. A monumental revolving tiered set and monochromatic costumes designed by Pierre-André Weitz create a sweeping spectacle and a grand operatic experience.

Joining Kaufmann will be American soprano Emily Magee in her Opera Australia debut as Elsa, and Mezzo-soprano Elena Gabouri, praised by Limelight for the "*strength, expressiveness and flexibility of her voice*", makes a welcome return to Melbourne, in her role debut as Ortrud, while one of Australia's foremost baritones Simon Meadows will make his role debut as Telmarund.

Warwick Fyfe, who is considered one of Australia's finest baritones and known for his expertise in Wagner roles, will debut as The Herald and bass baritone Daniel Sumegi, who has performed in over one hundred operatic roles, will add another opera to his extensive repertoire when he debuts as Heinrich.

Head of Music at Opera Australia, Tahu Matheson will conduct this epic opera, leading Orchestra Victoria and the Opera Australia Chorus, one of the largest in any opera, with 70 members including an additional 25 local singers to the Opera Australia chorus.

*Lohengrin* is a fantastical romance. It is filled with shimmering string passages and angelic choruses, including the famous Bridal March. Described by composer Richard Wagner as "streams of gold, ravishing the senses of the beholder" his score soars along shimmering strings and the enormous choruses seem voiced by a thousand angels.

**Creatives**

Conductor **Tahu Matheson**  
 Director **Olivier Py**  
 Revival Director **Shane Placentino**  
 Set & Costume Designer **Pierre-André Weitz**  
 Lighting Designer **Bertrand Killy**

**Cast**

Elsa **Emily Magee**  
 Ortrud **Elena Gabouri**  
 Lohengrin **Jonas Kaufmann**  
 Telramund **Simon Meadows**  
 Herald **Warwick Fyfe**  
 Heinrich **Daniel Sumegi**  
 First Noble **Dean Basset**  
 Second Noble **Tomas Dalton**  
 Third Noble **Nathan Lay**  
 Fourth Noble **Ryan Sharp**

**Opera Australia Chorus**  
**Orchestra Victoria**

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 Please refer to the website for the Company's COVID Safe procedures:  
<https://opera.org.au/covid-safety>

**Media enquiries**

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**Performance information**

**Evenings at 6:00pm**  
 May 14, 17, 24,  
**Saturday Matinees at 12.30pm**  
 May 21

**Running time**

Approximately 4 hours and 20 minutes including two intervals

Performed in German with English surtitles  
 A co-production between Opera Australia and the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie

**Production Partner**



**Bookings**

Adult tickets from \$399 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office  
 (02) 9318 8200  
[www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

**State Theatre,  
 Arts Centre Melbourne**