

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 22 September 2025

Young Artist Program opens door for next generation of Australian opera stars



"The ability to solely focus on my craft every day has been monumental," Chelsea Burns, 2025 Young Artist Program soprano making her Opera Australia main stage debut in 2026

Applications are now open for Opera Australia's 2026 Young Artist Program which will appoint up to seven young artists - including up to five singers, one repetiteur and one director - to full-time, fully paid training at the country's premier opera company.

This will be the second year that young artists will participate in the revitalised program, which will also see its 2025 cohort make their mainstage debuts with Opera Australia in 2026.

Via a national audition process, the company is looking for diverse voices and perspectives from across Australia who will shape the future of opera. The ideal candidates will not only possess exceptional talent but also demonstrate creativity, adaptability, and a passion for pushing the boundaries of the artform.

The 18 month-long career pathway includes advanced training on site at The Opera Centre in Sydney, international study with renowned coaches, and professional experience and integration into the company, including cover roles and performances in Opera Australia events and productions at Sydney Opera House.

The generous support of Principal Patron Maureen Wheeler AO enables Opera Australia to offer full-time salaries for successful applicants for the duration of the program, along with support for travel expenses associated with audition workshops and relocation for the program.

The flagship program is aimed at emerging artists who have completed relevant training, or equivalent experience, and are ready to step into their professional career. Opera Australia Acting CEO Simon Militano said: "The combination of artistic excellence, holistic development, and integration into the life of the company affirms the program's impact as a model of best practice in nurturing emerging talent.

"Perhaps the greatest testament to its success after the program was revitalised last year is the mainstage casting of our 2025 artists for our 2026 Sydney Summer season. Each 2025 Young Artist Program singer will make their OA mainstage debut, while the director and répétiteur will also play significant roles, having made their mainstage debuts in 2025 in *Carmen*," Militano added.

NIDA Head of Directing, and Opera Australia Young Artist Program Acting Coach Dr Benjamin Schostakowski said the program is a rare chance for emerging artists to be part of the program.

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

HERO PARTNERS

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"I encourage all young directors, singers, and répétiteurs to apply for this life-changing opportunity. I've witnessed a remarkable transformation in the 2025 cohort of artists — not only in their technical skill, but in their confidence and artistry. This program is a rare chance to be a part of Australia's largest repertory company, supported by mentors who are truly invested in the futures of young artists," Dr Schostakowski said.

The program provides advanced, bespoke study for each participant including vocal and dramatic coaching, language classes, career guidance, masterclasses, assistant and cover work, and performance opportunities. Training is delivered by OA's Young Artist team and renowned coaches and professionals from across Australia and around the world.

Applicants are required to complete three rounds of selection including: a video / audio submission, an in-person interview and audition, and a three-day workshop at The Opera Centre in Sydney.

Applications are now open: [APPLY NOW](#)

Key Dates:

Applications open: Monday 22 September 2025, 9am AEDT

Directors & Répétiteurs

Applications close: Monday 20 October 2025, 9am AEDT
In-Person Auditions: Monday 3 October – Sunday 9 November 2025
Finalist Workshop: Thursday 27 November – Saturday 29 November 2025

Singers

Applications close: Monday 1 December 2025, 9am AEDT
In-Person Auditions: Wednesday 11 February – Saturday 21 February 2026
Finalist Workshop: Friday 27 March – Sunday 29 March 2026

Program begins: Wednesday 1 July 2026

Media enquiries

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Image: Opera Australia's Young Artists, from left: Elias Wilson, Chelsea Burns, Leon Vitogiannis, Claudia Osborne, Jem Herbert and Shikara Ringdahl. Photos: Neil Bennett