

24 & 26 November  
Sydney Opera House

# SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN'S FIDELIO



SYDNEY  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



# SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australia-born Simone Young commences her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra makes its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

## **Simone Young**

Chief Conductor

## **Donald Runnicles**

Principal Guest Conductor

## **Vladimir Ashkenazy**

Conductor Laureate

## **Andrew Haveron**

Concertmaster

Chair supported by Vicki Olsson

## **FIRST VIOLINS**

### **Andrew Haveron**

Concertmaster

### **Harry Bennetts**

Associate Concertmaster

### **Lerida Delbridge**

Assistant Concertmaster

### **Fiona Ziegler**

Assistant Concertmaster

### **Jennifer Booth**

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Claire Herrick

Georges Lentz

Alexander Norton

Anna Skálová

Sercan Danis\*

Cristina Vaszilcsin#

### **Sun Yi**

Associate Concertmaster

Nicola Lewis

Emily Long

Alexandra Mitchell

Léone Ziegler

## **SECOND VIOLINS**

### **Marina Marsden**

Principal

### **Emma Jezek**

Assistant Principal

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Emma Hayes

Shuti Huang

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Maja Verunica

Benjamin Tjoo#

Tim Yu#

### **Kirsty Hilton**

Principal

### **Marianne Edwards**

Associate Principal

Alice Bartsch

Monique Irik

Riikka Sintonen#

## **VIOLAS**

### **Richard Waters**

Guest Principal

### **Tobias Breider**

Principal

### **Anne-Louise Comerford**

Associate Principal

### **Justin Williams**

Assistant Principal

Sandro Costantino

Rosemary Curtin

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Justine Marsden

Felicity Tsai

Amanda Verner

Leonid Volovelsky

## **CELLOS**

### **Catherine Hewgill**

Principal

### **Leah Lynn**

Acting Associate Principal

Kristy Conrau

Fenella Gill

Timothy Nankervis

Christopher Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

Eliza Sdraulig\*

Elizabeth Neville

David Wickham

Miles Mullin-Chivers\*

## **DOUBLE BASSES**

### **Kees Boersma**

Principal

### **Alex Henery**

Principal

David Campbell

Steven Larson

Richard Lynn

Jaán Pallandi

Benjamin Ward

## **FLUTES**

### **Emma Sholl**

Associate Principal

Carolyne Harris

Kate Proctor\*

### **Joshua Batty**

Principal

## **OBOES**

### **Diana Doherty**

Principal

Callum Hogan

### **Shefali Pryor**

Associate Principal

### **Alexandre Oguey**

Principal Cor Anglais

## **CLARINETS**

### **Francesco Celata**

Acting Principal

### **Alexander Morris**

Principal Bass Clarinet

Christopher Tingay

## **BASSOONS**

### **Todd Gibson-Cornish**

Principal

Fiona McNamara

### **Noriko Shimada**

Principal Contrabassoon

### **Matthew Wilkie**

Principal Emeritus

## **HORNS**

### **Ben Hulme**

Guest Principal

### **Euan Harvey**

Acting Principal

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

Lee Wadenpfuhi\*

### **Geoffrey O'Reilly**

Principal 3rd

## **TRUMPETS**

### **David Elton**

Principal

Anthony Heinrichs

### **Brent Grapes**

Associate Principal

## **TROMBONES**

### **Scott Kinmont**

Associate Principal

### **Christopher Harris**

Principal Bass Trombone

### **Ronald Prussing**

Principal

Nick Byrne

## **TUBA**

### **Steve Rossé**

Principal

## **TIMPANI**

### **Brian Barker**

Guest Principal

### **Mark Robinson**

Acting Principal

## **PERCUSSION**

### **Rebecca Lagos**

Principal

Timothy Constable

\* = Guest Musician

# = Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony Fellow

Grey = Permanent Member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra not appearing in this concert

Thursday 24 November, 7pm  
Saturday 26 November, 7pm  
Concert Hall,  
Sydney Opera House

# SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN'S FIDELIO

OPERA IN CONCERT

**SIMONE YOUNG** conductor  
**TYSON YUNKAPORTA** writer  
**VIRGINIA GAY** narrator

**ELZA VAN DEN HEEVER** Leonore  
**SIMON O'NEILL** Florestan  
**JAMES ROSER** Don Pizarro  
**JONATHAN LEMALU** Rocco  
**SAMANTHA CLARKE** Marzelline  
**PELHAM ANDREWS** Don Fernando  
**NICHOLAS JONES** Jaquino  
**LOUIS HURLEY** First Prisoner  
**CHRISTOPHER HILLIER** Second Prisoner

**SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS**  
**BRETT WEYMARK** chorus master

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)**

*Fidelio*

Overture  
Act I

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Act II

Pre-concert talk by  
David Larkin in the  
Northern Foyer at 6.15pm.

**ESTIMATED DURATIONS**

75 minutes, interval 20  
minutes, 47 minutes

The concert will conclude  
at approximately 9.30pm.

**COVER IMAGE**

Credit Ian Dooley

**ASSISTANT  
CONDUCTOR/  
REPETITEUR**

Simon Bruckard

**ENGLISH SURTITLES**

Barry James Woods /  
libreTTitoli.com

**SURTITLE OPERATOR**

Roman Benedict

*These performances  
have been generously  
supported by I Kallinikos*

*Tyson Yunkaporta's  
original texts for Fidelio  
were commissioned  
with generous support  
from the Oranges &  
Sardines Foundation*

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



# WELCOME

Welcome to this performance of *Fidelio* conducted by Simone Young.

Tonight, we are treated to an Opera in Concert led by one of the worlds experts in Beethoven's opera: Simone Young. The Orchestra is joined by a cast of talented international artists brought together to bring us a story of love, rebellion, and injustice. And a new text by First Nations author Tyson Yunkaporta will give us a new way for us to view this traditional opera.

The right partnership can be a powerful thing. Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have enjoyed one of the longest standing partnerships in Australia's performing arts. Twenty years ago, Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra met and created a wonderful partnership that celebrated our common goal of creating journeys of excitement and discovery for people around the globe.

We are delighted by this continuing partnership, and it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Barry Brown**

Divisional Vice President for Australasia  
Emirates

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

After the overture the curtain rises on the courtyard of what proves to be a state prison in 18<sup>th</sup> century Spain. Marzelline, the jailor's daughter, is fending off the advances of her father's assistant Jaquino, as she is in love with Fidelio, the recently hired errand-boy. Her father Rocco approves of the potential match, to Jaquino's (and Fidelio's) consternation.

Fidelio is actually Leonore, who has infiltrated the jail in disguise as a young man in order to find and free her husband, Florestan, a nobleman of Seville incarcerated as a political prisoner and the enemy of the prison governor, Don Pizarro. Hearing of a man near death in the dungeon, Leonore accompanies Rocco below, but is not allowed to see the prisoner.

