The Opera & Song Collective

Presents

A[C]F AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL FUND.ORG.AU

Stormlight

An Afternoon of Contemporary Voices

A MINI FESTIVAL FEATURING WORKS BY

CHRISTINE DRAEGER | **TRISTAN ENTWISTLE** | **MICHAEL LAMPARD** | **NIGEL MCDOUGALL** | **DAVID TUNLEY**

3 pm Sunday
25 October 2026

St Lukes Anglican Church
4 Heydon St, Mosman

TOSC Artists

Singers Passionate To Bring Fine Music To You

The Opera and Song Collective

Artists passionate to bring fine music to you

We bring joy to our audiences and artistic fulfilment to our performers through performances distinguished by artistry, imagination and excellence.

Our repertoire embraces remarkable music across opera, art song, sacred and contemporary genres, interpreted by established and emerging Australian artists. We combine well-loved repertoire with less commonly heard works, presented in imaginative and intimate settings that invite audiences to discover something new.

TOSC is equally committed to showcasing compositions by our nation's own composers and actively promotes the performance of new works.

The Opera and Song Collective acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging



We were conceived in COVID Lockdown, originally as a recording project to be shared virtually and performed in distinct short modules. To us, despite its hardships and the curtailment of all our other performance projects and in many cases income, Lockdown provided time, an opportunity to learn that was to be seized and treasured. We worked online and later, in person with marvellous coaches. Since then we have presented themed concerts and recitals in Sydney and Brisbane and a season of semi -staged performances of the opera *Rusalka* with piano.

TOSC Concert History

2026

September: Return of the Queens ~ Kings Arise

April : Songs Through Time ~ From Ramaeu to Messiaen

March : Lament to Light ~ Together in Song

2025

November : Visions of Verdi
~ Excerpts from his later Operas

May : Endless Pleasure
~ Gems of the English vocal repertoire

2024

November : Rusalka in Chamber
~ A semi staged production

July : Chanson d'après mídì

June : Songs from the Winter Palace
Russian Songs, Arias and Ensembles
in collaboration with Russian for Singers

May : Solveig's Song
- A tribute to Kirsten Flagstad

April : Stabat Mater - Pergoelsi, Poulenc,
Liszt and Saint-Saëns

2023

November : Opera Queens - Brisbane

July : Diamonds in the Snow
(Scandinavian Music)

April : If Music be the Food of Love
(Shakespeare inspired)

February : Opera Queens

2021

November : Into the Light

July - October: Online learning

TOSC Artists

Stormlight ~ Contemporary Voices

PART ONE Nature's Voices

Michael Lampard

At the Harbour's Edge *
i Morning Tide, ii Ancient Waters, iii. Evening Pacific
Emma Häll, Angelique Tot, Jill Sullivan, Claire Howard

Nigel McDougall

Nature, Love and Grief ** Based on poetry of John Clare
i Alone, ii Evening Primrose,
iii Sudden Shower, iv I Am
Maria Hemphill, Liz Cartmer, Bradley Gilchrist

Christine Draeger

Two Fires Suite ~
i The Child ii Lament for Passenger Pigeons
Christine Draeger

Ross Edwards

Three Songs from Five Senses
i Song, ii The Lost Man, iii The Forest
Charlotte Merz, Claire Howard

Ross Edwards

Ecstatic Dances ~ i Ritmico ii Animato
Christine Draeger, Philip Murray

Kaija Saariaho

Changing Light
Leah Thomas, Christine Draeger

PART TWO Words on the Wind

Thomas Pasatieri

Lady Macbeth
Samanta Lestavel, Bradley Gilchrist

Kaija Saariaho

Ariel's Hall
Leah Thomas, Christine Draeger, Claire Howard

David Tunley — **A Wedding Masque**

Emily Turner, Emma Häll, Emmeline Booth, Philip Murray, Bradley Gilchrist & The Ladies Ensemble

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PART THREE — Much Ado and a Touch of Blue

Christine Draeger — **Blues Sicilienne**

Christine Draeger, Claire Howard

Tristan Entwistle — **Much Ado About Nothing ***

Hero, Samanta Lestavel • Beatrice, Emmeline Booth • Claudio, Michael Kaufmann • Benedick, Tristan Entwistle • Leonato, James Pinneri • Don Pedro, Matthew Gaskin • Don John, Dale Schilling • Friar Francis, Michael Lampard • Bradley Gilchrist.

David Tunley — **In Praise of Music**

Bradley Gilchrist, Full TOSC Ensemble

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* World Premiere ** Sydney Premiere

Thank you for sharing this inspiring programme with us - we invite you all to join us for refreshments in the courtyard

TOSC Artists

Singers Passionate To Bring Fine Music To You

Stormlight ~ Contemporary Voices

Sopranos: Liz Cartmer, Nadia Cassidy, Emma Häll, Maria Hemphill, Amanda Kelly, Samanta Lestavel, Leah Thomas & Emily Turner

Mezzos: Emmeline Booth, Camille Merčep, Charlotte Merz, Sandra Oldis, Jill Sullivan & Angelique Tot

Tenors: Matthew Gaskin & Michael Kaufmann

Baritones: Tristan Entwistle, Michael Lampard James Pinneri & Dale Schilling

Flute: Christine Draeger & Philip Murray

Piano: Bradley Gilchrist & Claire Howard

Programme curated by: Dr Jill Sullivan

The Opera and Song Collective would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone at St Luke's Anglican Church—especially to The Rector, Revd Dr Max Wood, and Parish Manager Helen Bell—for their invaluable assistance and for making us feel so warmly welcomed.

TOSC also wish to thank our front of house assistants for *Stormlight*, Elisabeth Pidd and Ellen McNeil.

Programme Notes

STORMLIGHT – CONTEMPORARY VOICES

By Dr Jill Sullivan

Every generation has something to say, and every generation deserves to be heard. The great composers we treasure today were once contemporary voices themselves, inspired by the world around them.

Stormlight celebrates that continuing creative spirit through music inspired by nature, poetry, Shakespeare and the human condition.

Yet another story runs through this programme: the remarkable threads of friendship, family, mentorship and artistic collaboration that connect our composers and performers. Teachers and students, parents and children, old friends and new colleagues come together, sometimes through unexpected connections spanning generations and continents.

These are the circles of life that sustain music, passing inspiration from one generation to another.

Today we celebrate not only new music, but the human relationships that bring it to life.

Part I – Nature's Voices

Nature has inspired composers for centuries, offering an inexhaustible source of beauty, mystery and reflection. In these six works, the natural world becomes both subject and metaphor, illuminating our relationship with landscape, memory and the passage of time. From the familiar waters of Sydney Harbour to the poetry of John Clare and Judith Wright, the rhythms of the Australian bush and the luminous sound world of **Kaija Saariaho**, we encounter nature through different eyes and listen with new ears.

