

VICTORIAN
OPERA

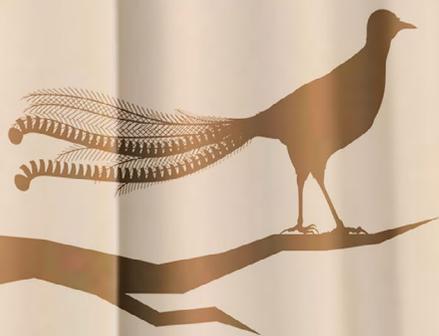
THE LYREBIRD'S VOICE



Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia.

We recognise their continuing connection to lands, waterways and communities through song, dance and storytelling. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their Elders past and present.

Always was, always will be.



WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to our joyous production of *The Lyrebird's Voice*. This project, more than three years in development, began in an effort to engage younger audiences with the delight of opera.

I still remember my first experience of opera when I was a child. An advertisement on television played the Flower Duet from the 1883 opera, *Lakmé* – its beauty captured my attention, but I didn't realise it was from an opera until I grew up.

Many of the opera tunes featured in *The Lyrebird's Voice* are still so heavily featured across all parts of our culture, from advertisements to films to television shows. We wanted to offer kids an opportunity to relish music they might have already heard as a way to introduce them to the magic opera has to offer.

Composer Peter Rutherford and six youth participants went away to Montsalvat Arts Precinct to create a story that could relate to the young, and young at heart. Add to this mix our generous patron Barbara van Ernst, who is passionate about music for younger audiences, and the production began to take shape.

We had another development period involving librettist Jayde Kirchert, followed by a rehearsal period to establish Ishan Vivekanantham's designs and Robert Brown's lighting.

And finally, bringing the music to life are a wonderful cast of the VO Ensemble joined by The University of Melbourne, Master of Music (Opera Performance) students, our generous conductor Carlos Del Cueto and the VO Chamber Orchestra.

We're thrilled to share this production with all of you, our audience. Thank you to all who have contributed to this project, you've made this a very special one for our company.

ELIZABETH HILL-COOPER

Director
CEO, Victorian Opera





SYNOPSIS

Our story begins with birds and other animals meeting together in an Australian forest. They're planning to protect their new home after humans chopped down the trees in their old home for wood.

During the meeting, Lyrebird copies the sounds of other birds, making them confused and upsetting the Duchess of Wattle. The Duke and Duchess knight several birds, but not Lyrebird. They don't listen to Lyrebird's worry that no one is guarding the southern trees in their home.

Feeling left out, Lyrebird plans to prank the knighted birds. She tricks Lord Kookaburra into abandoning his duties. She mocks the Honeyeaters, angering them. And she lies to mammals about her skills.

All these pranks mean that when she tries to warn the animals about humans cutting down trees, no one believes her. Things get chaotic, and Lyrebird is blamed for the destruction. The Duchess of Wattle sends her away from her community of animals... for good.

Lyrebird wanders the forest alone until she meets four beetles. They advise her to be true to herself and admit that she has made mistakes.

She then meets Lord Emu. They bond over being different to the other birds.

Together, they create a plan to scare away a cat named Kitcat, who has captured all the birds in cages. Lyrebird bravely uses her ability to copy other sounds to frighten Kitcat, freeing the captured birds.

The Duke and Duchess say sorry for blaming Lyrebird. They knight her as Lady Lyrebird, recognising her bravery.

Lady Lyrebird says it's important to admit to your mistakes, and to use your voice for good. The animals celebrate and learn the value of respecting each other's strengths.





THE LYREBIRD'S VOICE

Libretto and lyrics

Jayde Kirchert

New music composition

Peter Rutherford

Arrangements and orchestrations

Peter Rutherford

A story developed by Peter Rutherford and six youth participants of the New Work Opera Studio 2023:

Asmira Adams

Xavier Grindlay

Alexis King

Agnieshka Markwell

Amelia Mason

Anushka Tiwari

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor

Carlos del Cueto

Director

Elizabeth Hill-Cooper

Set, Costume & Projection Designer

Ishan Vivekanantham*

Lighting Designer

Robert Brown

Sound Designer

Daniel O'Callaghan

*Truscott Foundation Prize Recipient 2025

CAST

Lady Lyrebird

Michaela Cadwgan*

Lord Emu

Douglas Kelly

Duchess of Wattle

Alessia Pintabona**

Duke of Wattle

Joshua Morton-Galea

Lord Kookaburra

Bailey Montgomerie***

Lady Lorikeet/Lyrebird (Alternate)

Rachael Joyce***

*Michaela Cadwgan is proudly supported by Mary Davidson & Family of the late Frederick Davidson AM

**Alessia Pintabona is generously supported by Joy Selby Smith

***Emerging Artist Opera Prize winners proudly supported by Dr Michael Stubbs and Malcolm Roberts

ENSEMBLE

Erin Absalom

Sarah Amos

Samantha Anderson-Mayes

Millicent Brake

Isaac Burgess

Ashley Chua

Leyland Jones

Mia Koutsoumidis

Zoe Lancaster

Sophie McGetrick

Tessa McKenna

Brittney Northcott

Phoebe Tait

Chloe Taylor

VICTORIAN OPERA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Keys

Phoebe Briggs

Violin 1

Jaso Sasaki

Violin 2

Margaret Butcher

Viola

Shani Williams

Cello

Nils Hobiger

Bass

Nic Synot

Flute/Piccolo

Roxy Kavanagh

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Natasha Fearnside

Horn

Rob McMillan

Trombone

Trea Hindley

Percussion

Felix Gilmour

Acoustic/Electric Guitar

Matthew Tzivakis

PRODUCTION

Stage Manager

Finlay Pedler

Deputy Stage Manager

Claudia Howarth

Assistant Stage Manager

Annabelle Rossi

Head Electrician

Jamie Turner

LX Programmer/Operator

Jack Willis-Hall

Orchestra Manager

Noah Chrapot

Costume Manager

Mel Serjeant

Costume Assistant & Wardrobe

Supervisor

Becky Silveira

Costumiers

Nicole Serjeant

Olivia Peters

Ines Kustura

Cortnee Jarvis

Xander Reichard

Dressers

Xander Reichard

Olivia Peters

Set Construction

Jesse Chabrier-Pope

Tiernan Maclaren

Props

Alex Donnelly



VICTORIAN OPERA PARTNERS

The Lyrebird's Voice is presented in association with Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne.

The commissioning of this new Australian work was made possible through the generosity of Professor Barbara van Ernst AM.

The Lyrebird's Voice is generously supported by:



William Angliss
Charitable Fund

The Marian & E.H.
Flack Trust

Gailey Lazarus
Foundation

Jane Hemstrich
OA

Victorian Opera acknowledges the support of the Victorian Department of Education through the Strategic Partnership Program.



VICTORIAN OPERA

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@VictorianOpera #VictorianOpera



VICTORIANOPERA.COM.AU