Don Pizarro learns that Don Fernando, the King's Minister, plans to visit and inspect the prison having heard rumours of cruelty. Pizarro resolves quickly to murder Florestan and orders a grave be dug. Using Marzelline's love for 'Fidelio'. Leonore persuades Rocco to distract Pizarro while allowing the prisoners a few moments in the sun and air to give her time to release Florestan, but the plan fails.

### ACT II

A desperately weak Florestan, in the vault, expresses faith in God and then imagines that Leonore has come to free him but despairs when he realises it was a dream. When she and Rocco arrive to dig his grave he fails to recognise her, and his state causes her great distress. She and Rocco give Florestan food and drink, before Rocco sends a signal to Pizarro that the grave is ready.

Pizarro arrives, armed with a dagger and taunts Florestan, Leonore reveals herself and draws a pistol; at the moment a trumpet sounds from the battlements announcing the arrival of Don Fernando, who recognises Florestan, and frees him and the other prisoners amid great rejoicing.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## THIRD TIME LUCKY – THE SLOW GESTATION OF A MASTERPIECE

*Fidelio* flopped on its first outing in 1805. Beethoven had hoped to finish the piece in time for a performance in mid-1804 but the composition was not completed until mid-1805. Then, the premiere, scheduled for October 1805, was delayed by the censor, who objected to the contemporary setting of the piece. A month later it finally hit the stage – now set in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – as Napoleon’s armies reached Vienna. Many of Beethoven’s potential audience had either fled the city or decided to remain at home. *Fidelio*’s opening night crowd was not, therefore, the Viennese A-list, but a bunch of French officers, and on the two subsequent nights the remaining Viennese population stayed away in droves.

It is quite possible that some of the French officers present were aware of the story. The libretto, by Joseph Sonnleithner, was based on a libretto by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly; it dramatises an incident in which Bouilly was involved, in, as it were, the ‘Don Fernando’ role, just over a decade earlier during the post-revolutionary Reign of Terror.

In Paris, in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, a vogue developed for what later came to be known as ‘rescue opera’ (and there were a couple based on Bouilly’s story in this vein). These pieces tended to cultivate ‘realistic’ settings, with a recurrent theme of the dramatic release of an innocent hero from unjust imprisonment.



Beethoven in 1814



Jean Nicolas Bouilly, whose experience was the basis for the *Fidelio* story.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

Beethoven was drawn to the subject matter of such works, which harmonised perfectly with his own musical and ethical preoccupations. The year 1802 ushers in what is commonly referred to as Beethoven's 'heroic' period, and in several pieces from this time he examines a concept of heroism outlined by poet Friedrich Schiller in his 1793 essay, *On the Nature of Pathos*. Schiller, as William Kinderman writes, argued that, 'Pathos or tragedy arises when unblinkered awareness of suffering is counterbalanced by the capacity of reason to resist these feelings. In such resistance to the inevitability of pain or despair is lodged the principle of freedom.'

Beethoven had already explored this idea in the 1801 ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* and his oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives* early in his 'heroic' period, both works whose heroes face suffering and death with stoic fortitude. In the *Eroica* Symphony, Beethoven translates these ideas into abstract symphonic music, though his slow movement is explicitly a hero's death march, and the triumphant finale takes its theme from the *Prometheus* ballet, suggesting again a scheme of suffering and death borne and overcome.

What Beethoven also got from French 'rescue opera' was a kind of musical expression quite removed from the elegant intricacies of late-classicism, a new rhetoric based on the repetition of simple ideas and what can only be described as brute force as against subtle or rigorous argument.



Ewald Dülberg set design for *Fidelio*, Berlin Krolloper 1927.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

Hand in hand with Beethoven's Schillerian view of heroism was his hatred of tyranny. He was no democrat in any modern sense, and in his ideal polity, justice and personal freedom would be guaranteed by the enlightened authority of a noble ruler. Beethoven flirted with the idea of Napoleon as such a ruler, though in later life conceded that 'with that bastard I made a mistake'. It is no accident that *Fidelio's* heroes, Leonore and her husband Florestan, are nobles (and are contrasted in the comic opera sub-plot with the commoners Rocco the jailer, his daughter Marzelline and her suitor Jaquino) or that while Leonore's bravery staves off Florestan's execution by his enemy Don Pizarro, it is with the arrival, announced by a trumpet call, of the benign Minister Don Fernando that Florestan and his fellow prisoners are released. And there was one further element irresistible to Beethoven: the notion of what librettist Sonnleithner called 'the heroism of womanly virtue'.

Beethoven was by no means inexperienced in opera. Parts of *Fidelio* are recycled sections of an unfinished sword-and-sandal epic, *Vesta's Fire*, on which he began work in 1803 with Emanuel Schikaneder, librettist of *The Magic Flute*. More to the point, in Bonn, for four successive seasons before his move to Vienna, the composer had played viola in the court orchestra and therefore knew the current Italo-Austrian repertoire quite literally from the inside. That, needless to say, included works of Mozart, which Beethoven decried as frivolous and, in the case of *Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*, immoral. Beethoven's prudishness only became more pronounced as he grew older and, thanks to his increasing ill-health and general eccentricity, more isolated. Where Mozart understood that the flesh is weak, confirmed bachelor Beethoven was uncompromising when it came to conjugal virtue. There is no question that Beethoven held most women to an impossible ideal, but in the person of Leonore he was able to embody that ideal.



## ABOUT THE MUSIC



Lotte Lehmann as Leonore/Fidelio

Director Peter Hall once said that Beethoven simply 'goes on just a little too long for the drama'. That, too, was the verdict of Beethoven's friends at the 1805 premiere, who gathered to persuade him to revise – and cut – the piece. Singer Joseph August Röckel left an entertaining account of a meeting that started at seven one evening: 'Although Beethoven's friends were fully prepared for the coming battle they had never before seen him in *such* a fury'. But six hours later, when the composer finally agreed to cut three of the opera's numbers, they all sat down to supper 'no one was in a happier or merrier mood than Beethoven'!

Unbeknown to Sonnleithner, Beethoven engaged Stephan von Breuning, who 'remodelled the whole book...quicken and enlivening the action'. To Sonnleithner, Beethoven claimed to have done the remodeling himself 'to make the opera move more swiftly', explaining that he had '*shortened everything* as much as possible, the *prisoners'* chorus and chiefly numbers of that kind'. This was not quite true.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

The new version, cut from three to two acts, was performed in April 1806 – woefully under-rehearsed owing to the late delivery of the revised score. Röckel claimed Pollyannishly that it was received well by ‘a select group’ in the audience. Characteristically, Beethoven accused the management of the theatre of cheating him of his royalties and withdrew the score, snarling ‘I don’t write for the galleries!’ And there it would almost certainly have rested had not three singers (who would play Pizarro, Rocco and Fernando) asked Beethoven if they could perform the work for their benefit in 1814.

By then Beethoven was writing for the galleries in a big way. After personal crises and creative silence, Beethoven would churn out various noisy patriotic works as the map of Europe was redrawn by the Congress of Vienna. It was in this climate that the revival of *Fidelio* appeared, greeted, as Maynard Solomon says, ‘as a celebration of victory over the Napoleonic forces by the Allies, and as an allegory of the liberation of Europe from the aggressions of the tyrant/usurper.’

