NELSON CIVIC CHOIR presents

2 - 5 MAY 2024 NELSON CENTRE OF MUSICAL ARTS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



As a frequent visitor and vacationer to Nelson over the years I was always pleasantly surprised when a trip would coincide with the showing at the State Cinema of one of the operas from the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Quite often it would be a showing of a production that I had performed in whilst singing with the Lyric Opera of Chicago for many years, as many of the productions were co-owned and produced by these two great New York and Chicago opera houses. Both opera houses have similar size stages and nowadays it makes more financial sense to share the costs of creating and owning these massive productions. Opera is very expensive to produce!

And so, when I moved to Nelson back in 2021 I thought that the occasional Met Opera broadcast at the State Cinema and maybe an occasional trip to a big city would be where I would need to go to get my opera fix. But in living and working here in Nelson for the past several years I have come to discover that not only is there an audience here for 'real' opera, but that there is also enough local talent to be able to mount opera concerts such as these Opera Festival Gala Concerts ... and maybe, possibly one day, even a future fully staged production. Wouldn't that be fun!

The cast of players participating in this four day mini Opera Festival are mostly local orchestral players and choir members, but we also did not have to look very far for our wonderfully talented soloists, all of whom have connections to the area.

We are so fortunate to have such talent here at the Top Of The South that we can present four days of opera related events. This also means that YOU don't have to travel to distant places to hear music from many of the greatest operas ever written.

It has been a joy and a delight to bring together people from several different choirs and orchestras in the region as well as soloists, actors and artists, to present for you a mini festival of opera typically only seen and heard in the larger musical centres around the world. And it's happening right here in sunny Nelson. Enjoy!

Jason Balla Music & Artistic Director



INTRODUCTION



Ravishingly beautiful orchestral music, exhilarating chorus music, arias and duets that draw us into worlds we can only imagine ...

Music and Artistic Director

Jason Balla shares a lifetime of experiences on the international opera stage and brings to life some of the most well-known and beloved operatic favourites. The Nelson Civic Choir is joined by the Nelson Male Voice Choir, an orchestra comprised of many of the best orchestral players in the Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough regions and a trio of accomplished opera singers from near and far and with a range of international experience on the operatic stage both nationally and abroad.

Masterclass - Opera and Broadway

Vocal coach and Music Director Jason Balla is joined by pianist Kyoko Takashima and singers Rosemary Galton, Olivia Starrenburg and Aaron Borcovsky, performing and working on a range of songs and arias from opera to Broadway musicals. An informative insight into performance preparation demonstrating how singers prepare music for a performance or a staged opera production.

Live Lounge – Opera/Jazz Fusion

A selection of well-known operatic tunes presented in a more jazzy and casual style illustrating the versatility of some of the world's most beloved operatic tunes and featuring some of Nelson's finest local jazz musicians. Blurring the lines between opera and jazz, singer/pianist Jason Balla is joined by soprano Carleen Ebbs and local Nelson musicians Raffaele Bandoli, Brett Holland, Louis Lucas-Perry and Nick Van Dijk in a blend of music by Puccini, Mozart, Gershwin, Weill and others.

Opera Gala Concerts

The combined forces of the Nelson Civic Choir and Nelson Male Voice Choir are joined by three distinguished opera singers and accompanied by a full orchestra to take you on a journey through some of the most exciting and moving operatic landscapes.

With Mozart we visit Seville, Spain and the Island of Crete. We meet up with Puccini at the Café Momus in Paris on Christmas Eve before heading to a church in Rome via a quick visit to a house on a hill in Nagasaki, Japan. Verdi leads us off the beaten track and to a gypsy camp in Zaragozza, Spain on the way to a monastery near Cordoba before being exiled by the Babylonians and ending up on the banks of the river Euphrates. Coming out of exile we find ourselves transiting once again through Italy where we end up in another church, this time on Easter morning in a Sicilian village. Then, after a short detour to Bruges, Belgium we end up for one final party at Violetta's apartment in Paris.

Along the way you will meet wounded soldiers returning from war, a flirtatious young woman with a penchant for older men and a shopping addiction, a chief of Police lusting after an opera diva – and in church, too! A woman scorned, wealthy men attracted to lovely young ladies, young love, old love, an exiled peoples longing to be home and free. Come meet some of the many characters depicted through music and drama in a concert of operatic favourites.



