

Stopera

Artistic Director: Vivienne Winther
Company Manager: Greg Marginson
GPO Box 2481 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia
+ 61 2 6232 4082 stopera@netspeed.com.au

Stopera

Acclaimed in the national press as 'one of the most adventurous and stylish independent opera companies in the country', Stopera has delighted Canberra and interstate audiences for the past ten years with its award-winning productions and concerts. Stopera's diverse repertoire of full length and one-act operas includes eight Australian premieres, and extends from the Baroque delights of Handel to the jazz idiom of Kurt Weill. Since its foundation in 1995, Stopera productions and artists have received nine Canberra Critics Circle Awards. Stopera also presents specially commissioned concert performances for festivals and national institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia, the National Multicultural Festival and the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival. Festival successes include the Australian premiere of Handel's *Ariodante*, in a stunning outdoor production for the 1999 Canberra National Multicultural Festival; a tour of the 18th century Italian opera *The Country Philosopher* to a sell-out season at the 2003 Castlemaine State Festival; and sold-out opera galas at the 2005 and 2006 National Multicultural Festivals. In the 2005 Canberra International Chamber Music Festival, Stopera collaborated with the Haydn Bande to present cantatas by Vivaldi and Pepusch with Bach's humorous *Coffee Cantata*, in a sold-out concert at Tilley's Café. Stopera's most recent critical and box office success was the 2005 Australian premiere production of *Jane Eyre*, by British composer Michael Berkeley and Australian writer David Malouf. In September 2006, Stopera will present another Australian premiere: the Canadian chamber opera, *Nigredo Hotel*, by Nic Gotham and Ann-Marie McDonald, a Hitchcock-style thriller set to a cool jazz score.

Stopera Artists

Rebecca Collins

soprano

Rebecca Collins, National Aria winner and a former member of Opera Queensland's Young Artist Development Program, has performed major operatic roles with Opera Queensland, Opera Australia, and OzOpera, including *Marzelline* in *Fidelio*, *Tytania* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Peep-Bo* in *The Mikado*, and *Gilda* in *Rigoletto*. She made her US debut singing Pat Nixon in John Adams' *Nixon in China* for the Colorado Music Festival, and has also performed at the AIMS Festival in Graz, Austria. Concert performances with symphony orchestras in Australia and overseas include soprano soloist in *St Luke's Passion* (Bach), *Messiah* (Handel), *Coronation Mass* (Mozart), *Nelson Mass* (Haydn), *A Child of our Time* (Tippett), *Choral Symphony No 9* (Beethoven), *Six Settings for Vespers* (Monteverdi), *The Creation* (Haydn) and *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (Barber). With Stopera she has appeared in sold-out concerts for the National Gallery of Australia, the National Multicultural Festival and the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival, and also played two major roles in Stopera's 2003 French Baroque production, *cantata*. Rebecca starred as Jane in Stopera's award-winning 2005 Australian premiere of the opera *Jane Eyre*, by British composer Michael Berkeley and Australian writer David Malouf, receiving national and international critical acclaim for her outstanding performance in this demanding role.

Maria Danielle-Sette **mezzo soprano**

A graduate of the ANU School of Music, Maria has performed as soloist in oratorio and concert repertoire with the Canberra Choral Society, Canberra Youth Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, ACT and Sydney Lieder Societies, ANU Choral Society, Llewellyn Choir, and for "Opera by the Harbour" at Sydney's Darling Harbour. Her opera repertoire includes more than twenty principal roles in operas such as Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Britten's *Albert Herring*. In 2001, Maria was awarded a Canberra Critics' Circle Award for her performance as Madame Flora in Stopera's production of *The Medium* by Menotti, and later that year appeared in the Stopera production *Viva Verdi!* Maria was engaged by Opera Queensland in 2002 for *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Andrea Chenier*, and in 2004 by the State Opera of South Australia for Wagner's Ring Cycle. In 2003 she toured Italy with the American quartet Arena. In 2005, Maria was soloist in *Tutto Italiano*, Stopera's opera concert for the National Multicultural Festival and featured in Stopera's Australian premiere of Michael Berkeley's *Jane Eyre* as Mrs Rochester.