This time, writer Georg Friedrich Treitschke revised the libretto to make it as ‘succinct and clear as possible’. But the strengths of the final version, are, first and foremost, musical. The 1814 version has an inexorable trajectory. Specific keys stand for certain characters: Don Pizarro sings in a demonic D minor; Florestan is associated with F minor and Leonore with E major, keys that look close on a keyboard – the third note of their common chords are same – but in terms of sound and classical ‘grammar’ are worlds apart. The characters are archetypes: the jailer Rocco, for instance is not intrinsically evil, but is morally weak – the essential collaborator. Leonore is the hero and as such is accompanied by the three horns which feature in the *Eroica* Symphony.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC



The climactic scene from *Fidelio*, at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris in 1860

One of Beethoven's problems in 1805-6 was caused by his insistence on beginning the work with a powerful overture that outlined the drama as a whole. The *Leonore* Overtures No.2 and, especially, No.3 (the first and second to be written) 'annihilate', to use Donald Tovey's word, the first Act. After the *Sturm und Drang* of these mighty pieces the sub-Mozartian *buffo* scene between Marzelline and Jaquino seems inconsequential. In the 1814 version this (shortened) first scene, after a more appropriate overture, functions to put us off the scent of the ensuing tragedy. An apparently anodyne pastoral comedy, complete with a woman disguised as a boy, passes from light into the darkness of reality. In Act II, this pattern is reversed, and Beethoven underlines this by arranging the key-relationships as he would in a symphony, according to the 'gravitational laws' of classical music. Each key change feels inevitable, particularly when the G major of the couple's ecstatic reunion duet, 'O nameless joy', leads into the blazing C major of the work's finale when Florestan and the other prisoners are released. The effect is not unlike the release of rising C major figures in the finale of the Fifth Symphony. Beethoven may be saying that good will inevitably triumph over tyranny, or be constructing an ideal world which alleviates his loneliness, or both. Ideologues can argue about the message, but the music takes no prisoners.

# BEETHOVEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Indigenous author **Tyson Yunkaporta** has been working with the Simone Young on reimagining Beethoven's only opera for 21st century Australia – but as he explains, it's a story that connects all of us.

*Written by Hugh Robertson*

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Tyson Yunkaporta wears many hats — arts critic, award-winning author, academic — but he would be the first person to tell you that he isn't interested in music. Which makes it all the more fascinating that he has been working closely with Simone Young, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, to write text for this production of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*.

"I haven't got a musical bone in my body. I'm completely tone-deaf, and colour-blind, but I'm somehow an arts critic," says Yunkaporta with a laugh. "I have certain cultural limitations, certain barriers in between me and Beethoven. I'm hearing-impaired too, like him. Music doesn't make much of an impact on me. I understand the theory behind it, and why people like it, but I'm not really into it because it's just some noise to me. I need to be able to see other people's lenses, through other people's eyes, and I need to be able to listen to them deeply.

But when Young got in touch to ask about working together, the connection was immediate. "We just hit it off. She wanted to work with me, and she gave me the brief, and launched in to painting a picture for me of Beethoven that I had never seen before."

"I imagine working with Simone was a bit like seeing colours for the first time. It was like braille for music. She just painted me this picture of not just the opera but the man, and the time, and the history, and the through-line to now. And the other thing was that *she* was through it, her fingerprint of her soul was running through all of that. She did all of that for me in about half an hour, and I was just like, 'Yep. I can write that.'"

# BEETHOVEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

“At the same time, I said, ‘You’re my conductor. My instrument is this screen here, but you are my conductor. You tell me.’ And Simone told me how it all works, and what the instruments mean, and I just *felt* that. She would send me emails about my writing, saying, ‘No — you are too much oboe, I need more French horn.’ And I absolutely get that.”

*Fidelio* is a relatively simple plot, but Beethoven paints it across an enormous canvas, an allegory about individual rights against state tyranny and the yearning for freedom in the human soul — subjects that he was passionate about at the time, as Napoleon (who Beethoven once had greatly admired) had declared himself emperor and was marching his armies across Europe.

It is also a work that, unusually for opera, has undergone many transformations over the centuries. Of all art forms, opera is undoubtedly the most resistant to change. Classical music is almost entirely abstract, so there is no fixed meaning to cleave to; dance and theatre have change baked in to standard practice, as each new choreographer and director tackles works anew. But opera? The inseparability and immutability of the plot, the text and the music makes it very hard indeed to break away and do something new. Opera companies have struggled mightily in recent decades to adapt or alter cornerstones of the repertoire like *Turandot*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Carmen* and many others with outdated views on race and sexual politics in particular. *Fidelio*, by contrast, has undergone many changes and adaptations, not least by Beethoven himself, who wrote three significantly different versions of the opera between 1805 and 1822.

That malleability is one of the things that Yunkaporta most gravitated towards. “The most subversive thing about that opera — and there are a lot of subversive things about that opera, in its content — is that the libretto makes room for spoken parts, that can be recreated locally by local storytellers. It can be recreated in a place, by the people of that place, to ground that opera in place there. I loved that, most of all.”

# BEETHOVEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Almost immediately, Yunkaporta and Young got stuck deep into the major themes of the opera.

“[We started talking] at a time when there was a lot going on, over COVID, and it was amazing being able to talk to somebody who could just talk with were working with those big, historical through lines.”

“We were having a conversation about oppression, and yearning, and injustice, and longing, and love finding a way in horrendous circumstances. And gender, and love, and sex, and death, and murder, and trauma, and how you get through. And the startling things that happen when you get through, or while you are trying to get through, or while you are underneath it. And historically how all that has worked. It’s messy, and bloody, and horrific. And there is this spiky, beautiful loveliness.”

Out of all that chaos came an interesting idea — to insert five pieces of text into the opera. But rather than advancing the plot, or giving context to characters’ motivations, they sit outside Beethoven’s work, reflecting on the opera and its themes from a 21st century perspective.

“Some of the stuff is big picture, and has a big picture feel,” says Yunkaporta. “It seesaws wildly. Some address the relationship between the audience or the musician and the state. Some of them are very, very intimate, and the relationship is between the speaker and the love of their life. It seesaws between massive, nation-level brush strokes and the most intimate brush strokes of your life.”

“This is my understanding of history, and what ties it all together. I’m trying to weave patterns of history together, but in a way to uncover the truths, the pressure points, the leverage points, the triggers within history where different kinds of things happen, different things grow, those reactions that we all have, those movements that are spawned, those desires that are lit, and that desperation that occurs, too. Those phenomena that occur — where are the places these comes out?”

# BEETHOVEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Yunkaporta points out that this isn't the 'Aboriginal *Fidelio*', but of course his response to the work, and his words, are rooted in his own lived experience. "There is nothing here, in any of this, that is specifically talking about Indigenousness, or stuff that people will say, 'Oh yeah — that's a boomerang, that's a didgeridoo, that's Aboriginal.' But it's coming from my life, and from my point of view, so it is Aboriginal. But people will think to their own connection to place, and to people, and their longing for those things if they don't have it or are missing it — which is all of us."

