

VICTORIAN OPERA



JULIAN LANGDON, CASEY BENNETTO,
GILLIAN COSGRIFF

LORELEI



Dimity Shepherd (Lorelei A),
Ali McGregor (Lorelei B) and
Antoinette Halloran (Lorelei C)

VICTORIAN OPERA PRESENTS

LORELEI

OPERATIC CABARET - NEW WORK

Music **Julian Langdon, Casey Bennetto and Gillian Cosgriff**

Lyrics **Casey Bennetto and Gillian Cosgriff**

Orchestration **Julian Langdon**

Concept **Ali McGregor**

Musical Director **Phoebe Briggs**

Director and Dramaturg **Sarah Giles**

Set and Costume Designer **Marg Horwell**

Lighting Designer **Paul Jackson**

Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**

Assistant Director **Cathy Hunt**

CAST

Lorelei A **Dimity Shepherd**

Lorelei B **Ali McGregor**

Lorelei C **Antoinette Halloran**

Victorian Opera Chamber Orchestra

3-10 NOVEMBER 2018

The Coopers Malthouse, Merlyn Theatre

World premiere, Saturday 3 November 2018, The Coopers Malthouse

Running Time is approximately 75 minutes, no interval

Sung in English

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager **Eduard Inglés**

Stage Manager **Luke Hales**

Assistant Stage Manager **Rebecca Neeson**

MUSIC STAFF

Repetiteur **Phillipa Safey**

ORCHESTRA

Violin 1 **Peter Clark**

Violin 2 **Cameron Jamieson**

Viola **Shani Williams**

Cello **Nils Hobiger**

Bass **Mark Elton**

Flute/Piccolo **Tamara Kohler**

Oboe/Cor Anglais **Rachel Curkpatrick**

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet **Lachlan Davidson**

Guitar **Doug de Vries**

Percussion **Arwen Johnston**

Percussion **Kaylie Melville**

Harp **Yuko Tomonaga**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Performer **Alex Aldrich**

Victorian Opera would like to thank Onset Arts.



Dimity Shepherd

WELCOME

New Australian work is at the core of Victorian Opera's mission to reimagine the potential of opera, for everyone. Reforming the great traditions of our artform to sing and speak with a twenty-first century Australian accent is just as important to us as making accessible the great literature of operatic heritage. Indeed, it is the logical extension and completion of that process; one cannot flourish without the other. Tradition nourishes and informs the present moments of creativity, it enriches them and provides both a guiding light and a basis for comparison.

Myth is inseparable from the history of opera. The first titles, such as *Orfeo* and *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*, were all from the literature of Greek myth, and this matter of Greece has been a deep well of resource for opera ever since, right up to our own times – Henze's *The Bassarids* and my own *Love of the Nightingale*, for example.

The story of the sirens – appropriated by the Germans and put in the Rhine – a story of feminine allure has featured both in opera and concert (Debussy's *Sirènes* from his *Nocturnes*). It has a rich provenance, which has inspired our version created by composer Julian Langdon in collaboration with Casey Bennetto and Gillian Cosgriff to make a startling new work, part opera, part

cabaret, which revisits this classic story and invests it with a contemporary accent.

The result is lively, funny, sad and humane, and is given a unique energy by the trio of divas – Ali McGregor, Dimity Shepherd and Antoinette Halloran who have, each in their own right, made such remarkable contributions to Australian theatre.

The great novelist Joseph Conrad once said, 'the value of a sentence is in the personality which utters it' and this is particularly true for our version of *Lorelei*. Prepare to be seduced, surprised and, above all, delighted by this fascinating new work. Welcome and enjoy.

RICHARD MILLS

Artistic Director, Victorian Opera



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A story. About a young boy on an adventure. Off to discover the world. Falls in love. Has children. Grows old. Dies. This story becomes a story not just about this boy, but about humanity; about what it means to be human.

Take another story.

About a young girl on an adventure. Off to discover the world. Falls in love. Has children. Grows old. Dies.

This story ends up being about womanhood. About what it means to be a woman. Perhaps about motherhood.

I think a lot about this. About how men represent humanity and women represent their gender.

I think a lot about it when I read stories to my children. So many male pronouns. So many stories about little boys.

And I think about it when I read the classics. So many female characters authored by men; women defined through the eyes of men.

There is a very famous test called the Bechdel test. It is a test that can be applied to any play, film or opera. To pass this test you must say yes to the following three questions:

Is there a scene where there are two female characters?

Do you know their names?

Do they talk about something other than a man?

If you say yes to all three questions the work has passed the test.