MASTERCLASS 2 MAY 12.30PM



JASON BALLA - VOCAL COACH

In the early part of his career Jason was very fortunate to have been able to participate as a student singer in many masterclasses given by opera stars such as Dame Joan Sutherland, Nicolai Gedda, Ileana Cotrubas, Dame Emma Kirkby, and many more. But the learning did not stop there, and a career spent on stage with singers such as Placido Domingo, Renee Fleming, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and countless others has provided Jason with the knowledge and interest in sharing that experience with others and, in particular, through the lens of a public masterclass. He's always pleased to see the discovery and learning process live for the participants as well as the audience.



ROSEMARY GALTON - SOPRANO

British soprano Rosemary Galton is a versatile musician with extensive experience as a soloist and a consort singer, specialising in the Baroque repertoire. Recent solo appearances include Bach's *St John Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*, Rameau's *Castor e Pollux*, Purcell's *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*, and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. On the opera stage she has sung in the chorus for Ryedale Festival Opera in the UK and Zezere Arts Festival in Portugal.



AARON BUKOWSKI - BARITONE

Aaron started singing at nine years old with his primary school choir. Throughout his youth he sang with many different choirs—at one point being part of five separate choirs at once, including the New Zealand Secondary Schools Choir. Through singing Aaron travelled to wonderful places including Japan, America, Canada and Malaysia and was incredibly lucky to receive the chance to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York. He has enjoyed singing some jazz, country and pop music but regularly falls back to his classically trained roots.



OLIVIA STARRENBURG - SOPRANO

Soprano Olivia Starrenburg studied at the New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) under Australian Soprano Lisa Harper-Brown. While at NZSM she sang the role of the Sorceress in their production of *Dido and Aeneas*. She was awarded the 'John Bond Trophy for Most Promising Voice' at the New Zealand Aria competition. Olivia was selected to attend the 2015 New Zealand Opera School where she worked with eminent teachers and coaches from around the world.



ΚΥΟΚΟ ΤΛΚΛSΗΙΜΛ - ΛCCOMPANIST

Kyoko Takashima was born in Japan. She graduated from Osaka College of Music in Japan and enriched her skills by participating in the Summer Academy at The Mozarteum University of Salzburg in Austria. For approximately 40 years Kyoko was a piano lecturer at Osaka Aoyama University and an accompanist for vocalists in the postgraduate course at Osaka College of Music. Kyoko actively contributed to the Sakai City Opera as a committee member and participated in various opera productions in Osaka, while also showcasing her talent through numerous solo recitals and piano concerts. She also gained international experience by accompanying solo artists in countries such as Austria, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, and the USA. In March 2021 she relocated to Nelson.



LIVE LOUNGE OPERA/JAZZ FUSION $_{3 MAY 5PM}$

Summertime by George Gershwin from Porgy and Bess 1934 - Carleen Ebbs
Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II from Showboat 1927 - Carleen Ebbs
Youkali - Tango Habanera by Kurt Weill 1934 - Carleen Ebbs
Mon Coeur by Camille Saint- Saens from Samson and Dalilah 1877 - Jason Balla
Largo al Factotum by Gioachino Rossini from The Barber of Seville 1816 - Raffaele Bandoli and Louis Lucas-Perry
Quando M'en Vo' by Giacomo Puccini from La Boheme 1896 - Nick Van Dijk and Raffaele Bandoli
Nessun Dorma by Giacomo Puccini from Turandot 1924 - Nick Van Dijk and Raffaele Bandoli
Una Furtiva Lagrima by Gaetano Donizetti from L'elisir d'amore 1832 - Brett Holland
Un Bel Di Vedremo - Giacomo Puccini from Madama Butterfly 1904 - Brett Holland
Habanera by Georges Bizet from Carmen 1875 - Brett Holland



JASON BALLA

One of the benefits of having spent most of his career in Chicago is that Chicago is one of the major jazz centres in North America. When slavery ended many moved North to New York and Chicago, bringing their musical heritage and blending it with the new, modern music of the early 20th Century – Jazz. Many of the musicians Jason lived and worked with in Chicago often *Jazzed* up opera and *Opera' d* up jazz. It seems to be a curious blend of opposing styles that somehow manages to offer almost limitless possibilities of expression.