Michael Lampard's ***At the Harbour's Edge*** opens our journey through the changing light and atmosphere of Sydney Harbour. His three-part song cycle captures the shifting moods of its waters, from intimate reflection to the harbour's expansive beauty. Written for three female voices, the work also

invites comparison with a rich operatic tradition: Wagner's Rhinemaidens, whose voices rise from the waters of the Rhine; Mozart's Three Ladies in The ***Magic Flute***; and again in his ***Ring Cycle***, Wagner's Three Norns, who weave the threads of destiny in ***Götterdämmerung***. Each ensemble possesses its own dramatic identity, yet all demonstrate the expressive possibilities of three women's voices entwined. Here, **Lampard** brings that tradition into a distinctly Australian landscape, allowing the voices to evoke the changing moods and timeless presence of Sydney Harbour.

Nigel McDougall's ***Nature, Love and Grief***, setting poems by the nineteenth-century English poet John Clare, emerges from a deeply personal understanding of human vulnerability. During his career as a social worker, first in disability services and later in aged care, **McDougall** witnessed raw human suffering at close quarters: loneliness, grief, loss and the often unspoken struggles of those in his care. Clare's poetry, with its profound sensitivity to nature and the human condition, "struck a chord", as Nigel himself describes it. In these settings, the beauty of the natural world becomes inseparable from the fragility of human experience.

There is a particularly moving circle of connection in today's performance, as **McDougall's** daughter, soprano Maria Hemphill, gives voice to her father's music. Underscoring the importance of friendship, Maria is joined in harmony by her close friend and colleague, Liz Cartmer.

Christine Draeger's ***Two Fires Suite*** draws inspiration from the poetry of Judith Wright (1915–2000), one of Australia's most celebrated poets and a passionate environmentalist and advocate for Aboriginal land rights. Wright's deep reverence for the natural world was accompanied by a fierce awareness of its vulnerability to human exploitation. Her poetry explores both the extraordinary beauty of life and the destructive consequences of humanity's disregard for it.

Christine's interest in Wright's writing finds expression in two contrasting pieces, ***The Child*** and ***Lament for Passenger Pigeons***. Together, they invite reflection upon the beginnings of life, its fragility and the possibility of irreversible loss.

The passenger pigeon, once among the most abundant birds in North America, numbered in the billions before relentless hunting and habitat destruction brought about its extinction. The last known bird died in 1914. Its story remains one of the most devastating examples of a species disappearing through human activity.

Through her musical response to Wright's poetry, **Draeger** brings these themes into a contemporary setting, reminding us that the wonder of creation and the tragedy of destruction are never far apart. Her work offers both a celebration of life and a poignant reflection on our responsibility to preserve the natural world for generations yet to come.

One of Australia's most distinctive contemporary composers, **Ross Edwards** has developed a musical language deeply influenced by the natural environment, particularly the sounds, rhythms and patterns of the Australian bush. Birdsong, insect calls, the stillness of the landscape and the vitality of dance all find expression in his work, alongside influences from sacred music and musical traditions beyond Australia.

In Three Songs from Five Senses, **Edwards** returns us to the poetry of Judith Wright, creating a direct connection with **Christine Draeger's** preceding work. Wright's extraordinary sensitivity to the Australian landscape finds a kindred spirit in Edwards, whose music frequently suggests the intimate relationship between human perception and the natural world.

A different aspect of his musical personality emerges in ***Ecstatic Dances,*** performed today by flautists Christine Draeger and Philip Murray. Originally conceived for two flutes, the work grew from a short composition celebrating fellow Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe's fiftieth birthday.

The first dance uses interlocking musical phrases to create hypnotic patterns reminiscent of insect sounds, while the second blossoms into radiant, insistently rhythmic music. **Edwards** has described the influence of the Australian bush and his interest in the ecstatic qualities of ritual dance.

These two works reveal complementary sides of his musical imagination: the contemplative observer of nature and the exuberant celebrant of its restless energy.

The section concludes with ***Changing Light*** by the celebrated Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho** (1952–2023), whose extraordinary sensitivity to musical colour and texture established her as one of the most original voices of contemporary music.

Light held a particular fascination for **Saariaho**. Its changing colours, shifting intensities and elusive transitions between brightness and darkness offered a powerful parallel to the transformation of sound. Rather than relying solely on conventional melody and harmony, her music often unfolds through subtle changes of timbre, resonance and atmosphere.

Changing Light, composed in 2002, sets a text drawn from Jewish liturgy, translated from Hebrew by Rabbi Jules Harlow. Its imagery moves through the eternal cycle of night and day, the mystery of the stars, the changing light of dawn and dusk, and the fragile, transient nature of human existence.

Written for violinist Edna Michell's Compassion Project, the work explores an intimate dialogue between voice and instrument. **Saariaho** described its delicate sound world as reflecting the uncertainty and fragility of our existence. In today's performance, soprano Leah Thomas and flautist Christine Draeger bring this conversation to life.

The placement of ***Changing Light*** at the conclusion of **Nature's Voices** creates a deliberate connection with **Michael Lampard's** opening work. Both composers explore the changing qualities of light, although through markedly different musical approaches. Across the intervening works, nature is considered not only as a source of beauty and inspiration, but also in relation to human emotion, environmental responsibility, loss and renewal. Together, these compositions demonstrate the diversity of contemporary musical responses to the natural world, and the continuing relevance of nature as a subject for artistic exploration.

Part 2 – Words on the Wind

More than four centuries after his death, **Shakespeare's** words continue to inspire composers, performers and audiences. Their enduring power lies not simply in the beauty of his language, but in his profound understanding of human ambition, vulnerability, love, jealousy and the forces that shape our lives. In **Words on the Wind**, three composers draw upon two of his most remarkable plays, ***Macbeth*** and ***The Tempest,*** exploring the relationship between language, music and the natural elements.

Throughout ***Macbeth***, S**hakespeare** uses imagery of wind and air to reflect the progressive collapse of the natural and moral order. Before Duncan's murder, the air surrounding Macbeth's castle seems deceptively welcoming. Duncan himself remarks, "The heaven's breath smells wooingly here", unaware of the treachery awaiting him. Following his murder, that gentle atmosphere gives way to violent disturbance, strange cries in the night and winds powerful enough to shake the foundations of the world. Later, Macbeth invokes the witches' power to unleash the winds, even if they should destroy churches and overturn the structures of civilisation.

Thomas Pasatieri's dramatic cantata ***Lady Macbeth*** draws together passages from different stages of Lady Macbeth's psychological journey. The work begins with the ominous raven announcing Duncan's arrival and Lady Macbeth's invocation of the spirits of cruelty. Determined to overcome every trace of compassion, she urges Macbeth to conceal his murderous intentions beneath an appearance of innocence.

