

O|PERA AUSTRALIA

# Whiteley

KATS-CHERNIN AND FLEMING



Education Resource

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# The vision for *Whiteley*

Looking out towards North Sydney from Circular Quay on a brilliant summer's day. The colours are vivid, striking, harsh, and to Lyndon Terracini, Opera Australia's Artistic Director, the essence of the genius of artist Brett Whiteley. He had been searching for a quintessential Australian subject for a new commission, something that "reflected the culture of this place".

For him Brett Whiteley was "very much a Sydney subject who brought an iconism beyond that of kangaroos and koalas". Lyndon Terracini believed that there was much about Sydney including its colours, space and brashness that shaped the artist's style. Brett Whiteley's quintessential Australianness and depiction of place was something which would resonate with Australian audiences either subliminally or in real terms.

He therefore sought creatives who would be able to reflect that in their contribution to the opera. Composer Elena Kats-Chernin has experienced a mixed life which influences her distinct sound, connection to melody, exploration of colours and light and the general eclectic breadth of her output; which in many ways reflects that of Whiteley himself. Both the director and librettist lived through that time of sex, drugs and rock-n-roll in Sydney. They also lived near Lavender Bay and had an awareness of the culture of Sydney during that time, understanding from experience the culture that influenced and nurtured Whiteley.

Lyndon Terracini also imagined that new technology could explore Brett Whiteley's life and output more coherently than just building a set. LED screens could capture the shock of Whiteley's paintings, the use of line and colour, and the influences of the architecture and colours of Sydney.

*Whiteley* is about the culture of a place, its people and an extraordinary, iconic artist, depicted in a contemporary way, rather than through tokenistic, nostalgic references. We too are assessing and commenting upon our cultural roots in a different way as we continue to mature as a company.

*This production crosses boundaries between biography, myth, music, design and digital technology in quite a new way for opera*

DAVID FREEMAN, DIRECTOR.



ELENA KATS-CHERNIN, COMPOSER



JUSTIN FLEMING, LIBRETTIST



## *How is a new opera made?*

The way that *Whiteley* was conceived is quite unusual, in that the Artistic Director had a precise idea of what he wanted.

There are generally three ways that a new opera may come about. If you are a composer with ambitions to have an opera performed, consider one of the following:

1. The Opera Company approaches a composer of note to present ideas for an opera that they might be interested in, and a subject is agreed upon. This was the way that the opera *Bliss* by Brett Dean was conceived.
2. The composer approaches the opera company with an idea and after discussion and negotiation a commission and a brief is agreed.
3. A new route for a less experienced or well-known composer is to submit a scene for a new opera workshop, which are frequently held. Here the composer and librettist will have a scene prepared that is workshopped and performed by a professional opera company and watched by artistic directors looking for new work. This means that you are able to write something of interest to you with a librettist of your choice, however it may not be commissioned, so you take the risk of not being paid. The payoff is that you will have footage for showing your idea to other opera companies, so it helps a young composer trial and show their work.

# Cast of Characters in *Whiteley*

Brett Whiteley	baritone	Leigh Melrose	Artist
Wendy Whiteley	soprano	Julie Lea Goodwin	Wife
Beryl Whiteley	mezzo	Dominica Matthews	Mother
Arkie Whiteley	soprano	Kate Amos	Daughter
Young Arkie	soprano	Natasha Green	
Joel Elenberg	bass	Richard Anderson	Friend
Michael Driscoll	tenor	Nicholas Jones	Friend
Robert Hughes	baritone	Alexander Hargreaves	Critic
Patrick White	tenor	Gregory Brown	Writer
Frank Lloyd	tenor	Brad Cooper	Gallerist
Anna Schwartz	soprano	Leah Thomas	Friend/gallerist
Queen Elizabeth	soprano	Annabelle Chaffey	
Fijian Policeman	bass	Sitiveni Talei	
Fijian Backpacker	soprano	Celeste Lazarenko	
Janice	mezzo soprano	Angela Hogan	Girlfriend
Opera Australia Chorus			
Opera Australia Orchestra			
Opera Australia LED Screens			



## ***Who was Brett Whiteley?***

No other artist saw the world quite like Brett Whiteley. A restless seeker of ideas, a vivid spark of life, he described the creative process as an attempt to keep an appointment with nature: “Art should astonish, transmute, transfix.”

Born in Sydney in 1939, Whiteley devoted his life to art. He moved to London at the age of 20, hungry for experience, and became the youngest artist to have work purchased by the Tate. From there, he made his way to New York with his wife Wendy and daughter Archie, the family setting themselves up in the famous Chelsea Hotel. When New York proved too much, he fled to Fiji before a scrap with the law resulted in his return to Sydney and the harbourside suburb of Lavender Bay.

In Australia, Whiteley’s reputation took off. His name became familiar even to those who didn’t know much about art. He painted portraits. He painted landscapes. He turned the gaze back upon himself. He looked out from his home to the water and painted the view. And he won every major art prize, including the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman in 1978 — a feat that no other artist has achieved, before or since.

That Archibald-winning painting was a revelation. Honest and raw, it was a picture of addiction, a struggle that consumed Whiteley for years and eventually cost him his life. How to reconcile his creativity with his addiction became the central tension of his world.

When we look back across Whiteley’s life, another figure comes into clear focus: his wife, muse and creative partner Wendy. Brett and Wendy first met as teenagers, and their partnership lasted a lifetime even if their marriage did not. Brett once put it like this: “All of my work has been hinged to her, is drawn formally and aesthetically from her. She is an inexorable part of my creative process.” So this is a love story, too.

In later years, Whiteley spent hours talking with musicians about their craft. He was a disciple of art but he loved music too. Part of him was envious about the power of live performance, the ability to harness the energy of a crowd and connect with audiences in the most direct way.

When you consider all that, it’s easy to see why the team at Opera Australia was drawn so strongly to the Whiteley story. A rich canvas, full of vibrancy, struggle, love and excess: the perfect material, in other words, for an opera.

Check out the trailer below.

[Click here to watch Opera Australia’s \*Whiteley\* trailer](#)

# Synopsis

## *Justin Fleming (Librettist)*

The story of *Whiteley* starts with his death in 1992. It moves through a series of flashbacks, starting with Brett as a young boy on Sydney's lower north shore before tracking his journeys across the world and back. Brett and Wendy, along with their daughter Arkie, interact with eight principles and a chorus of characters. This is a story about art, so the creative process is a key part of the opera. But the libretto also focuses on Brett's struggles with addiction, a struggle that eventually claims his life.

### Act I

From school days, Beryl sees Brett's talent at painting.

Brett meets Wendy. They go to Europe to experience Art in its original setting, and honeymoon in Sigeon.

Brett is enraged by the absence of Australian art.

Brett pays homage to three heroes: Charles Baudelaire, Piero della Francesca and Francis Bacon — all addictive personalities.

In London, Brett is the youngest artist to sell to the Tate.

In the pub, the Barman challenges Brett to delve into the dark side, giving him a substance to help his journey starting at the site of the Christie murders.

After failing in America, Brett, Wendy and Arkie go to Fiji but are expelled for possession of opiates.

### Act II

Back in Australia they settle in Lavender Bay. Michael Driscoll introduces them to heroin.

Wendy and Michael become lovers. Brett introduces Patrick White to Joel Elenberg, a neighbour at Lavender Bay.

Brett tries to visit Fiji, but is refused entry.

Brett makes history by winning three major art prizes. They take Joel to Bali to spend his last days.

Back in Lavender Bay, Brett shows the worst symptoms of addiction. Wendy asks if he still has artistic vision. Critics and others turn against Brett. Wendy and Brett part.

Brett tries to withdraw from drug dependency in a Japanese Zen Garden.

Brett is now in a relationship with Janice Spencer. Brett's mother tells him he'll be honoured with the Order of Australia. Arkie is horrified to find Brett back on the drugs.

Brett goes to a motel to control his addiction by sedation. He fatally overdoses. Beryl laments her dead son.

Wendy creates her own work of art — the Secret Garden in front of the house in Lavender Bay — celebrating the Whiteley legacy against the luminous power of the harbour.



## *How are characters created musically in an opera?*

Tahu Matheson explains:

[Watch \*The Conductor's Perspective\*](#)

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What is the role of Tahu Matheson in the opera *Whiteley* in this footage?
2. What does someone creating a character in an opera need to think about when preparing for the role?
3. How does the music impact on the understanding of character?
4. What are the three main considerations that help create the “cogent and coherent whole”?
5. What has composer Elena Kats-Chernin done that is difficult to do in a modern opera?

### *The Creative Team*

Composer	Elena Kats-Chernin
Librettist	Justin Fleming
Conductor	Tahu Matheson
Director	David Freeman
Designer	Dan Potra
Digital Designer	Sean Nieuwenhuis
Lighting Designer	John Rayment
Assistant Director	John Sheedy
Consultant	Ashleigh Wilson (Whiteley biographer)
Artwork	Brett Whiteley

## *Opera – the ideal vehicle for storytelling.*

Opera may well be the ultimate art form because of the way it brings together multiple disciplines and skills: writing, music, drama, visual art, design, choreography, the digital arts, film and so on. And the cast members don't just stand and sing: like all actors, they need to find ways to bring their characters to life on stage.

*Whiteley* is an important addition to opera canon. It's also an important addition to Australian culture in general, a local production about a remarkable Australian artist who remains a source of fascination a quarter of a century on from his death.

But do you know how much work goes into creating an opera? What you see and hear is only the tip of the iceberg. To understand the entire process of bringing an existing opera to life, watch our series of short films [Staging an Opera](#)

1. The Beginning
2. The Build
3. Making and Measuring
4. The Music
5. The Final Countdown

*"It's as close as we can get to the 'total work of art' that Wagner loved."*

JUSTIN FLEMING, LIBRETTIST



## *What is the timeline and creative process for making a new opera?*

Time before opening night	Activity
3 – 4 years	<p>Concept and brief for new work is decided. [See note on How does a new opera start?]</p> <p>Funding secured. Creative team selected.</p> <p>Librettist starts researching and writing.</p> <p>Date for premiere is set.</p>
2 years	<p>Librettist shares draft of the libretto with the composer</p> <p>Designer starts work on the vision for the opera</p> <p>Cast is contracted</p> <p>Production budget finalised</p>
18 months	<p>Designer drafts the costumes and set</p> <p>A section of the opera workshopped with cast and musicians</p> <p>Production staff working with the designer identify ways to realise his vision.</p> <p>Management announces the new opera.</p> <p>Designs for costumes finalised. Textiles and resources required researched</p>
1 year	<p>Designers start to make costumes.</p> <p>Artists work on backdrop and other visual scenery.</p> <p>Director and designer present a model box of the opera to the making teams, musicians and management</p> <p>The workshop starts to build the set and props.</p> <p>The Digital designer starts planning digital content.</p> <p>The lighting designer sets to work.</p> <p>Costumes are finalised and ordered</p>

6 months	<p>Costumes are made, along with wigs.</p> <p>Props constructed in consultation with the designer.</p> <p>Set is built as the designer makes final decisions.</p> <p>The publicity campaign gets underway to boost ticket sales.</p> <p>Costume department fits the members of the chorus.</p>
5 – 4 months	<p>Cast are sent scores, but the composer is still making final touches while orchestrating the entire work.</p> <p>The conductor receives a draft of the score to prepare rehearsals.</p> <p>Production continues on set, costume, wigs and props.</p>
3 months	<p>Rehearsal of promotional material for recording</p> <p>Promotional material collected — filming, photo shoots, recordings.</p> <p>Media campaign continues to promote opera</p>
2 months	<p>Cast continue to learn music under the direction of OA staff.</p> <p>Rehearsal with language coaches if the opera is in a foreign language.</p> <p>Stage manager and director plan rehearsal schedule</p>
5 – 6 weeks	<p>Rehearsals begin, led by conductor (music) or director (drama) who blocks the performance and offers slow, detailed examination of the score and staging.</p> <p>Creatives work together in the rehearsal room problem solving and refining.</p> <p>Costume department fits lead roles</p> <p>Score checked and type-set.</p> <p>Major stakeholders (Board members, supporters and so on) invited to the opening night.</p>

4 weeks (continued)	<p>Chorus start their rehearsals</p> <p>Creative team leads rehearsals on individual scenes to iron out problems and secure the narrative.</p> <p>Vocal coaching ongoing as required</p> <p>Choreography direction starts</p> <p>Program material collated</p> <p>Promotional event takes place (in this case an event at the Whiteley studio in Surry Hills)</p>
3 weeks	<p>Piano/vocal score updated daily and reprinted by the music library</p> <p>Draft orchestral parts available for the orchestra players</p> <p>Instrument section leaders plan the deployment of their players and source all required instruments (e.g. additional percussion sounds)</p> <p>Technical rehearsals start</p> <p>Program content completed and sent to be printed</p>
2 weeks	<p>Orchestra's first rehearsal of the full score.</p> <p>Set delivered to the theatre and assembled.</p> <p>Sitzprobe rehearsal with all singers and orchestra.</p> <p>Rehearsals move into the theatre performance space to ensure the set works, familiarise cast with entrances/exits and stage</p> <p>Costumes worn at rehearsal including makeup, hats, jewellery etc.</p> <p>Director starts running full acts</p>
1 week	<p>Stage and orchestra rehearsals with the full cast</p> <p>Technical elements, such as LED screens, incorporated into rehearsals</p>
2 days before	<p>General (final dress rehearsal) with photographers and press.</p> <p>Ongoing tweaking of parts by creatives</p>
Opening night	<p>Premiere performance</p> <p>Stage crew strikes the set, clearing the stage for the next performance</p> <p>Costumes laundered ready for next show.</p>



# Creating a Story

## *Interview with Justin Fleming, librettist*

The central challenge for the *Whiteley* librettist was to identify the best way to tackle such a creatively complex subject. This task fell to the Australian playwright and author Justin Fleming, whose international career has involved writing for theatre, music theatre, opera, television and cinema. Born in Sydney, he grew up in the era of Brett Whiteley, not far from Lavender Bay where the Whiteleys lived and worked.

