



THE  
OPERA  
AND  
SONG  
COLLECTIVE

# TOSC NOTES

The Newsletter of TOSC Artists passionate to bring fine music to you.

**COMING SOON!**

**Diamonds  
in the Snow**



THE LATEST FROM TOSC NOTES:

- The year to date
- Queens and a little Shakespeare
- A Tasmanian Willow Song
- The Joy of Hatting
- Diamonds in the Snow - July

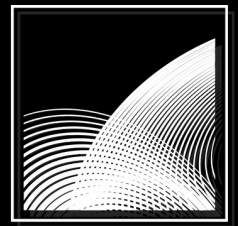
## THE YEAR TO DATE

We began 2023 in royal fashion with Opera Queens on 12th February at the Mosman Art Gallery. This concert performed by six singers was based on music written for 10 Queens portrayed in different ways by operatic composers. Our Queens ranged from Clytemnestra of Greek mythology, to Angelica and Cleopatra of ancient times, to the mediaeval Lady Macbeth, Queen of Scotland, to the Tudors and finally to the Fairy Queen, Titania, each Queen being represented in works by at least two composers from different eras.

Of all the Queens, it is Cleopatra that has had the most attention in music and drama. At least 100 operas were written about her in the 18th Century alone and more are being composed all the time, so it would have been possible to fill an entire program drawing on her character alone. But not as interesting!

Most of our Queens met untimely deaths and one singer had to play both Mary Queen of Scots and Anne Boleyn. Our Donizetti Queen, Louise Keast was beheaded not once, but twice! The haunting *Ode of Anne Boleyn* thought to have been composed by the Queens brother, while she awaited her execution, concluded our first half in 'surround sound' as we wrapped around the audience, inspired by our director, Bec Moret.

We are extremely grateful to Simon Kenway for his generosity and expertise in coaching and playing for this concert.



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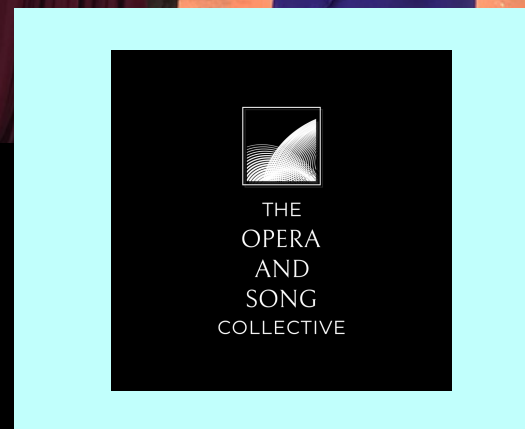
**OPERA  
QUEENS**  
CONCERT





## OPERA QUEENS

*Samanta Lestavel, Laura Scandizzo, Tom Hamilton  
Jill Sullian, Simon Kenway, Margaret Trubiano, Louise Keast,  
Bec Moret & Emily Turner*



We wish 'Opera Queen' Margaret Trubiano all the very best in her new ventures.

Margaret performed in our inaugural concert in November 2021 singing arias and ensembles from Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, as Sister Helen in a powerful duet from Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* with Rachael Cunningham as Sister Helen and as the Third Wood Nymph from Dvorak's *Rusalka*, with Emily Turner and Susie Bishop.



For Opera Queens, Margaret reprised Clytemnestra and sang Massenet's seductive aria for Cléopâtre also performing the trouser roles in Handel ensembles with Samanta and Emily.

Margaret will be based between Melbourne and Sydney where she will be performing in solo roles in addition to assisting her percussionist husband in his new role with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and of course devoting more of her time to her beloved labrador, Mary. But we're pretty sure we'll see many more of her sunning performances! Here's to next time Margaret!



# IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE

*Jill Sullivan*

On 30 April TOSC presented a program based on texts of William Shakespeare and we were delighted to have our first FULL HOUSE, reaching the maximum allowable audience with booked tickets and door sales.

Sandra Oldis came on board as Executive Assistant which has been an enormous help. We are also grateful for the assistance of Sheila Ryan and Vera Tchikina, who previously assisted with Opera Queens and were not deterred!

Marc Lestavel was the photographer who kindly donated his services for which we are grateful.

Our program included comedy and tragedy with the boys trio (When Shall We Three Meet Again) certainly providing much mirth! As did the Gangsters Duet from *Kiss Me Kate*, performed hilariously by Tom Hamilton and Tristan Entwistle.

Laura Scandizzo continued her riveting exploration of Verdi's *Lady Macbeth*, while our star-crossed lovers, *Romeo and Juliet*, were sung deliciously by Gavin Brown and Emily Turner. Pamela Andrews' *Desdemona* from *Otello*, was filled with warmth and aching beauty. See her deep dive into the Willow Song on page 5.

Kylie Bailey made her first appearance with TOSC and shared the beauty of her voice and fine interpretive skills in songs by Johnson, Korngold, Chausson and Gounod's aria for Stephano from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Also singing with TOSC for the first time was baritone Ian Warwick whose stylish singing of Finzi and Quilter was an absolute delight. Later he paired with Emily Turner in our *Kiss Me Kate* Finale.