As the drama unfolds, **Pasatieri's** music moves between forceful declarations, moments of apparent control and increasingly disturbed recollections. Lady Macbeth's initial confidence in her ability to suppress conscience gradually gives way to psychological disintegration. The woman who once dismissed the consequences of murder becomes haunted by imagined bloodstains, disturbed sleep and the memory of her own actions.

The imagery of air returns with devastating significance in her final recollections. What was once sweet and welcoming has become associated with corruption and guilt. No perfume can disguise the imagined smell of blood upon her hands. **Shakespeare's** language, intensified by **Pasatieri's** musical setting, reveals the terrible distance between ambition and its consequences.

Kaija Saariaho's *Ariel's Hail* transports us from the darkness of ***Macbeth*** into the magical world of ***The Tempest.*** Ariel, the spirit servant of Prospero, possesses extraordinary powers of movement and transformation, travelling through air, water and fire to carry out his master's commands.

Saariaho's setting for soprano, flute and piano is particularly suited to this elusive character. The vocal line and flute engage in a restless musical dialogue, while rapid figures, trills, glissandi and shifting rhythmic patterns suggest Ariel's supernatural mobility. The piano creates a changing harmonic atmosphere, contributing to the impression of a world in which the boundaries between the physical and the magical are constantly shifting.

Yet Ariel is more than a supernatural messenger. His longing for freedom gives the character a distinctly human dimension. Where the supernatural forces of ***Macbeth*** contribute to destruction and moral disorder, those of ***The Tempest*** ultimately become instruments of reconciliation and release.

The section concludes with **Professor David Tunley's *A Wedding Masque***, drawn from **Act IV of *The Tempest***. Prospero summons a masque to celebrate the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda, calling upon the goddesses Iris, Ceres and Juno to bless their union.

The masque was an elaborate form of courtly entertainment combining poetry, music, dance and theatrical spectacle. **Shakespeare** uses this tradition to create a vision of harmony, fertility and abundance. Iris, the messenger of the gods and goddess of the rainbow, summons Ceres, associated with the harvest and the fruitful earth, while Juno, queen of the gods, bestows blessings upon the young couple.

Tunley's musical setting brings these mythological figures to life through three female voices, recalling the expressive possibilities of the female ensembles encountered earlier in Nature's Voices. The work celebrates not only the union of Ferdinand and Miranda, but the restorative power of love and the promise of a new generation.

There are also remarkable personal connections surrounding today's performance. **Professor Tunley** was Patron of the **Lieder Society of Western Australia**, founded by Jill Sullivan, and his influence as a teacher and mentor extends across several generations of musicians. Pianist Bradley Gilchrist and flautist Philip Murray were among those who benefited from his teaching, while soprano Leah Thomas's father was taught by Tunley at Fort Street High School before his distinguished academic career in Western Australia. These relationships bring another dimension to the performance, reflecting the enduring influence of musical mentorship and the friendships that develop through shared artistic experience.

From the destructive winds of ***Macbeth*** to the airy enchantments and eventual reconciliation of ***The Tempest***, these three works reveal contrasting responses to **Shakespeare's** dramatic imagination. **Pasatieri** explores the psychological consequences of moral disorder; **Saariaho** gives musical form to supernatural movement and transformation; and **Tunley** celebrates the restoration of harmony through love and human connection.

Together, they demonstrate how **Shakespeare's** language continues to generate new musical interpretations, its meanings renewed through the creative perspectives of successive generations.

Part 3 – Much Ado and a Touch of Blue

After the intensity of **Words on the Wind**, our final section turns towards humour, theatrical invention and the sheer enjoyment of music-making. **Shakespeare** remains an important presence, but here we encounter his wit, his delight in human relationships and his remarkable understanding of the absurdities of love.

We begin with **Christine Draeger's *Blues Sicilienne,*** a playful meeting of two seemingly contrasting musical traditions. The sicilienne, with its gently lilting rhythm and pastoral associations, has long been a familiar form in European music. The blues, by contrast, brings its own distinctive harmonic language, expressive inflections and rhythmic character. By bringing these elements together, **Draeger** creates a witty musical conversation between traditions, demonstrating how established forms can be reimagined through a contemporary composer's individual voice.

The result is a light-hearted and engaging introduction to a section in which humour and musical imagination take centre stage.

Tristan Entwistle's operatic scenes from ***Much Ado About Nothing*** bring us into the lively world of **Shakespeare's** Messina, where romantic intrigue, mistaken assumptions, wounded pride and verbal sparring create one of the playwright's most enduring comedies.

For **Entwistle, *Much Ado About Nothing*** has long been a favourite **Shakespeare** play. His operatic adaptation began as a personal passion project during the COVID lockdowns, when the interruption of normal artistic life provided an opportunity to pursue a long-held creative ambition. Over the following six years, the work gradually developed into the scenes we hear today.

At the centre of **Shakespeare's** comedy are two contrasting relationships. Beatrice and Benedick, both fiercely independent and determined to resist marriage, conceal their growing affection beneath a seemingly endless exchange of insults and witty observations. Their verbal battles provide some of **Shakespeare's** most sparkling comedy, while revealing the vulnerability that lies beneath their carefully maintained independence.

By contrast, the relationship between Hero and Claudio is threatened by deception, jealousy and misplaced trust. Their story introduces a darker dimension to the comedy, reminding us that **Shakespeare's** understanding of human relationships was rarely uncomplicated. Love may inspire generosity and courage, but it can also expose pride, insecurity and the destructive consequences of believing appearances.

These contrasting relationships offer rich possibilities for operatic treatment. Music can reveal what characters conceal beneath their words, allowing emotional truths to emerge even as the dramatic dialogue continues to suggest otherwise. The movement between comedy and genuine emotional vulnerability is central to the enduring appeal of **Shakespeare's** play.

Particularly significant is the collaborative nature of **Entwistle's** creative process. The composer himself performs Benedick, while his wife, soprano Samanta Lestavel, takes the role of Hero. Their personal connection adds another dimension to a work concerned with love, misunderstanding and the complexities of human relationships.

The opera has continued to evolve through rehearsal, with the performers contributing their own understanding of **Shakespeare's** characters. Indeed, **Entwistle** was so impressed by mezzo-soprano Emmeline Booth's interpretation of Beatrice that he revised the ending of the scenes, allowing the singer's dramatic insight to influence the developing composition.

This is contemporary opera in the fullest sense: not simply a newly-written score presented to an audience, but a living creative process in which composer, singers and pianist work together to discover the dramatic possibilities of the music. It also demonstrates how the artistic relationships fostered through TOSC can contribute directly to the development of new work.