Many operas, plays and films fail this test.

I point this out because these things are important.

We learn so much about our humanity from the stories we tell, and if we don't interrogate the kind of stories we're telling, the kind of characters we're seeing, we have no hope of moving forward.

It may seem trivial that the caterpillar in a children's book is male, but these are the building blocks of a society where inequality is so neatly stitched into the fabric that we often don't even notice it.

Lorelei presented us the chance to unpick this stitching and take another look at the stories we take for granted.

SARAH GILES

Director



MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The opportunity to be a part of an inspired and relevant work comes up all too rarely so when this particular one came up I jumped at the chance to be involved. Having long admired the work of Casey Bennetto, Julian Langdon and Gillian Cosgriff, this was an exciting prospect right from the start.

The creation of a show around the combination of our three incredible singing actresses meant that there were endless possibilities in terms of dramatic and musical styles for the composers and librettists to explore.

From the shimmering opening sequence of layered rhythms and lush harmonies through to tango, pop

and Latin numbers, Julian's incredibly inventive orchestration and evocative use of the three voices conjure up a vivid soundscape. Combined with incisive, poignant and witty lyrics, the three Lorelei take us on a wild ride down the River Rhine with many a twist and turn along the way.

Bringing such an exciting and necessary work to life has been a lively and thought-provoking process. It's been a huge pleasure to be part of this creative team.

PHOEBE BRIGGS
Musical Director



Sarah Giles (Director),
Phoebe Briggs (Musical
Director) and Paul Jackson
(Lighting Designer)

THE LORELEI – IN LEGEND

The Lorelei in German lore is a siren of distracting beauty said to sit atop a particular rock at the edge of the River Rhine, singing to lure sailors to their doom. When she was a human woman her lover was faithless, so in despair she threw herself into the river and was transformed into a siren whose voice pulled men under her spell and onto the rocks.

Her name comes from the name of that echoing rock on the southern bank of the Rhine – Lurlei. In Clemens Brentano's 1801 ballad 'Zu Bacharach am Rheine' a woman called Lore Ley accused of bewitching and murdering men is on her way to a convent but falls to her death from this rock, leaving only the trace of her name behind. The fatal allure of this creature and her unearthly song was defined further in an 1824 poem by Heinrich Heine, *Die Lorelei* which has since been set to music by more than 25 composers.

The area where this rock is located - Rhine Gorge at Sankt Goarshausen, was actually one of the deepest and most dangerous points of the River Rhine. The song attributed to the Lorelei was probably drawn from a combination of sounds including the currents of the Rhine and a nearby waterfall, amplified

by the echo of the rock, leading to the murmuring rumoured to be the dangerous song of the siren.

*The comb she holds is golden,
She sings a song as well
Whose melody binds an enthralling
And overpowering spell.*

*In his little boat, the boatman
Is seized with a savage woe,
He'd rather look up at the mountain
Than down at the rocks below.*

From 'The Lorelei'

English translation of the poem by Heinrich Heine, 1824. Translated by A.Z. Foreman.

BIOGRAPHIES



JULIAN LANGDON
Music and Orchestration

Julian graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts with an honours degree in practical composition and was awarded the first Melbourne Prize for Music Development Award. This led to a series of orchestral commissions and orchestration opportunities for major performing arts companies as well as recordings sessions for feature film, television, and video games. Julian combines his love for traditional compositional processes using a pencil and paper with the latest digital music making practices to produce work across a spectrum of interdisciplinary projects and events. He is currently working on an opera for children called *Melisma's Little Book*.



CASEY BENNETTO
Music and Lyrics

Casey Bennetto is best known for writing the musical *KEATING!* and worst known for blathering on at length about things everyone else in the room had worked out years ago. Over the past three months he's also been writing a new musical with Sisters Grimm, scoring the second season of *Get Krack!n* and preparing for his role as Musical Director in the Circus Oz/Die Roten Punkte collaboration *Rock Bang!* which is literally the next show on in this theatre.



GILLIAN COSGRIFF
Music and Lyrics

Gillian graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2010 with a Bachelor of Music Theatre. Theatre credits: *Vivid White* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Company* (Watch This); *Loving Repeating* (Vic Theatre Company); and *The Pirates of Penzance* (The Production Company). Television credits: *Offspring*, *House Husbands*, *Fat Tony & Co.*, *Ricketts Lane* and *Get Krack!n*. She has toured extensively with her solo shows as a comedian and cabaret performer. Awards: Best Cabaret (Melbourne Fringe), Green Room Awards for Writing, Original Songs, and Artiste (Cabaret). She has recently been cast in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, playing at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne from January 2019.



