

q opera: OPERA AUSTRALIA IS BACK

John Bell's highly acclaimed production of Bizet's Carmen has had its Melbourne premiere this May. The passion, heat and danger of Carmen is brought to dazzling heights in John Bell's acclaimed production that tackles Bizet's gritty tale of power, corruption and destruction head on.



Set against crumbling, monumental colonial architecture, this vibrant and colourful production will bring obsessions and love to the stage through traditional Spanish dance and a touch of contemporary breakdancing.

"I've always been intrigued by the psychology of that choice," contemplates John Bell, who this year follows up his critically acclaimed Tosca with Bizet's Carmen. *"What leads you to love the one person who is going to destroy you?"*

"Carmen is colourful, physical and entertaining, but it shouldn't get too pretty", he adds. *"To succeed, it must have punch. Sex and sexual politics. Physicality and power."*

Conducted by Guillaume Tourniaire, Bizet buffs and first-time opera-goers alike will be captivated by Carmen's extraordinary score.

"Carmen is a must see opera, even if you've never set foot in an opera house," said Opera Australia's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini. *"If you're new to opera, this production of Carmen is the perfect first show – the work itself is, of course is brilliant, the production values are second-to-none and with the stellar Australian and international cast we have assembled, it's an opera that can't help but impress."*

Carmen brings with it some of opera's biggest names – Israeli born mezzo-soprano Rinat Shamam (Carmen) and Ukrainian tenor Dmytro Popov (Don José) both return to the Opera Australia stage after starring in Carmen in Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

The sets have been designed by Michael Scott-Mitchell, the brains behind the incredible sets of Tosca and The Elixir of Love. Carmen will take the audience to a once grand but now crumbling world featuring Havana-inspired bright colours, fluorescent piñata horses, cobblestone grounds and for a complete contrast, a red combi van.

Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm

May 4, 6, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26

Saturday matinée at 1pm May 13

Running time Three hours including one interval.

Performed in French with English surtitles.

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$72 (fees may apply)

Group and concession prices available for most performances.

Student Rush available for most performances: \$50 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office (03) 9685 3700 www.opera.org.au
State Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne

Opera Australia is giving audiences a rare opportunity to experience a classic operatic double-bill when they present celebrated director Damiano Michieletto's new Olivier Award-winning production of Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci at the Arts Centre Melbourne this autumn.

This co-production with the Royal Opera House is a classic of the 'verismo movement' and presents a slice of life from the small villages of Southern Italy, laying bare the raw heart of each story – ordinary people, driven by betrayal, passion, jealousy and revenge, emotions stretched to the limits.



Opera Australia Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini has wanted to do Cavalleria Rusticana / Pagliacci for some time: *"I think audiences are going to love this new production. These two operas are tremendously powerful and the cast is simply brilliant. In particular, it is a treat to see Diego Torre perform the two challenging roles on the one night and we're thrilled that Dragana Radakovic has returned to Australia after her fantastic performance in Handa Opera on the Harbour - Turandot. She's the perfect choice for the intensity of Santuzza. I saw Russian singer Anna Princeva perform Così fan tutte in Switzerland and knew she'd be fabulous as Nedda in Pagliacci,"* he said.

Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm May 10, 13, 15, 17, 20 - Running time Three hours including one interval.
Performed in Italian with English surtitles.

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)
Group and concession prices available for most performances.
Student Rush available for most performances: \$50 (fees may apply)
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A new, highly acclaimed production of Szymanowski's King Roger will have its Melbourne premiere this autumn, offering audiences a rare opportunity to experience an extraordinary piece of work that is being performed for the first time in Australia in 2017. It is also the first time a Polish opera is being staged by Opera Australia.

Szymanowski's intoxicating, iridescent music is rarely heard on the opera stage so this is a highly anticipated staging of a 20th-century Polish masterpiece. A co-production with the Royal Opera House and Dallas Opera, it was first staged in Covent Garden where critics described director Kasper Holten's arresting staging as a "major artistic triumph" (The Telegraph, UK).



The opera traces the enlightenment of the Christian King Roger II by a young shepherd who represents pagan principles. The shepherd's voice is seen as lyrical and exotic, his message is dangerously seductive. One by one the people abandon themselves to the worship of desire, pure in its profanity while King Roger struggles with his own passions: choosing between the sacred love he knows and the sensuous, glittering realm of hedonism preached by the shepherd.

Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm May 19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 - Running time Two hours including one interval
Performed in Polish with English surtitles

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$72 (fees may apply)
Group and concession prices available for most performances.
\$50 Student Rush available for most performances (fees may apply)
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