Shakespeare's characters have survived for more than four centuries because their emotional contradictions remain recognisable. **Entwistle's** opera does not seek merely to reproduce the play in musical form, but to explore how a contemporary musical language can reveal new dimensions of its humour, conflict and humanity.

Our concert concludes with **Professor David Tunley's *In Praise of Music,*** bringing the performers together in a collective celebration of the art that unites them. A distinguished composer, scholar and educator, **Tunley's** influence extends across generations, reflected in the personal and professional connections linking him with several of today's artists.

As the final work in ***Stormlight***, ***In Praise of Music*** provides a fitting affirmation of the concert's central purpose: to champion contemporary composition, encourage artistic collaboration and ensure that the music of our own time is heard, performed and carried forward.

TOSC Artists

Singers Passionate To Bring Fine Music To You



Emmeline Booth is an emerging Australian mezzo-soprano whose rich, expressive voice has brought her to stages across Sydney and beyond. A graduate of the Australian National University (BMus/BSc), she studied Classical Vocal Performance under Cheryl Barker AO, earning the Christel Larko Scholarship, the Llewellyn Choir Prize for Most Outstanding Vocalist, and the Whitworth Roach Competition People's Choice Award.

Emmeline has worked with groups including Pacific Opera, Sydney Chamber Opera, National Opera, Gente, gente!, The Opera and Song Collective, and The Opera Room across her career. She has previously appeared on national television as part of ABC's coverage of the Australian of the Year Awards, as well as on local radio.

2026 has been a year of growing presence for Emmeline. She joined Gente, gente! as Contralto soloist in their production of *Riders to the Sea /Works of Elizabeth Maconchy*, performed with The Opera and Song Collective in *Lament to Light*, appeared as Alto Soloist under the baton of Dr Philip Eames with the Macquarie Singers, and sang in Elgar's *The Kingdom* (Chorus) with Pacific Opera at the Sydney University Great Hall. She was delighted to make her role debut as the bon vivant Prince Orlofsky in Opera Lirica's *Die Fledermaus* this July under Maestro Glenn Amer.

Emmeline is passionate about sharing stories of hope, joy, beauty, and light through opera and classical music. This TOSC concert series in late 2026 promises to bring beautiful classics and distinctly Australian music to the fore - with some of Sydney's finest singers - it's going to be a treat!



Nadia Cassidy is an operatic soprano who first performed in Sydney in The Opera and Song Collective's (TOSC) inaugural concert *Into the Light* in 2021. Nadia made her soloist debut in 2022 with The Filmharmonia Orchestra and Georges River Voices in the concert *Redemption*; and sang with Christine Douglas OAM in the 2023 Daylesford ConcertSeries A feast of song from Purcell to Puccini.

In 2024, Nadia performed in *La Traviata* and solo Gala performances with Troupe Viva, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Rockdale Opera Company (ROC), and in *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Gente, Gente!.

In 2025, Nadia had her first solo role with ROC in *Opera on the ROCS*, Sister Berthe in *The Sound of Music* (RMS), performed in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ROC), *Nabucco* (The Cooperative), *Visions of Verdi* (TOSC) and made her role debut with ROC as Annina in *La Traviata.*

This year Nadia performed in *Lament to Light – Together in Music* (TOSC), *A Little Night Music* (self-produced), *Patience* (ROC), *Return of the Queens - Kings Arise* (TOSC) and is delighted to share *Stormlight* with you today.



Amanda Kelly is a casual classical singer, currently undertaking vocal coaching from Simon Kenway whilst completing a Bachelor of laws and finance Degree at UTS.

Stormlight is Amanda's fourth appearance with The Opera and Song Collective. In last years *Visions of Verdi* Programme she covered the role of Curra in the segment from *La Forza del Destino*, performing it twice in stage rehearsals earning praise from her colleagues.

In Lament to Light earlier this year she sang in the quintet by Renaldo Hahn, *Pleurez avec moi.* She is looking forward to her solo debut with TOSC in the finale to the *Stormlight* Series, *Shadow to Champagne* in December. Amanda has also performed with The Opera Room company and received an Encore nomination for her 2023 HSC Performances.



Liz Cartmer is a singer, school music teacher, choral conductor, actor & pianist. Liz has a Bachelor of Education in Music, specializing in piano & voice. Liz also has a C/Amus.A in piano, and a Diploma of Theatre Performance.

Some of Liz's recent singing credits include commercial work for Ubank, St Mary's Cathedral quartet, Disney's The Artful Dodger sea shanty actor-singer & conductor, QVB concerts & Sydney Weekender, corporate work at the Hilton and Shangri-La Hotel at The Rocks (Christmas) a principal soloist at The State Theatre for *Mamma Mia in Concert*, including the Australian tour, *Greek Legends in Concert* at the State Theatre and the Palais Theatre (VIC) and most recently *Marinella* (ensemble) at The State Theatre, The City Recital Hall (Nov 2026) and The Palais Theatre in Melbourne (Nov 2026).

Liz has performed extensively as a singer and actor in music theatre, TV & Film, is a current member of NCE – a professional commercial and events ensemble, and the touring group The Ten Sopranos. She has also appeared across Australian Television in many varied acting roles & commercials.

Some choral highlights have included the select backing choir for Andrea Bocelli and Delta Goodrem at Qudos Bank Arena, *BBC Doctor Who Symphonic Spectacular* at Qantas Credit Union Arena, *King Kong* select soundtrack recording-produced by Global Creatures at Trackdown Studios, and the opening night at the *BBC Proms* in London at The Royal Albert Hall with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. As part of the London tour Liz also performed in the chamber ensemble for Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and concerts at Australia House (Australian Embassy).
Liz has also conducted many choral events & is the rehearsal accompanist for the Sutherland Shire Children's Choir.



Christine Draeger studied at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of music and with Zdenek Bruderhans at Adelaide University, graduating in 1979 with a Bachelor of Music (Honours).

She was a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 1981-86, and has also worked with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Opera Orchestra, and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared as guest artist with Synergy, The Song Company, Perehelion, Sydney Bach Orchestra and Bourbaki Ensemble.

Christine has recorded three CDs of Australian flute music; *Streeton's noon* (1999), *Eat Chocolate and Cry* (2009) and *Spirit of the Plains* (2013). As well, she has made many studio recordings for ABC Radio and Fine Music (2MBS).

A specialist in contemporary techniques, Christine was a member of the contemporary music ensemble Sonic Art Ensemble (formerly The Seymour Group) from 1982-2007. She has run workshops and master classes in contemporary techniques for ANU School of Music, Tasmanian Conservatorium and Sydney Conservatorium.

