

Media Release

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Opera Australia announces 2024 Summer season with five Sydney Opera House premieres



Opera Australia (OA) today announced its 2024 Sydney Summer Season with guest Creative Director Lindy Hume presenting five Sydney Opera House premieres, having been invited by CEO Fiona Allan to curate the season.

Incoming Artistic Director Jo Davies officially takes up the reins in November and is currently working remotely on the remainder of the 2024 national season that will be announced later in the year.

The program highlights the virtuosity and scope of Australian talent both on and off the stage, as well as featuring a premier selection of international guest artists and celebrates the potency of opera in contemporary storytelling.

Lindy Hume's curation of this program has been highly collaborative and it includes a number of milestone partnerships for OA including those with Victorian Opera, Pinchgut Opera, Circa and Opera Queensland, and will see OA make a welcome return to the Sydney Festival program.

Inspired by the European Enlightenment Era, the season contains four operas written in the 18th century. Lindy says the season is filled with extraordinary music, deep contemplation and is brimming with optimism for the future.

"This is a celebration of opera in Australia right now. Each of the directors has placed a uniquely Australian stamp on each of these operas and this Sydney Summer season captures how versatile and dynamic the artform can be.

"There has been such a wide range of artistic input across the whole program, all to magnify the storytelling power of opera." said Ms Hume.

OA CEO Fiona Allan explained that the global search for the Company's new Artistic Director was extensive and it soon became evident that someone would need to step in and program an interim Sydney Summer season.

"As one of this country's most acclaimed opera and festival directors, Lindy Hume was the perfect choice to create an interim Sydney Summer program for OA. Her season is tremendously refreshing, filled with exciting works that showcase a great breadth of artistic talent from all across Australia and around the world.

“Opera Australia is moving into a new chapter and that includes a focus on collaboration, the ongoing fostering of Australian talent and a move towards greater diversity across our organisation. This is an exciting time for OA, a time to re-energise, reinvigorate and reimagine what our national opera company can bring to the current cultural conversation,” said Ms Allan.

Audiences will be presented with some of Australia’s brightest local and returning talent, including directors Sarah Giles and Yaron Lifschitz, conductor Jessica Cottis, and singers Samantha Clarke, Caitlin Hulcup, Michael Smallwood, Helen Sherman and New Zealand baritone Phillip Rhodes, most of whom will be making their OA debuts across the season.

Acclaimed Sydney director Kate Gaul will make her directorial debut with OA bringing together one of Australia’s most exciting sopranos Stacey Alleaume and musical theatre star Ben Mingay in a fantastical and eclectic new production of *The Magic Flute*, which will premiere under the baton of Austrian-Spanish conductor Teresa Riveiro Böhm as she makes her Sydney Opera House debut.

For the first time in Sydney, the internationally award-winning Australian soprano Samantha Clarke will reprise her role of Violetta in Sarah Giles’ acclaimed production of *La Traviata*, a co-production between Opera Queensland, State Opera of South Australia and West Australian Opera, which comes to Sydney following successful seasons in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth in 2022.

OA has joined forces with one of Australia’s most successful cultural exports, Circa, to present Gluck’s *Orpheus and Eurydice*, a co-production with Opera Queensland, as part of Sydney Festival 2024. French countertenor Christophe Dumaux will make his Australian debut, singing with Australian soprano Cathy-Di Zhang in this genre defying production by Yaron Lifschitz.

In a landmark partnership with Victorian Opera, the yet to be premiered *Idomeneo*, will be another new production for Sydney audiences. Directed by Lindy Hume herself, with the celebrated Canadian-German tenor Michael Schade in the title role, this production further broadens the collaborative reach of this season, featuring awe-inspiring projections by award-winning video designer David Bergman, which draw on landscape imagery captured by Tasmanian filmmakers Rummin Productions.

Another first time collaboration, OA will present baroque specialists Pinchgut Opera in their debut at the Joan Sutherland Theatre performing Handel’s *Theodora* in Concert. American countertenor Christopher Lowrey makes a welcome return to reprise the role of Didymus, which he debuted with Pinchgut to great acclaim in 2016.