CARLEEN EBBS

Carleen first came to singing through Irish folk singing with her father and choral singing at school. Both instilled a love for exploring and performing multiple genres of music. While in London, Carleen was part of a vocal trio which presented thematic programmes incorporating folk and Baroque to jazz and pop in interesting three part arrangements with multi instrumentalists, blurring the boundaries between classical and other musical worlds.





RAFFAELE BANDOLI

Raffaele was born in Faenza, Italy. He completed his musical studies at the Conservatory of Music Fratelli Malerbi in Lugo. After study and playing in Chicago and Italy Raffaele moved to Nelson where he collaborates with the Nelson Symphony Orchestra and Nelson City Brass. Raffaele currently teaches trumpet and cornet to private students and enjoys playing with the soul-funk local band Sun City Soul.

BRETT HOLLAND

Brett Holland is a local musician and music teacher. He enjoys creativity through music with composition, songwriting and arranging. His main modalities are jazz and modern fingerstyle guitar. Brett's style has been shaped through mentoring with international guitar icon Tommy Emmanuel.





LOUIS LUCAS-PERRY

Pianist Louis Lucas-Perry has performed in many concerts in the Nelson and Wellington regions. A recent international achievement was at the 2024 Aegio International Piano Competition in Toronto, where he won First Prize in the Sonata Category and Second in the Grand Prix. He is highly valued locally for his concert performances and work as accompanist for local choirs, including the Nelson Civic Choir and the Nelson Male Voice Choir.

NICK VAN DIJK

Nick Van Dijk has been a performer and educator for 3 decades including bands, orchestras, TV and sound recordings. He holds a MMus from Victoria university and lectured in Jazz at New Zealand School of Music in Wellington.





MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR – JASON BALLA



Jason Balla was born in Wales and was awarded the prestigious Organ Scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford where he also sang in the choir of New College. Jason sang and toured as a soloist with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and at age eighteen he became the youngest member of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. After completing post-graduate studies in voice and opera at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London Jason went on to a busy schedule internationally as a singer, pianist, organist and music director. As a conductor and choral trainer his choral repertoire ranges from masterworks of the renaissance through Handel oratorios and Mozart masses to 20th century English choral pieces.

As a teacher of music and voice in particular Jason has tutored and taught extensively in the UK and the USA. As a singer he appeared regularly in opera, concert and oratorio throughout the UK, Europe, the Far East, and North America. He has performed most of the major concert and oratorio works, including Verdi's *Requiem*, Lloyd Webber's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and many others. He has recorded recitals of French and English music for Radio Hong Kong and has also been featured on CBC and BBC radio broadcasts, and CD recordings of Mozart's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with the Slovak Philharmonic. Jason was a company member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1995 to 2018. His organ and piano instrumental recital tours have taken him from the West Coast of the USA to Germany, the UK and the Far East. In 2021 Jason moved to Nelson where he now resides permanently.

CONCERTMASTER & SOLOIST - FLEUR JACKSON



Fleur Jackson is a passionate performer and music educator. Originally from Nelson and an active musical family, she completed a BA/MusB in 2010 at Canterbury University under the tutorage of Jan Tawroszewicz. In 2016 she completed her BMus (First Class Hons) at Te Koki New Zealand School of Music and in 2018 finished her MMus in Classical Performance under Helene Pohl from the New Zealand String Quartet. She is currently a member of several chamber music ensembles, the Nelson Symphony and the Nelson String Collective.



VOCAL SOLOISTS CARLEEN EBBS – SOPRANO

Motueka born Soprano Carleen Ebbs was London based for 15 years where she trained and had a busy freelance singing career, before returning to live in Wellington in 2021. Carleen has worked with companies including Welsh National Opera, English National Opera, The Royal Opera, The National Theatre (London), Longborough Festival Opera, The London Handel Festival, Birmingham Opera, Festival Opera NZ and Celebrate Voice UK among others. Carleen has a great enthusiasm for Baroque and early classical repertoire and was a London Handel Singing Competition Finalist and Britten Pears Young Artist working with conductor Christian Curnyn.