### **How did you become involved in this project?**

I was with Lyndon Terracini at Circular Quay looking out across the harbour and he asked ‘Which artist does this remind you of?’ Fortunately, I said ‘Whiteley’. I was familiar with his legacy and the garden. Previously I had written a few musicals and recently done a new libretto for *The Merry Widow* for Opera Australia. But this was a huge new project as I was not working from an existing drama.

### **What is the *Whiteley* story?**

Brett Whiteley was the youngest artist to sell to the Tate the work *Untitled Red Painting* (1960) which made him a celebrity. He travelled to the US where he failed to woo the critics, and then to Fiji thinking he might be the next Gauguin, but was deported for possessing opiates. He returned to Australia and settled in Lavender Bay, a perfect location for him, which he called an ‘optical ecstasy’ and so became part of community of artists, known as the Lavender Bay set. It was here that he finally settled.

### [The Artists of Lavender Bay](#)

Brett Whiteley made many unsuccessful attempts to beat his addictions. In 1992 while alone he again tried to kick his habit, planning to sedate himself to get through the process of withdrawal. Sadly, he overdosed and died. *Whiteley* is a dramatisation of the life of an addictive personality in every sense of the word and the struggle of the artist against the world. The paradox is, in that terrible state of mind, he created extraordinary work. He divided critics, but he must have been extraordinary to win three large prizes in the same year and be hanging in the Tate at such a young age!

### **How did you create the *Whiteley* libretto?**

Enormous amounts of research. Ashley Wilson was part of the creative team. An excellent journalist, he collected facts and worked closely with Wendy and other friends to create the definitive account of his life journey. These details were wonderful because at the end of all of my research I

had access to a fantastic amalgam of facts: life facts, opinions, other people’s thoughts and the experiences that made up his quite extraordinary life.

The draft and story needed a lot of development. Initially we wanted dialogue and music. But when they workshopped that, it was only the music that seemed fun. The second draft had only music with recitatives, arias and ensemble work. Sometimes the composer requested minor changes to the text to musical structure. It has taken two years of consistent working and reworking to create the idea.

### [Watch Storytelling](#)

### **What surprised you along the way?**

I did not know of his travels and success beyond Sydney, that he won the three prizes in one year, or of the explosive, addictive nature of the man. I was surprised by his eloquent use of words. The other new ingredient for me was the digital component. The set is made of movable panels that can alter the shape of the stage, can go black or be lit up and reflect projection. This minimises the requirement for a built set, but allows for quick transportation between venues. Digital craftsmanship is becoming a new valuable and essential skill in opera creation.

### **What features of Whiteley himself are in the libretto?**

How do you portray an addictive personality? The visual aspects of his addictions showed up in a work like *Self-portrait after 3 bottles of wine*. He said his heroes included Francis Bacon and Pierre Bonnard who were also addictive types. He found some comfort in knowing there were other great artists who also saw the world through a lens of compulsion. He could not separate life, alcohol and work but still created such amazing work. Discovering there was a creature like that with such talent was a surprise.

When writing about his life some elements of dramatic license are needed to create an artistic impression of a life. Sometimes I fused together two events that may have

happened years apart and in two different places into one time and place. I referenced only the nuclear family and his mother — as he had a huge family, but too many to include in the story. What is especially interesting in doing this opera is that it is not a biography and not a chronological depiction of his whole life. It is an artistic impression of a life, in the same way that his art is an impression of nature and what he saw. It is important to remember that Brett Whiteley did not go through life with an orchestra accompanying his sung words with scenes changing all around him. He went through life like all of us do — in reality and real time. We are not interested in reality — not in show business!

Brett Whiteley spoke his thoughts so well that his expressions could easily be developed into the libretto. He was a thinker and occasionally funny. One of my favourite quotes in the opera is “Life is short but Thursday afternoon goes on and on...” My first draft included a lot of rhyme as you would find in more traditional opera formats, but I decided to express it all without intentional rhyme.

### **How was it to join a creative team once your libretto was completed?**

Working with a creative team is different to working as a playwright because music changes everything. Setting words to text can elevate it from the ordinary. Just as Brett looked differently at the world and depicted it artistically, as an artistic team we try to do the same.

We have different opinions on some things, but respect each other, so we always come to a good solution. My original idea was to end with Wendy’s garden created as the Whiteley legacy to the community. I did not want her portrayed as “just a wife” in an opera in 2019. They met in art school and Brett believed she had a better idea of line and colour than he did. My libretto includes him asking her “Why don’t you do art?” She replied she did not want to “draw or paint a landscape but to create one”. She references *The Secret Garden*, a story about the last survivor in a house of people who die of the plague, who finds a secret garden, and begins life again.

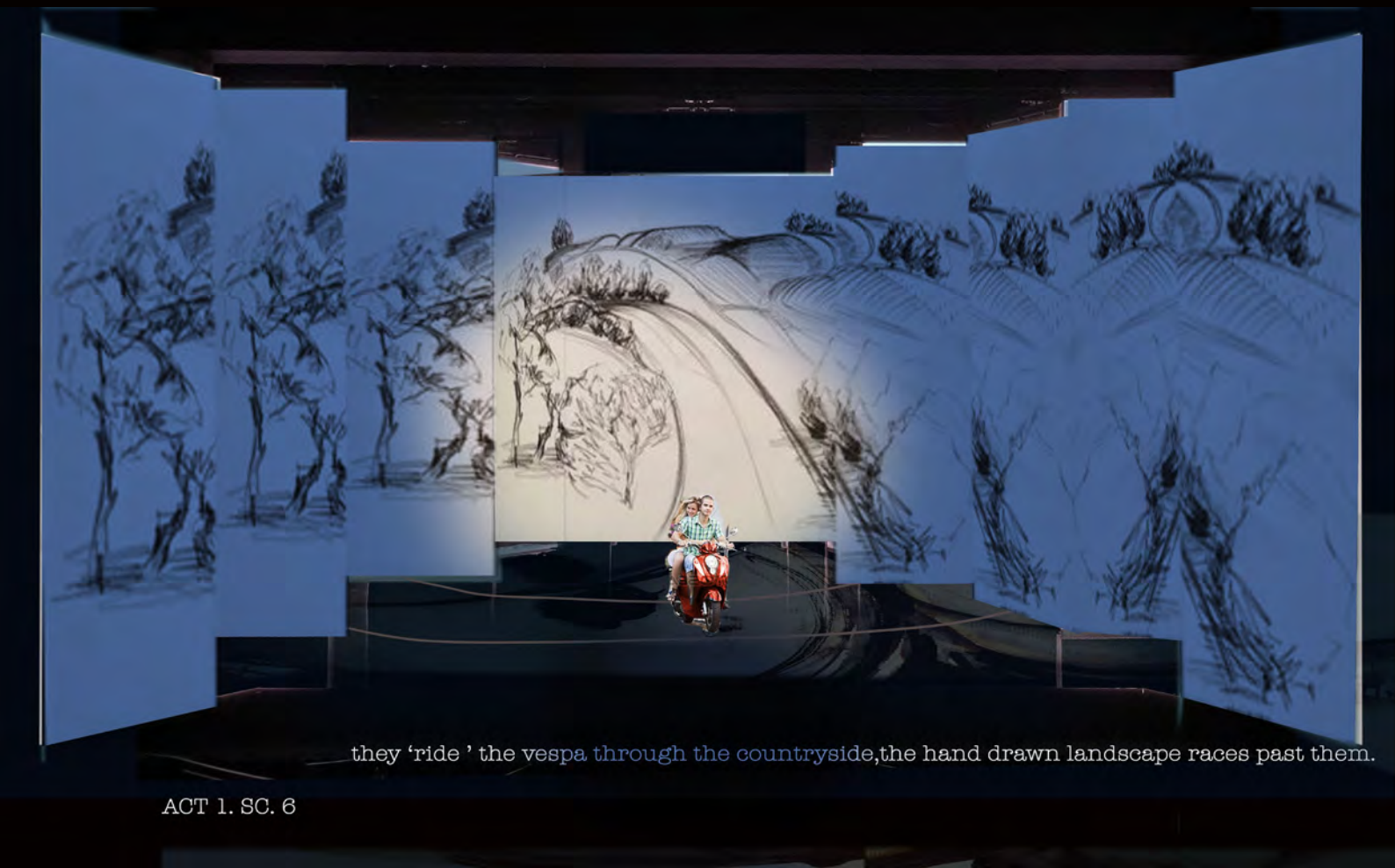
I wanted the opera to end with the creation of the garden and visuals of the Whiteley family legacy against the dazzling harbour. The director wanted to end with the artist’s death, but I felt ending with the garden she created from wasteland and harbour would be a fitting tribute to her as the creator. My plan was to end with the words “this will give me sanctuary”. I am happy with how it ends and glad I stood my ground and think the director would now agree.

The opposite has occurred when I have been asked by the director or the composer to rethink something. And after my initial indignation, I think about it and realise they are right. Everyone has a generosity of spirit and respect for each other’s opinions and vision.

### **Favourite thing about the project?**

Its novelty, boldness, audacity and its state-of-the-art modernity which Brett would have loved. A pity he is not here to enjoy it, but without the final tragedy, it would be a very different story.





***Drama Exercise 1:***  
***Study the dialogue below between Brett and his Mum.***

**M:** Brett!

**B:** Mum

**M:** Brett!

**B:** Mum

**M:** BRETT!! I have good news and bad news

**B:** First the good

**M:** You've won the school art prize!

**B:** It's hardly a surprise. What's the bad news?

**M:** You stole the art materials you used to win the prize  
The bad news: You've been expelled for stealing!

**B:** Oh yeah? So I don't have to go back to boarding school?

**M:** A blessed curse from the God of Contradiction. One flower  
dies, another blossoms.

**B:** Mrs Waugh says that God is just a fiction as there is nothing  
up there except possums.

*(He rides away)*

***Discussion Questions***

- a) What does this interaction tell us about young Brett and his mother Beryl, and the relationship between them?
- b) The way you say the lines affects the way the audience understands their attitude to the content of Beryl's news. In pairs experiment with the way you say the lines.  
What range of attitudes to this news can you show?

[Watch the workshop reading of this excerpt of the Opera here.](#)

## Drama Exercise 2: Director's Challenge

Study this excerpt from the Libretto to Act 1 Scene 3, paying attention to the stage directions.

**WENDY:** There's a party tonight. Do you want to come?

*A wild party. WENDY and BRETT, dancing. CHORUS of DANCERS and ONLOOKERS hum a dance song. Time passes.*

**BRETT:** In your heartbeat, in your touch,  
My little mouse, my piece of fire,  
I am knocked silly by your kiss.  
I cannot conceive of a better mate for me.  
I've won a scholarship. I have to go away.  
If you will come to me, I will wait for you.

*An overseas departure dock. The sound of a ship's horn.*

**WENDY:** In your promise, in your words,  
The flood of joy, the ache of need.  
I will soon be at your side  
I have to believe that you'll really wait for me.

**BRETT:** I will. I love you.

**Orchestral.** *They kiss, passionately in love, and, with painful separation, wave. BRETT returns to embrace her several times before he boards his ship.*

Much of the drama in this opera happens very quickly, as the librettist establishes Brett's infatuation for Wendy and the intensity of their relationship. In this short excerpt they go from their first date at a dance to a commitment to be together.

- a) What stage directions have been included by the librettist in this section?
- b) One instruction is *Time passed*. How do you achieve this in a theatre setting? Consider the creative team's use of music, lighting, costumes etc.