As a composer Christine has written works for solo flute, flute and piano, flute and string orchestra, flute quartet and theatre pieces. In 1999 she won first prize in the Australian Flute Composition Competition for *Melusina's Dream*. She is a partner in Fluteworthy, a specialist flute music publisher.



Tristan Entwistle is a singer, conductor and composer. He completed his Master of Music Studies (Opera Performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium and has been a chorister with Opera Australia since 2017, making his mainstage debut in 2024 as a chorus soloist in Joseph Twist's *Watershed* and as Guccio in Puccini's *Il Trittico*.

From 2021 to 2023 he toured NSW primary schools with the Opera Australia Schools Tour, performing Figaro *The Barber of Seville*, Ferdinand *El Kid* and Don Magnifico *Cinderella*.

His other roles include Nabucco *Nabucco*, Germont *La Traviata*, Enrico *Lucia di Lammermoor,* Silvio *Pagliacci*, Marcello *La Bohème*, Escamillo *Carmen,* Il Conte *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Guglielmo *Così fan tutte*, Dr Falke Die *Fledermaus,* Figaro *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, Edmund Bertram *Mansfield Park*, Elder McLean *Susannah,* Giuseppe *The Gondoliers*, the Pirate King *The Pirates of Penzance*, Leporello *Don Giovanni*, Figaro *Le Nozze di Figaro,* Nardo *La Finta Giardiniera*, Giove *La Calisto*, the Drunken Poet/Corydon *The Fairy Queen* and Bartolo *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

Tristan was a finalist in the 2017 German Australian Opera Grant, the 2018 IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition ("The Mathy") and the 2019 Joan Carden Award. His setting of ten poems from A. A. Milne's *Now We Are Six* was premiered by The Opera and Song Collective, who now present selections from his *Much Ado About Nothing*, after Shakespeare.



Matthew Gaskin has recently come home to Sydney after 12 years living in Canada. Whilst he was there, he obtained a Bachelor of Music from the University of Toronto, majoring in composition, and a Masters of Music in Opera Performance from the University of British Columbia, where he studied with J. Patrick Raftery.

Roles performed there include Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Nika Magadoff in Menotti's *The Consul*, and Herzog von Urbino in Johann Strauss' *Eine Nacht in Venedig*. During his studies he took part in the masterclass and Singer Behind the Song series with Ben Heppner, performed the tenor solo for Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the UBC Symphony Orchestra, as well as concert tours as soloist with the UBC Opera Ensemble to Czech Republic, China, and Christmas concerts with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Matthew has also performed the role of Tito in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy, and Tamino in The Czech Republic for the European Music Academy in Teplice, as well as Summer Opera Lyric Theatre in Toronto, Canada.

Professional chorus and choral work include the Vancouver Opera Company, Vancouver Chamber Choir and the Elmer Iseler Singers of Toronto. Since returning to Sydney, Matthew has appeared as Count Almaviva in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (The CoOperative), Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Concordia Ensemble), 1st Commissaire in Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmelites* (Gente! Gente! Productions), the Gamekeeper in *Rusalka* (The Opera and Song Collective), and Brother/Billy in *Seven Deadly Sins* and *Mahagonny Songspiel* (Operantics).



Bradley Gilchrist is a well known accompanist, chamber musician, vocal coach and music director based in Sydney, working across a number of genres including opera, ballet and music theatre.

His capacity for nuanced collaboration with artists and his ability to assist in refining and developing chosen works has led to an extensive career in piano accompaniment and mentorship of young artists.

Some career highlights include concerto soloist performances with the Slovakia Philharmonic and Odessa Philharmonic Orchestras; broadcasts for the Young Australia programme on ABC Classic FM; repetiteur at Opera Australia and WA Opera; Music Director of Pacific Opera 2020-2024; official accompanist for the IFAC HANDA Australian Singing Competition 2022-2025; coaching and accompaniment at Cuskelly Summer School 2023-26; and winning the National Liederfest Accompanist prize.

Bradley's diverse career stems from his wide ranging interests in instrumental and vocal accompaniment where he is sought after as a freelance accompanist and vocal coach for auditions, recitals, recordings, broadcasts, role preparation, examinations and concert performances.

He works closely mentoring emerging collaborative pianists and has extensive experience accompanying students at undergraduate and postgraduate level at tertiary institutions Including WAAPA, UWA, UNSW, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, AIM and the VCA.

Bradley's love of community music-making has led him to participate in many community theatre, choir, and choral groups as a guest conductor and accompanist. He has been the Musical Director of Canada Bay Community Choir since 2022.

Bradley obtained a Bachelor of Music at the WA Conservatorium of Music, followed by postgraduate studies in Sydney and Madrid.



Emma Häll completed her Bachelor of Music degree at the Elder School of Music, Adelaide University, and undertook her postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. Since returning to Australia she has been studying with Simon Kenway.

Whilst in the UK Emma originated the roles of Emily in Opera Room Productions *The Invited*, and Katie in *All To Play For*. She worked with Re:Sound Theatre Company on a number of occasions including their productions of *Battles Within and Without* - an actor/musician staging of Monteverdi madrigals and Judith Weir's *Missa del Cid*, and the UK premier of Tim Benjamin's *La gateau d'anniversaire* at the Purcell Room in London. Emma also performed with Scena Mundi Theatre Company providing musical accompaniment such as for their production *Venus and Adonis*.

Emma first performed with The Opera and Song Collective as Sprite Number 2 in *Rusalka*, and has also joined them for a number of concerts. Emma started performing with the Opera Australia chorus last year, also in *Rusalka*, and in 2026 performed in their productions of *Turandot, Madama Butterfly*, and *Eugene Onegin*.



Maria Hemphill is a Sydney based Soprano with a Diploma of Opera, and a Bachelor of Music.
In 2023 Maria studied in the UK with the British Opera Academy under tutelage of Allan Glassman (Metropolitan Opera) Caroline Dawdle (Covent Garden Young Artist Program), Dr Mark Ross Clark, (Director Louisiana Opera.)

In 2025 Maria performed two concerts with TOSC at Mosman Art Gallery. In 2024 she sang the role of the Kitchen Boy in their production of *Rusalka*. Maria looks forward to working with TOSC in later programs this year. Earlier in 2026 was a production with Factory Space Theatre in May and the role of Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Lirica in July.

Other performance history includes; *Legends of Greek Music* and soloist in The Ten Sopranos *ABBA Classical Show* with Giant Entertainment, Operantics, Mrs Gobbineau *The Medium*, Godalming Opera Festival Surrey, Melbourne Contemporary Opera, Moira, *A Hand Maid's Tale*, national touring with the Ten Soprano's, private event work with Natalie Claire Entertainment, Opera Australia extra Chorus, Sydney Chamber Opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* Pacific Opera *Xantippe*, *Gods and Sinners*, Sydney Symphony Opera, Handmaid, *Elektra*, Melbourne Opera, Tasmania Chamber Orchestra, (Soprano Soloist, *Gorecki Symphony of Sorrowful songs*).