Judith Dodsworth **soprano**

Judith Dodsworth graduated with distinction from Canberra School of Music and then studied in London and Vienna, where she worked extensively with such groups as the Arnold Schönberg Chor, Concentus Vocalis Wien and NeuOper Wien. Currently based in Melbourne, she completed a Masters in Performance at the University of Melbourne. Recent operatic roles include Carmen and Mercedes in OzOpera's *Carmen*, the Wife in the Australian première of Michael Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, and Kate Pinkerton in *Madam Butterfly*. In 2004 she created the role of the lead soprano in *Opiume* for the Singapore and Hong Kong New Visions Arts Festivals. For Stopera she has played Eugenia in Galuppi's *The Country Philosopher* and the title role in Rameau's *Pigmalion* in the 2003 production Cantata. Judith collaborates regularly on new works with a number of prominent composers including Calvin Bowman, Lindsay Brunson, Nirmali Fenn and Johanna Selleck, and has performed in major festivals including Melbourne International, Castlemaine, Port Fairy and Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields. As an oratorio soloist she has appeared with the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic, Melbourne University Choral Society, Monash University Choral Society, the University of Melbourne Faculty of Music Choir, Victoria Chorale, Canberra Choral Society, Camberwell Chorale and many others.

Felicity Gallagher **flute**

Felicity Gallagher graduated with first class Honours from the Canberra School of Music in 2000, where she studied with Virginia Taylor and Vernon Hill. Felicity has performed with the Canberra School of Music Orchestra, the Canberra Youth Orchestra, and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. She has toured nationally with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and internationally with both the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian Youth Orchestra Cammerata ensemble. She travelled to the UK twice for further advanced study, assisted by a Big Brother Movement study award in 2001, and in 2003 by an Australian Youth Orchestra Opportunity Grant. Her performances for Stopera include: the premier of Judith Crispin-Cresswell's *The Nameless Dead* for FOCA 1999;

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Impressions - Music from the Era of Monet at the National Gallery of Australia in 2001; *Viva Verdi!* in 2001; a concert of 18th century Italian music for the exhibition *The Italians* at the National Gallery of Australia in 2002; Galuppi's *The Country Philosopher* at The Street Theatre in 2002 and on tour to the Castlemaine State Festival in 2003; and Rameau's *Pigmalion* in the 2003 Stopera production *cantata*.

Lindy Reksten **cello**

Lindy spent some early years in Canberra playing in both the Canberra Youth Orchestra and Canberra Symphony Orchestra. After completing her music degree in cello performance and teaching at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Lindy moved to Germany where she continued her cello studies as a post-graduate student at the Northwest German Music Academy in Detmold. Lindy spent 10 years in Germany studying, working fulltime as a cellist in the orchestra at the Detmold Opera House, and teaching cello and chamber music at the Detmold Music School. On returning to Australia, she settled in Canberra, and now has a very busy teaching practice, with students at the ANU School of Music, Orana School and private students, as well as being a cello tutor for Canberra Youth Music. She plays with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and for many other Canberra music groups. Lindy first performed with Stopera in the 1998 Festival production of Handel's *Ariodante* at Stage 88, Commonwealth Gardens.

Frances Stevens **cello**

Frances graduated from the Canberra school of Music in 2003 with a Bachelor of Music (Honours). Throughout her degree she studied with Prof. Uzi Wiesel, the internationally renowned cellist, formerly principal of the Israel Philharmonic and cellist with the Tel Aviv String Quartet. She has won prizes for solo and chamber music performances, including the Grand Prize and Adjudicator's Choice trophy at the City of Hobart Eisteddfod, and toured South Australia as a member of the Young Australia Concert Artists String Quartet. Last year she successfully auditioned for the Carl Flesch Academy in Germany where she had lessons with Wolfgang Boettcher, the former principal cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic. Currently she is continuing her studies with Prof. Wiesel, while playing with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and teaching at the Casals Academy.