# Directing *Whiteley*

The role of the director is to consider the vision of the whole creative team to make sense of the story as a whole. Once the opera enters rehearsal, the director takes the lead, solving any problems that might arise.

The director works closely with the key creatives — the production designer, the conductor, the librettist and composer (if a new work), and the cast; focusing on what will have the maximum impact in a production. The challenge for the director is being smart about choosing where to put their time and focus. Their role is to empower everybody on the production to create the best possible work.

The director has to consider the broader questions of:

- a) How to stage it?
- b) In what time period will the performance will be set?
- c) Where to set it?

It is not sufficient for a director to only read the libretto, because often the emotional messages are contained in the music rather than the words. A successful director needs a strong understanding of the music as well as the text. In *Whiteley* the biggest questions were how to stage the opera and how to move quickly through time while keeping the storyline convincing.

Obviously, rehearsals are planned well in advance. If an issue arises in the rehearsal room, the director must think on the spot and solve the problem at hand.

[Watch \*Directing Whiteley\*](#)



## Drama Activity 3: Understanding Character

Being able to create convincing characters is an essential skill. Many factors combine: voice, body language, movement, gestures and so on.

In theatre, characters need to adjust their spoken voice. In opera, the singers are cast often because their voice is right for the role. But the way they present the character dramatically and interpret the lyrics is also key to engaging the audience in their role.

### Warm Up

Choose a character from the list below, then consider the following dramatic elements:

- Dame Edna Everage
- Donald Trump
- Cartoon character Stewie Griffin
- Rebel Wilson
- A character from your school community

**Voice:** Does your character have an accent? What is the tone of their voice like? How quickly do they speak? Do they have any vocal mannerisms like a stutter or little punctuation noises that are particular to them?

**Body language:** How does the character move and use their body? How does the situation or story line affect your character and how might they use their body to show nerves, happiness, tension, sadness etc.

**Use of face:** How does your character use their face? What is their “listening” facial expression? Do they have a very expressive face or do they try not to give much of themselves away?

How do you think your character responds to the people around them?

### Task

Use this information to inform your interpretation of the two contrasting lines from the libretto below as one of the characters above. Rehearse it and then perform for your peers.

- Mr Whiteley, this makes you the youngest Artist to be purchased by the Tate.*  
[context: Whiteley is being presented to the Queen as his work is hung at the London Gallery]
- No one would suspect, who would miss a few unknowns?*  
[context: serial killer, John Christie has murdered many women and disposed of the bodies in his home, the words are spoken by the ghosts of these women]

## Task

The following three excerpts from Justin Fleming's libretto are all quasi soliloquys sung by the character of Brett Whiteley at different points in the opera.

No 1:

*She is beautiful as cream, And her eyes are Prussian-blue.  
Beneath a gentle hat. So radiant a gaze.  
Her shoulders, her hips, With coffee at her lips.  
Her jeans are lean and tight. She isn't wearing shoes.  
Her beauty fills the frame. And now I lose my mind.  
In this moment, I know (To her) My life is with you.*

No 2:

*My work is the whole of my want.  
My work is the whole of my need.  
My art is like the sun to a sapling.  
Or flesh to the hunger of a wolf.  
Painting is an argument between what nature looks like  
and what it means.  
You suddenly see what you've never seen before.  
It heralds the beginning of difficult pleasure.  
It's also the beginning of yourself.  
And yet... I still don't know the big answer to the little  
question: Who Am I?*

No 3:

*I am not what I intended: I want to live, I want to be,  
I want to give; I want to see.  
Our feeble mind is forced to choose Perfection of the life  
or of the work.  
We die raging in the dark. My weakness is the danger  
of the world,  
The day's vanity, the night's remorse  
Is this the Great Glimpse, the Hidden View?*

## Activity:

1. Read them thoroughly and think about their meaning. They capture three different stages of Brett Whiteley's life. What are these stages? (First love; art obsession; frustration and destruction). Consider the following:

What language in the text has been used by Fleming to create these scenarios?

What emotive words are evident in the text?

How will the actors use of voice impact on the interpretation of the words?

2. Create your own interpretation of the first excerpt (Brett Whiteley in love) and prepare it as a short monologue as a character of your choice from a time period not in the twentieth century, i.e. either earlier or the twenty first century. Consider how people would speak, the level of formality, who the audience might be, how demonstrative you can be sharing your feelings.



### Activity:

Now consider these words from Act 2 Scene 17, as sung by Wendy Whiteley while Brett and his friend Michael Driscoll (who later became her lover) are admiring her beauty:

*The storm yields to glorious sunlight as the view changes to  
Lavender Bay on Sydney Harbour.*

*WENDY stands, goes to the view, looks out. A sunrise has begun.*

**Wendy:** Do not look at me. Look at what I see:  
Life waking on the Harbour as sunrise begins.  
Everything is new, I am not the view.  
All blending into daylight as the sun rises high.  
Turbulent then calm, the wilderness and the charm  
This wondrous duality: the sunlight and the storm....  
The scene around them changes as WENDY conjures it.

Read through the libretto excerpt above and consider the following questions:

1. What does this tell us about the character of Wendy Whiteley? Write a brief character sketch outlining your ideas.
2. How is her personality different to that of Brett Whiteley shown in the earlier excerpts?
3. How do you think she would speak these lines? Experiment with the use of your voice and body movement and gesture to perform these lines.
4. It is likely that this scene could be delivered in the context of the 1970s, when artists were considered to be bohemian and hippies. Using that contextual knowledge — how would you change your interpretation from the way you delivered the lines in the question above?
5. If you were the director how would you position the characters of Wendy, Brett and Michael? How would you encourage each to react to her words?





# On composing *Whiteley*

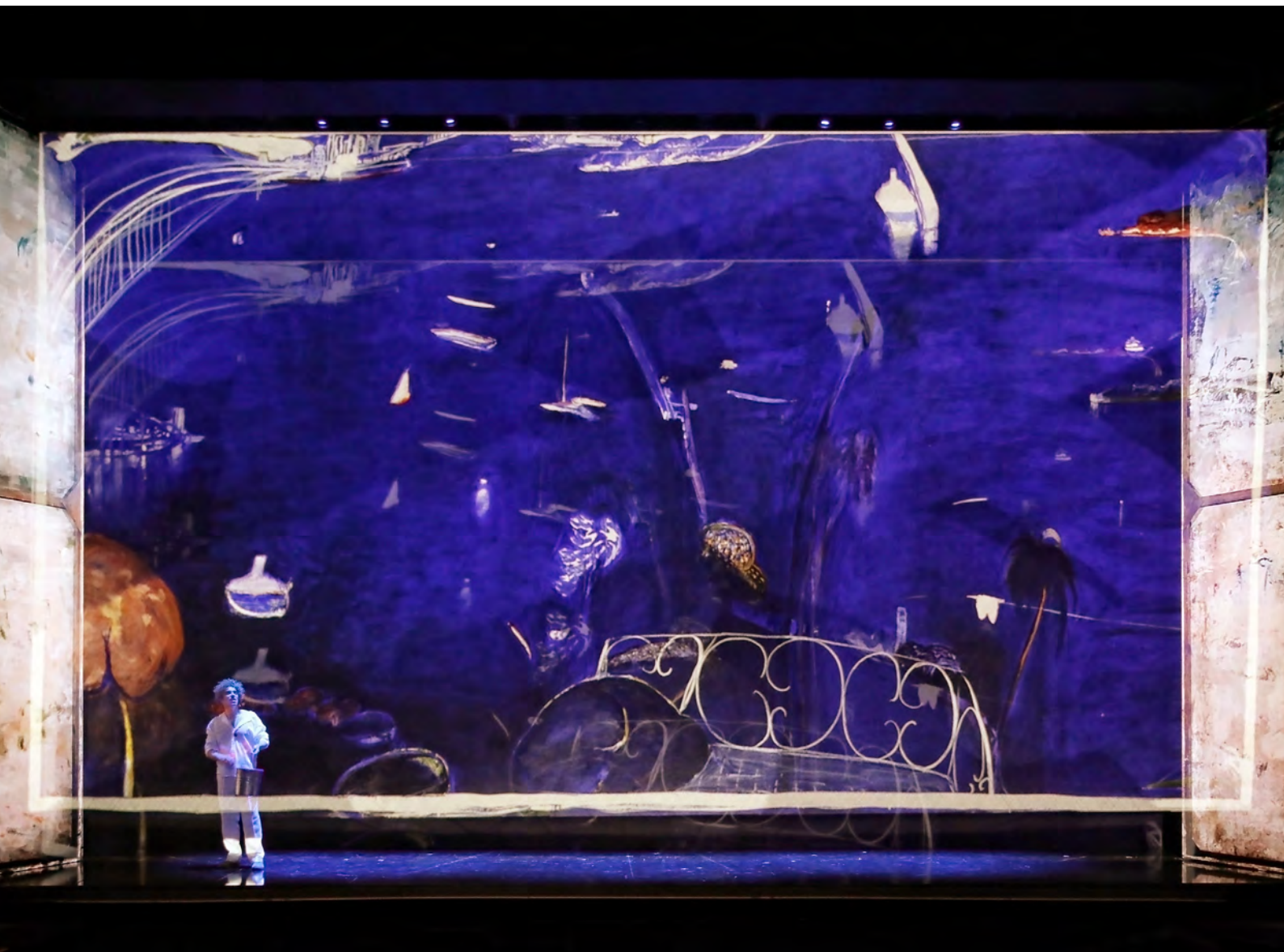
*Elena Kats-Chernin, composer*

[Watch \*The music of Whiteley the opera: a preview\*](#)

## Introduction to the music of *Whiteley*

Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin is highly respected for her extraordinary output of music ranging from operas, to symphonic works, chamber and solo pieces, plus music for dance, film and theatre. Her musical style is quirky and distinctive, often combining chiselled rhythmic pulsation with a bitter sweet melody or harmonies. Trained in Moscow, Australia and Germany, her distinctive sound reflects her unique personal history.

*Whiteley*'s art was the starting inspiration behind her music and in her aural imagination required specific instruments and tone colour combinations. She felt the work suggested juxtaposition of light and dark, which she achieves by deliberate use of musical contrasts: juxtaposing the unexpected and specifically in her choice of instrumentation and techniques of orchestration.





## Tone Colour and Instrumentation

The famous Brett Whiteley “blue” drew Kats-Chernin to the vibraphone and saxophone, as their timbres had a “shiny” quality, something that suggests sparkles. In the libretto there are many descriptive words about colour such as “gold that sparkles” which suggested to her a vibraphone whose long, sustained notes actually shimmer, an effect created by the instrument’s motor. In the opera, she avoids that particular effect, but the timbre of the vibraphone and harp are used to suggest a specific atmosphere.

In the more lyrical scenes of the opera she chose a saxophone and it performs the important melody which recurs regularly throughout the opera, and its theme represents Wendy.

The saxophone is not a new instrument to opera. It features in Massenet’s *Hérodiade* (1881) and *Werther* (1892); Puccini’s *Turandot* (1926) Berg’s *Lulu* (1937) and Britten’s *Billy Budd* (1951); often exploiting its distinct tone colour to suggest exotic places. Kats-Chernin wrote specifically for the sound made by Christina Leonard, who has played in the Australian Opera and Ballet orchestras for many years. She uses a unique doubling of the alto sax and trumpet in the scene where Whiteley’s *Untitled Red Painting* is selected for purchase at the Tate Gallery, and the unusual tone colour this instrument combination creates reflects both a significant career breakthrough for the artist, and the unique fresh perspective of his art.

The alto flute is used only once in the opera playing a solo in the Bath scene, again mysterious, evocative in its melodic meandering over a sparsely textured accompaniment. This excerpt can be heard in the link below.

Audio excerpt 

A full 21<sup>st</sup> Century percussion section is utilised. Four players are required and many timbres and pieces of standard and “found” instruments are needed. It took principal percussionist Kevin Man a full day to determine how to set up the gear. The parts require doubling of instruments and it would not have been possible to give all four players all the gear they required in one individual area, which is the norm. He therefore decided upon one universal set up around which the players need to move. Unusual sounds and tone colours are required including stones, corrugated iron and brake drums. Three saucepans and the stones were sourced from a local hardware outlet by the percussionist, who hit them together, experimenting until he found “something of interest”.

## Structure

*Whiteley* uses the characteristics of grand opera in that there is no spoken dialogue. All storytelling occurs via recitative, solos and ensemble pieces accompanied throughout by an orchestra. To portray the many contradictions of the character, Kats-Chernin chose to use few tunes, preferring leitmotifs which could be developed or fractured as needed as the story evolves.