Maria is passionate about theatre and screen. Credits include ad campaigns for Australia Post, Youi, Harvey Norman, featured role on *The Devil's Playground*, and lead roles in theatre such as 'Hannah' from *A Chorus of Disapproval*, Ida *The Matilda Waltz*, Thea *Hedda Gabler* Factory Space Theatre, and other lead roles.

In 2026 Maria performed the role of Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Lirica; the lead role of Angie in Factory Space Theatre's *Off Track* in addition to performing as a soloist with TOSC in their *Return of the Queens – Kings Arise* Concert last month.



Claire Howard obtained her Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours in Piano Performance with teacher Colin Spiers, and was awarded the University Medal from Newcastle Conservatorium, The University of Newcastle, NSW. She continued her postgraduate piano accompaniment studies at the Canberra School of Music and then the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, where she was awarded the Broadwood Junior Piano Accompanist Fellowship. She subsequently earned a Master of Music in Performance and Research with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, London, studying piano accompaniment with Malcolm Martineau and Iain Ledingham.

Her pianism has been described as "an exceptional display" (Limelight Review), "truly superb playing" (Deborah Humble) and "beautiful music making" (Simon Keenleyside). Claire has recorded for ABC Classic playing music by Australian composer Paul Smith and appeared in recitals with Deborah Humble, Roderick Williams, Mariana Hong (Hye Seoung Kwon) and Allie Osborne



Michael Kaufmann is an Australian tenor, currently based in Sydney. Originally from Canberra, he began singing in children's choruses of touring opera productions at the age of 10. Michael graduated with a Masters degree from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Opera School in 2024, receiving multiple awards and scholarships over his studies, including the Greenberg-Gurney-Jensen scholarship, and the George Henderson Traveller's Fund.

Michael's performance credits cover multiple genres, encompassing opera, oratorio, cabaret, and musical theatre. In 2023 Michael took part in the Prague Summer Nights Young Artist Festival in the Czech Republic, making his role debut as Don Basilio in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In Australia, Michael originated the role Bill in BellBonTom Productions' site-specific pastiche opera *Trackworks*, and sang the role of Arnalta in the Australian premiere of Elena Kats-Chernin's reorchestration of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

A seasoned concert singer as well, Michael has appeared as a soloist with multiple ensembles, including the Macquarie Singers, Jubilate Singers, Sydney University Symphony Orchestra, and the Sydney Youth Orchestra.

In 2025, Michael joined Pacific Opera Studio as a young artist, receiving the Philip Bacon Scholarship. He sang the title role in Pacific Opera's presentation for Handel's *Samson* in collaboration with the Muffat Collective, Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and as Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Bohème*. In 2026, Michael joins the Opera Australia Chorus for the centenary production of Puccini's *Turandot*, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choir for Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, under the baton of Simone Young.



Sydney-based baritone **Michael Lampard** holds a Master of Music from the University of Tasmania and has established a multifaceted career spanning opera, concert performance, musical theatre, conducting and musical direction, as well as composition.

As a Principal Artist with Opera Australia, Michael made his company debut as Schaunard in *La Bohème* at the Sydney Opera House in 2019. He has since toured nationally in *Carmen, Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* and *La Bohème*, and in 2026 joined the cast of *The Phantom of the Opera* on Sydney Harbour. His career has taken him across Australia and internationally, with a repertoire of more than 80 operatic roles including leading roles in major works by Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, and Bizet.

Michael is also an accomplished concert artist, with particular expertise in German Lieder, English art song, and contemporary Australian repertoire. As a composer, he has written extensively for the voice, with his works performed by leading Australian artists and ensembles. He was nominated for a Green Room Award in 2019 for his portrayal of Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* with Melbourne Opera.

Alongside his performance career, Michael maintains a thriving private voice studio on Sydney's Upper North Shore and teaches voice in schools across Sydney.



Samanta Lestavel graduated in November 2017 with a Graduate Diploma in Music (Opera Performance) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She studied German extensively in university, adding to her native proficiency in French, Italian and English.

Samanta has performed 17 principal operatic roles to date, some more conventional than others! Her most recent roles include Anna in Verdi's *Nabucco*, The Governess (Britten, *The Turn of the Screw*), Countess Almaviva (Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro*), and Frasquita (Bizet, *Carmen*). Roles Samanta has previously performed include Adele (J. Strauss, *Die Fledermaus*), Belinda (Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*), Pamina (Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*), Blondchen (Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Calisto (Cavalli, *La Calisto*), Zerlina (Mozart, *Don Giovanni*), Patience (Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*), Despina (Mozart, *Cosi Fan Tutte*), Lucy (Menotti, *The Telephone*), Mary Crawford (Jonathan Dove, *Mansfield Park*, Australian premiere), and Angelina (Gilbert and Sullivan, *Trial by Jury*).

Samanta is always drawn to opportunities which are unconventional and new. She has occasionally moonlighted as a tenor and a mezzo-soprano, featuring as Mario Cavaradossi (Puccini, *Tosca*) and Pylade (Gluck, *Iphigenie en Tauride*) with The Cooperative in 2021, and as Count Orlofsky (Strauss, *Die Fledermaus*) with The Cooperative.



Passionate about music and the voice, Mezzo–Soprano **Camille Merčep** is returning to Opera, after an absence of some years. Camille is well-known as a singer, voice teacher, a regular presenter for 2MBS Fine Music Sydney 102.5, and as compère for the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition.

Her performance experience encompasses the operatic stage and international concert platforms, plays, cabaret and music theatre.

On completing the Opera and Music Theatre Course at the NSW Conservatorium, she joined the Australian Opera as a member of the Chorus and principal cover. She has performed for NZ Opera, Opera Mode, Rockdale Opera and the Touring NSW company, Opera Ensemble.

Whilst overseas she was a finalist in the Masterplayers' International Music and Conductors Competition in Lugano, which lead to concert and recital performances throughout Europe. She has also performed in China with the National Opera Orchestra of Beijing and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

Until recently she was Music Director for the Italian choir, Coro Marconi, and Chorus Master for Opera Lirica's production *Die Fledermaus*.

Camille continues to perform in recital and concerts in Australia and New Zealand, and particularly enjoys exploring the repertoire for chamber ensemble and voice.

Her operatic roles include: the title roles in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and Bizet's *Carmen*; Santuzza- *Cavalleria Rusticana*; Suzuki – *Madam Butterfly*; Leonore- *Il Trovatore*; Donna Elvira- *Don Giovanni*; Elisabetta- *Maria Stuarda*; Giulietta – *Tales of Hoffman* and Siegrune- *Die Walküre*.