Although this isn't the Aboriginal *Fidelio*, Yunkaporta says that he immediately saw a parallel when interacting with Young in her role as Chief Conductor. "I recognised it, culturally. Not every person in your group knows everything that is going on. Everybody has their role in our families, and in our society — certainly in Aboriginal society. We do our roles, and there are people who have the authority for a place, or an activity, or a particular context, and that constantly shifts. But those people who have the authority, they see the big picture of what is happening there. And you don't see it until the end. And it's the same with a conductor. She is the only one who can see the whole cloth of this thing."

Yunkaporta expands on this when asked what he hopes audiences will take away from the production. "Oh man, it's none of my business," he says. "I am just like one of the instruments. What does the triangle guy expect them to take away? I'm just dinging the triangle when I'm told. People can take what they want away from it. I can tell you what I put in, but I can't tell you what people are going to take out."

"But if I am there with the triangle, and I've got my sheet music in front of me and I'm playing triangle, I'm not hearing everything around me — I'm just watching for when Simone points to me to play that triangle. I'm not going to see the whole thing. But I can't wait to sit back and see how it all comes together."



Simone Young AM  
Photo by Sandra Steh



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **SIMONE YOUNG** AM conductor

Internationally recognised as one of the leading conductors of her generation, Simone Young has this year taken up her position as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, having been Chief Conductor Designate since 2020. From 2005-2015 she was General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg.

An acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, she has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Staatsoper Berlin and in Hamburg. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring Cycle*, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. Her tour to Brisbane with the Hamburg Opera and Ballet, (*Das Rheingold* in concert, and Mahler Symphony No.2 “*Resurrection*”), won her the 2013 Helpmann Award for Best Individual Classical Music Performance.

Simone Young is regularly invited by the world’s great orchestras and has led the New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Stockholm, New Japan, Helsinki, and Dresden Philharmonic Orchestras; the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; Orchestre de Paris; Staatskapelle Dresden; the BBC, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, and National Symphony Orchestra; and the Orchestra Nacional de Espana, Madrid; and the Barcelona Symphony and Orchestra Nacional de Catalonia. In Australia she has conducted the West Australian, Adelaide, Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras and the Australian World Orchestra.

Highly sought-after by the world’s leading opera houses, most recently Simone Young has appeared at the Opera Nationale de Paris (*Salome and Parsifal*); Vienna State Opera (*Peter Grimes*); Bavarian State Opera, Munich (*Tannhäuser*); Berlin State Opera (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Zurich Opera (*Salome*).

Simone Young has been Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and Principal Guest Conductor of the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra.

Her many accolades include Honorary Member (Ehrenmitglied) of the Vienna State Opera, the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales, Griffith University and Monash University, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, and the Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **TYSON YUNKAPORTA** writer

Tyson Yunkaporta is a researcher, arts critic, poet, and traditional wood carver. He works as a senior research fellow in Indigenous Knowledges and is the founder of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Lab at Deakin University. He also hosts a podcast called *The Other Others*, on which he yarns with guests about how Indigenous knowledge can solve the world's problems.

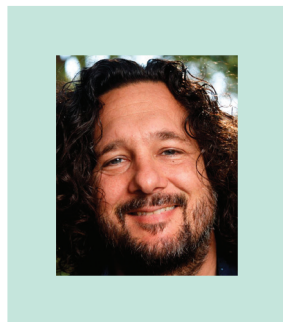
Yunkaporta's recent book *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*, is all about identifying and learning from the patterns of creation.

*Sand Talk* has sometimes been described as an exercise in "reverse-anthropology", because rather than looking at Indigenous knowledge systems and practices from a Western perspective, Yunkaporta examines Western knowledge systems and practices from an Indigenous perspective.

He is careful about what knowledge he shares in the process, explaining that symbolic knowledge is often restricted (for example, by age or birth order) or is only appropriate for a specific places or groups (for example, members of particular clans).

However, he shares enough to help his readers start to recognise patterns in the world around them and to "come into Aboriginal ways of thinking and knowing, as a framework for the understandings needed in the co-creation of sustainable systems."

*Tyson Yunkaporta's original texts for Fidelio were commissioned with generous support from the Oranges & Sardines Foundation.*



Tyson Yunkaporta,  
photo by James Henry

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **VIRGINIA GAY** narrator

Virginia Gay graduated WAAPA, then spent four years pretending to be a nurse on *All Saints*, six months pretending to be Julia Gillard in the STC's *Wharf Revue*, and then five years on *Winners & Losers*, where she pretended to know a lot about high finance. That last one, particularly, was a stretch.

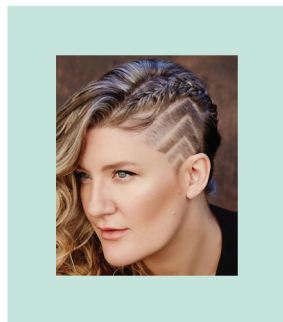
She won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Actress for *Calamity Jane*, starred in the film *Judy & Punch* (also starring Mia Wasikowska) which premiered at Sundance, and wrote and directed her first short film *Paper Cut*, which made 2018 Tropfest finals. She starred in *Savage River* (dir. Jocelyn Moorehouse) for Aquarius Films (ABC, Paramount+), which also starred Katherine Langford, and *Safe Home* (SBS and Imogen Banks), also starring Aisha Dee.

In 2020 she wrote two new plays: an adaptation of *Cyrano* for MTC which which sold out its triumphant Oct 2022 run, and *The Boomkak Panto* for Belvoir which which was a smash hit for Christmas 2021. She starred in both and also co-directed *The Boomkak Panto*.

She's been an apocalyptic squid in Eddie Perfect's *Vivid White*, a prize bitch in *The Beast*, every stop on the boganto-hipster spectrum in *On The Production Of Monsters*, and Nancye Hayes' granddaughter in *Minnie and Liraz*, all for the MTC. She played pacifist, suffragist, and feminist Vida Goldstein in *The War That Changed Us* (ABC), and a fast-talking 1930s photographer in *High Society* (Hayes Theatre Company). She had a sold-out season at the Opera House of *Cautionary Tales for Children* (Arena Theatre Company), and was Bea Miles, iconic (and homeless) Sydney eccentric, in the immersive-theatre experience *Hidden Sydney*.

She has written two solo cabaret shows, *Songs To Self-Destruct To* and *Dirty Pretty Songs*, both of which sold out at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, and which toured nationally and internationally, most notably headlining the Famous Spiegel tent at the 2012 Edinburgh Fringe.