Key themes or leitmotifs which drive the piece include:

- Wendy's theme



- Unsettled chords



- Brett's Theme

**Brisk, quasi tango**



[Listen to Elena discuss the main musical character themes here](#)

While creating this score, she was constantly thinking about the order in which she would put her musical ideas. The work is through-composed and held together by reiterations of fragments of each of those key themes. Whenever there is a moment of peace in the opera the Wendy theme in some new transformation is usually heard.

Occasionally additional “sub themes” are introduced. One of these is in the Bath scene. Wendy is found lying in the bath directly after the scene where Whiteley has won a large award in London. The critics in the previous scene are represented by a “real” but distorted tango. This tango has a meandering, twisting tune of running quavers, played over a traditional style tango chord progression and rhythmic accompaniment. To segue into the bath scene, she keeps the melodic line similar, ensuring a smooth transition. As the tango rhythms fade, a solo alto flute rises mysteriously using very similar musical ideas to the theme of the critic’s tango, which is a development of the theme that represents Brett. This ensures a smooth transition between scenes, avoiding the stop/start structure of the more traditional opera song forms.

The bath scene is almost non rhythmic, having no regular pulse. It stops, starts and meanders about over muted chords that reference the unsettled chord motive. It is improvisational in style and the timbre of the alto flute creates a meditative, dark mood. The glockenspiel, vibe, harp and pizzicato violins are also used to give sparkle on top of the texture. This effect balances the darkness of the alto flute theme, showing there is some light as well as the darkness in their situation. That style of musical juxtaposition can be found throughout the piece. There is contrast of tonal against atonal writing, the edgy and dissonant sounds, created by the enormous battalion of percussion, such as brake drums, or claves creating punchy rhythmic clusters on the vibraphone to accompany tender, sweeping melodies.



### The Composition Process

Opera is unusual in that it is about singing phrases that people would normally speak. Once you accept that, everything is possible and the focus is on creating singable material and making the setting of the words convincing, so every sentence needs specific treatment. That is the role of an opera score: to bring it together, support, and create the appropriate atmosphere for the words.

[Listen to Elena discuss writing for voices](#)

Opera singers need extraordinary technique, stamina and range vocally and she wants to show that off, rather than making them do things not suited to their voices. The best thing for the voice is to sing long lines so there are many of those in the score. Evidence of the influence of Whiteley’s long, large brush strokes can be found here in the long melodic lines sung by Brett and Wendy. The audio excerpt below of the love theme demonstrates this.

Audio excerpt 

watch Composing the Music of Whiteley

When working with text, Kats-Chernin finds it interesting to explore music which will not be what people expect to hear in a scene. Her composition process is essentially to explore a number of ideas then settle on something. *After a week I review my material. If I'm bored or don't like it, I change it. I know I am right when I can hear something over and over and still like it.* Sometimes people like something she has written but she knows she can do better, that something needs changing and improving. It can sometimes be an extreme change such as slow becoming fast, something high becoming low, or lyrical becoming rhythmical.

It was important to compose with a sense of the whole work in the back of her mind, as sometimes when working on Act II, she realised a musical idea needed to occur earlier in Act I, but until she had created it, she did not know that. This is essentially the nature of dramaturgy — being able to understand the impact that a change/addition might have to the opera as a whole, or to be able to look objectively at the whole and see what is missing. Throughout the rehearsal process she is continually adding to and/or modifying her score.

54

Act I  
Scene 8

Brett Whiteley  
1 A 144-152  
Au - stra - lia is not re - pre - sen - ted here.

Pno.

Brett Whiteley  
6 7 8  
There is no - thing from my coun - try  
Shh! Shh!

Patrons  
Shh! Shh!

Pno.

Robert Hughes  
9 B 10 ad lib 11 12  
Ro - bert Hughes is the name; I em -

Patrons  
B

Pno.

Handwritten notes: *Bb*, *F#*, *A*, *P*

55

Robert Hughes  
13 14 15  
brace your na - tive rage. Aus - tra - lian art is a

Pno.

Robert Hughes  
16 17 18 19  
hymn to the in - dif - ference of the u - ni - verse, the pain - ful in -

Pno.

Robert Hughes  
20 21  
dif - ference of the u - ni - verse.

Pno.

Robert Hughes  
22 C 23 27 28 29  
This is ad - grace, we are ab - sent from the view! What ven - o - thing in this space!

Pno.

Handwritten notes: *less space*, *squashed*

Kats-Chernin finds it better to use a small number of musical ideas frequently than introducing lots of new material. The audience need repetition, which requires less energy for the audience and helps them to recognise key themes. In dramatic music, such as an opera, she also composes sections which she calls “grey”. These are often recitative, where the singers are delivering a lot of text, often using only one or two notes. These are supported with relatively spare accompaniment figures such as a couple of strings and occasional chords. So, there is no real melody, and nothing musical for the audience to remember. She calls this a palette cleanser where not much happens but gives the audience an aural break so they are ready for the next important musical statements. One example is the party scene in Act I where the music is busy, rhythmic, texturally dense and colourful, reflecting the energy of a party. After that is a scene of quiet, spare occasional light, high pitched chords, creating strong musical contrast and a relaxing of the tensions and energy of the scene before.

There was much trial and error in putting the score together. In one scene, Brett’s best friend Joel Elenberg is reading to him from the writings of Moliere, one of his heroes. Elena Kats-Chernin first decided to set the text as a standalone song in the style of Schubert. As this was workshopped, she realised it did not work. The poem was dark but she preferred not to write dark sounding music. When she made the music simple, stripping it of virtually everything she had originally conceived, it finally seemed to work.

This contrasts with other moments where the director in the rehearsal room would decide that in order for some dramatic point to happen convincingly or smoothly, another 15 seconds of music might be required. Elena Kats-Chernin at the piano, improvised a number of options for consideration. Once a decision was made, she would notate it then email it to her copyist for inclusion in the score. Her extraordinary musicality and ability to communicate her ideas effortlessly on piano to the team is remarkable.

#### [Watch About the Music](#)

For her the words and the scene come first, the music comes after. She initially started by setting the text of the libretto and allowing that to create the structure. However, she realised that what she needed to do was to consider what the dramatic and emotional essence of a scene was, then create the music for that scene and the words seemed to fit.



*It is amazing to see it all come alive. Watching the director and cast react to my music is fantastic, because I know that they are really hearing it and my music is feeding the creation of their characters. They are not just standing there singing an aria, like in the nineteenth century – they are actually doing stuff while they are singing. And that to me is so very interesting.*

ELENA KATS-CHERNIN, COMPOSER.



## Score Observation Task

## Act 1 Scene 4 Whiteley's Recitative

Study the excerpt below and answer the following questions

**Slow, darkly mysterious**

*I miss you so deep-ly those weeks we are a-part there's*

**Slow, darkly mysterious** *mp*

*p*

5

*dark and si-lent no-thing in my sick and sad-dend soul.*

9 **A tempo**

*I sense my ex - plo - ding. I have*

**A tempo**

13

*a my-sti-cal de - sire to shape my un - der stan - ding*

*8vb*

*8vb*

## *Whiteley Recitative Questions*

The score excerpt is sung by Whiteley after he has arrived in Rome. The score is a reduction for soloist and piano.

1. From what you know of the story, who is Whiteley thinking about?
2. What composition device is evident in the first 6 bars?
3. What performance directions has the composer given the soloist?
4. Identify two examples of word painting in the excerpt.
5. Consider how the vocal line interacts with the orchestral parts (in the piano reduction). How does Kats-Chernin ensure the voice part can always be heard? Consider:
  - a) texture
  - b) phrase structure
  - c) pitch
6. What is a recitative? What typical features of a recitative can be found in this excerpt in terms of the treatment of text?
7. Revise the three motives that are significant in this opera. Can you find any suggestion of these in the excerpt?
8. Whilst Opera is an art form that reached great heights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kats-Chernin did not wish to be 19<sup>th</sup> century like in her use of harmony. How has she achieved this?

## *1. Songwriting*

Use the text below from Whiteley's first encounter with Wendy to create your own love song melody in the style of a ballad.

Be sure to scan the text carefully before setting it to a major melody and notate it accurately, so that another person may be able to sing it.

Once the melody is complete, choose accompanying chords to be played on guitar or keyboard

Then write these above your notated tune using wither tab or chord symbols.

Her jeans are lean and tight.  
 She isn't wearing shoes.  
 Her beauty fills the frame.  
 And now I lose my mind.  
 In this moment, I know  
 My life is with you.

## 2. Exploring the leitmotif

Perform the different versions of the Wendy leitmotif below and then identify how it has been changed, from its original version, making reference to the elements of music in your answer.

- Original



- No 1 Act 1 Scene 13 London Pub



- Act 1 Scene 6 Sigeon



- Act 1 Scene 3 Brett and Wendy meet

Voices

*f* *Wendy* *mf* *p*

*i have to be-lieve* *that you'll real-ly wait for me.*

11

*Brett*

*I will* *I love you.*

## Explore the music of *Whiteley* by analysing these short listening excerpts

### Audio excerpt 1

This tango represents the character of Brett Whiteley

1. What are the main musical features of the excerpt?
2. What does this excerpt tell you about the character of Brett Whiteley?
3. With each repetition of the theme, there is a musical change to keep the listeners attention, whilst repeating a key motive. As you listen, identify by raising you hand, each time there is a new statement of the theme.
4. Why do you think it is important for the motive to be repeated so many time?
5. One thing that stays constant in the repetitions is the bass line. Describe the bass line used in this tango.

### Audio excerpt 2

1. What is the tempo and time signature of this excerpt?
2. Describe the opening accompaniment.
3. It begins as a series of layers. Complete the table below describing each layer.

When	Key instrument	Musical features
Start		Accompaniment
0.06		
0.25		

4. The music changes dramatically at 0.45". What changes do you hear?
5. This excerpt (used for a scene change) is based upon the Wendy motif. How has the motif been used?



6. What is the overall tone colour or timbre of this excerpt?

*Audio excerpt 3*

1. Discuss the composer's use of question and answer (call and response) in this excerpt.
2. What are the two large ascending intervals played by the violins at the start of the excerpt?
3. How does the music gradually build to a climax about 1 minute in?
4. This excerpt makes use of the "uncertain chords" motif. Play the chords below for familiarisation, then listen to the excerpt and identify where you can hear it.



5. Now describe using musical terminology, how the composer has used this motif in the excerpt.

*Audio excerpt 4*

1. Identify 4 solo wind instruments featured in this excerpt
2. Identify 2 pitch devices used in the excerpt.
3. Discuss the composer's use of texture.
4. How does the composer create contrast in this excerpt?
5. What is the mood of the excerpt? How does the composer manipulate the elements of music to create this mood?

*Audio excerpt 5*

1. This excerpt features the percussion family. Identify the **non pitched** (un-tuned) percussion instruments you hear.
2. How does the composer ensure the percussion instruments can always be heard in the excerpt?
3. Discuss the composer's use of rhythm vocabulary and devices in this excerpt.
4. Identify three dynamic and expressive techniques in this performance of this excerpt.
5. The excerpt ends with a 3-chord ostinato around which a number of different melodic ideas are heard. Describe three ways in which the ostinato contrasts with other musical material heard.



# Designing Whiteley

*Dan Potra, Designer*

## Creating the “look” of the opera.

The role of a production designer is to design the space in which drama and performance occurs. The designer creates the visual appearance of a production, working across the creative and making teams to unify all aspects of the production. Dan Potra is a NIDA graduate who works on design projects across the arts. This includes designing sets, costumes and animation for opera, dance productions, theatre, large scale events and film. He made an imaginative contribution to the Sydney 2000 Olympics opening ceremony with *Deep Sea Dreaming* and *Tin Symphony*. His work in theatre and opera has taken him across the globe and won him three Helpmann awards. He has created designs for operas, theatre and events in the UK, France, Spain, Belgium, China, Germany, Greece Switzerland, Sweden and in Houston Texas. *Dead Man Walking* for the State Theatre, *The Misanthrope* for Bell Shakespeare and *La Boheme* for Opera Australia’s Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour represent some of his key work on home soil.

Potra’s role in *Whiteley* was to assemble the visuals in a way that enhanced and revealed the story. This meant designing the set, props and costumes. With the additional digital component, he also worked with the designers who conjured the imagery on the screens and controlled the movement of the LED screens on the stage.

For a subject like Brett Whiteley, who remains so vivid in the minds of Australians, there was no shortage of visual material to draw on. His 1976 painting, *Self Portrait in the Studio*, was the central image that Opera Australia used to promote the new opera. In this work many clues can be found which provide insight into the artist, as the link below explains.

[Find out more about Brett Whiteley’s \*Self Portrait In The Studio 1976\*](#)

As well as using original Whiteley material, Potra also created new digital imagery to tell the story in a way that remained respectful to the artist and his work at the same time.