We were also thrilled to include an Australian premiere of Thomas Pasitieri's Monodrama, *Lady Macbeth* performed convincingly with power, skill and nuance by Samanta Lestavel. Samanta later performed the World premiere of a delightful aria written by her husband, Tristan Entwistle, from his opera *Much Ado About Nothing* 'Sigh No More'.

Again the program was packed with memorable moments but who could forget the blustering, avuncular Sir John Falstaff of Tom Hamilton !

Donna Balson played magnificently supporting us as needed and much more! It was a joy to compere this program and also to step into sing in the Berlioz ensembles and Mondaufgang Chor from Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor*.



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**AN AUSTRALIAN  
& WORLD PREMIERE!**

## **IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE**



**Lady Macbeth**  
by Thomas Pasitieri

**Sigh No More**  
by Tristan Entwistle



# A TASMANIAN'S WILLOW SONG

*Pamela Andrews*

*The year was 2007 and I, along with other eager young singers from around the region, was competing in the City of Hobart Eisteddfod. The adjudicator was Jonathon Welch AM, of 'Choir of Hard Knocks' TV fame, and I had entered the DJ Mazda Operatic Aria Award with 'Salce, Salce' from Verdi's 'Otello' - an aria now, in hindsight, I'm rather surprised that I was assigned in my mid 20s at a conservatorium, but perhaps my Conservatorium teacher thought I had the right instincts and maturity to pull it off.*

*It is an aria that requires a great deal of compassion and maturity from the singer approaching the role. Part of a larger scene, Desdemona is talking to her ladies' maid, Emilia, and getting lost in remembrance of an old willow song, whilst simultaneously feeling the foreboding of the terrible events of the evening to come. (I'm trying not to give everything away here!) The freedom required to truly soar like a leaf on the wind as you sing uninhibited and with pure innocence is quite different to the recitative-like bars, particularly the panicked ones, and of course wildly different to the final bars of the aria as Desdemona lets loose with all the unbridled passion she has as she bids farewell to Emilia.*



*I performed the aria in the competition with whatever worldly knowledge I had at 26 and somehow our esteemed adjudicator was very taken with my interpretation, though I'm sure I exceeded the time limit, and I won first prize, which I believe was \$2000. I put the money towards a study trip to "the mainland", and another \$500 prize I received for the Recital section, I spent on Amazon buying a large number of vocal scores which I still own and use today.*

*I remember my thought process when I was performing the aria back at age 26, and I identified strongly with Desdemona's innocence. Nowadays, at 38, I would say I identify a little more strongly with the injustice of Desdemona's situation, as well as the innocence, but I have great compassion for the blind trust and love she put into her husband. Her situation is still so relatable today, with more than one woman a week in Australia dying at the hands of their current or former domestic partner. Though I understand it, I have no sympathy for Otello!*

*Singing competitions were good and bad in equal measure - wonderful for the opportunity to be able to perform repertoire from memory under pressure for an audience, but awful in my opinion for the yardstick mentality it instilled in me as a young singer. Was I better than the singer before me? Did I sing the notes more accurately than the soprano who sang the same song as me? Years of competitions taught me to view other singers as competition rather than colleagues, and it took me a long time to work out that my fellow competitors were colleagues who had value to me as friends and confidantes; people I could try out new repertoire with, celebrate in our successes with, and trust implicitly to be my rock and cheerleader whenever I needed it. I am privileged to be able to perform with such friends and colleagues as The Opera and Song Collective. Nothing better than making music with friends!*