Carleen gained an MMus with Distinction from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama London and also trained at the Cardiff International Academy of Voice working with Dennis O'Neill, Dame Josephine Barstowe, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Richard Bonynge and Phillip Thomas among other coaches from international opera houses. She has recently performed as a soloist with The Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Tudor Consort and The Napier Civic Choir and continues to work in the UK with English National Opera and The Royal Opera.

ALLISON CORMACK - SOPRANO

Captivated by opera from an early age, Allison went on to study Classical Voice at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, (Brisbane) E.I.T (Taradale) and most recently Victoria University of Wellington.

In 2005 Allison won the Sealord (Nelson) and Wellington Aria competitions and was Runnerup in both the Rotorua Aria and the Lexus Song Quest.

Allison has appeared as a soloist with the Wellington Youth Orchestra, Waikato Youth Orchestra, Kapiti Symphony, Hutt Valley Orchestra, Victoria University Orchestra and Nelson Symphony Orchestra. Recent local performances include the role of Aria In *That Conductor's*

Crazy in the Nelson Fringe Festival 2023. She has lived in Nelson since late 2007 and is thrilled to be singing this splendid operatic repertoire.

ROBERT TUCKER - BARITONE

Born in Australia and raised in Dunedin, baritone Robert Tucker completed a Bachelor of Music at the University of Otago in 2004. He spent time working in Australia and the UK before returning to New Zealand in 2012 where he continues to work on the stage, in the concert hall and as a singing teacher and conductor.

Since returning to New Zealand Robert has worked extensively with New Zealand Opera. Some highlights have been playing Adolfo Pirelli in Sweeney Todd, Masetto in Don Giovanni, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Noah in three different productions of *Noyes Fludde* for the Benjamin Britten centenary celebrations in 2013 and King George in *Eight Songs for a Mad*

King by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies which was received with great critical success at the New Zealand International Arts Festival and the Auckland Arts Festival.

A passion of Robert's is bringing new New Zealand composition to life. These have included characters in the Operas *Brass Poppies* by Ross Harris, *Hōhepa* by Jenny McLeod and *The Unruly Tourists* by Luke Di Somma with New Zealand Opera and *The God Boy* by Anthony Ritchie with Opera Otago. As well as Orchestral works *The Journey Home* by John Drummond with The Dunedin Symphony Orchestra and *In Paradisum* by Kenneth Young with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2015 Robert commissioned the song cycle *Whispers of Gallipoli* by Anthony Ritchie to commemorate the landings at Gallipoli 100 years earlier.









$\begin{array}{c} \text{GALA CONCERT} \\ {}^{4}_{5} \underset{\text{MAY 3PM}}{\text{MAY 3PM}} \end{array}$

Overture to 'Le Nozze di Figaro' – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

La Ci Darem La Mano from 'Don Giovanni' - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Soloists - Robert Tucker & Carleen Ebbs

Voyager's Chorus from 'Idomeneo' - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Nelson Civic Choir & Soloist Carleen Ebbs

Soldiers' Chorus from 'Faust' - Charles Gounod

Nelson Civic Choir with Nelson Male Voice Choir

Méditation from 'Thaïs' – Jules Massenet

Violin Soloist Fleur Jackson with Nelson Civic Choir

Quando m'en Vo from 'La Bohème' - Giacomo Puccini

Soloist Carleen Ebbs

Humming Chorus from 'Madama Butterfly' - Giacomo Puccini

Nelson Civic Choir

Te Deum from 'Tosca' - Giacomo Puccini

Nelson Civic Choir with Nelson Male Voice Choir & Soloist Robert Tucker

CONCERT NOTES PART 1:

'Le Nozze di Figaro', considered one of the greatest operas ever written, tells how the servants Figaro and Susanna succeed in getting married, foiling the efforts of their philandering employer Count Almaviva to seduce Susanna and teaching him a lesson in fidelity.

The seduction continues with '**Don Giovanni**' when Zerlina's betrothed, Masetto, has left the scene Giovanni attempts to seduce Zerlina to accompany him to his castle.

A violent storm has washed up '**Idomeneo'** on a Cretan beach. Once the storm passes the voyagers find comfort in the now calm waters and gentle breezes.

In Act 4 of '**Faust'** the soldiers return triumphant from a war conjured up by the devil, Mephistopele. But whilst they were away fighting the devil has been causing much chaos among the townspeople.