*One of the criteria in the brief for the opera was that the art itself would be part of the story. And the art inescapably tells his life, the truth about him.*

JUSTIN FLEMING, DIRECTOR

[Watch \*Creating the Visuals of Whiteley\*](#)

Consider the comments by the designer in the video excerpt and discuss the following:

1. As the lead designer, which other key roles did Dan Potra work closely with?
2. What is the main role of a designer when producing an opera?
3. What is the process for designing costumes for specific characters?
4. What logistical challenges did Dan Potra need to consider when creating Brett Whiteley's costumes?
5. What techniques does he use when shaping his ideas as he creates his designs?
6. What discovery did he make as an artist while working on *Whiteley*?

### Exploring the decision-making process

Dan Potra likes to experiment broadly in every project using his training and experience across the full spectrum of the arts to do so. He works with pen and paper, as he was classically trained in painting and drawing, which gives him the ease of hand sketching that facilitates his ability to capture and communicate his ideas. He is also excited by the possibilities of digital technology and pushes beyond use of photo shop, vector works and program illustrators offer. He likes to experiment with analogue (using pencils, watercolours etc.) and digital art work.

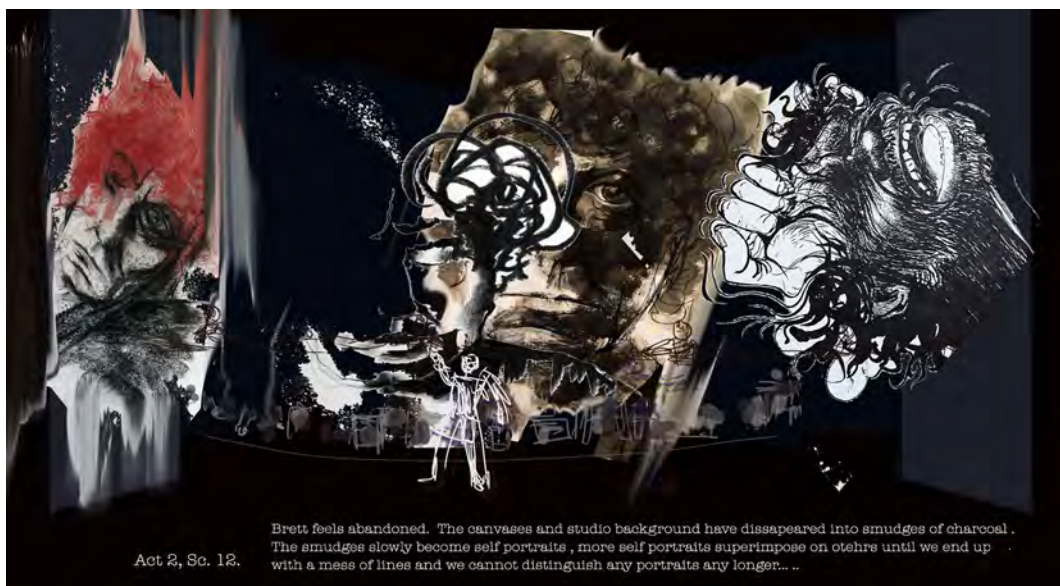
He believes it is stimulating as an artist and crafts person to be able to use all these tools, and means that whenever he feels he has come to the end of his ideas for a certain medium, there is always the option to change tack and try a new style, technique or idea. Some projects can be done with simple sketching and gathering references, other projects require incredible detail in everything because it is impossible to find the references. In those cases, the artist has to produce the references instead of just trawling the internet to find images and taking them.

The internet as a resource tool is only useful if you are persistent and prepared to dig deep, otherwise you end up having exactly the same references in the design as everyone else. His trick is to always go back to books, which offer far greater material than the web alone.

This was the first time Potra had worked with digital screens on an opera, so he took the opportunity to explore a range of new ideas. He was especially excited by the potential of those huge LED screens. They allowed for a large amount of visual trickery and an effective contrast between analogue and digital design techniques.



Below are some of his early drafts



The steps Dan Potra followed in his creative process were:

1. Firstly he read the script in great detail. Twice.
2. He then broke it down into elements — mostly life events — such as growing up, journey, betrayal and so on.
3. When he could label the script section, the design for screens started to emerge in his mind.
4. He then decided how the screens could be used to connect scenes while revealing images to th audience.





ACT 1. SC. 5

a train arrives in station, the projection on successive panels Wendy steps down from in between couple of LED panels ( a small hidden rostra to suggest coach height).  
Brett greets her

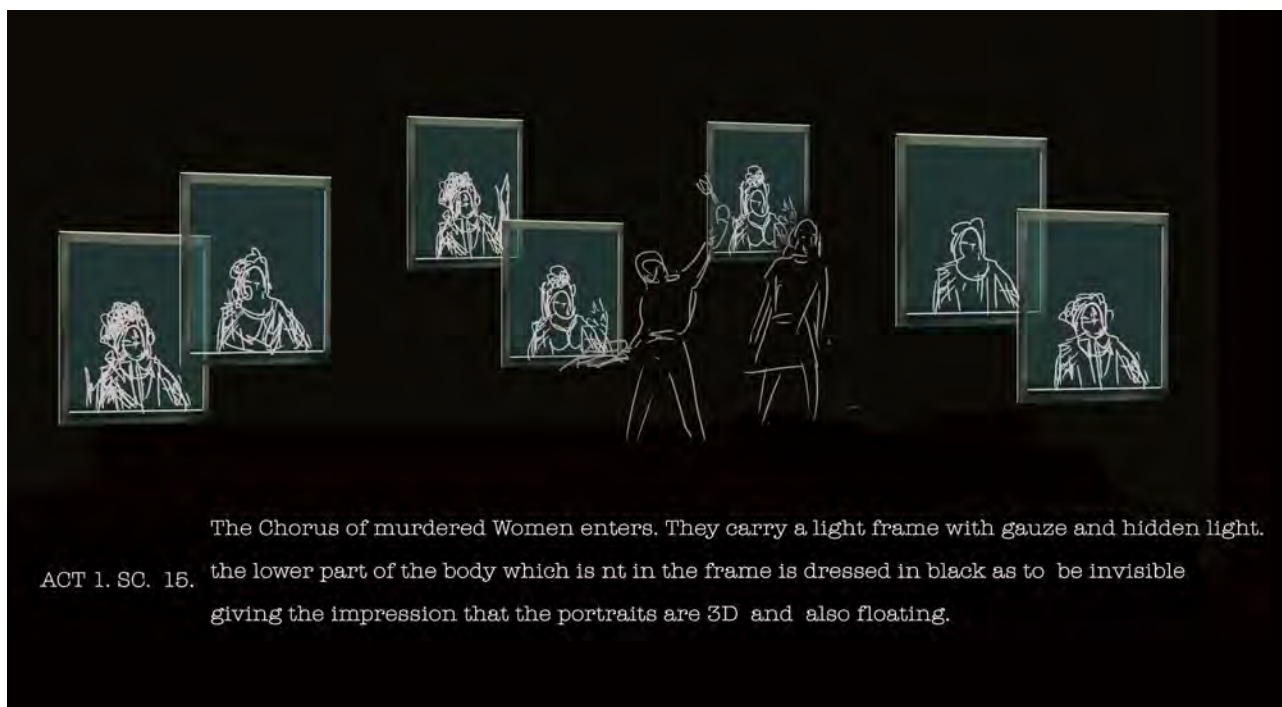


ACT 1. SC. 2

As Brett lights up Wendy's cigarette the beach background turns to evening, lights turn on, a giant moon rises . they instantly fall in love

The LED screens are a dominant visual factor on the stage, so it was his job to consider when to use them and when to pull them back. The audience needs to see the face of the central character, not just something that looked ten times bigger on a screen. The creative aim was not to project onto the screens an enlargement of the stage action, and it was essential that the screens could not upstage the cast, rather serve to enhance their dramatic story telling.

In *Whiteley* digital screens contrast with analogue staging. One example is the scene about the Christie murders that shocked London in the 1940s. Brett Whiteley was fascinated by this story and created a series of works based on Christie's crimes. In the opera, a chorus of the murdered women represent the bodies that had been discovered in Christie's home. Potra chose to move away from the LED screen for a more low-key approach, as shown below.



The technique was effective because it contrasted strongly with the power of the LEDs. By removing the LEDs at this point, it also acts as a palette cleanser for the audience, allowing them to move to the next scene and enjoy it in a new way.





The images calm down to reveal The American Dream, Brett is left exhausted, collapses.

Wendy and Arkie rush in, sound of an ambulance siren .

ACT 1. SC. 16.

blackout..

One work referenced in the opera is Whiteley's *The American Dream* (1968–9), a multi-panelled picture that takes in everything from paradise to hell, a warning for the future and a kaleidoscope of the America that so terrified Whiteley in the late 60s. Whiteley thought this picture would wake up America to its problems, but he failed to interest his dealers in the work.

Brett Whiteley's *The American Dream* is now displayed as an installation at the National Gallery of Victoria: [watch here](#).

### **Bringing one's own art to a story about an artist.**

Whiteley is the story of Brett Whiteley, the artist, but it is not a biography per se. Potra believes part of his role was to communicate to the big picture, the broad brush strokes of the subject instead of the sordid minutia. Potra had a challenging role: he needed to show the work of Brett Whiteley in a new and fresh way, avoiding a documentary style while exploring the emotions and urges that drove the artist through his life.

It was a journey of discovery that had to be surprising and exciting for him, and important for an audience to have a similar response. Like Elena Kats-Chernin, his own aesthetic response to material created becomes the litmus test of what is appropriate and ready for the stage.

## Sketching Exercise: Creating a cartoon type of yourself

1. There are a number of sketched characters in this resource. Look at them and reflect on the way Potra has used his understanding of
  - a) line
  - b) recognising edges
  - c) Angles
  - d) proportion and perspective
  - e) shadow and highlight
2. Now look at yourself in a mirror and consider the shape of your head, your body shape, the length of your limbs etc.
3. Identify some distinctive features. They might be physical (eg shape of your hairdo, freckles, ear shape) or material (a distinctive cap or accessory, glasses, a particular clothing item).
4. Use a pencil to start sketching and doodling your outline shapes considering proportion — you may wish to limit it to the upper body only.
5. Try a number of quick sketches experimenting with placement and proportion.
6. Start adding light and dark to the shapes to give clear definition to the image. Refer to some of the sketches by Dan Potra to help you solve specific problems.
7. Once you have finished our pencil sketch you might decide to scan it into a programme to colour and manipulate the image.
8. When everyone in the group has completed the task hang them around the room and ask the students to identify the character in each picture.
9. Discuss what were the strengths and useful features that helped the audience to accurately view the character.
10. Once you have completed this task, use the internet to find images of the artist Brett Whiteley. Compare these to the sketches of Whiteley contained in this resource and discuss the way Dan Potra has conveyed the impression of the artist in his designs for the stage.



## *Design Activity – Making a Model Box*

Before sets are constructed, the designer creates a scale model of how it should look.

The steps involved in this process are:

### 1. Ideas and Preparing:

- Carefully read the script or libretto, identifying the key themes.
- If necessary, research historical eras and styles.
- Brainstorm ideas and create sketches/ collages etc. to discuss with the director, head technical personnel such as directors of lighting and stage management.
- Present the draft of your ideas and vision for the work, including scenic design, colour choices, choice of textures, structures, anything that will have an impact on the building and staging of the production.
- Consider their feedback then refine and finish your draft design.
- Make sure you have the correct dimensions of the space.

### Making a Model Box

### 2. Create your set model box

- Some designers will make a “white” version first, which is usually blank and a way of checking the scale and dimensions of your ideas, similar to an app that allows you to check if your furniture will fit in a new house.
- Build a box or create one from heavy cardboard that is the exact dimension of the stage and paint it black.
- Carefully select the materials you might need to create your scale model right down to the colours, types of furnishings and fabrics.
- Create the set carefully, remembering that model box is a tiny work of art.
- Consider attending some opera or theatre to see other set examples.

A set can be architecturally realistic or abstract in terms of colour, mood or feeling. It is to aid the story telling. The atmosphere you create helps the performers to understand their role better and the world in which their characters live. Whatever your interpretation you need to have space for entrances and exits, action on the stage, so do not go overboard with furniture and props!

# Costumes

Dan Potra designed hundreds of costumes for this production. The lead performers appear in a number of countries and time periods and both Brett and Arkie appear as children and adults, but Leigh Melrose played Brett both as a young boy and an older man. There are a number of secondary roles as well and the chorus of approximately 45 appear in five different costumes. Potra designed everything, including the wigs, shoes and accessories, before the costume department began their work. Whiteley had worn a mop of unruly curls, while he and Wendy were considered fairly Bohemian in the way that they dressed. Other characters, such as the Queen, also came with an iconic style, so all of these different elements had to be incorporated into the designs.

