

**MEDIA RELEASE**

17 September 2024

# ***OA strengthens commitment to Australian talent with 2025 season announcement***



Opera Australia (OA) has today announced its eagerly awaited 2025 season, comprising a line-up of spectacular productions that demonstrate the Company’s ongoing commitment to broadening its repertoire and audience base and showcasing exceptional Australian talent both on and off the stage.

OA continues forward with its mission to ensure a sustainable future for the Company by extending opportunities for Australian artists and creating new pathways for the next generation of opera singers, musicians and creatives, including the introduction of a renewed Young Artist Program.

OA’s CEO Fiona Allan thanked OA’s former Artistic Director Jo Davies for her dedication and hard work in delivering the 2025 program.

“We’re very excited about the 2025 season, it’s a great representation of the breadth and depth of the operatic canon and includes some of the finest operas ever written, to be brought to life by the finest Australian talent,” Ms Allan said.

Opera Australia’s Head of Music Tahu Matheson worked closely with Ms Davies to create the 2025 season.

“The Sydney seasons are a marvellous mixture of the esoteric and the obvious, the known and unknown. There will be renowned and well-deserved encore productions, while others will inhabit and thrill our stage for the first time. We will see productions brimming with coruscating wit and riotous slapstick, productions replete with the extravagantly fantastical and the unworldly mystery and of course, what opera does best, productions sustained by the abjectly flawed human journey: the passage into the acutely, deeply moving.

“The season has certainly filled the brief to engage and delight, to encapsulate the entire gamut of dramatic expression. There is definitely something for everyone,” he said.

Featuring five Sydney Opera House premieres, the 2025 Sydney Season begins with a joyous and vibrant opera production of *Cinderella*, (*Cendrillon*) presented in association with Sydney Festival. Sung in English, this is the first time OA has performed this opera and Laurent Pelly’s production is a feast for the senses. The brilliant cast includes four of Australia’s finest singers, Emily Edmonds, Emma Matthews, Sian Sharp and Margaret Plummer, who is returning to debut with OA after achieving international success.

Melbourne Theatre Company’s Anne-Louise Sarks will be making her fully staged opera directorial debut with a new production of Bizet’s *Carmen*, that will play in both Sydney and Melbourne and star celebrated soprano Danielle de Niese along with an exceptional cast of local and international singers.

PATRON-IN-CHIEF  
**DR HARUHISA HANDA**



HERO PARTNERS



GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



"Creating a new production of *Carmen* is a thrilling prospect for me. *Carmen* was groundbreaking when it premiered and I am excited to capture that revolutionary spirit in our bold new production. This story is a classic for good reason. The need for love and connection is timeless. And its examination of desire and division - via class and sexuality and power - is all too relevant today. Opera is an incredibly powerful way to tell stories, and I am so excited to get started," said Ms Sarkis.

Australian opera sensation Nicole Car will star in a new production of Dvorák's *Rusalka*, directed by the award-winning Sarah Giles, whose critically acclaimed *La Traviata* will also make a celebrated return to the Opera House in 2025.

Ms Giles said "Creating these operas has been deeply fulfilling for me - not only because they offer profound insights into our identities, politics and world but also because they afforded me the opportunity to reimagine these fearless, complex central characters from a fresh perspective. My production of *La Traviata*, starring the inimitable soprano Samantha Clarke, has been an absolute joy to share with audiences, and I'm humbled by the overwhelming enthusiasm for the show.

"Making my production of *Rusalka* - a contemporary fairy-tale about the courageous search for belonging - with West Australian Opera this year has been equally rewarding - the audience's response left me truly inspired, and I was in awe of the bravery with which my creative team and cast embraced our expansive, imaginative, and bold production. I'm immensely excited to begin rehearsals with the brilliant Nicole Car as she brings our complex and fearless *Rusalka* to life," said Ms Giles.

The Opera Conference production of *Rusalka* is one of the many, meaningful collaborations OA has undertaken with other Australian performing arts companies that also includes Victorian Opera's production of *Candide*, and Opera Queensland's production of *Dido & Aeneas* in association with Circa.

