

MEDIA RELEASE

24 January 2024

Opera Australia and Pinchgut Opera to premiere first-time collaboration with *Theodora* in Concert

February 8 + 9, 2024 | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House



Two of Australia's leading opera companies, Opera Australia and acclaimed baroque opera specialists Pinchgut Opera, have come together for the first time in an exciting collaboration to present *Theodora* in Concert at the Sydney Opera House.

The landmark partnership marks the first time in ten years that OA has programmed an opera by George Frideric Handel, offering audiences the rare opportunity to hear Handel's powerful score sung in English and played by some of the finest early music specialists in Australia.

Renowned for presenting rarely performed 17th and 18th Century masterpieces, Pinchgut Opera will also be making its stage debut at the Sydney Opera House.

Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Pinchgut Opera Erin Helyard will bring his expertise to the conductor's podium with acclaimed opera director Lindy Hume providing creative oversight.

Australian soprano Samantha Clarke will return to the Joan Sutherland Theatre stage in the titular role of *Theodora* after her widely celebrated debut in January as Violetta in OA's presentation of *La Traviata*.

"Samantha Clarke sang with fluid grace, creating golden liquid sounds in quiet passages and thrilling force at climactic moments... fully deserving of the standing ovation she received at the end." – Sydney Morning Herald

Making his Opera Australia debut, American countertenor Christopher Lowrey will perform the role of Didymus having sung it to great acclaim worldwide, recently gaining praise for *"perfect technical mastery of his craft"* – Bachtrack, at the MusikTheater an der Wien in Austria. Christopher also performed the role of Didymus with Pinchgut in its fully staged opera performance of *Theodora* in 2016.

Nominated for a Helpmann Award for Best Female Performer in an opera for her portrayal of the title character in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for Pinchgut, Australian mezzo soprano Helen Sherman will make both her role and OA debuts as Irene.

Beloved Melbourne tenor Michael Petruccelli and ARIA-nominated baritone David Greco, who have both performed with OA and Pinchgut in a variety of productions across Australia, will sing the roles of Septimius and Valens respectively.

This stellar cast will be joined by Pinchgut's Chorus, Cantillation, while the critically acclaimed Orchestra of Antipodes will perform on period instruments, led by Erin Helyard on harpsichord.

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

HERO PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Creatives

Conductor **Erin Helyard**
 Staging realised by **Lindy Hume**
 Lighting Designer **Jason Morphet**

Cast

Theodora **Samantha Clarke**
 Didymus **Christopher Lowrey**
 Irene **Helen Sherman**
 Septimius **Michael Petruccelli**
 Valens **David Greco**

Orchestra of Antipodes

Cantillation

Performance information

Evenings at 7pm

February 8, 9

Running time

Approximately 3 hours and 5 minutes
 with one interval

Performed in English with surtitles

Opera Australia and Pinchgut Opera present
Theodora

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$72 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office
 (02) 9318 8200
www.opera.org.au

Joan Sutherland Theatre,
Sydney Opera House

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