[Further details about each production on the following page]

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Booking Information

Subscriptions available now. Two operas from \$135

Opera Australia Box Office | (02) 9318 8200

Explore the season with our digital brochure opera.org.au/discover-2024

Single tickets on sale from 24 July 2023

www.opera.org.au

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Sydney Summer 2024

VERDI: *La Traviata* | Conductor **Jessica Cottis** and **Paul Fitzsimon** | Director **Sarah Giles**

Award-winning director Sarah Giles' acclaimed production of Verdi's *La Traviata* brings a fresh new perspective to this opera classic. Performed by Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House for the first time, audiences are drawn into the inner world of Violetta while opulent sets and 20th century costumes capture the glamour and luxury of the world she moves in.

Australian conductor Jessica Cottis will make her Opera Australia debut, Soprano Samantha Clarke returns home to sing the title role after dazzling on the international stage, Kang Wang is back to delight Australian audiences with his rich tenor as Alfredo and Baritone Phillip Rhodes makes his Opera Australia debut as the conflicted father Giorgio Germont. **Sydney Opera House, 2 January – 14 March and New Year's Eve performance on 31 December, 2023**

GLUCK: *Orpheus and Eurydice* | Conductor **Dane Lam** | Director **Yaron Lifschitz**

Awe-inspiring acrobatics meet Gluck's exquisite music in the genre-busting, critically acclaimed *Orpheus and Eurydice* co-production by Circa and Opera Queensland and directed by Circa's Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz. Bringing together virtuosic singers and the trailblazing circus artists of Circa, this is a visual feast and its clever use of projections seamlessly integrates surtitles into the on stage action.

Brilliant French Countertenor Christophe Dumaux will make his Australian debut as Orpheus, joined by Australian Soprano Cathy-Di Zhang who will make her debut in the roles of both Eurydice and Amor. Under the baton of Chinese-Australian sensation Dane Lam, all elements of this production come together to create a sublimely mesmerising experience. **Sydney Opera House, 12 – 31 January**

MOZART: *The Magic Flute* | Conductor **Teresa Riveiro Böhm** and **Tahu Matheson** | Director **Kate Gaul**

Award-winning director Kate Gaul conjures an enchanting and eclectic world for Mozart's great adventure *The Magic Flute*. Performed in English, this bright new production will delight audiences with its big heart, adventurous spirit and memorable music.

Australia's newest star Soprano Stacey Alleaume and musical theatre's acclaimed leading man, Ben Mingay, will join a cast of accomplished singers including Michael Smallwood, Giuseppina Grech, Kanen Breen and David Parkin. This all-Australian cast will be led by the young, yet ever impressive, Austrian-Spanish conductor Teresa Riveiro Böhm as she makes her Sydney Opera House debut. **Sydney Opera House, 1 February – 16 March**

MOZART: *Idomeneo* | Conductor **Johannes Fritszsch** | Director **Lindy Hume**

OA Guest Creative Director Lindy Hume highlights the natural forces at play in the plight of *Idomeneo* in a vivid showpiece of Mozart's epic opera. In a musically and visually rich experience the immersive set swells with projections of Australia's epic seas, skies and rugged coastlines captured by Tasmanian filmmakers Rummin Productions and video designed by the award-winning David Bergman.

Renowned Mozart specialist Johannes Fritszsch will conduct as Canadian Tenor Michael Schade and Australian Mezzo Soprano Caitlin Hulcup both make their debuts with Opera Australia, performing alongside the brilliant Celeste Lazarenko, Emma Pearson and John Longmuir. **Sydney Opera House, 20 February – 15 March**

HANDEL: *Theodora* in Concert | Conductor **Erin Helyard**

Theodora in Concert is a milestone collaboration between Opera Australia and Pinchgut Opera and marks the first performance by the acclaimed baroque specialists in the Joan Sutherland Theatre.

Led by Pinchgut's charismatic director Erin Helyard from the harpsichord, this performance will showcase the Orchestra of Antipodes in their element, performing on period instruments, joined by Cantillation as the chorus and a cast of early music specialists, including Countertenor Christopher Lowrey alongside Samantha Clarke, Helen Sherman, Michael Petruccelli and David Greco. **Sydney Opera House, 8 & 9 February**