The season will also see the return of three OA hall-of-fame productions to the Joan Sutherland Theatre: Sir David McVicar's *Marriage of Figaro*, Elijah Moshinsky's *The Barber of Seville* and Gale Edwards' perennial production of *La Bohème*. All three productions continue to enthrall audiences and some superb Australian voices will return home to join the casts, including Samuel Dale Johnson, Kiandra Howarth and Rachelle Durkin.

Musical fans will be spoilt for choice in Sydney with the Broadway and West End smash hit *Hadestown* opening at the Theatre Royal in February, a brand-new production of *Guys & Dolls* on Sydney Harbour in March/April, and Shaun Rennie's production of *Rent* debuting in the Joan Sutherland Theatre in September.

OA's outdoor stage on Sydney Harbour will come alive when the winner of five Tony Awards, the much-loved musical comedy *Guys & Dolls* transports audiences to 1950's Manhattan - a colourful and glamorous world filled with showgirls and gangsters. With music by Frank Loesser and book by Joe Swerling and Abe Burrows, *Guys & Dolls* is regarded as one of the finest musicals ever written. From its premiere on Broadway in 1950, the adaptation to a Hollywood film in 1955 starring Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando, to its most recent smash-hit revival on the West End, this musical is filled to the brim with toe-tapping tunes, high-energy, vibrant dance numbers and plenty of laughs.

## Sydney Summer 2025

**CINDERELLA (CENDRILLON) - Massenet | Conductors Evan Rogister | Tahu Matheson | Director Laurent Pelly**

Marking the first time OA performs Massenet's *Cinderella (Cendrillon)*, Laurent Pelly's highly acclaimed production will make its Australian debut after seasons at New York's Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden's Royal Opera House. Sung in English and starring four of Australia's finest singers, this ravishing, crowd-pleasing fairy tale, features dazzling costumes and a storybook set, with Emily Edmonds as Cinderella, Margaret Plummer and Sian Sharp as Prince Charming and Emma Matthews as the Fairy Godmother. **Sydney Opera House, 2 January – 28 March and New Year's Eve performance on 31 December 2024**

**THE BARBER OF SEVILLE - Rossini** | Conductors **Daniel Smith** | **Tahu Matheson** | Director **Elijah Moshinsky**

Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* will delight audiences at the Sydney Opera House when Elijah Moshinsky's sparkling production returns for the first time in almost a decade. In a spectacular homecoming Australian baritone Samuel Dale Johnson will make his Opera Australia debut as mischievous barber, Figaro. Highly awarded Daniel Smith will conduct this rollicking comedy, leading a brilliant cast of singers through as many famous tunes as you can pack into two-and-a-half hours. Italian mezzo soprano Serena Malfi, in her first Australian appearance, will share the role of Rosina with Australian mezzo soprano Helen Sherman and Australian tenors John Longmuir and Shanul Sharma will share the role of Count Almaviva. **Sydney Opera House, 18 January – 28 February**

**LA TRAVIATA - Verdi** | Conductors **Johannes Fritzsich** | **Paul Fitzsimon** | Director **Sarah Giles**

Following last summer's sell-out success, award-winning director Sarah Giles' production of *La Traviata* will return to the Sydney Opera House for a special encore season. Bringing together two outstanding Australian sopranos, Samantha Clarke and Lorina Gore, to reprise their awe-inspiring performances as Violetta under the baton of accomplished Johannes Fritzsich. This triumphant production is a rich visual experience where opulent sets and stunning 20th-century costumes set the stage for a contemporary retelling of Verdi's timeless score. A co-production by Opera Queensland, State Opera South Australia and West Australia Opera. **Sydney Opera House, 23 January – 27 March**

**CANDIDE - Bernstein** | Conductor **Brett Weymark** | Director **Dean Bryant**

Award-winning director Dean Bryant's smash hit staging of *Candide* will make its Sydney premiere after opening with Victorian Opera in 2024. Bernstein's remarkable score, including the orchestral favourite overture, soprano showpiece 'Glitter and Be Gay' sung by Cunegonde, played by Annie Aitkin, and touching choral 'Make Our Garden Grow' finale, steers a brilliant satire about humankind's capacity for mindless optimism. A stellar cast will be led by musical theatre's Eddie Perfect and *Hamilton* star Lyndon Watts. **Sydney Opera House, 20 February – 14 March**