Méditation is a symphonic intermezzo from the opera '**Thaïs**'. As an instrumental entr'acte it is performed between two scenes in Act 2 of the opera and is considered to be one of the great encore pieces as well as an audience favourite.

Quando me'n vo, also known as *Musetta's Waltz*, is a soprano aria - a waltz in Act 2 of Puccini's 1896 opera 'La Bohème'. It is sung by Musetta, in the presence of her bohemian friends, hoping to reclaim the attention of her occasional boyfriend Marcello.

'Madama Butterfly' – **Humming Chorus** is a musical bridge between Acts 2 and 3. From the hill house, Butterfly sees Pinkerton's ship arriving in the harbour. She and Suzuki prepare for his arrival, and then they wait. Suzuki and the child fall asleep, but Butterfly stays up all night waiting for him to arrive.

Tosca – A procession enters the church singing the **Te Deum**. Baron Scarpia (Chief of Police) is gloating over his plot to seduce Tosca. Piety and lust are both front and centre in Scarpia's mind in this thrilling finale to end Act 1 of the opera.



Overture to 'Die Fledermaus' - Johann Strauss II

Anvil Chorus from 'II Trovatore' - Giuseppe Verdi

Nelson Civic Choir with Nelson Male Voice Choir

La vergine degli angeli from 'La Forza del Destino' - Giuseppe Verdi

Soloist Allison Cormack

Va Pensiero from 'Nabucco' - - Giuseppe Verdi

Nelson Civic Choir with Nelson Male Voice Choir

Voi lo Sapete, O Mamma from 'Cavalleria Rusticana' - Pietro Mascagni

Soloist Allison Cormack

Intermezzo from 'Cavalleria Rusticana' - Pietro Mascagni

Easter Hymn from 'Cavalleria Rusticana' - Pietro Mascagni

Soloist Allison Cormack with Nelson Civic Choir

Pierott's Tanzlied from 'Die Tote Stadt' - Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Soloist Robert Tucker

Brindisi from 'La Traviata' - Giuseppe Verdi

Soloists Allison Cormack, Carleen Ebbs & Robert Tucker

with Nelson Civic Choir & Nelson Male Voice Choir

CONCERT NOTES PART 2:

The overture from '**Die Fledermaus'** sets the scene for this German/French farce which has been part of the regular operatic repertoire since it premiered in 1874. If only the master of the house, Eisenstsin, could keep his hands off his wife's maid, Adele!!!

The **Anvil Chorus** opens Act 2 of '**II Trovatore'.** Gypsies are striking their anvils and singing in praise of the approaching dawn and the pleasures of work, wine and women.

La Vergine degli Angeli - Outside the monastery of the Madonna of Angels, Leonora, seeking sanctuary and solitary atonement, has come to take refuge in the monastery intending to live the rest of her life as a hermit.

Va Pensiero from '**Nabucco'**. The opera's triumphant success was due at least in part to this melody to which Verdi set this paraphrase of Psalm 137. Sung by the Israelites as they lament the loss of their homeland, it soon became an anthem of Italian patriotism.

'Cavalleria Rusticana' – Easter morning in a Sicilian village and Santuzza exclaims (**Voi lo sapete**) and tells Mamma Lucia the story of her seduction by Turiddu (Lucia's son) and his affair with Lola. Santuzza feels that she cannot enter the church and begs Lucia to go inside herself and pray for her. Inside the church the choir is heard singing the **Regina coeli** and **Alleluia**. Outside, the villagers sing an Easter Hymn, **Inneggiamo, il Signor non è morto** (Let us sing hymns, the Lord is not dead) joined by Santuzza.

At Marietta's request, Fritz (the Pierrot) sings a nostalgic song **Mein Sehnen, mein Wähnen.** 'Die tote Stadt' had its premiere on December 4, 1920, when Korngold was just 23 years old. It was one of the greatest hits of the 1920s. Within two years of its premiere it had circled the globe. But the work was banned by the Nazi régime because of Korngold's Jewish ancestry and after World War II it fell into obscurity.

'La Traviata' – The opera opens with a party at the house of a fashionable courtesan, Violetta. Alfredo, in love with her, sings the **Brindisi** (drinking song) and calls on the company to raise their glasses in a toast to life, love and laughter.