She makes regular appearances on Mark Humphries' sketches for *7:30* (ABC), *The Book Club* (ABC), Adam Hills' *In Gordon Street Tonight* (ABC), *Good News Week* (Channel 10), *Studio at The Memo* (Foxtel), *The Unbelievable Truth* (Channel 7), was team captain for *CRAM!* (Channel 10). She was extremely proud to play Magda Szubanski's wife on Channel 9's *After The Verdict*, and will appear in a series of increasingly unhinged cameos on Channel 7's new sketch show *We Interrupt This Broadcast* in 2023.



Virginia Gay,  
photo by Sally Flegg

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **ELZA VAN DEN HEEVER** Leonore

South African-born soprano Elza van den Heever has established herself unchallenged as one of the world's leading singers of her repertoire.

At the beginning of the 2022/23 season, Elza van den Heever made her highly anticipated role debut in the new production of *Salome* (Simone Young/Lydia Steier) at the Opéra de Paris. The Festspielhaus Baden-Baden presents the artist as the Empress in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* conducted by Kirill Petrenko. At the Metropolitan New York, she will make her role debut as Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer* and will subsequently guest with this role at the Santa Fe Festival. The Orchestre Philharmonique de Montpellier has won the soprano to sing Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*.

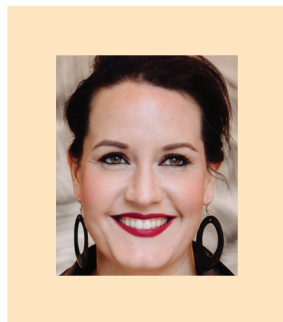
In the recent past Elza van den Heever caused a sensation in presenting three important role debuts: Julia in *La Vestale* at the Theater an der Wien under the baton of Bertrand de Billy, Marie in *Wozzeck* with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting at the MET and Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in concert performances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

Audiences in Vienna, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Zurich, Munich, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Bordeaux celebrate the soprano for her outstanding achievements. Her vocal skills allow her a wide-ranging repertoire from Handel (Rodelinda), Mozart (Vitellia, Elettra, Donna Anna), Beethoven (Leonore in *Fidelio*), the Bel canto repertoire (*Norma*, *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*), Verdi (Elisabetta, Desdemona, Elvira in *Ernani*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*), Puccini (Giorgetta in *Suor Angelica*), Wagner (Elsa, Senta) to Strauss (Empress, Chrysothemis), Berg (Marie in *Wozzeck*) and Britten (Ellen Orford).

Besides her opera engagements, Elza van den Heever is a sought-after concert singer. She works regularly with conductors such as Simone Young, Kirill Petrenko, Bertrand de Billy and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Elza van den Heever was a member of the ensemble of the Oper Frankfurt from 2008 to 2013, where she was able to establish her wide-ranging repertoire. She gave her debut in Europe with Giorgetta in Puccini's *Il trittico*.

Publications include a CD recording of her interpretation of Giorgetta under the baton of Bertrand de Billy (*Capriccio*) and a DVD recording of her debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda*.



Elza van den Heever,  
photo by Juyang Chen

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **SIMON O'NEILL** Florestan

Simon O'Neill is a Fulbright Scholar and became Officer of New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours list. He performs at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala Milan, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Wiener Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Hamburgische Staatsoper, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals; under such celebrated conductors as Barenboim, Runnicles, Nagano, Levine, Luisi, Thielemann, Muti and Petrenko. His many roles include Lohengrin, Parsifal, Siegfried, Siegmund (*Die Walküre*), Florestan (*Fidelio*), Boris (*Katya Kabanova*), Kaiser (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and Soltzing (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*).

Concert highlights include Florestan in Rome with Sir Antonio Pappano, Siegfried in Hong Kong (van Zweden), *Glagolitic Mass* in Prague (Inkinen) and Berlin (Sir Simon Rattle), Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*) at the Ravinia Festival (Conlon), *Gurrelieder*, *Fidelio* and Mahler 8 at the BBC Proms, *Gurrelieder* (Runnicles), *Die Walküre* (Davis), Mahler 8 (Harding) and *Siegfried* (Elder) in concert at the Edinburgh Festival, *Das Lied von der Erde* with the London Symphony Orchestra (Rattle), and Siegmund with the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and Dallas Symphony Orchestras.

Simon recently made an acclaimed house and role debut at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in the title-role of *Tristan und Isolde*. He made another house debut with the same role at Santa Fe Opera in July 2022. Future 2022-23 season highlights will include concert performances of *Fidelio* with Sydney Symphony Orchestra, performances of Siegfried with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and later with Sinfonieorchester Basel, and semi-staged performances of *Katya Kabanova* with London Symphony Orchestra and Simon Rattle.



Simon O'Neill, photo by Albert Comper Photography

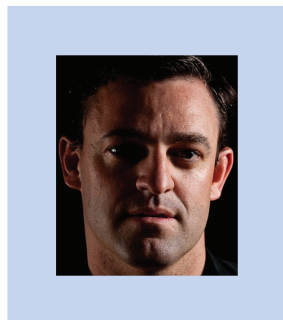
# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **JAMES ROSER** Don Pizarro

Baritone James Roser initially began a career as an environmental scientist, having completed a Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) at the University of NSW, before beginning his musical studies. The recipient of a number of major singing awards including the Mietta Song Recital Award, Vienna State Opera Award and Britten-Pears Young Artist Award, Roser's operatic repertoire includes the title role in *Rigoletto*, Beckmesser (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Gunther (*Götterdämmerung*), Wotan (*Das Rheingold*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Don Giovanni, Il Conte (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Wiedhopf (*Die Vögel*), Owen Wingrave, Peter (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Johann (*Werther*), Schaunard (*La Bohème*), Der Feenkönig and Harald (*Die Feen*). He has performed with the Wiener Staatsoper, Staatstheater Cottbus, Tiroler Festspiele Erl, Victorian Opera, Opera Australia and made his musical theatre debut singing the role of Curly in *Oklahoma!* at the Rainhill Music Festival.

Following his acclaimed performance of Amfortas with Victorian Opera in 2019, this year sees very welcome returns to Australia for James to perform the roles of Giorgio Germont (*La Traviata*) with State Opera South Australia (a company debut) and Don Pizarro (*Fidelio*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (another company debut) under the baton of Chief Conductor, Simone Young.

Some of James' most notable engagements include the role of Rigoletto in the Austrian television series *Kultur mit Holender: Wie eine Oper entsteht*, a broadcast of the same opera on Servus TV Austria, and the role of Wiedhopf in Walter Braunfels' *Die Vögel*, conducted by Lothar Zagrosek, televised on ORF. James is a passionate Art Song and Lieder advocate and performs regularly in recital throughout Europe and Australia, having performed for Oxford Lieder Festival, Franz Schubert Institut, Gesellschaft für Musiktheater Wien, Beethovenhaus Wien, Artsong NSW, Chamber Music Australia, and Aldeburgh Music Festival. In concert, he has been a soloist in Corrette's *Laudate Dominum*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, Handel's *Messiah*, JM Haydn's *Requiem*, Faure's *Requiem*, Saint-Saens' *Oratorio de Noel*, Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus*, and JS Bach Cantatas and *St. Matthew Passion*.



