

MEDIA RELEASE

6 February 2025

Opera meets acrobatics in Sydney premiere of *Dido & Aeneas*



©David Kelly

Jaw-dropping acrobatics and sublime music will combine when Opera Australia presents Opera Queensland's production of Henry Purcell's love story for the ages, *Dido & Aeneas*, for its Sydney premiere in the Joan Sutherland Theatre this March.

Directed by Yaron Lifschitz, Artistic Director of the widely acclaimed acrobatic troupe Circa, this spectacular production reprises the winning formula of his highly praised *Orpheus & Eurydice*, merging Circa's exhilarating physicality and Opera Australia's stunning musicianship in a contemporary operatic retelling of the ancient Greek myth.

It is widely acknowledged that English Baroque composer Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, penned in the late 17th century, gave the world one of the most poignant scores ever written and laid the foundation for every opera that came after.

Artistic Director of Pinchgut Opera, Erin Helyard, will share the podium with British Maestro Chad Kelly to conduct the acclaimed OA Orchestra through the poignant Baroque score, including the famous aria 'When I am laid in earth'.

Two Australian stars return from their European bases to lead the all-Australian cast. Mezzo soprano Anna Dowsley will make a welcome return to the Joan Sutherland Theatre stage to reprise the role of the doomed Queen of Carthage, Dido while tenor Nicholas Jones will play Aeneas. They will be joined by OA principals Jane Ede, Sian Sharp and Kanen Breen, along with the OA Chorus adding to the onstage action.

Award-winning contemporary Australian circus troupe Circa will return to the Joan Sutherland Stage after wowing audiences with their stunning acrobatics in last year's debut collaboration with OA, *Orpheus & Eurydice*.

All the onstage action is brought into sharp focus by Lifschitz's sleek, dark set and costume designer Libby McDonnell's strong silhouettes, creating a stark environment for *Dido & Aeneas* to come to life in this operatic rendition of the romantic Trojan war tragedy.

13-29 March 2025 | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

HERO PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Creatives

Conductor **Erin Helyard** (Mar 13, 15, 22, 25, 29), **Chad Kelly** (Mar 18, 20)
 Director & Stage Designer **Yaron Lifschitz**
 Costume Designer **Libby McDonnell**
 Lighting Designer **Matthew Marshall**

Cast

Dido / Sorceress **Anna Dowsley**
 Aeneas **Nicholas Jones**
 Belinda **Jane Ede**
 Second Lady **Sian Sharp**
 First Witch / Spirit 'Mercury' **Kanen Breen**
 Second Witch **Keara Donohoe**
 Sailor **Gregory Brown**

Opera Australia Chorus
Opera Australia Orchestra
Circa Ensemble

Erin Helyard appears courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.

Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm
 March 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25
Saturday Matinee at 12.30pm
 March 29

Running time

Approximately 70 minutes with no interval.

Performed in English with English surtitles

This production contains depictions of nudity and haze effects.

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

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

**Joan Sutherland Theatre,
 Sydney Opera House**

Opera Australia presents Opera Queensland's production of *Dido & Aeneas* in association with Circa.

Media enquiries

Janet Glover | Communications Manager | +61 412 601 816 | janet.glover@opera.org.au
 Analisse Mammone | Publicist | +61 488 244 750 | analisse.mammone@opera.org.au