Some of Whiteley's costumes shown here include him as a boy, leaving for Europe; and in Act 2 as the more developed artist.

## Brett Whiteley

Leaving for Europe - this costume stays until encounter with Dark Figure



Act 2 as the artist





Wendy's look includes:

sketches by  
whiteley



The realisation of these designs in readiness for the stage is:





It is traditional for the chorus members to play all the crowd scenes in an opera. In most operas this may only require one or two different costumes for each chorus member. *Whiteley* sees the chorus in many roles and six different outfits were needed for each chorus member.

#### ART CRITICS



#### BEACH GOERS, ACT 1, ACT 2



#### NEIGHBOURS



SYDNEY TOURISTS



FIJI TOURISTS, FIJIANS





# The LED Screens

The screens have a LED panel on one side and a hard surface on the other. This means they can display digital projections or any other image or physical object on the reverse. For *Whiteley*, the graphic arts team painted the back of the screens to look like the back of canvases. This feature opens up several possibilities for the designer. It also means that the screens do not need to be used constantly throughout the opera.

A media server called Disguise is used to project the image onto the screens. Each screen is made up of a series of 500x500mm bricks modules that clip together and become one enormous TV screen when combined.

The screens dimensions are

- Four screens, each 7 x 2.5 metres
- Two screens for down stage, 7 x 2 m
- Two screens upstage, 7 x 3 m

The large screens sit on six tracks above the stage. Five of the tracks hang via a truss hanging on rotators which means you can show either side of the screen as they can rotate without requiring the assistance of on-stage hands. The rotators sit on trusses which are able to move up and down vertically using the fly lines of the venue.

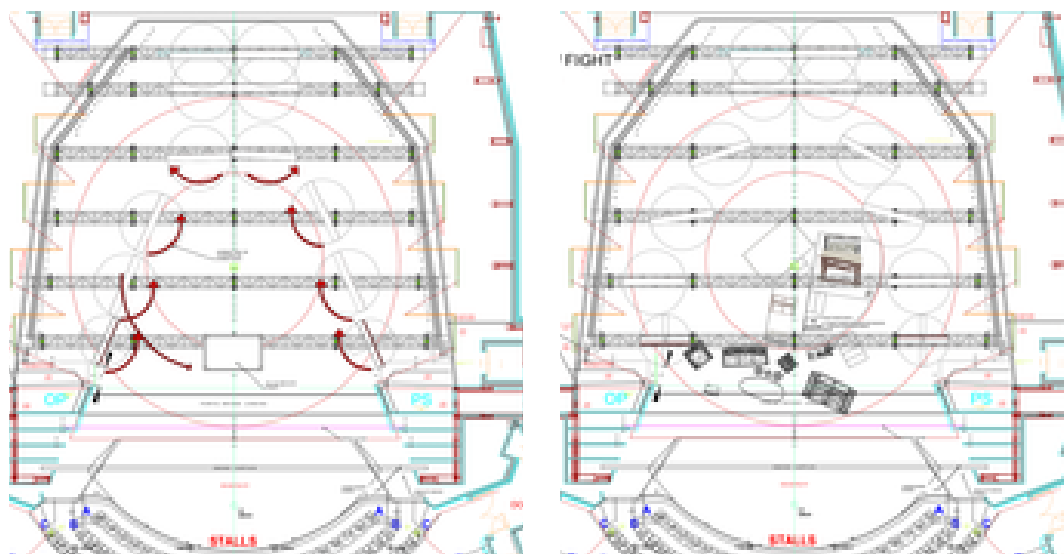


*As a national opera company we need to remain part of the 21st century, and the Sydney Winter season in 2019 will be a showcase of how we are approaching this challenge.*

LYNDON TERRACINI, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



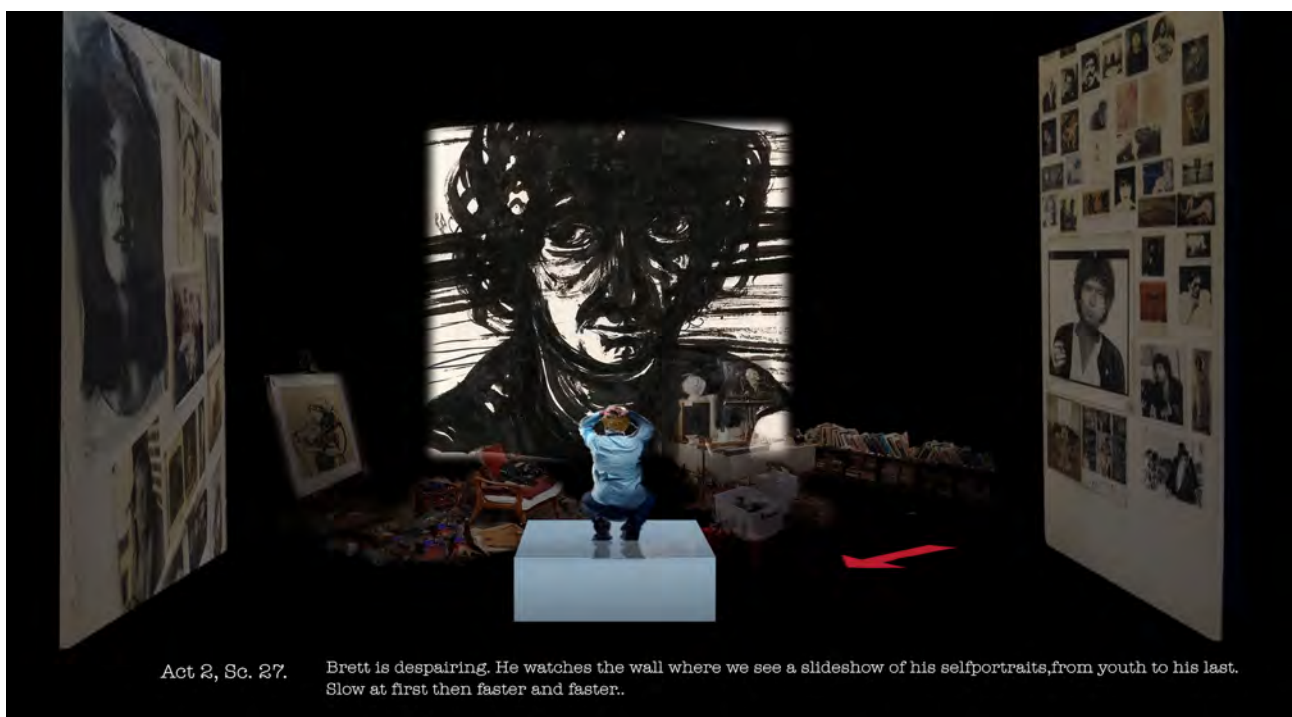
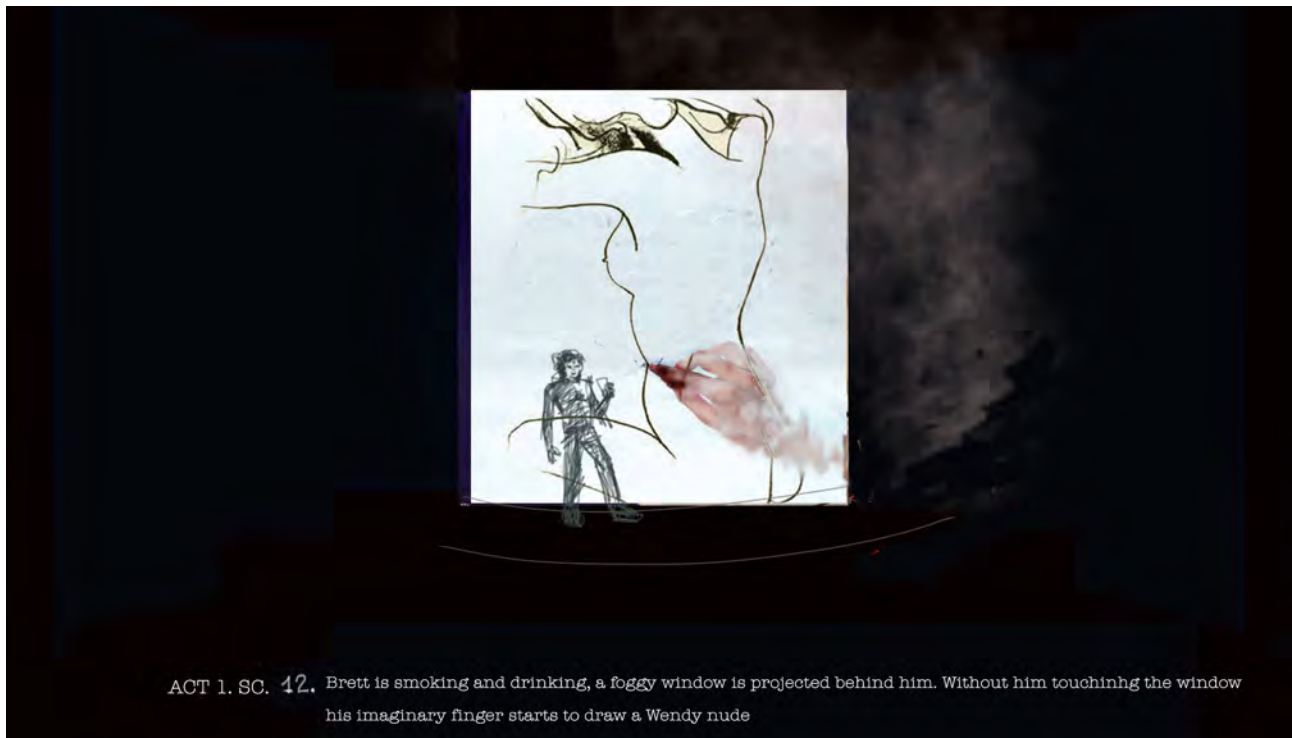
Video content designer Sean Nieuwenhuis created the images and data to be projected on the screens. He then choreographs the movement of the screens throughout the opera. The libretto is quite prescriptive in terms of how the screens contribute to the overall storytelling, which means the original draft reads more like a movie script. The stage plan for the positioning of the LED screens for Act 2 Scenes 22 and 23 is below:



The movement of the screens is mostly programmed into computers and done mechanically. The production team will do this prior to getting the rehearsals so that the creative team working in the room can see how they will work and tweak as required to ensure that all the requirements for screen placement can be executed. As the screens move seamlessly around the stage, they create a visual landscape which has taken opera to a whole new level.



In terms of content, the lead character can be making a brush stroke on a canvas while lines appear as if by magic on the screens. It is a tremendous tool for conveying Whiteley's artistic flair, often highlighting small details from his life for dramatic purposes, as the storyboard below indicates:





Opera Australia uses the LED screens for four main purposes:

1. Creating a sense of space and place.
  - a) The images below can only be a typical Australian back yard with its hills hoist, lawn mower and trees.
  - b) The story boards shows how the LED screens achieve the change of place without the actors or stage hands needing to move.
2. Reflect the psyche of the characters.
3. Provide additional atmospheric effects such as would be achieved with smoke machines, or in this case, the effect of looking out over the ocean.
4. Create multiple pictures. For example, instead of hanging a single Whiteley painting on a wall, the screens can capture, magnify and even distort parts of his work. In the example below, from the middle of Act 1, Brett is overwhelmed by his obsession for Wendy as the LED imagery enhances the story telling on stage.

The final point is particularly important to this production, since this story spans an entire life and creative development in only a few hours. If a picture paints a thousand words, it can also convey the passing of time and change more quickly than the dramatic action. Multiple genres, shapes and images to appear on the screens from his work. The screens display the evolution of his style, change the shape of the stage and convey the design concept faster than would have been possible otherwise. All this creates a different atmosphere in which the director and artists work and a new experience for the audience as well.