James Roser

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **JONATHAN LEMALU** Rocco

Jonathan Lemalu is a New Zealand-born Samoan who graduated from London's Royal College of Music where he has been named an honorary fellow. A joint winner of the 2002 Kathleen Ferrier award and the recipient of the 2002 Royal Philharmonic Society's Award for Young Artist of the Year, he has worked with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Colin Davis, Zubin Mehta, Valery Gergiev, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Vladimir Jurowski, Sir Roger Norrington, Bolton, Dutoit, Joel and Summers. Jonathan has recently been made an ONZM for his services to opera.

Jonathan performs at world renowned opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Chicago Lyric, Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Australia, and Glyndebourne. He has also performed at the Salzburg Festival. His concert and recital performances span both classical and contemporary repertoire and include the Berlin, New York, Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Strasbourg and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras, and the New Zealand, London, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Paris and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras with world renowned conductors.

Jonathan's debut recital disc was awarded the *Gramophone Magazine* Debut Artist of the Year award. He subsequently released his first solo recording, with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, as well as a recital disc with Malcolm Martineau, also featuring the Belcea Quartet.

Highlights this season include Jonathan's house debut as Sacristan (*Tosca*) at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Sarastro (*Magic Flute*) for Welsh National Opera, Rocco (*Fidelio*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and Brander (*La Damnation de Faust*) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Edward Gardner. On the concert platform, recent and upcoming performances include *The Seasons* for the Academy of Ancient Music, and Verdi's Requiem with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



Jonathan Lemalu

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

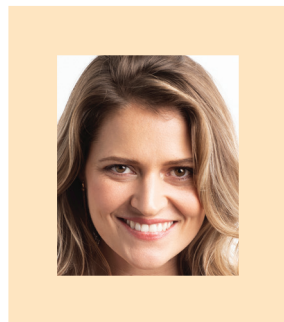
## **SAMANTHA CLARKE** Marzelline

Australian/British soprano Samantha Clarke is a recent graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In the 2021/22 season Samantha sings the title role in *The Golden Cockerel* for the Adelaide Festival, Flower Maiden Parsifal for Opera North and Adina *L'elisir d'amore* for West Green House Opera. On the concert platform she appears in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and as Marzelline (*Fidelio*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young, as well as with the Melbourne, Tasmanian and West Australian symphony orchestras.

Her recent engagements have included her Proms debut (Mozart's Requiem), Tytania (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) for the Grange Festival, Musetta (*La bohème*) for Opera North and the title role in the Buxton Festival's award-winning pasticcio Georgiana. For British Youth Opera she has sung Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*).

Future seasons see her sing the title role in *La Traviata* for the West Australian Opera, return to the Grange Festival and make her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Samantha was the recipient of an Independent Opera Voice Scholarship in 2016 and a Voice Fellowship in 2019, and she won the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and 2nd Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2019 Grange Festival International Singing Competition. Her previous awards have included the 2017 RNCM Gold Medal, the Nora Goodridge Developing Artist Award, the Dame Eva Turner Award and the Michael and Joyce Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss. She is supported by the Australian Music Foundation.



Samantha Clarke, photo by Benjamin Ealovega



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **PELHAM ANDREWS** Don Fernando

Pelham Andrews trained in the UK, Germany and Australia, and is a leading classical bass singer. He has been a soloist for such companies and ensembles as the Melbourne, Adelaide, Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, the Auckland Philharmonia, Aalborg Symphony, Opera Australia, State Opera South Australia, Victorian Opera, English National Opera, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Napier Civic Choir and Australian Interschool Choir Festival. His performances range from the core Italian, French, German and English operatic, sacred and symphonic repertoire through to lesser-known classical works, contemporary compositions, and traditional folk music. His key operatic roles include Timur (*Turandot*), Colline (*La bohème*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Lodovico (*Otello*), King (*Aida*) and Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*), performed chiefly with Opera Australia, State Opera South Australia, and the Auckland Philharmonia.

Pelham was a Young Artist with State Opera South Australia and has performed extensively with the company in a variety of roles which include Friedrich Bhaer (*Little Women*), Tio Sarvaor (*La Vida Breve*), Basilio (*The Barber of Seville*), Nourabad (*The Pearl Fishers*), Lester Lamb (*Cloudstreet*), Count Ribbing (*Un ballo in maschera*), Bonze (*Madama Butterfly*), Mikado (*The Mikado*), Betto (*Gianni Schicchi*), Stationmaster (*The Station*), Ben (*Madeline Lee*) and many others.

Pelham Andrews featured in the 2021 Adelaide Festival of Arts as bass soloist in *A Child of Our Time* (Tippett), and as Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, returning in 2022 as bass soloist in the acclaimed premiere of *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan*. He will feature in the 2023 Festival as bass soloist for the Zurich Ballet's Verdi Requiem.

Pelham's most recent appearances include Judd/Bonner in *Voss*, Colline in *La bohème* and Baron Douphol in *La traviata* for State Opera South Australia, a recital: Songs from the Sea, also for SOSA, and as bass soloist in Mozart's Requiem (Queensland Symphony Orchestra), Handel's *Messiah* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra) and the Cantatas of JS Bach (Adelaide Cantata Band).



Pelham Andrews

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **NICHOLAS JONES** Jaquino

Brilliant young tenor Nicholas Jones recently won the Green Room Award for his portrayal of David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for Opera Australia. He was nominated for a Helpmann Award for this same role.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and Herald-Sun Aria finalist, Nicholas' other roles for the national company have included: Remendado in *Carmen*, Marasquin in *Two Weddings, One Bride*, Albazar in *Il Turco in Italia* and several roles in Shostokovich's *The Nose*. He also sang Tamino and Almaviva in Opera Australia's touring productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

In 2016, Nicholas created the role of Fish Lamb in the world premiere of Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* - composed by George Palmer and presented by State Opera South Australia.

He sang Male Chorus in Victorian Opera's *The Rape of Lucretia*, Britten's *Canticles* and Stefan Cassomenos' *Art of Thought* for Melbourne Recital Centre, Soldier in *The Emperor of Atlantis* and Barnardo in *Erwin und Elmire* for IOpera, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings* at ANAM and Hadyn's *The Creation* for Sydney Philharmonia; Nick was also an original cast member of Deborah Cheetham's indigenous opera *Pecan Summer*.

Most recently, he sang Michael Driscoll in the world premiere of *Whiteley* and Tony in *West Side Story* for Opera Australia and Tom in *Christina's World* for State Opera South Australia.

In 2022, Nicholas sings Tsarevich Gvidon (*The Golden Cockerel*) and Harry (Voss) in Adelaide, Handel's *Messiah* in Sydney and Adelaide, Jaquino (*Fidelio*) with the Sydney Symphony and returns to Opera Australia as Almaviva.

Nicholas is the current recipient of the Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award.



Nicholas Jones

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## LOUIS HURLEY First Prisoner

After completing a Bachelor of Music and Graduate Diploma of Music at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), tenor Louis Hurley furthered his studies, as a Hazell Scholar, with a Master of Music at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London under the tutelage of Adrian Thompson. Whilst in London, Louis performed at both the Wigmore Hall and the Barbican Hall.

