

**MEDIA RELEASE**

31 January 2024

# Opera Australia and Victorian Opera's first collaboration *Idomeneo* debuts in Sydney

20 February – 15 March 2024 | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House



Opera Australia and Victorian Opera's exciting new co-production by Lindy Hume of Mozart's *Idomeneo* will have its Sydney Premiere at the Joan Sutherland Theatre, opening 20 February and running to 15 March.

This production is the first partnership between these two leading Australian performing arts organisations, extending both companies' capabilities to present world-class opera to audiences around the country.

*Idomeneo* is an exploration of humanity, a grand tale of love, politics, familial conflict and sacrifice that draws on the mythology of the aftermath of the Trojan War and questions the depths humans will plumb in the face of desperation. It explores mortal themes that resonate through the ages: the fallout of war, natural catastrophe, grief, love and human frailty.

The epic story sees the King of Crete faced with an impossible dilemma. To save himself from drowning at sea in a vicious storm, he makes a pledge to Neptune to save his ship and his men. He vows to sacrifice the first human life he encounters on land, when bound by his rash promise, the first person he meets is his own son. The choice he makes next sets the vengeance of the gods upon the people of Crete.

Distinguished Australian director Lindy Hume vividly reimagines Mozart's 18<sup>th</sup> century work through an Age of Enlightenment contextual lens. Her visually rich interpretation invokes the mythic power of the drama, through an immersive set depicting the unforgiving seas and rugged coastline of ancient Crete.

Cinematographer Catherine Pettman and award-winning video, stage and sound designer David Bergman, whose recent credits include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for STC, utilise awe-inspiring landscape projections of Tasmania's craggy coastline to highlight the natural forces at play in *Idomeneo*'s world. An elegant set by Michael Yeargan with design consultation by Richard Roberts, lighting by Verity Hampson and contemporary costumes by Anna Cordingley all combine to create a powerful experience.

Labelled a showcase of "*theatrical design excellence – achieved through set design being successfully blended with vivid video design and captivating cinematography*" – Broadway World.

The cast will be led by celebrated Canadian tenor Michael Schade making his OA debut in the title role, alongside internationally established Australian mezzo soprano Caitlin Hulcup also in her OA debut as Idamante. Australian singers Emma Pearson and Kanen Breen complete the cast alongside OA principals Celeste Lazarenko, John Longmuir and Richard Anderson, all performing role debuts.

Renowned conductor Johannes Fritzsch will lead the Opera Australia Orchestra and the Opera Australia Chorus through the passionate, tuneful score.

PATRON-IN-CHIEF  
DR HARUHISA HANDA

HERO PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

**Creatives**

Conductor **Johannes Fritzsch**  
 Director **Lindy Hume**  
 Set Designer **Michael Yeargan**  
 Costume Designer **Anna Cordingley**  
 Lighting Designer **Verity Hampson**  
 Video Designer **David Bergman**  
 Cinematography **Catherine Pettman, Rummin**  
**Productions**  
 Set Design Consultant **Richard Roberts**

**Cast**

Idomeneo **Michael Schade**  
 Idamante **Caitlin Hulcup**  
 Ilia **Celeste Lazarenko**  
 Elettra **Emma Pearson**  
 Arbace **John Longmuir**  
 High Priest **Kanen Breen**  
 Voice of Neptune **Richard Anderson**

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

**Media enquiries**

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**Performance information**

**Evenings at 7.00pm**

February 20, 27  
 March 1, 6, 9, 12, 15

**Saturday Matinee at 12.00pm**

February 24

**Running time**

Approximately 3 hours  
 including 1 interval

Performed in Italian with English surtitles

Please note this production contains adult themes, flashing lights, and theatrical haze.

**Production Partner**



Opera Australia and Victorian Opera present  
*Idomeneo*

**Bookings**

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

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

**Joan Sutherland Theatre,  
 Sydney Opera House**