NELSON CIVIC CHOIR



Nelson Civic Choir is a non-audition choir which is open to people of all ages with an interest in singing and learning choral music in a variety of styles and genres. The choir rehearses regularly on Tuesday evenings preparing for three concert programmes each year. If you would like to know more about joining the choir please contact <u>secretary@nelsoncivicchoir.com</u>

SOPRANO: Agatha Porlier, Alison Wallace, Alouise Pope, Anne Doyle, Anne Harrhy, Charlotte Reith, Elena Camisani West, Emma Hamley, Frances Coleman, Gay Bryant, Helen McDonnell, Helen Tapper, Inga Lane, Irene de Jong, Jill Seeney, Linda Wareing, Lucy Rainey, Maggie Costello, Maggie Suwono, Megan Thomas, Nancy Davis, Rachel Donald, Rosemarie Amos, Rosemary Shaw, Sarah Potter, Sarah Holmes, Sheree Phyn, Steph Hoffman, Tara Foster, Tracy McCrenor, Ulla Schneider, Ulrike Meissner.

ALTO: Antje Kleinhans, Delyth Logan, Eva Virtue, Eve Ward, Gillian Kendrick, Grace Hileman, Helen Bywater, Jan Brayshaw, Janet Mercer, Karen Gibson, Kay Hunter, Kathryn Van Veen, Lesley Darcy, Liivi James, Liz Coulter, Lyndal Howley, Martina Schneider-Leisser, Mary Bronsteter, Mila Hofberg, Neroli Amyes, Nicole Hauman, Rita Joy, Saori Suzuki, Shona Idle, Sian Holden, Sunmi Kang., Suzie Peacock,

TENOR: Andrea King, Ann Briggs, Anne Brow, Bronwen Pelvin, Christine Burn, David Featherstone, Gretchen Howard, Joe Waller, John Foes-Lamb, Linda Cubis, Noel Stephens.

BASS: Bill Walker, Colin Davis, Jack Hamley, Nathaniel Murken, Robin Bayley, Roy Numegen, Todd Padgett.

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN: Fleur Jackson (Concertmaster), Grace Lee, Cara Bryant, Samara Holland, Linda Lloyd, Sacha Kashihara, Rosemary Galton, Paul Roper, Aeris Jackson, Kurt Simcic. VIOLA: Jan-Ulf Kuwilsky, Jonna Arthur, Margarita Jackson, Joanne Kydd. CELLO: Lissa Cowie, James Donaldson, Marta Barham, Diana Roper, Jenni Stubbs, Sue Stubbs. DOUBLE BASS: Kyoko Ball, Marijke Praat. FLUTE: Annabelle Laing, Anthony Ferner. OBOE: Lucy Davies, Suzanne Pentecost. CLARINET: Marie Willis, David North. BASSOON: Clare Moore, Belinda Carey. HORN: John Rimmer, Maia O'Connell. TRUMPET: Raffaele Bandoli, Lena Krakowiak. TROMBONE: Grant Wright, Clara Dujakovic. TIMPANI: Beth Cuizon. PERCUSSION: Robin Le Couteur, Kate Redgrove. KEYBOARD: Kyoko Takashima. HARP: Helen Webby.

NELSON MALE VOICE CHOIR



The Nelson Male Voice Choir was founded in 1932 by a group of keen amateur singers in Nelson. It gave its first concert at the Nelson School of Music on April 26th, 1933.

Today the Choir is in great heart with twenty to thirty singing members and gives concerts for its loyal supporters several times every year. It also leads the singing at civic occasions such as ANZAC Day and has given much young, local talent the opportunity to perform in front of a large audience. It is proud of its long tradition.

This year, under the baton of Jason Balla, the choir can call on a vast repertoire of traditional songs, light classics, show tunes and contemporary favourites.

TENOR: Andrew Palmer, Bruce Gee, Dick Vandenberg, Eru Aperahama, Grant Russ, Herman Van Gessel, Jason Templer, Martin Dack, Norman Phillips, Paul Bayard, Peter Jones, Samuel Aarsen, Stephen Zanetti, Tibor Karolyi.

BASS: David Riddell, Ernie Tarling, Hans Anderson, John Foes-Lamb, Steve Barter, Stewart Robinson, Ted Howard, Willem Reuvecamp.



