

MEDIA RELEASE

1 March 2024

Cast from across Australia begin rehearsals for *West Side Story* on Sydney Harbour



Rehearsals have begun this week for the smash-hit musical *West Side Story*, which returns on Friday 22 March as the most popular production ever staged at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

Performers from Mount Gambier, Wagga Wagga, Alice Springs, Gold Coast, Canberra, Newcastle, Melbourne and Adelaide, as well as one international cast member from the US, have descended on Sydney, all eager to rise to the challenge of the four week, open-air season on the famous harbour stage.

This exceptional cast have an intense rehearsal schedule ahead of them to master the challenging dance scenes and iconic music in this legendary Broadway musical, under the direction of Associate Director **Eric Sean Fogel**, Revival Choreographer **Kiira Schmidt Carper** and Musical Director **Guy Simpson**.

West Side Story features one of the most renowned ensembles in musical theatre, playing enemy street gangs, the Sharks and the Jets, requiring highly skilled dancers to perform the celebrated and complex choreography.

Leading the cast are First Nations soprano **Nina Korbe** as Maria and Canberran **Billy Bouchier** as Tony, joined by Newcastle-born **Patrick Whitbread**, whose previous credits include *Mary Poppins*, *The Book of Mormon* and *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, as Riff and Gold Coast's **Kimberley Hodgson** as Anita, straight from her successful run as Gigi in Opera Australia's *Miss Saigon*. Broadway performer **Manuel Stark Santos** will make his Australian debut in the role of Bernardo.

The cast of 44 also includes Australian performers **Wayne Scott Kermond** as Doc, **Scott Irwin** as Schrank, **Joe Clements** as Officer Krupke and **Doron Chester** as Gladhand.

Known as one of Sydney's most spectacular night's out, an evening at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour includes a nightly fireworks display, a range of pop-up bars and eateries across the site and unmatched views of Sydney's iconic cityscape, including the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is supported by the NSW Government, via its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and through the International Foundation for Arts and Culture as Naming Rights Partner, Dr Haruhisa Handa OA's Patron in Chief, and OA's Principal Partner HSBC.

STRATEGIC SPONSORS

NAMING RIGHTS PARTNER

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PRINCIPAL PARTNER

Creatives

Director **Francesca Zambello**
 Musical Director **Guy Simpson**
 Associate Director **Eric Sean Fogel**
 Revival Choreographer **Kiira Schmidt Carper**
 Set Design **Brian Thomson**
 Costume Design **Jennifer Irwin**
 Lighting Design **John Rayment**
 Sound Design **Des O'Neill**

Cast

Maria Nina Korbe
Tony Billy Bouchier
Anita Kimberley Hodgson
Riff Patrick Whitbread
Bernardo Manuel Stark Santos
Doc Wayne Scott Kermond
Schrank Scott Irwin
Officer Krupke Joe Clements
Gladhand Doron Chester
Standby Tony & Gladhand Joel Granger
Standby Maria Clarissa Spata
Male Swing Noah Missell
Female Swing Tayla-Grace Azzopardi

The Jets

John Rex Berry, Molly Bugeja, Ella Fitzpatrick, Ewan Herdman, Luke Jarvis, Chloë Marshall, Lexie Mav, Brittany Page, Bronson Pfeiler, Dimitri Raptis, Jamie Reisin, Lewis Shilvock, Ryan Smith, Bree Stephens, Daniel Wijngaarden and P. Tucker Worley.

The Sharks

Eli Clarke, Steve Costi, Tiana Costanzo, Emma Feliciano, Diego Garcia, Stefan Lagoulis, Josephine Lopes, Jayme Jo Massoud, Avigalle Mendoza, Matthew Nguyễn, Rebecca Ordiz, Temujin Tera, William Tukia-Edwards, Christopher Theodore Tsattalios and Massimo Zuccara.

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Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm

March 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, April 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes including one interval

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

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

**Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour
 Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point**