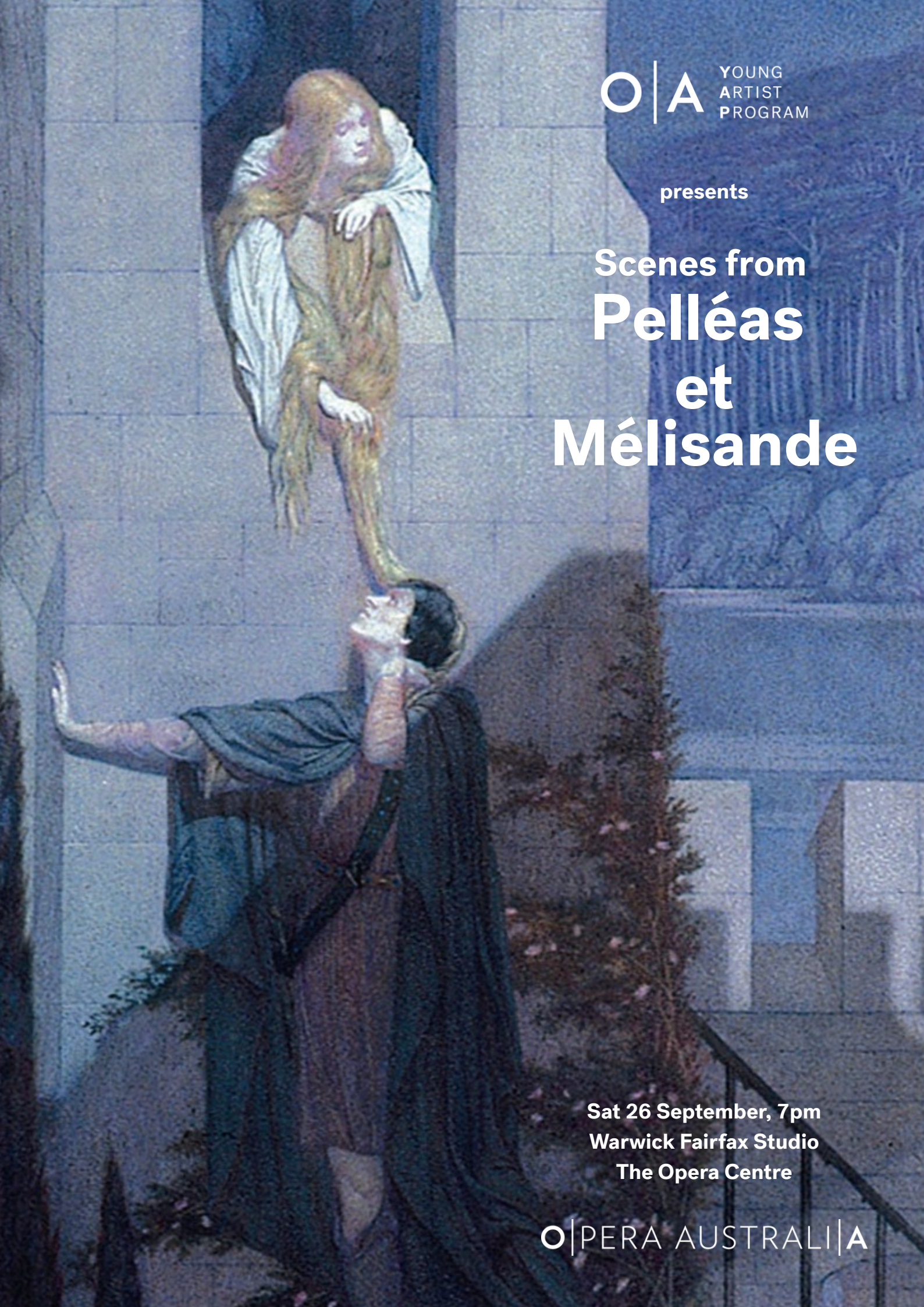




O|A YOUNG
ARTIST
PROGRAM

presents

Scenes from
**Pelléas
et
Mélisande**

Sat 26 September, 7pm
Warwick Fairfax Studio
The Opera Centre

O|PERA AUSTRALI|A

Scenes from *Pelléas et Mélisande*

Wednesday 23 September 2026, 7pm
Warwick Fairfax Studio, The Opera Centre

Opera in 5 Acts, 1902 by Claude Debussy
Libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck

PROGRAM

Act 1 Scene 3 In front of the castle

Act 2 Scene 1 A fountain in the park
Act 2 Scene 3 In front of cave by the sea

Act 3 Scene 1 A tower in the castle
Act 3 Scene 3 At the entrance to the castle vaults

Act 4 Scene 1 A room in the castle
Act 4 Scene 4 A fountain in the park

SYNOPSIS

Prince Golaud finds Mélisande, a mysterious young woman, lost in a forest. He marries her and brings her back to the castle of his grandfather, the King of Allemonde. Pelléas, Golaud's half brother, finds himself becoming attracted to Mélisande the more time he spends with her. This arouses Golaud's jealousy and he goes to excessive lengths to find out the truth about Pelléas and Mélisande's relationship. Pelléas decides that he must leave Allemonde and arranges to meet Mélisande one final time, where they confess their love for one another. Golaud, who has been eavesdropping, rushes out and kills Pelléas. In the opera's fifth act, Mélisande dies after giving birth to a daughter. In vain, Golaud begs her to tell him "the truth."

THE OPERA

The Source: Debussy based the libretto directly on the symbolist play of the same name by Maurice Maeterlinck, keeping the prose dialogue largely intact.

Timeline: He began drafting the music in 1893 after securing permission from Maeterlinck, orchestrating and refining the score intensively through 1895, and completing final revisions before the 1902 staging.

Vocal Style: Debussy wanted the characters to sing "like natural people," avoiding traditional operatic arias, grand gestures, and metrical constraints in favor of a flexible, speech-like declamation that mirrors the rhythms of the French language.

Director

Music Director/Piano

Musical Preparation

Pelléas

Mélisande

Gènevieve

Goloud

Chorus

Young Artist Producer

Production Manager

Stage Manager

Intimacy Coordinator

Young Artist Coordinator

Surtitles

Surtitle Operator

Edwina Strobl

Francis Greep

Francis Greep, Marie-France Lefebvre

Leon Vitogiannis

Lana Kains

Sidra Nissen

Jake Lyle

Chris Whalley, Jake Lyle, Daniel Kramer

Jane Hennessy

Louisa Hickson

Claire Edmonds-Wilson

Chloë Dallimore

Sammie Bailey

Edwina Strobl

Elias Wilson

MUSICAL LANGUAGE

Anti-Wagnerian Approach: While influenced by Richard Wagner's continuous orchestral flow, Debussy rejected massive brass explosions and showy tunes, creating a muted, understated drama where the orchestra operates in undertones and subtle colour shifts.

Harmonic Innovation: The score avoids traditional functional tonality through the use of whole-tone scales, pentatonic elements, parallel chords, unprepared modulations, and unresolved dissonances.

Motifs: Rather than rigid, repeating Wagnerian leitmotifs that merely announce a character, Debussy's flexible musical themes shift and transform organically to reflect the hidden, psychological interiority and changing emotions of the characters.

Orchestration: Omitting a traditional overture, the orchestra functions as an atmospheric canvas—using muted strings, two harps, and delicate woodwinds—to evoke the shadowy, dreamlike, and watery depths of the fictional kingdom of Allemonde.

Acknowledgement of Country

Opera Australia recognises and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the unceded land and waters across Australia on which we live, perform and work and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.
We acknowledge, celebrate and respect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first story tellers who carry the cultural wisdom, traditions and dreaming of this ancient land.

Opera Australia's Young Artist Program is generously supported by Maureen Wheeler AO

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

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Click [THIS LINK](#) to ensure your contact details are correct and you are on the Young Artist Program invitation list

Artists

Click the links for artist biographies



[Leon Vitogiannis](#)
2025/26 Young Artist



[Lana Kains](#)
Young Artist Soprano



[Sidra Nissen](#)
Young Artist Mezzo-Soprano



[Jake Lyle](#)
Young Artist Baritone



[Edwina Strobl](#)
Young Artist Director



[Francis Greep](#)
Head of Young Artists

Upcoming Young Artist Events



German Opera Scenes

Scenes from *Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart
Der Rosenkavalier & *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Strauss
Friday 27 November, 7pm
Phillip Bacon Studio, The Opera Centre



Letters to the Wind

German Song Recital
Music by Beethoven, Wolf, Brahms, Zemlinsky & Korngold
Wed 2 Dec 7pm
Venue TBA