**DIDO & AENEAS - Purcell** | Conductors **Erin Helyard** | **Chad Kelly** | Director **Yaron Lifschitz**

Following the sell-out season of *Orpheus & Eurydice* in OA's 2024 season, Circa's Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz merges jaw-dropping acrobatics and sublime music again with this Opera Queensland production of *Dido & Aeneas presented* in association with Circa. One of the most significant operas written in English, Purcell's poignant Baroque score laid the foundations for all that would follow. Combining exhilarating physicality and an Australian cast featuring Anna Dowsley, making a welcome return to OA as Dido and Sorceress, Jane Ede as Belinda and tenor Nicholas Jones as Aeneas, this is *Dido and Aeneas* for the 21st Century. **Sydney Opera House, 13 - 29 March**

**In Concert****OPERA UP LATE** | Director **Shaun Rennie**

International comedy and cabaret star Reuben Kaye is back for a bigger, better and naughtier *Opera Up Late*, with an all-new start time and a brand-new line up of re-imagined opera hits, musical theatre classics and more. Directed by the award-winning Shaun Rennie this annual operatic revelry will kick off at the earlier start time of 9.30pm, bursting with big laughs and bigger voices. It's the perfect chance for newbies to pop their opera cherries while the aficionados can sit back and enjoy their favourite arias as they've never seen before. **Sydney Opera House, 30 January**

**GREAT OPERA HITS**

A showcase of the world's greatest arias, Great Opera Hits concerts shine the spotlight on exceptional music and the power of the operatic voice. Some of Australia's finest performers sing recognisable solos, duets and ensemble pieces by esteemed composers, such as Bizet, Mozart, Puccini and Verdi, in a light-hearted 90 minutes of entertainment, for those who've wanted to see opera at the Sydney Opera House, this is the perfect place to start. **Sydney Opera House, dates across the Summer and Winter seasons**

**Sydney Winter 2025**

**CARMEN - Bizet** | Conductors **Lidiya Yankovskaya** | **Natalie Murray Beale** | **Tahu Matheson** | Director **Anne-Louise Sarks**

Melbourne Theatre Company's Anne-Louise Sarks will make her fully staged opera directorial debut with a brand-new production of *Carmen*. A bold offering from Sarks will lean into the revolutionary heart of Bizet's once groundbreaking opera, asking urgent questions about opera's iconic femme fatale. Four extraordinary Carmens will perform over the course of the season: international stars Danielle de Niese, Rihab Chaieb, and Opera Australia favourites Sian Sharp, Angela Hogan, Stacey Alleaume, Jennifer Black and Diego Torre, matched by international tenors Abraham Bretón and Young Woo Kim. Baritones Andrii Kymach and Phillip Rhodes will share the role of Escamillo. Sensational casting of bright international talent across the season will make this fiery new production a guaranteed highlight of the year. **Sydney Opera House, 10 July – 19 September**

**RUSALKA - Dvořák** | Conductor **Johannes Fritzsch** | Director **Sarah Giles**

Director Sarah Giles' new Opera Conference production of Dvořák's melodic *Rusalka* will make its Sydney premiere. Lush orchestration and the famous 'Song to the Moon' play out in a mesmerising, dangerous world with an evocative set and ethereal costumes. International star soprano Nicole Car returns to Sydney as the titular water nymph, Natalie Aroyan makes her role debut as The Duchess and Gerard Schneider makes his OA debut as the Prince, with Warwick Fyfe as the Water King and Ashlynn Tymms as Ježibaba. **Sydney Opera House, 19 July – 11 August**

**THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO - Mozart:** | Conductor **Teresa Riveiro Böhm** | Director Sir **David McVicar**

Sir David McVicar's celebrated production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* presents the classic domestic comedic spectacle. Brilliant trios, quartets and a sextet set to hummable melodies and a witty libretto will be performed among luxurious 17<sup>th</sup> century designs and radiant lighting. Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg, Canadian Gordon Bintner and American Michael Sumuel will all make their OA debuts, while Kiandra Howarth makes a welcome return to share the role of the Countess with Jane Ede. **Sydney Opera House, 31 July – 27 August**

