

MEDIA RELEASE

27 May 2026

Fabulous, flirty and fun, *The Merry Widow* makes its spectacular return



Opera Australia opens its Sydney Winter season on 8 July with the spectacular return of National Living Treasure Graeme Murphy’s dazzling production of one of the world’s most popular operettas Lehár’s *The Merry Widow* to the Joan Sutherland Theatre stage.

One of the great composers of operetta, Franz Lehár’s unique blend of opera and musical theatre is both accessible and entertaining, delivering a glitzy, glamorous good time with *The Merry Widow*. His score is bubbly and beautiful, packed with hum-along dance tunes from the famous waltz to marches, cancons, gallops and even a polonaise. Paired with Murphy’s signature choreography, this production guarantees to have audiences swaying, smiling and swooning in their seats.

Performed in English, Murphy’s production, commissioned by The Opera Conference, transports audiences to the opulent art deco era of 1920s Paris brought to life by a talented Australian creative team. Michael Scott-Mitchell’s dramatic sets include faceted mirrors, geometric screens and a stunning Monet-inspired night garden, while Jennifer Irwin’s costume designs are sumptuous featuring elaborate braided dress uniforms, elegant shapes, exquisite embroidery, feathers and prints.

Sharing the iconic role of Hanna Glavari, one of Dame Joan Sutherland’s signature roles, are Australian born, international opera star Emma Pearson, making her role debut, and audience favourite Julie Lea Goodwin, reprising her celebrated performance. Starring alongside them is acclaimed opera tenor and musical star, Alexander Lewis, returning to the role of Danilo and lyric Australian coloratura soprano Alexandra Flood, who has been making waves on the global stage making her debut with OA. Maestra Vanessa Scammell leads this star-studded cast and orchestra through Lehár’s sophisticated orchestrations that are full of colour and harmony.

Despite its doomed premiere in 1905 with recycled sets and costumes and little rehearsal time, word-of-mouth fast propelled *The Merry Widow* from minor success to smash hit, performed more than 20,000 times across Europe by 1909. Today, it’s been translated into more than 25 languages and Murphy’s production has been praised as an all singing, all dancing Broadway style show and a visually stunning spectacle not to be missed.

A fusion of familiar romantic comedy tropes; high society life, money on the line and a ‘will they or won’t they’ love story, the operetta revolves around the small European country Pontevedro who are on the verge of bankruptcy. The Pontevedrians’ only hope is for Hanna Glavari, a beautiful widow who inherited her husband’s fortune, to marry local Danilo Danilovich, who just happens to be Hanna’s former lover, so her wealth can remain in the country.

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

HERO PARTNER

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8 July – 18 August | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House

Creatives

Conductor **Vanessa Scammell**
 Director & Choreographer **Graeme Murphy AO**
 Creative Associate **Janet Vernon AM**
 Set Designer **Michael Scott-Mitchell**
 Costume Designer **Jennifer Irwin**
 Lighting Designer **Damien Cooper**
 Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**
 Assistant Director **Cameron Mitchell**
 Assistant Choreographer **Olivia Jenkins**
 English translation **Justin Fleming**

Cast

HannaGlavari **Emma Pearson** (8–26 Jul)
Julie Lea Goodwin (31 Jul–18 Aug)
 Danilo Danilovich **Alexander Lewis**
 Baron Mirko Zeta **David Whitney** (
 Valenciienne **Alexandra Flood**
 Camille De Rosillon **John Longmuir (8-26 Jul)**
Virgilio Marino (31 Jul-18 Aug)
 Njegus **Benjammin Rasheed**
 Alexis Kromov **Richard Anderson**
 Dominik Bogdanovich **Alexander Hargreaves**
 Sylviane **Jane Ede**
 Raoul De St. Brioche **Iain Henderson**
 Viscount Nicolas Cascada **Nathan Lay**
 Olga Kromov **Helen Sherman**
 Konrad Pritschich **Tom Hamilton**
 Praskovia **Dominica Matthews**

Opera Australia Orchestra
Opera Australia Chorus
Opera Australia Dancers

Performance information

Evenings at 7:30pm
 Jul 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 24, 31
 Aug 4, 6, 13, 15, 18

Matinees at 12:00pm
 Jul 25

Matinee at 12:30pm
 Jul 11

Matinees at 2:00pm
 Jul 19, 26

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 55 minutes including two intervals.

Performed in English with English surtitles.

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**

This production was commissioned by the Opera Conference, Australia's national partnership of professional opera companies.

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