Pamela Andrews

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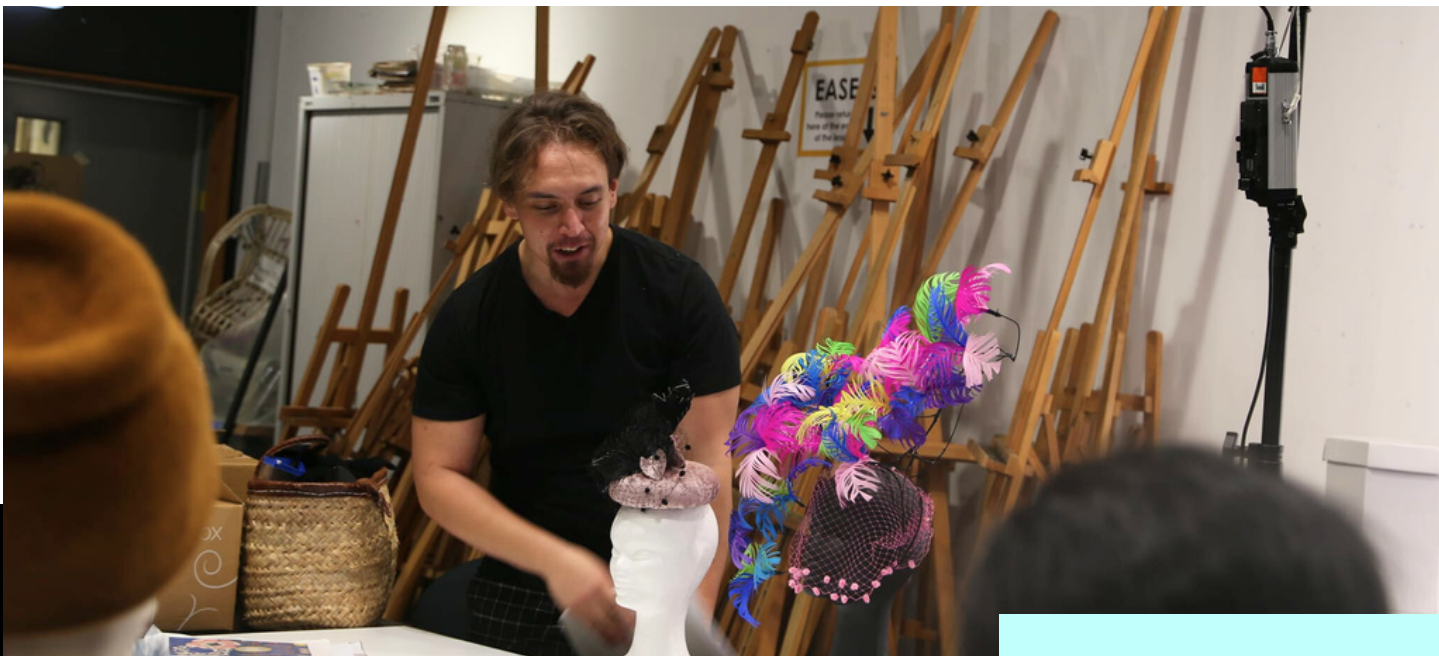
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# THE JOY OF HAT MAKING

*Ian Warwick*

In April of 2022, my dear friend and colleague Rachel Dal Santo, who was the former head of makeup at Channel 7, a freelance makeup artist, and a teacher at TAFE introduced the notion of studying millinery at Enmore TAFE to me. TAFE has been offering a stack of free courses in all manner of different disciplines and fields. Rachel thought the millinery courses would suit me immensely as I had done some millinery designs for Operantics way back in 2016 for Jonathan Dove's "Mansfield Park" when we were all babies (so to speak!), and also for a concert at the Sydney Opera House in the Utzon Room.

These designs weren't based on any technical foundation of course; I would look at fashion plates and take pre-existing hats, cut them up, and try to make them resemble headpieces from the Regency era or fantastical dresses.

I've always been interested in design. In fact, when I was 18, I got accepted into the Sydney College of the Arts with hopes of putting it towards studying scenic design/costume design. However, coming from a family where no one had gone to university before, and being relatively young, inexperienced, and ultimately scared, I turned down the offer and spent a year in turmoil trying to work out what I wanted to do with my life. I put aside my design dreams and instead studied music, with mixed feelings, mostly regret.

As wonderful as the singing, performance, writing, and directing opportunities I've had so far. I often wonder how different my life would have been had I kept on that trajectory at a younger age.



The initial course Enmore TAFE was offering was millinery for stage, with the phenomenal Penelope Gervaise. I created a feather piece inspired by the film *The Fifth Element* and a little pink and black pillbox, which we used as an exercise for blocking shapes and creating decorations with thermoplastics. I entered the feather headdress into a competition called "Art for Action: Diverse Millinery Universe" and won first prize, which was the opportunity to study with couture milliner Neil Grigg. I have only just taken up this opportunity and made a ducky 1870s ladies' hat.

Since then, I have completed another Fundamentals course with Penelope Gervaise, and I made a beautiful 1920s wide-brimmed ladies' hat trimmed with apricot feather flowers. Currently, I'm enrolled in Enmore TAFE's latest venture, which is called the Sydney Wearable Art Prize. There are sections for many different disciplines, including cosplay, costume design, and prop design. I've entered the millinery section. The theme is "Magic: The Surprise and the Reveal." My piece is a homage to the magic of movies. I grew up watching old MGM musicals and musicals about the gay nineties from 20th Century Fox, featuring great ladies of the screen like Betty Grable, Marilyn Monroe, Alice Faye, and June Haver. I've included a sketch of the initial design but won't reveal too much more because it is meant to be a surprise!



Hat model Emily Turner  
Photos by Rosa Doric  
Make up by Rachel Dal Santo



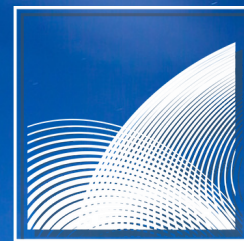
**Coming Soon!**

# DIAMONDS IN THE SNOW

*Sounds of Scandinavia for Voice, Flute and Piano*



Alnaes, Andr e  
Draeger, Grieg  
Kuula, Maier,  
Merikanto  
Sibelius and more



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Bye for now! Next time read some more on the Scandinavian inspiration. But for now, thanks for supporting us and we hope to see you on 16 July. In the meantime, keep the music playing!

Best, Jill



Sibelius Park, Helsinki

Buy tickets at  
<https://www.ticketebo.com.au/diamondsinthesnow>



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MUSIC THEATRE ACROSS THE AGES