Dr. Charlotte Merz is an Australian mezzo-soprano and scholar whose professional work spans performance, pedagogy, and tertiary-level research. She is currently a Casual Lecturer in the Vocal Arts Department at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Previously, she held teaching appointments at the Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University in New York.

Dr. Merz made her Sydney Opera House debut in 2015 as a featured soloist in Bernstein's *Mass*. Her Australian operatic credits include the Countess of Desmond *English Eccentrics*, Jo March *Little Women*, and Giraffier *Les Deux Aveugles*. She has performed with Sydney Philharmonia, Penrith Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney Collegium Musicum Choir and Orchestra, and was named a Young Artist with Pacific Opera Sydney.

In the United States, her operatic roles have included Dorabella *Così fan tutte*, Miss Jessel *The Turn of the Screw*, Octavian *Der Rosenkavalier*, Sesto *La clemenza di Tito*, Angelina *La Cenerentola*, and Mercedes *Carmen*. She was accepted as a Young Artist with Sarasota Opera following her studies at the Manhattan School of Music and has also been a Festival Artist with Chautauqua Opera Company and an Emerging Artist with Bel Canto Tuscany.

Her awards and grants include the Helpmann Family Fellowship, Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Clare Martin Bequest, Albert Scholarship for Music, and Performers Trust Foundation.

Dr. Merz holds doctoral and master's degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and completed undergraduate and postgraduate conservatory training at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. During her doctoral studies, she was also a Doctoral Fellow in the Centre for Career Readiness and Community Impact.



Born in Western Australia, **Philip Murray** studied flute at the WA Academy of Performing Arts, and completed doctoral studies at UWA.

Following further study with teachers in the UK and Germany, he has enjoyed a diverse freelance career and performed with many professional ensembles, including the WA Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra.

He has performed as a soloist with the Juniper Chamber Orchestra and St George's Sinfonia, and has presented solo recitals for the Blackwood River Chamber Festival and the Magellan chamber music series.

In recent years, Philip has also enjoyed exploring performance on historical flutes as a member of the early music ensemble Quatorze, and has presented a number of concerts for Glebe Music Festival, as well as performing regularly with Sydney Cantata Project.

Philip is also a singer and performed for many years with the WA Opera Chorus and St George's Cathedral Choir. He is currently a member of the Choir of St. James', and has performed regularly with other ensembles including Castalia Vocal Consort and the Australian Brandenburg Choir.

Philip also maintains a busy schedule as a teacher of flute, singing and piano at several Sydney schools.



Sandra Oldis completed her Bachelor of Music Degree at Melbourne University before undertaking post graduate studies in Opera at the Victorian College of the Arts, graduating all with Honours.

Sandra is proud to have been a long term member of the Opera Australia Chorus where she also performed roles such as the Chorus Soloist/Cretan Woman *Idomeneo*, Lady Artist *Lulu*, Mistress of the Novices and Second Lay Sister *Suor Angelica*, Antonia's Mother *Les contes d'Hoffmann,* Aunt/Off-stage voice *Jenufa*, German Mother *Death in Venice*; Maid *My Fair Lady*. In addition, she covered a great variety of roles including Mother Marie in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Mrs Sedley in *Peter Grimes*, Mrs Herring in *Albert Herring*, The Mother in *Hansel and Gretel*, Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* and many others.

Roles for other companies include the Title Role *The Medium*, Miss Pinkerton *The Old Maid and the Thief*, La Ciesca *Gianni Schicchi*; Marcellina T*he Marriage of Figaro*, Sally in *A Hand of Bridge*. Concert Engagements include soloist in Mahler's *Second and Third Symphonies*, Bach *St Matthew Passion*, Duruflé *Requiem* (including in Paris, in the presence of Maurice Duruflé himself), Handel *Messiah*, *Saul* and *Dixit Dominus*, Mozart *Litanae Lauratanae*, Pergolesi *Stabat Mater*, Vivaldi *Gloria*, and a very wide range of recital repertoire with highlights being Wagner *Wesendonck Lieder* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Mahler *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, and Schumann *Frauenliebe und Leben*, to name but a few.

Sandra acts as the Executive Producer for The Opera and Song Collective looking after many of the administrative tasks required to present concerts such as todays and so helping to enable upcoming and established singers to follow their dreams.



James Pinneri is a Classically trained Baritone from Perth, WA. He completed his Bachelor of Music in Classical Voice at WAAPA in 2022. He won the inaugural 'Winifred Hurford' award as part of the Royal Schools of Music Club Excellence Awards in 2022.

James was an inaugural Margaret Pride Scholar and a Young Artist with the Perth Symphonic Chorus. James received the Men's Vocal Championship award as well as Most Outstanding Senior Vocalist award at the North of Perth Music Festival (2023). He has sung in the West Australian Opera Chorus. In 2024 he sang the role of Belcore in Opus Wa's production of *L'elisir d'amore,* the role of Papageno for Freeze Frame Opera's 2024 Schools Tour in *The Magic Kazoo* - Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

He sang with the WA Opera Young Artists in the annual 'Morning Melodies' concert at His Majestys Theatre as well as in Mandurah. He also sung the role of Leporello in Freeze Frame Operas production of *Don Giovanni* in November of 2024. James is the Bloomhouse Projects Emerging Artist for 2024 courtesy of the Diane & Dr Ken Collins AO Award. He was nominated for a Performing Arts WA award in the category of 'Best Newcomer' for his role as Papageno in Freeze Frame Operas 2024 Schools Tour.

In 2025 and 2026 he was the Loz Copley Scholar in the Young Artist Program with Pacific Opera under the tutelage of Peter Coleman-Wright AO. He sang with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir for their Christmas Concert in 2025.



Dale Schilling is a lyric baritone whose performances span opera, operetta, sacred and choral works, art song, musicals and cabaret. He is recognised for his warm tone, vibrant stage presence, and versatility across a wide range of repertoire.

Dale's love of performance began in Adelaide in the late 1980s, where he appeared with State Opera South Australia in *Macbeth* and *The Iron Man*, and as Young Patrick in *Mame* with The Therry Dramatic Society.

As a teenager he was awarded the Caltex Bicentennial Choral Singer Scholarship, touring nationally as a soloist with the world-renowned Texas Boys Choir — an experience that ignited his lifelong passion for sharing music with audiences. His journey has since taken him abroad, performing in Japan as a principal with Kyoto University's musical theatre troupe Gekidan Tottemo Benri, and in the United States with Harvard Business School's a cappella group Heard on the Street.