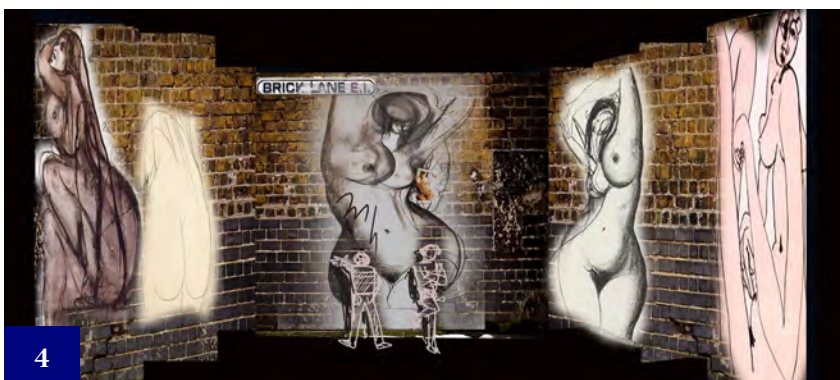
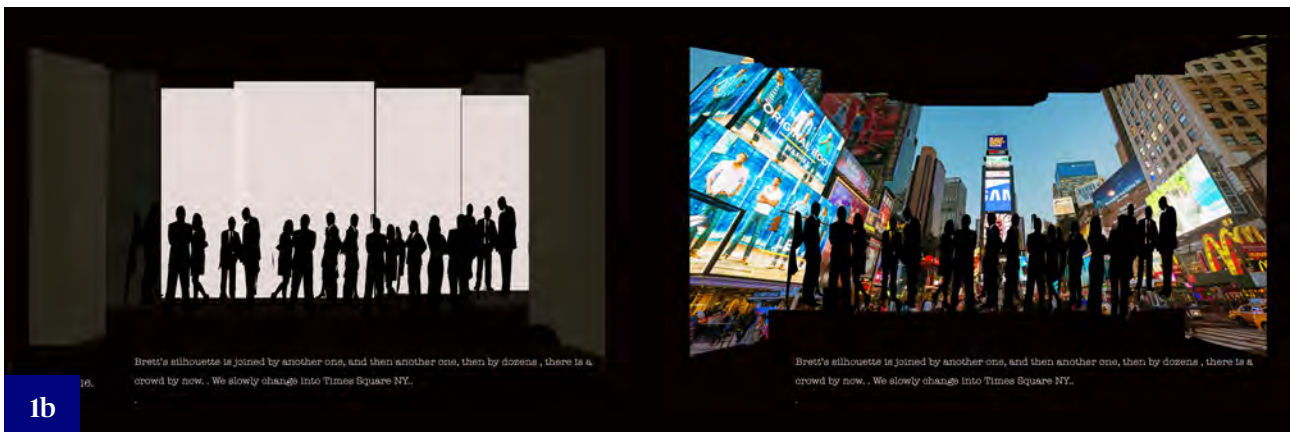
Use of the LED screens specific to Whiteley include:

- a) Showing aspects of his art
- b) Showing the places of his world travels such as the Vienna Biennale, and images of Australia, London, Fiji and New York.
- c) Magnifying the text evident in the cemetery scene at the grave side of one of his heroes.
- d) Showing people such as the head of John Christie the infamous murderer who piqued Whiteley's imagination.

Some of this technology was not available in the first time OA experimented with digital screens, back in 2018 with their production of *Aida*. Significant advances in technology have occurred since, which have enormous implication about the storytelling potential on stage.

*Aida* was a groundbreaking work in the way that it made use of digital techniques. *Whiteley* demonstrated an even greater world of possibilities.

Two revolves in the floor of the stage allow for additional onstage movement of props and screens without the intrusion of stage hands to disrupt the storytelling. But as the team worked with the new technology, they were careful to remember one important point: the screens are there to serve and support, not to distract from, the music and the story.



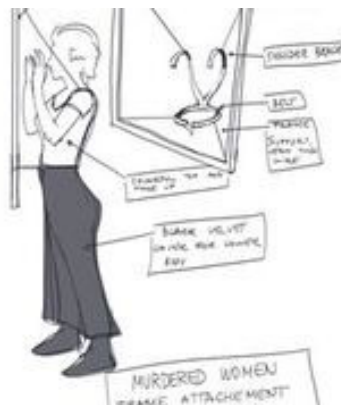
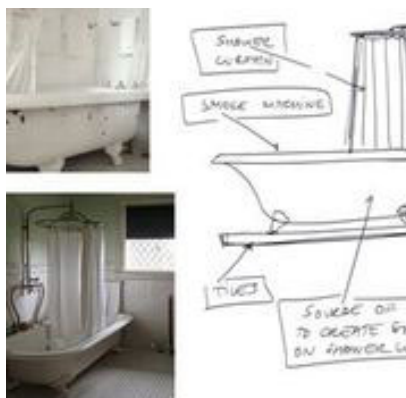
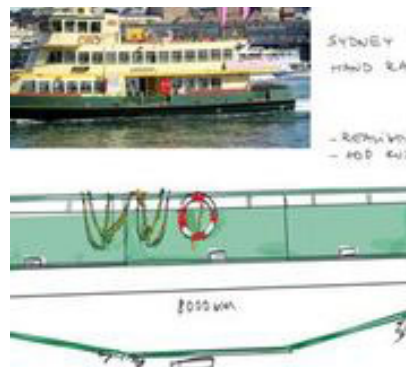
# Props

The last of Dan Potra's extensive creative portfolio for this opera are his prop designs. Props are objects created to enhance the story telling and support the drama in theatrical works. Prop makers make anything from fake jewellery and furniture to weapons and moving models, using materials like metal, latex, Styrofoam, fibreglass textiles and wood. They need a range of practical skills to make the props envisioned by the director, including carpentry, casting, sculpting, painting, welding, sewing and computer-generated design.

Whilst working on an opera a prop maker will:

- Discuss the props needed to stage the opera.
- Analyse the sketches made by the designer.
- Research and source materials to make authentic looking items of the specified time period.
- Experiment with effects and materials to create the right look or age for the prop.
- Operate a range of equipment when making, modifying or repairing the props.
- Hire or buy additional “props” as necessary, if a more cost-effective option.

The amount of detail given by the designer is evident in Dan Potra's sketches below from *Whiteley*.



# Problem Solving in the Rehearsal Room

A central challenge for the director is ensure that no elements of the production – staging, sets, props, scene changes or acting – detracts from communicating the story clearly to the audience. Here are some of the challenges tackled by assistant director John Sheedy during the penultimate week of rehearsals.

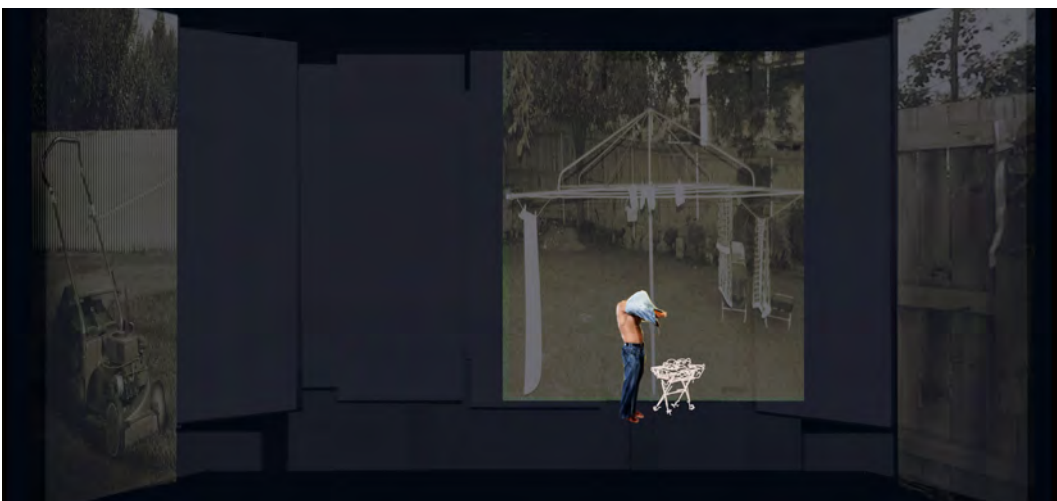
## 1. Quick costume change.

Between scenes 2 and 3 of the opera, Whiteley changes from a boy into a young man of 17 about to meet Wendy on stage. This character transition is mostly achieved by having Whiteley stand, stop behaving as a child riding his bike, the vocabulary of the libretto and a quick change of costume over a short musical interlude.

**Problem:** The character playing Whiteley needs to change his costume in front of the audience. How to achieve this in a convincing manner without interrupting the flow of the opera?

**Solution:** The costume is wheeled on in a washing basket trolley by his mother, typical of those used in many backyards. This works with the action on stage and is wheeled in by a member of the chorus who is part of the next scene to the Mother. The singer changes clothes, taking items out of the washing basket and donning them over his clothes and places his bicycle helmet and kneepads into the basket. The next scene is a party scene and Whiteley is able to achieve this change as the guests are entering and milling around — distracting the audience. A chorus member as a guest at the party wheels it off stage, effecting a smooth transition.

This is rehearsed and the right personnel are selected to assist moving the costume receptacle in and out of place. The trolley is an authentic 1970s model and has a very noisy wheel mechanism. It is therefore sent to the props department who change the wheel types from plastic to proper rubber wheels and thereby sort the unnecessary additional noise.





**2. A scene change is taking far longer than the amount of scene bridging music allows.**

As much time passes between scenes in this opera, and each scene is concerned with a different encounter in Whiteley's life, sometimes in a different country, but definitely with different people, significant change needs to occur swiftly and efficiently without disrupting the dramatic flow.

**Problem:** the scene change takes longer to do than the time it takes to play the scene change music, requiring an additional 30 seconds.

**Solution:** The director allocated someone to remove/bring or move a prop as they enter the scene. Some props are omitted in an attempt to declutter. After all ideas have been exhausted, they are still over by about 15 seconds. Now the composer is asked about extending the music performed here. Can something be repeated or replayed? A dialogue starts up between the conductor and composer and a number of ideas using material from the previous scene are trialed. The librettist, director, conductor and other in the room are asked which they prefer. A decision is made, the composer plays the scene change at the piano for the scene to be tried again. It works. The composer then notated the ideas onto some manuscript paper and emails it to the copyist who is working on the music offsite, creating instrument parts, typesetting making thousands of small changes or additions to the score and then emails it to the music library. The music library reprint scores. The next day a new version of the vocal score with these adjustments included are waiting on the piano for the conductor, rehearsal pianist, composer and stage manager.

Handwritten musical score for "The Snow-Geese" by Wendy Whiteley and Brett Whiteley. The score includes piano accompaniment and vocal parts for Wendy Whiteley and Brett Whiteley. It features lyrics such as "Ar-kie, how did you sleep?" and "Brett was vo-mi-ting". The score is marked with "X" and "Y" for specific measures and includes a "Repeat sign" at the bottom.

Handwritten musical score for "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score includes staves for Piano (Pno.), Chief, and Brett Whiteley. It features handwritten annotations such as "7", "p", "pmp", and a circled "A".

205 206 207 208

Pno.

Chief

Brett Whiteley

I have a winc-ment to search this be-re. me do

Come back la-ter. Af-ter break - last

ad lib

Come back la-ter. Af-ter break-fast.

7

p

pmp

Chief

Brett Whiteley

I've been watch-ing you since you ar - rived. I do not

Pno.

212 213 214

Chief

Brett Whiteley

I want you on this is - land

Pno.

215 216 217 218

Chief

Brett Whiteley

AA

A



### 3. The set does not fit on the rehearsal room stage revolve.

The set was built to fit the stage of the Sydney opera House, which like the rehearsal room in Surry Hills has a revolve built into the floor.

**Problem:** The floor space of the stage revolve mechanism used in the rehearsal room is not as large as the revolve at the opera house, and cannot be used with the real set. The cast need to rehearse with a set and start blocking their movements.

**Solution:** The set building team is called in and they need to modify and rebuild parts of the set so it can be used in the studio. Time is money, so it needs to be done as quickly as possible in order to lose as little rehearsal time as possible. The build team come in early to work and once rehearsal time arrives the cast individually review their material in the greenroom until it is ready and safe. The placement of the large LED scenes for this scene is also reconsidered and reset to allow the revolve to move safely and sufficient room for movement. All changes are recorded by the stage manager.

### 4. Director, David Freeman is concerned that the “look” inside the Whiteley home in Lavender Bay is not quite right.

The stage has been set to start rehearsing the scenes inside Whiteley’s home in Lavender Bay. There are a number of “living areas” such as the balcony, a lounge room and dining room and these have been dressed with a number of period appropriate props.

**Problem:** This looks too normal. Brett’s outlook on life was quite off centre. His room needs to be too.

**Solution:** Major set remains front facing, Sheedy repositions the furnishing to look off centre. Some of the placement affects movement lines, so decisions are made to declutter or completely reposition some objects. Once the look is correct, the rehearsal recommences and the stage manager redraws the stage floor plan and adds the appropriate notes.



### 5. The exit of Arkie (the adult) from a scene is not working.

Brett, Wendy and friend are smoking dope and drinking in the house and Brett is sprouting drug influenced philosophy, which is mostly nonsense. Arkie, sick of listening to the endless babble of nonsense makes a comment and leaves the scene.

**Problem:** The director does not feel that the exit is really conveying the essential drama components needed to make sense of the scene. Essentially it is a good example of how drink and drugs are destroying Whiteley's life, whilst Wendy is flirting with and a relationship is forming with the friend. Arkie is frustrated and annoyed by their behaviour and chooses to reject their company by leaving the scene. Arkie is the only "appropriately behaved" or sensible one, contrasting sharply to the behaviour of the others against whom the audience can measure the deterioration of Whiteley's personal life. So instead of just up and leaving she need to make a "real exit".