**LA BOHÈME - Puccini** | Conductor **Erina Yashima** | Director **Gale Edwards**

Gale Edwards' beloved masterpiece of Puccini's popular *La Bohème* returns to the Joan Sutherland stage having inspired audiences for over 200 performances. Set in 1930s Berlin, Brian Thompson's stunning sets, Julie Lynch's dazzling costumes and John Rayment's masterful lighting combine with Puccini's soaring melodies to touch hearts as four young bohemians become entangled through love, jealousy and loss starring Olivia Cranwell, Kang Wang, Iain Henderson and Rachelle Durkin. **Sydney Opera House, 23 August – 20 September**

**Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour**

**GUYS & DOLLS - Loesser** | Director **Shaun Rennie** | Musical Director **Guy Simpson**

A brand-new production of five-time Tony Award winning musical *Guys & Dolls* will transport audiences from the stunning Sydney Harbour to the colourful, glamorous world of showgirls and gangsters in 1950s Manhattan. Acclaimed Shaun Rennie will direct the annual harbourside highlight's first musical comedy, on a brand-new staging by renowned Set Designer Brian Thomson, with costumes by Jennifer Irwin. Filled to the brim with toe-tapping tunes led by Musical Director Guy Simpson and vibrant dance numbers by Choreographer Kelly Abbey, this will be the most fun yet on the giant Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour stage. Onsite pop-up restaurants, nightly fireworks and plenty of laughs will ensure a rollicking night out for all. **Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point, 21 March – 20 April**

**Musical**

**HADESTOWN - Mitchell:** | Director **Rachel Chavkin**

Winner of eight Tony Awards, including Best Score, and the Grammy Award for Best Musical Theatre Album, the acclaimed West End and Broadway musical phenomenon *Hadestown* will make its Australian premiere at the Theatre Royal this summer. Singer-songwriter Anaïs Mitchell’s genre-defying, defiantly hopeful musical blends modern American folk music with New Orleans-inspired jazz to reimagine the ancient tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, performed by a vibrant ensemble of actors, singers, musicians and dancers. **Theatre Royal Sydney, from 10 February**

**RENT - Larson:** | Director **Shaun Rennie**

Two-time recipient of Broadway World’s Best Director Award, Australian director Shaun Rennie’s critically acclaimed production of *RENT*, by an all-Australian creative team, will make its debut on the Joan Sutherland stage after a five-star national tour in 2024. Inspired by Puccini’s *La Bohème*, Jonathan Larson’s groundbreaking multi-Tony Award-winning rock musical celebrates life and art, love and the human spirit as young people navigate poignant social issues in the streets of New York City’s East Village. **Sydney Opera House, from 26 September**

**National Tour 2025**

**LA BOHÈME - Puccini** | Director **Dean Bryant**

A fresh take on one of the world’s favourites *La Bohème* captures the vibrant spirit of the 70s. Award-winning director Dean Bryant brings his trademark wit and vivacity to this new staging, with set and costume designer Isabel Hudson and lighting designer Damien Cooper. Known for drawing on emotions that only music can express, this bohemian love story will touch hearts across Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory on Opera Australia’s annual national tour. Various locations around Australia **7 July – 14 September**

**Booking Information**

Subscriptions available now. Prices start at \$142 for two operas.  
Opera Australia Box Office | (02) 9318 8200

Explore the season with our digital brochure [opera.org.au/events/season-2025](http://opera.org.au/events/season-2025)

Single tickets on sale from 29 October 2024  
[www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

**Media enquiries**

Janet Glover | Communications Manager | +61 412 601 816 | [janet.glover@opera.org.au](mailto:janet.glover@opera.org.au)  
Christy Seddon | Senior Publicist | +61 411 675 490 | [christy.seddon@opera.org.au](mailto:christy.seddon@opera.org.au)  
Caitlin Eames | Publicist | +61 433 746 644 | [caitlin.eames@opera.org.au](mailto:caitlin.eames@opera.org.au)