

6 June 2024

Opera Australia premieres a 70's inspired production of *La Bohème* for national tour



John Longmuir as Rodolfo and Cathy-Di Zhang as Musetta in Opera Australia's new production of *La Bohème*

Opera Australia is embarking on its 28th annual National Tour with a brand-new production of Italian composer Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, travelling more than 5,000kms across Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania from 12 July to 3 September this year.

Award-winning director **Dean Bryant** brings his trademark wit and vivacity to this new staging, working with set and costume designer **Isabel Hudson** and lighting designer **Damien Cooper**, to place this enduring love story in the bohemian 1970s.

Bryant, who grew up in the Victorian town of Shepparton, one of this year's tour dates, says that *La Bohème* explores universal human experiences and is keen to impress the value of taking high quality live theatre to audiences outside the capital cities.

"This is a story about a group of young artists dealing with all the huge things in life for the first time. Growing up in regional Australia, I had the same passion and urgency to be heard, to fall in love, to live, so it's particularly exciting for me to be taking this production, set in Paris in the 1970s, across the country, including to Shepparton where I started making theatre." he said.

A cast of brilliant Opera Australia singers and musicians will breathe fresh life into one of the world's favourite operas including sopranos **Danita Weatherstone** and **Maia Andrews** sharing the role of Mimi, tenors **John Longmuir** and **Nick Kirkup** as Rodolfo, sopranos **Cathy-Di Zhang** and **Jane Magão** as Musetta and baritone **Andrew Williams** as **Marcello**.

Conductor **Simon Bruckard** will lead the cast, touring orchestra and Regional Children's Chorus through Puccini's soaring score which will enthral first time opera goers and seasoned audiences alike.

A highlight of the national tour is the inclusion of local children's choirs in each of the tour locations. Under the direction of Children's Chorus Master **Su Chong**, and working in advance with choirs based in each town, the students then join the cast for rehearsals before taking to the stage, which is for many their first taste of performing in front of an audience.

Opera Australia Artistic Director **Jo Davies** said: "Everyone deserves the opportunity to experience the wonder of music and the arts. Opera Australia's National Tour provides regional and remote audiences access to outstanding operatic performance which fosters a sense of community spirit through a shared artistic experience. Working with communities across Australia to present *La Bohème* – and to facilitate music education activities as part of the tour – is a privilege and a joy."

Since 1996 Opera Australia has toured more than 690 fully-staged performances to more than 330,000 people in 119 locations across metropolitan and regional Australia. This is an essential activity in broadening the reach of Australia's national opera company and increasing access to world-class live opera performances, particularly for audiences who live in regional and remote locations.

This production is supported by the Opera Conference, Australia's national partnership of professional opera companies, the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its arts and funding advisory body, by the NSW Government through Create NSW, and by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

Creatives

Conductor **Simon Bruckard**
 Director **Dean Bryant**
 Set and Costume Designer **Isabel Hudson**
 Lighting Designer **Damien Cooper**

Cast

Mimi **Danita Weatherstone, Maia Andrews**
 Rodolfo **John Longmuir, Nick Kirkup**
 Musetta **Cathy-Di Zhang, Jane Magão**
 Marcello **Andrew Williams**
 Schaunard **Michael Lampard, Daniel Ott**
 Colline **Shane Lawrencece, Eddie Muliaumaseali'i**
 Benoit/Alcindoro **Eugene Raggio**

TOUR DATES

Victoria

Dandenong, 12 & 13 July | [Drum Theatre](#)
Horsham, 17 July | [Horsham Town Hall](#)
Warrnambool, 20 July | [Lighthouse Theatre](#)
Warragul, 24 July | [West Gippsland Arts Centre](#)
Sale, 27 July | [The Wedge](#)
Shepparton, 31 July | [Riverlinks Westside](#)
Nunawading, 1 August | [The Round](#)
Bendigo, 3 August | [Ulumbarra Theatre](#)

New South Wales

Wagga Wagga, 6 August | [Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre](#)
Goulburn, 8 August | [Goulburn Performing Arts Centre](#)
Dubbo, 10 August | [Dubbo Regional Theatre & Convention Centre](#)
Tamworth, 13 August | [Capitol Theatre Tamworth](#)
Armidale, 15 August | [Lazenby Hall, Armidale](#)
Port Macquarie, 17 August | [Glasshouse](#)
Wyong, 20 August | [The Art House](#)
Newcastle, 22 August | [Civic Theatre](#)
Parramatta, 24 August | [Riverside](#)
Wollongong, 26 & 27 August | [IPAC](#)

Tasmania

Hobart 30 & 31 August | [Theatre Royal](#)
Burnie 3 September | [Burnie Arts Centre](#)

Hi-Res Images: opera.org.au/about/media-centre/touring/
Website: opera.org.au/on-tour

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Caitlin Eames | Publicist | +61 433 746 644 | caitlin.eames@opera.org

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes including 1 interval.
 Performed in Italian with English surtitles.

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