**Solution:** Instead of sitting in a chair, she is now lying relaxed and reading on the lounge, with her facial expressions clearly observable by the audience. The librettist is consulted for an expletive to use and she is directed to "spit the dummy, shout the expletive, and throw the book on the lounge" as she leaves the room. This is rehearsed and the right amount of dramatic impact achieved.

Making an opera — like any creative process — is about problem solving, trial and error and refinement. Activity such as this will occur in the rehearsal room right until the opening performance.



# Is this a job you might enjoy?

An opera company employs many people who work on the stage and below it (i.e. in the orchestra), but there are literally hundreds of people who work behind the scenes making the vision of the creative team into a reality. Here are some of those roles that exist at Opera Australia:

Name	Adam Christie
Role	<b>Head of Steel Fabrication</b> Anything to do with steel structures of the sets, lifting and creating the steel structures used in productions.  A designer will create a model of what they want, or design office will make a 3-dimensional drawing and that will be transferred into component pieces on large pieces of paper and we will make the structure guided by that pattern.
Training	Apprenticeship in metal fabrication at Chullora TAFE
Skills needed in this role	Maths, good with your hands, good at welding and able to do calculations, read a drawing, make changes to a design as needed or to look at a design and notice what will not work, try this instead.
Pathway to Opera Australia	A friend whose father works here asked me to come in as a casual. And I stayed. I never thought I would end up working for an opera company, I thought I was going to be doing maintenance on the Sydney Opera House!
Best thing about working for an opera company?	We do not usually get to see a finished structure in final form unless we go down to the opera house. And seeing our work on the stage is pretty special.

Name	Melita Tickle
Role	<b>Scenic Artist</b> I paint anything that needs to be painted such as floors, big scenery that creates the edges of the stage and clothes and gauzes that create the back drop.
Training	Studies Photography at TAFE and painting at the National Art School
Skills needed in this job	Able to paint, mix colours, remember all the different materials and what they can create e.g. how to make a look of wood grain, marbling etc. Work well with other people and follow instructions from a range of people. You need to be able to follow the look of a design whilst also bringing your own creativity to a task.

Pathway to Opera Australia	<p>Was working part time as an artist in my own practice, then came to a pop-up dinner held in the workshop at Opera Australia. I met a vocal coach there who told me about OA. I thought it looked like an amazing place to work, and sent in my CV and samples of my work and was lucky enough to get the job.</p> <p>Other people would go through NIDA and do a props or scenic course there. Other have just worked in theatres and worked their way here, so there are many pathways into this type of job.</p>
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Being able to use my skills in a new framework and paint. It is flexible and different and we work on extraordinary productions.

Name	Charles Chen
Role	<p><b>Workshop Supervisor and Head of Carpentry Dept.</b></p> <p>I coordinate all the making schedules across the whole workshop. So organise the people who who look at the designers model and figure out the best way to build it.</p>
Training	I trained 30 years ago at Opera Australia as an apprentice and received a trade certificate
Skills needed in this role	Good communication, understanding the requirements of the designer so we can convert their intentions into a reality. And I am good with my hands and wood. I can look at a drawing and understand all the materials we work with. Lots of mathematics and problem solving.
Pathway to Opera Australia	I came from overseas as a student and needed to find a job to support myself. As I had some stage experience from my schooling, and enjoyed being in a theatre, when I heard of the apprentice training program, I decided to apply.
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Every day there are interesting things to do. It is not like a factory — there is always a new task and a new challenge.

Name	Zoe Zhiying Li
Role and Job description	<p><b>Wardrobe Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Pay roll for the wardrobe department</li> <li>• Accounts and tracking stock</li> <li>• All operational administration of the wardrobe production.</li> </ul> <p>For some productions like <i>Whiteley</i>, we made all the costumes and there is a lot of stock to be ordered by the department buyer, and my job it to check all the invoices and keep it all on budget.</p>
Training	Studied screen and media at TAFE
Skills needed in this job	Computer skills, use of word, excel, experience with spread sheets, accounting, understanding of budgets and mathematics

Pathway to Opera Australia	I was working in administration, but have always been interested in the theatre and was working as a volunteer for an amateur theatre group. I really had a lot of fun doing that. Opera Australia is the biggest company in Australia so it seemed like the best choice for me when a position was advertised.
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Seeing the development of the pieces in the workroom from drawings into actual costumes is amazing.

Name	Simon Crow
Role	<p><b>Head of Props Manufacturing</b></p> <p>Create props for every single production done by Opera Australia including mainstage work, touring, school shows and the Opera on the Harbour, concerts, theatre work, marketing and publicity; and the embellishment of the scenery.</p> <p>Our job is creative realisation of the vision of the designer and director according to the parameters of the theatre.</p>
Training	Arts background, building work. I initially wanted to be an artist
Skills needed in this job	<p>Practical skills and knowing how to build things, understanding the materials with which you work. Also useful is experience and understanding of repertoire theatre, and just simply how things in a company work.</p> <p>We work with every department in the company as it is a collaborative art form, so clear communication and interpersonal skills, utilising all the resources that we have including the musicians, accountants, costume makers — everyone is a source of information to us to help us with our problem solving.</p>
Pathway to Opera Australia	I was offered some casual work co-managing the prop hire department. I was then offered a contract, worked on the stage for many years and also in the workshop. I made a conscious decision to work in the collaborative arts and not be a solo artist.
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Being creative on a grand scale, problem solving, great people and that process of creative realisation.

Name	Siro Battaglin
Role	<p><b>Music Staff — Repetiteur</b></p> <p>The role is to assist the singers to learn their roles, learning the notes, memorising their parts and generally getting them as ready as they can be for when musical rehearsals start. When musical rehearsals do start, I play the piano for the rehearsals replacing the orchestra and if the chorus is not there, I replace them as well.</p>
Training	B Mus in piano at Melbourne Conservatorium. I realised my friends were singing and so I focussed on developing my piano accompanying skills and repertoire knowledge as my major.



Skills needed in this job	Play the piano, sight sing, knowledge of some foreign language — I speak Italian and German, I need to be able to coach and interact with singers, empathy for their specific musical concerns, problem solving; conducting.
Pathway to Opera Australia	As I developed as an accompanist, I became an associate artist which really got me interested in opera, and then I developed into a répétiteur
Best thing about working for an opera company?	You get to make music with fantastic musicians, play amazing music and that is really satisfying and gives me a buzz.

Name	Ash Retter
Role	<b>Orchestra Co-ordinator</b> I work on orchestra operations and administration. I look after the practicalities of the orchestra at the opera house, and scheduling, rostering, payroll, and contracting musicians.
Training	B Mus at Queensland Conservatorium of Music
Skills needed in this job	Understanding people, psychology and understanding personality types. A lot of attention to detail and patience in checking data and other information. Understanding how an orchestra is set up and being a musician helps you understand the demands of the professional players. Reading music is not essential, but it is a big plus.
Pathway to Opera Australia	I was planning to do music education as a student, and quickly discovered that was not for me. Started managing an amateur student orchestra and sort of fell into it. I had a role at the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and then moved to Sydney and the job here.
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Working at the Sydney Opera House — one of the most iconic buildings in the world.

Name	Stefanie Paglialonga
Role	<b>Head of Wigs</b> Make wigs, cut, colour, dress and make facial and body hair. This includes chest hair, arm hair, anything that involves hair for shows. This includes bald caps. Everyone is tailored to the wearer and we have to create between 40–60 wigs per show.
Training	Training in makeup, wigs and special effects and prosthetics in Germany.
Skills needed in this job	Hairdressing skills, wig making skills, makeup, accounting and an empathy to work with the designers and cast.
Pathway to Opera Australia	I always was curious about changing people's character so when younger I did face painting and anything that involved altering an appearance. And have learnt more and more since that time. Now I can do it on a big stage.
Best thing about working for an opera company?	Creating characters to the extent that they are even unrecognisable by their friends; transforming them into the person they play on stage.

Name	Stephen Bellar
Role	<b>Wardrobe Department — Art Finisher</b>  Either before they are made or after they are made, I do anything to the costumes that involves extra art effects, so dyeing, painting, ageing fabrics, fake blood, bullet holes and fake gun shots, painting shoes, working with the millinery (hat department) to paint feathers, making armour. All sorts of things.
Training	I studied many different arts in courses, not degrees such as fine art, graphic design, costume art and fashion design in Queensland.
Skills needed in this job	You need to understand costume and fashion, fabrics and art. You need to be something in between an artist and a costume maker. Lots of collaboration and team work skills, clear communication with all relevant parties such as the cutters and the makers, the supervisor and the designer.
Pathway to Opera Australia	I was always an artist as a child and once I had done a course in dress design and still a student, I had work experience working in theatre. A lot of the work I got through word of mouth and networking. It is definitely through experience in the skills you get by doing it. There are some skills you can gain through costume finishing courses, but it is mainly about experience and being lucky enough to find the opportunity to develop your experience.

## Interested in Making Costumes?

[Watch this video](#) for a journey behind the scenes into the Opera Australia Costume Department.

# Further information for the Curious

## ***Books:***

Ashleigh Wilson: Brett Whiteley Art, Life and Other Things (2017)

Kristina Olsson: Shell (2018) A story about Sydney in 1965

Barry Pearce: Brett Whiteley: Art and Life (2004)

Charles Beck: What to listen for in Opera (2014)

## ***Documentaries:***

Difficult Pleasure: A Film About Brett Whiteley by Don Featherstone

## ***Other operas about Australia by Australian creatives***

*Larry* (1955), *The Earth Mother* (1958) and *Dalgerie* (1958) by James Penberthy

*The Young Kabbarli* by Margaret Sutherland (1964) (chamber opera)

*Rites of Passage* by Peter Sculthorpe (1972 – 3)

*Voss* by Richard Meale (1986)

*Quito* by Martin Wesley-Smith (1994) (music drama)

*Black River* (1989) and *Going into Shadows* (2001) by Andrew Schultz

*The Eighth Wonder* by Alan John (1995)

The life and work of Brett Whiteley:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RYiD7obObo>

The Whiteley Legacy:

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artboards/brett-whiteley/videos/item/8pazm5/>

Brett Whiteley drawings:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/charliewattsart/brett-whiteley-drawings/>

Opera Australia website:

[www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

# Acknowledgements

## Images

### Cover — Self-portrait in the studio

Brett Whiteley (Australia; England, b.1939, d.1992)  
*Self portrait in the studio 1976*  
 oil, collage, hair on canvas, 200.5 x 259 cm  
 Art Gallery of New South Wales  
 Purchased 1977  
 © Wendy Whiteley  
 Photo: AGNSW 1.1977

### Pg. 38 — The American Dream

Brett Whiteley  
*The American Dream 1968-1969*  
 18 panels – mixed media on plywood  
 (a-n) 244.3 x 122.2cm (o) 243 x 122cm  
 State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia  
 Purchased 1978  
 © Wendy Whiteley  
 Photo: AGNSW 1.1977

### Pg.4 — Triptych

#### Summer at Carcoar

Brett Whiteley  
*Summer at Carcoar 1977*  
 oil and mixed media on pineboard  
 244.0 x 198.7cm  
 Gift of Dr William Bowmore AO, OBE through the  
 Newcastle Region Art Gallery Foundation 1977  
 Newcastle Art Gallery collection  
 © Wendy Whiteley

#### Yellow Nude

Brett Whiteley  
*Yellow Nude 1978*  
 Oil on canvas, 169 x 153 cm, Janet Holmes à Court  
 Collection,  
 © Wendy Whiteley

#### Art, Life and the Other Thing

Brett Whiteley  
*Art, life and the other thing 1978*  
 oil, photograph and mixed media on board, triptych: left  
 panel 91.9 x 79.6 x 7.8 cm; centre panel 211.8 x 130.6 x 8 cm;  
 right panel 31.2 x 31.2 x 7.3 cm

### Pg. 49 — Woman in bath

Brett Whiteley (Australia; England, b.1939, d.1992)  
*Woman in bath 1963, re-worked 1964*  
 oil, paper, graphite and tempera on plywood, 183.1 x 218.7 cm  
 Art Gallery of New South Wales  
 Purchased with funds provided by the Art Gallery Society of  
 New South Wales 2000  
 © Wendy Whiteley  
 Photo: AGNSW 191.2000

### Pg. 22 — The Balcony 2

Brett Whiteley (Australia; England, b.1939, d.1992)  
*The balcony 2 1975*  
 oil on canvas, 203.5 x 364.5 cm  
 Art Gallery of New South Wales  
 Purchased 1981  
 © Wendy Whiteley  
 Photo: AGNSW 116.1981

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This resource has been generously supported by  
 Deena Shiff and James Gillespie