In 2022, Louis makes a number of important debuts including *Messiah* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, First Prisoner (*Fidelio*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Chief Conductor Simone Young, Haydn's Nelson Mass with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and will be heard in recital at the Port Fairy Spring Festival. He will also return to Pinchgut Opera, where he is the inaugural The Humanity Foundation Taryn Fiebig Scholar, to perform the roles of Acis (*Acis and Galatea*), Arcas (*Medée*), and Tibrino (*Oronthea*).

Most recently Louis has been heard at the Adelaide Festival in the role of Flute in Neil Armfield's production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in the Montverdi *Vespers*, *The Spiritual Forest* and *Oronthea* with Pinchgut Opera. Further roles include the title role in *Albert Herring* and Pluto/Mercure (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) for Melbourne Conservatorium; Vitellozzo (*Lucrezia Borgia*), Jaquino (*Fidelio*) and Don Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Melbourne Opera; Giuseppe (*La Traviata*) for West Australian Opera, and Older Son (*Dead Man Walking*, Heggie) at the Barbican, London.

On the concert platform he has been heard in Dvořák's Requiem and Mass in D, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and in song cycles of Schubert (*Winterreise*), Schumann (*Dichterliebe*), Beethoven (*An die ferne Geliebte*), Brahms (*Liebeslieder Waltzer*) and Britten's Canticules.

The recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, Louis was the winner of the 2019 Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Competition and the Hans & Petra Henkell Award at the 2019 National Liederfest. A Melba Opera Trust Scholar in 2020 and 2021, as the recipient of the Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship, he is also an alumnus of Melbourne Opera's Richard Divall Emerging Artist Programme, where he was recently made an Associate Artist.



Louis Hurley,  
photo by Eve Wilson

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **CHRISTOPHER HILLIER** Second Prisoner

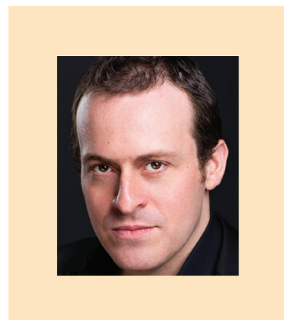
Christopher Hillier's most recent appearances for Opera Australia have included Zurga in a new production of *The Pearl Fishers*, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, The Convict in *The Rabbits*, Dancaïro in *Carmen* and The Count in their national tour of *The Marriage of Figaro*. In concert, he sang The Celebrant (*Bernstein's Mass*) at the Sydney Opera House, Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* for Sydney Philharmonia and undertook a tour to China as Papageno (*The Magic Flute*). For the national company in 2018, he took principal roles in *Rigoletto*, *The Merry Widow*, *La bohème* and *Metamorphosis* returning in 2019 for *Turandot*, *Salome*, *Rigoletto*, *Il viaggio a Reims*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Andrea Chénier*.

Christopher graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium with a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours in 2006 and the National Opera Studio (London) in 2007.

He is the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, most notably the Opera Foundation Covent Garden Scholarship in 2006.

He has a wide and varied concert repertoire including Handel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* and Haydn's *Mass in Time of War*. He has performed regularly for Sydney Philharmonia, Art Song NSW, the Joan Sutherland Society of Sydney and many other societies in the UK, Italy, Germany and Australia; he sang the baritone solos in the *Requiems* of Fauré and Duruflé for the New Zealand Chamber Choir in Wellington.

He joined the principal ensemble of Opera Australia in 2012 – singing Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers*, Jupiter in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Christian in *Un ballo in maschera* and the title role in *Don Giovanni* for OA's touring production; he also made his international stage debut as Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* in Tokyo, Japan.



Christopher Hillier

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **BRETT WEYMARK** OAM chorus master

Brett Weymark is one of Australia's foremost choral conductors. Appointed Artistic and Music Director of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs in 2003, he has conducted the Choirs throughout Australia and internationally. He has also conducted the Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian symphony orchestras, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Sydney Youth Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic and productions for WAAPA, Pacific Opera and OzOpera. He has performed with Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Song Company and Musica Viva. He has recorded widely for the ABC and conducted film scores, including *Happy Feet*, *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Australia*.

He studied singing and conducting at Sydney University and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and continued conducting studies with Simon Halsey, Vance George, Daniel Barenboim and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, amongst others.

His repertoire at SPC has included Bach's Passions and Christmas Oratorio, the requiems of Mozart, Verdi, Duruflé and Fauré and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. He is champion of Australian composers and has premiered works by Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin, John Peterson, Daniel Walker, Rosalind Page, Peter Sculthorpe, Andrew Schultz and Ross Edwards. In 2011, he premiered his own work *Brighton to Bondi*. He has also conducted musical theatre programs including Bernstein's *Candide*.

He was chorus master for the Adelaide Festival productions for *Saul* (2017), *Hamlet* (2018) and *Requiem* (2020) and has prepared choirs for Sir Charles Mackerras, Zubin Mehta, Edo de Waart, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Sir Simon Rattle. Recent conducting highlights include *Sweeney Todd* (West Australian Opera), *Jandamarra* by Paul Stanhope and Steve Hawke (SSO), Michael Tippett's *A Child Of Our Time* (Adelaide Festival) and *Carousel* (State Opera South Australia).

In 2001, he was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal. In 2021, Brett was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the performing arts through music.

Brett is passionate about singing and the role that music plays in both the individual's wellbeing and the overall health and vitality of a community's culture. He believes music can transform lives and should be accessible to all.



Brett Weymark,  
photo by Keith Saunders

# SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

## SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK OAM

**Brett Weymark OAM** Artistic and Music Director

**Dr Elizabeth Scott** Associate Music Director

**Tim Cunniffe** Assistant Chorus Master and  
Principal Rehearsal Pianist

**Claire Howard Race, Estella Roche**

Rehearsal Pianists

**Tanja Binggeli** Language Coach

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia's finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House. Led by Music Director Brett Weymark OAM since 2003, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises of three auditioned and three community choirs that perform a range of repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. It presents its own season of concerts with leading conductors, soloists and orchestras.

In 2002, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Sir Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010 to celebrate the Choirs' 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Choirs perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concert season every year as they have done for over 80 years.

In 2020, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs celebrated 100 years. Despite the restrictions on live performances in that year, it pressed ahead with a commissioning project – 100 Minutes of New Australian Music – featuring composers Elena Kats-Chernin and Deborah Cheetham, among others. 2021 saw a cautious but bold return to live choral performances. In 2022, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs has a full season at the Sydney Town Hall, St Andrew's Cathedral and Sydney Opera House Concert Hall with programs including Mozart's Requiem, Bach's Mass in B minor, Eric Whitacre's *The Sacred Veil*, Handel's *Messiah* and a tour to Christchurch, New Zealand.

# SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

## SOPRANOS

Veronica Alfano  
Eva Berger  
Noelle Betterley  
Georgina Bitcon  
Olga Bodrova  
Jodie Boehme  
Catherine Bryant  
Anne Cooke  
Nat Crane  
Pam Cunningham  
Rouna Daley  
Rachel Evans  
Karina Falland  
Susan Farrell  
Josephine Giles  
Natalie Gooneratne  
Jessica Lee  
Yvette Leonard  
Maria Lopes  
Lindy McMahon  
Bernadette Mitchell  
Stephanie Mooney  
Sarah Moore  
Merryl Neille  
Jayne Oishi  
Ruth Ongkowijoyo  
Dympna Paterson  
Karen Pearce  
Jane Prosser  
Elsa Rapon  
Georgia Rivers  
Jolanda Rotteveel  
Joanna Warren  
Sara Watts  
Genni Wetherell

## ALTOS

Amanda Baird  
Debra Baker  
Gillian Behrens  
Gillian Downes-  
Morgan  
Claire Duffy  
Lisa Elias  
Jan Fawke  
Liz Fuggle  
Jennifer Gillman  
Kathryn Harwood  
Tracey Jordan  
Rachel Maiden  
Donna McIntosh  
Maggie McKelvey  
Alyson Moore  
Penelope Morris  
Pepe Newton  
Marj O'Callaghan  
Catherine O'Grady  
Jonquil Ritter  
Virginia Rowlands  
Debbie Scholem  
Meg Shaw  
Jan Shaw  
Megan Solomon  
Marianna Wong  
Noriko Yamanaka  
Priscilla Yuen

## TENORS

Matthew Allchurch  
Langzi Chiu  
Daniel Comarmond  
Malcolm Day

Robert Elliott  
Michael Gray  
Tony Green  
Steven Hankey  
Bennett Haskew  
Boghos Keleshian  
Michael Kertesz  
Emanuel Kunick  
James Lane  
Oscar Ley  
Vincent Lo  
Frank Maio  
Alistair McDermott  
Dimitry Moraitis  
Tristan Spiteri  
Martin Stebbings  
Robert Thomson  
Nicholas Tong  
Alex Walter  
Andy Wang  
Christopher Whitfeld  
Isaac Wong  
Mark Wong

## BASSES

Jock Baird  
Edwin Carter  
Andy Clare  
Julian Coghlan  
Daryl Colquhoun  
Paul Couvret  
Phillip Cullen  
Robert Cunningham  
Ian Davies  
Nicholas Davison  
James Devenish

Roderick Enriquez  
Tom Forrester-Paton  
Andy Gibson  
Robert Green  
Simon Harris  
Scott Hekking  
David Jacobs  
Jonathon Kelley  
Bruce Lane  
Jeffrey Lock  
Johann Loibl  
Philippe Mayoraz  
Robert Mitchell  
Samuel Morrell-  
Feitelberg  
Finnian Murphy  
Eric Nelson  
Rafi Owen  
Edward Phillips  
Daniel Rae  
Michael Ryan  
Peter Templeton  
Ben Waters  
Bruce Watson  
Arthur Winckler  
Jonathan Wood  
Lachlan Wrenford



Photo by Keith Saunders





# SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS

## AN OPERA IN CONCERT

Wagner's extraordinary vision would take pages to describe – it should only be experienced, and ideally, as a purely musical performance.

A groundbreaking music drama that took Wagner twenty-six years to complete, the *Ring Cycle* is an epic through and through. *Das Rheingold*, the first in the four-opera cycle, sets the tone for the story – a cosmic struggle between Norse gods, heroes and mythical creatures over a cursed ring that bestows world domination.

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**Thursday 16 November 2023, 7pm**

**Saturday 18 November 2023, 7pm**

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

Special Event

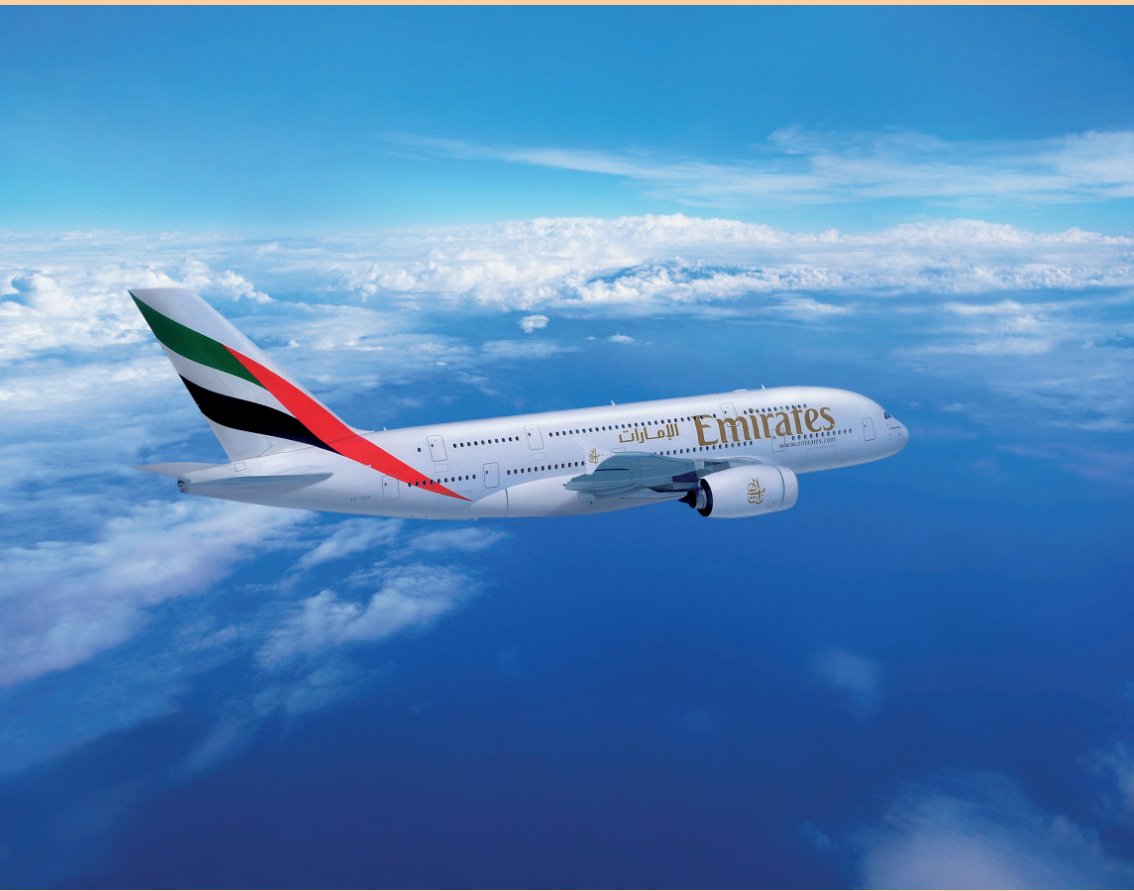
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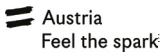
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