Back in Sydney, Dale has become a familiar face with the Rockdale Opera Company, where he has sung in *Lucia di Lammermoor, La Traviata, The Pirates of Penzance*, and as Dr Cajus in Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In August, he performed as Il Gran Sacerdote in Verdi's *Nabucco* with The Cooperative. He made his debut with The Opera and Song Collective in the *Visions of Verdi* program last year, and is delighted to return. Away from the stage, he balances a musical life with a career in IT.



Jill Sullivan is an Australian mezzo-soprano and contralto whose work encompasses opera, concert and recital. She has worked with West Australian Opera and Opera Queensland, recorded for the former Victoria State Opera, and sings regularly on a casual basis with the Opera Australia Chorus.

In 2026, Jill performed Erda in Shaumet Music's production of Birmingham Opera's adaptation of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at Sydney's City Recital Hall. She subsequently returned to the Dramatic Voices Programme in Berlin, performing Fricka in *Die Walküre* in concert and Schwertleite in fully staged performances with orchestra conducted by Levi Hammer, alongside Lieder repertoire by Brahms, Richard Strauss and Wagner.

Her previous roles include Ježibaba in *Rusalka* and Erste Magd in *Elektra*, and she has covered Klytaemnestra and Roßweiße. Her work with Opera Australia includes *Die Walküre, Eugene Onegin, Götterdämmerung, Król Roger, Aida, Lohengrin, Parsifal, Tannhäuser* and *Satyagraha.*

Her concert repertoire includes Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody*, Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Mass in C*, alongside extensive Art Song and Lieder recital work, with a particular interest in German, Russian and Eastern European repertoire.

Passionate about public education and engagement in opera, Jill is a popular presenter for Sydney opera study groups and has previously given introductory talks for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

Jill is founder and Artistic Director of The Opera and Song Collective (TOSC), an independent Sydney-based initiative bringing together professional singers, instrumentalists and emerging artists in imaginative opera, song and concert programmes, while creating valuable performance opportunities for artists and introducing audiences to both familiar and less frequently heard repertoire.



Leah Thomas has been a member of the Opera Australia Chorus since 2005. Born in Sydney, her early musical career was in flute and the recorder family, with a full music scholarship through high school. The breath discipline of wind instruments led to an interest in singing and she graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium with a Bachelor of Music and Diploma of Opera.

In 2003 she won the Mietta Song Recital Award, awarded by Richard Bonynge, which allowed her to further her studies in Florence, Berlin and Copenhagen. She won the 2007 Audi German Operatic Award – whilst 7½ months pregnant! – but decided to pass the prizes of engagements in Cologne to the runner-up in the circumstances.

A highlight of her time with Opera Australia was a two-year secondment with OzOpera Touring, performing the title role in *La Traviata* from Hobart to Darwin, from Esperance to a rainy amphitheatre performance in the Daintree. Other roles in her repertoire include Aida, Tosca, The Merry Widow, Sieglinde, Siegrune and 3rd Norn *Ring Cycle*, Princess and 2nd Woodsprite *Rusalka*, Venus *Tannhäuser*, Countess *Marriage of Figaro*, First Lady *Magic Flute*, Countess Ceprano *Rigoletto*, Annina *Traviata*, High Priestess *Aida*, Anna Elenberg *Whiteley*, Fata Morgana *Love for Three Oranges* and the Witch *Hansel and Gretel.*

She has performed in numerous oratorios by Handel, Bach, Mendelssohn and Vaughan-Williams, and concert series and gala events.

Her love of art song and languages is celebrated in a recital program with David Miller AM recorded for broadcast on ABC Classic FM's Young Performers Program



Angelique Tot is a Sydney-based mezzo-soprano and graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Master of Performance (Opera).

With more than twenty operatic roles across seven languages, she performs widely from the Baroque to the contemporary. Her roles include the title role in Bizet's *Carmen*, Isabella in Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri*, Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Prince Charming in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* and Fenena in Verdi's *Nabucco*. She recently performed Der Trommler in Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* at Glebe Town Hall.

A passionate advocate for new music, Angelique has premiered a number of contemporary works, and in 2026 gave the premiere of a song cycle by Michael Lampard.

She has appeared with leading Australian companies including Victorian Opera, The Co-Operative, TOSC, Lyster Opera and the Australian Contemporary Opera Company, where she received the prestigious Henkell Fellowship. Internationally, she has been a Young Artist with the Berlin Opera Academy, the Eurasia Summer Academy and the Jerusalem Lyric Opera Festival (2022, 2023). In 2025 she was awarded the Shoalhaven Eisteddfod Major Aria Prize.

As a 2026 Young Artist with Pacific Opera, Angelique has performed Mrs Sedley in Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Kabanicha in Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová* as part of the company's condensed "pocket opera" series.

Equally at home on the concert platform, she has appeared as alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Missa Brevis in F*, Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël*, Gounod's *Messe Chorale*, C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat* and Elgar's *The Kingdom*. Most recently she was alto soloist in the Australian premiere of Amaral Vieira's *Stabat Mater* with River City Voices.

Alongside her performing career, Angelique is a dedicated voice educator, teaching from her private studio in Sydney as well as at St Andrew's Cathedral School and Redlands.



Soprano **Emily Turner** has performed in multiple operas for Opera Queensland, including as 2nd Woman in *Dido and Aeneas* (2024), and in the chorus for *Eucalyptus* (2024), *Cosi fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni, Madama Butterfly, La traviata*, *The Perfect American* and *Mozart Airborne* (with Expressions Dance Company).

Her other operatic roles include Gretel & the Dew Fairy *Hänsel und Gretel,* 1st Wood Sprite *Rusalka*, Barbarina *Le nozze di Figaro*, Walter *La Wally*, Sylviane *The Merry Widow*, Yum-Yum *The Mikado*, Suor Dolcina *Suor Angelica*, Harry *Albert Herring*, Die Kluge *Die Kluge* and Geraldine *A Hand of Bridge*.

In 2025, Emily performed as part of the choir for the *Attack on Titan* world tour in the Concert Hall (Sydney Opera House). As a Young Artist for Pacific Opera (2017- 2019), Emily has performed in the Utzon Room of the Sydney Opera House and at the Concourse with Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. With Endangered Productions she performed the role of Solveig in a new production of Ibsen's musical play *Peer Gynt* (2022).

Emily has performed in many crossover concerts, including the 1950s musical theatre inspired cabaret *Make Believe* (Sydney Fringe [2022]). She was an Emerging Artist for Coast Opera Australia (2019) and a Summer Scholar for Opera Scholars Australia (2017).

She joined Opera Queensland's 2023 Young Artist Program, where she performed as a soloist in *Opera at Jimbour's* Eastern Lawn Gala programs with Opera Queensland and Ensemble Q. Emily holds a Graduate Diploma of Music Studies (Opera) from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music Griffith University.

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