

**MEDIA RELEASE**

17 February 2026

# Opera Australia celebrates Melbourne's Ian Potter State Theatre re-opening with Wagner Gala



Opera Australia will mark the re-opening of the Ian Potter State Theatre this October with a one-night-only Gala celebration that will feature a selection of Wagner's most extraordinary pieces of music including operatic arias and orchestral masterpieces, that will signal a welcome return to its traditional Melbourne home.

A major highlight of Opera Australia's history with the State Theatre was the staging of a brand-new production of Wagner's Ring Cycle, the Company's first, in 2013 and re-staged in 2016, cementing Art Centre Melbourne's reputation for staging ambitious and exciting grand scale opera.

Opera Australia CEO Alex Budd said, "The facilities and scale of the Ian Potter State Theatre make it the natural home for epic works of the operatic canon. This Gala will whet the appetite for audiences for what we have in store when we return in 2027."

Central to the history and eventual reshaping of German opera, Richard Wagner is known for composing some of the largest, longest and most complex operas such as *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and the biggest of them all, the 16-hour epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, otherwise known as the Ring Cycle.

Experienced Wagner conductor, German Maestro Michael Güttler will make his OA debut, bringing Orchestra Victoria onto the vast State Theatre stage for this one-off Gala performance.

Making their Opera Australia debuts are internationally renowned Wagnerian performers, British dramatic soprano Catherine Foster and Russian tenor Sergei Skorokhodov.

Foster is known for her portrayal as Brünnhilde which she sang at the Bayreuth Festival for Wagner's bicentenary celebrations, and Skorokhodov career has been dominated by demanding lead roles such as *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* which he's sung to great acclaim in leading opera houses around the world.

Joining them on stage will be one of the country's most versatile and in-demand baritones, James Clayton, making a welcome return to Opera Australia.

**Wagner Gala – Ian Potter State Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne**  
Friday 16 October 2026 - 7.30pm

## Bookings

Adult tickets from \$85 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office (03) 9685 3700 [www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

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## About Opera Australia

Celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026, Opera Australia continues a tradition of artistic excellence, community engagement and innovative programming, ensuring opera remains a vibrant, evolving artform that speaks to contemporary audiences and enriches lives. Supported by a generous community of donors, partners, government investors and sector partners, OA continues its mission to share great stories through music and song that appeal across generations, genres and geographies.

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