Laura Tanata **harp**

Laura Tanata completed her Bachelor of Music Performance with Honours at the ANU School of Music, where she is currently undertaking further postgraduate studies with harpist Alice Giles. Laura has been actively involved with the Australian Youth Orchestra since 2000, taking part in intensive weeks of orchestral training with key harp tutors such as Sebastian Liepman, Marshall McGuire, and Louise Johnson. She also took part in a master class with Czechoslovakian harpist Jana Buskova in 2004. Laura has performed with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Sinfonia, RAAF Air Command Band, Canberra Choral Society, Oriana Chorale and the Hall Village Brass Band. Currently, Laura is a member of the Kioloa Harp Ensemble, a newly established ensemble of 7 harps led by Alice Giles. The ensemble will be appearing in a series of performances in

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NSW and the ACT region, before travelling to San Francisco in July 2006 for the American Harp Society's 37th National Conference.

Julian Thompson **cello**

Julian Thompson is one of Australia's most versatile and adventurous cellists, with a career that has incorporated all facets of music-making including solo recitals, concerto appearances, chamber music, CD recordings, orchestral playing, artistic advising, teaching and composition. Born in Canberra, he studied with Lois Simpson for 10 years until 1994 when he was awarded the inaugural National Undergraduate Scholarship for Music at the ANU, where he studied with David Pereira. In 1999 Julian took up a scholarship in the Australian National Academy of Music's Advanced Performance Program, and was then awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 2000. He completed a Masters degree at Indiana University in 2002 studying with Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Janos Starker and David Baker (Jazz). In 1997 Julian was Principal Cello for the Australian Youth Orchestra, and is currently Principal Cello with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Haydn Bande Chamber Orchestra. He has also played as Associate Principal Cello with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In chamber music repertoire, he has performed at numerous festivals in Australia and internationally, including the Melbourne International Chamber Music Festival and the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival. Julian also maintains a strong interest in many non-classical forms of music making, performing at all of Australia's major folk festivals in a wide variety of different musical styles and contexts.

Alex Voorhoeve **cello**

After completing his music degree at the ANU School of Music, Alex spent two years travelling and performing in Europe, and also toured Taiwan as principal cellist with the Eurasia Chamber Orchestra. Alex returned to Canberra to enrol in a post-graduate course in computer animation with the Australian Centre for Arts and Technology (ACAT). His final animation, a music visualisation of a cello duet composed and performed by himself, was screened as part of the digital media section of the 1999 Sydney Film Festival. Alex has appeared with Stopera as principal cellist in two award-winning productions: *Viva Verdi!* in 2001 and *Jane Eyre* in 2005. Also performing with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and other ACT music groups, Alex is an active freelance musician in Canberra and continues to explore the fusion of music and image.

Vivienne Winther **piano**

Vivienne Winther is Artistic Director of Stopera, the ACT's chamber opera company, and has played a leading role in the production of more than twenty notable opera and concert events for the company since 1997. She is also Artistic Director of Music for Everyone, the ACT's community music organisation, and a part-time lecturer in piano at the ANU School of Music. She began her professional career as an opera repetiteur with Canberra Opera and was also an accompanist at the Canberra School of Music in the studio of Ron Maconaghie. At the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, she was Chief Repetiteur for the Graduate Opera School, assisting guest conductor Carlo Felice Cillario in major productions for the Academy, accompanist and coach for the Head of

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Vocal Studies, Dr Margreta Elkins, and a piano lecturer in the Academy's Keyboard Department. Vivienne has performed in recital for the Dante Alighieri Society, Goethe Institute, ACT Lieder Society, Pro Musica, Sydney Schubert Society, ACT Friends of Opera and the ABC. Vivienne has accompanied and coached singers from Opera Australia, Victorian State Opera, ChamberMade Opera, Beijing Central Opera, and Cologne Opera. In November 2005, Vivienne was named The Canberra Times Artist of the Year, for her uncompromising vision and achievement in gaining national and international recognition for opera in the ACT.