

Media Release  
17 December 2025

## Exceptional singers announced for Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour - *The Phantom of the Opera*



L-R Jarrod Draper, Amy Manford, Jake Lyle photo: Daniel Boud

Opera Australia announced today that Australian musical theatre royalty, celebrated soprano **Amy Manford** has been cast as Christine Daaé in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* when it returns for a much anticipated, limited season at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour from 27 March to 3 May next year.

Amy has attracted global recognition for her portrayal of The Phantom's protégé, playing the role to critical acclaim in both the recent Australian in-theatre tour and the West End production in London.

Amy will be joined by newcomer **Jake Lyle** who will slip on the world's most famous mask for the role of The Phantom, making his musical theatre debut as one of the industry's most iconic characters. The 22-year-old from Gladstone, Queensland is still studying Classical Voice at Queensland Conservatorium and is currently an Emerging Artist in Residence at Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Rising Australian musical theatre star **Jarrod Draper** will complete the trio of leads as Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny. Born in Orange, New South Wales, and a proud Wiradjuri man, Draper has made waves in Australia since he became the first Indigenous man to graduate from WAAPA's prestigious Musical Theatre program, and has performed in *Moulin Rouge*, *Sunset Boulevard* and most recently as Munkustrap in *Cats*.

Music Supervisor **Guy Simpson** said "Everyone loves to say they've 'discovered' someone, but during the auditions for the Ensemble, a young singer named Jake Lyle caught our attention. The next few days became a rollercoaster for Jake as we directed him through most of The Phantom's material, all the while confident we had found our man. I think Jake has a stellar future and we will all remember his Opera Australia debut for a long time to come.

"I'm really thrilled with all three outstanding talents we've selected for the 2026 season. It's a great pleasure to work with Amy Manford again, she is one of the world's best as Christine, as well as Jarrod Draper as Raoul, whose work in *Sunset Boulevard* impressed me greatly," Simpson said

This production will mark the debut at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour for all three singers, who will undertake the epic task of performing on Australia's largest outdoor stage floating above Sydney Harbour.

Directed by Australia's master of musical theatre, **Simon Phillips**, with elaborate costumes & set design by **Gabriela Tylesova** and choreography by Associate Director **Simone Sault**, the harbour setting brings a whole new level of spectacle to this legendary musical.

Unmatched views of world-renowned Sydney Opera House, a live orchestra, nightly fireworks and pop-up restaurants and bars, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is one of the most unique theatrical experiences in the world, and the only place where you can see this magnificent, grand-scale production of *The Phantom of the Opera* under the stars.

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Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is supported by the NSW Government, via its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and through the International Foundation for Arts and Culture as Naming Rights Partner, Dr Haruhisa Handa OA's Patron in Chief, and OA's Principal Partner HSBC

**The Phantom - Jake Lyle**

Queensland Baritone Jake Lyle is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Music (Performance) in Classical Voice at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University under the tutelage of Dr Margaret Schindler. During his studies at QCGU, Jake has received the Elizabeth Muir Undergraduate Memorial Award (2022), the Nora Baird Memorial Fund Audition Bursary (2022), the Donald Penman Prize (2024) and Alton Budd Memorial Award Runner Up (2024).

Jake was selected as a Finalist in the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition in 2024. Recent performances include Tonio in *I Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo), Taddeo in *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Rossini) as part of the Val Machin Opera Scenes, Marco in *Gianni Schicci* (Puccini) and Jupiter in scenes from *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Offenbach).

In 2025, Jake is the Emerging Artist in Residence for Queensland Symphony Orchestra and was also selected to participate in the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Program in 2024.

**Christine Daaé - Amy Manford**

Amy has toured globally with Classical Crossover legend Andrea Bocelli, including throughout Asia, Australia and South Africa after making her US debut on his North American tour opening at the iconic Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. Earlier this year, she completed her second North American tour with celebrated crossover cellist, Hauser.

Amy has co-produced, with her company MM Creative Productions, and performed in live concerts with Disney, including the 100th anniversary celebration concert which toured Australia in 2023 and a sold out run of *Disney in Concert: Live* at the Sydney Opera House and Arts Centre Melbourne.

She won 'Creative of the Year' at the 2023 Marie Claire Women of the Year awards and has sung at iconic events such as the 2021 AFL Grand Final in Australia and for King Charles at Buckingham Palace in London.

In 2023 Amy released her first EP 'A Dream is A Wish' and her first original song 'Ghost of You' after her viral cover of 'Walking in The Air' in 2024.

Amy is trained classically in Opera and studied her Masters at the Royal College of Music in London after completing a Bachelor of Music at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Art (WAAPA).

**Raoul - Jarrod Draper**

Jarrod Draper is a proud Wiradjuri man and the first Indigenous graduate of the prestigious Music Theatre course at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). Born in Orange, NSW, his artistic journey began with a full scholarship to the Regional Conservatorium, where he studied Music Theatre and Classical Voice, performing both nationally and internationally.

Jarrod most recently appeared as Munkustrap in the 40th Australian Anniversary production of *Cats* for Crossroads Live! and starred as Artie Green in *Sunset Boulevard* for Opera Australia/GWB Entertainment across Australia and Asia. He previously made history as the first Indigenous artist to play Toulouse-Lautrec in *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* for Global Creatures. An original Australian cast member, he initially understudied Christian and Lautrec before taking over the role. He also starred as C.C. Baxter in *Promises, Promises* for Neglected Musicals.

His additional credits include *Rent* (Sydney Opera House/LPD), *Catch Me If You Can* (Hayes Theatre Co), *Sondheim on Sondheim* (QPAC), *When the Rain Stops Falling* (Clovelly Fox Productions), and his critically acclaimed one-man show presented by Darlinghurst Theatre Company/People of Cabaret.

Resilient and passionate, Jarrod continues to break barriers as a leading Indigenous artist in Australian musical theatre.

**Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour – *The Phantom of the Opera***

**Friday 27 March – 3 May 2026**

**Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point, Sydney**

**Bookings: +61 2 9318 8200 | [opera.org.au/harbour](https://opera.org.au/harbour)**

**Images + Video available: [Opera Australia Media Centre](#)**

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