MAGGY JOHNSTONE - COSTUME CURATOR

Maggy's contemporary sculptural art practice questions behaviours around the urgent issues of the environment and gender equality. Using predominantly pre-used materials, often 'masculine' in nature, she transforms them using 'female' skills and crafts to create alluring art which invites close inspection and personal introspection.

Entering WOW over 15 times, Maggy saw how fashion and art can come together to inspire and uplift people. This Opera Festival celebrates Music, the Arts, and the Theatrical Costumes and props that come together to carry the audience into the whirlwind journey that is Opera.



ACTORS - ANTON BENTLEY & CREW

THE MAID: Molly Clarke MASTER OF THE HOUSE: Keith Marshall WOUNDED SOLDIER: Myles Smalley JAPANESE LADY: Michaela Sheehan PRIEST: Anton Bentley



OPERA COSTUMES

The history of theatrical costumes is a long and convoluted journey of designs, needs, and cultural influences. Reaching back through the centuries helps explain the culture of costume that we see today and illustrates the influence of the history of art and culture, technical development, and its effects on the costumes and their place in the arts.

Indian theatre can trace its roots to the early 15th Century BC, with the golden age of Sanskrit theatre between the 1st and 10th centuries. A holistic approach to theatre included music, dance, acting, costumes, makeup, and props. In the 6th century, the ancient Greek playwright Thespis wrote his tragedy, 'The Robes of Thespsis,' where the stage sets were minimal, and the costumes were crucial in setting the scene.

Roman theatre, two centuries later, was also influenced by the Greeks, as their togas reflected the status and role of the actors.

The development of theatre continued worldwide, with evidence that the Shang Dynasty in China performed shamanistic dances and songs. The Zhou Dynasty royal court employed professional actors, dancers, and musicians, where the costumes were a crucial element of the performances.

In the Middle Ages, theatre moved into churches, where the plays reinforced religious teachings, and the costumes became more intricate, dramatic, and colorful. These symbolic costumes helped give the audience subconscious clues about the character of the actor and the scene, where the stage sets were often rudimentary.

The Renaissance witnessed a significant growth in the evolution of theatre and opera. During this time, costumes became more opulent and extravagant in size and style. This was done to enhance the setting and convey the character's status and position in society. These costumes played a crucial role in visually presenting the actor's physical appearance, character, and the cultural context of the time. As Emily Otranto wrote, "costume is a cultural visual of the people," thus placing the play or opera within its historical context.

Initially, these costumes were exclusively worn by men. It was during the Renaissance period that there was a renewed interest in classical antiquity in Italy, and the Commedia dell'Arte troupes began using recognizable costumes for their archetypal characters, such as the Harlequin with his colorful diamond patchwork costume.

In the 19th century masks, which had been popular in previous centuries, were now used less frequently, particularly in opera, as many performers disliked the limitations they posed. Today, costumes are designed to be visually appealing, functional, and allow actors to move naturally. Stage makeup has largely replaced the use of masks.

In modern times, there is a debate about whether costumes should reflect contemporary cultural values or those of the time when the plays and operas were written. While there is no right or wrong position on this philosophical conundrum, it is recognized that cultural values and social norms evolve over time.



Costume design for Soprano Joan Sutherland in Bellini's 'La Sonnambula'

The history of theatrical costumes is an intricate play that has evolved and continues to evolve today. This history has created a tapestry of design and function that is rich and opulent. Nelson Civic Choir's *Opera Festival*, led by Music and Artistic Director, Jason Balla, emulates this journey through the history of theatrical costume design. The program devised for this festival takes audiences on a journey through the history of opera over the ages. The supporting costumes and props are designed to bring this fantastical journey to life as it winds through the operatic capitals of an operatic world.



Italian dramatic soprano – Natalina Cavalieri 1874-1944

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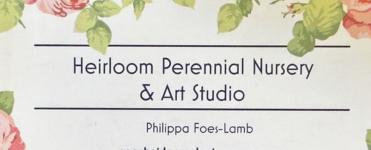






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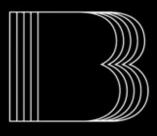
The draw will be conducted under Police supervision 13 May 2024. Results of the draw will be announced 16 May 2024.

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