PHOEBE BRIGGS
Musical Director

Phoebe completed a BMus at the University of Melbourne. A member of the Opera Australia music staff 2002–2012, she was appointed Head of Music at Victorian Opera in October 2012. For Victorian Opera, Phoebe has conducted *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Play of Herod*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cendrillon*, *Four Saints in Three Acts* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. She conducted *Opera in the Paddock* (Opera Northwest) and was assistant/cover conductor for *Don Pasquale* (IFAC/OA, Tokyo), *The Magic Flute*, *Merry Widow*, *Fledermaus*, *The Pearlfishers*, *Così fan tutte*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Mikado* (OA) and *Guys and Dolls* (Ambassador Group). Phoebe received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Music Direction for *Black Rider* (VO/Malthouse).



SARAH GILES
Director

Sarah Giles is an award-winning opera and theatre director. Opera works include *O Mensch!* by Pascal Dusapin, libretto by Friedrich Nietzsche, *Pas à Pas – Nulle Part* by György Kurtág, libretto by Samuel Beckett and *Into the Little Hill* by George Benjamin, libretto by Martin Crimp all for Sydney Chamber Opera and Sydney Festival. As a theatre director Sarah has worked with Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre and State Theatre of South Australia. Sarah was the Richard Wherrett Fellow at Sydney Theatre Company in 2011 and was Co-Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company in 2013.



MARG HORWELL
Costume and Set Designer

Marg is a multi-award-winning Designer, she has received seven Greenroom Awards, two Sydney Theatre Awards and multiple nominations for her work in Theatre, Dance, Film and Opera. Most recently she designed Set and Costumes for *Salome* (English National Opera), *Blasted*, *Melancholia*, *The Testament of Mary*, *The Real and Imagined History of The Elephant Man* (Malthouse Theatre), *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Common Ground* (Chunky Move), Production Design for the short film *Mrs McCutcheon*, and costumes for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Sydney Theatre Company).



DIMITY SHEPHERD

Lorelei A

Appearances for Victorian Opera include Cherubino in *Marriage of Figaro*, Orphée in *Orphée et Eurydice*, Alice in *Through The Looking Glass*, Arsamene in *Xerxes*, Nireno in *Julius Caesar*, Flora in *Traviata*, Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd*, Helpmann Award nominated Lucy in *Threepenny Opera* and Clara in *Midnight Son*, roles in *Banquet of Secrets*, *The Riders*, *Nixon In China* and *Sunday In The Park With George*.

Also Cherubino, Carmen and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* for Opera Australia, roles for Opera Queensland and Chamber Made Opera, Katchen in *Black Rider* for VO/Malthouse and the title role in *The Ghost Wife* at the Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and London's BITE02 festivals.



ALI MCGREGOR

Concept / Lorelei B

Ali McGregor started her career as a principal soprano with Opera Australia performing over 25 roles and winning a Green Room Award in 2004. She then ran away with the circus in the form of hit show *La Clique* and has since performed everywhere from Glastonbury to Carnegie Hall. She was nominated for an ARIA award in 2014 & in 2015 was awarded a special Green Room Award for her contribution to cabaret.

Artistic Director for Adelaide Cabaret Festival from 2016 to 2018, she has recently debuted a critically acclaimed show about the iconic Peruvian soprano Yma Sumac. In 2019, Ali returns to Victorian Opera to star in *A Little Night Music*.



ANTOINETTE HALLORAN

Lorelei C

Helpmann Award-nominated in 2016, 2017 and 2018, Antoinette Halloran 's most recent engagements include the title role in *Tosca* for West Australian Opera, Mrs Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* for Victorian Opera and New Zealand Opera, associate artist for José Carreras' National Tour and concerts with the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, West Australian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras.

For Opera Australia, Antoinette has sung the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rusalka*, Mimi (*La bohème*) and Stella (*A Streetcar Named Desire*).

Future engagements include *Lady Macbeth* and Mrs Lovett in Perth and the title role in *The Merry Widow* in Adelaide.



PAUL JACKSON

Lighting Designer

Paul has designed lighting for most of Australia's leading performing arts companies and has lectured in design at the University of Melbourne, RMIT University and the Victorian College of the Arts. His work has featured in festivals and programmes in the United States, Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom. Paul was listed in The Bulletin's Smart 100 for 2004, was the Gilbert Spottiswood Churchill Fellow for 2007 and was an Artistic Associate at Malthouse Theatre from 2007-2013. He has received a Helpmann Award, six Green Room Awards, a Sydney Theatre Award and two APDG awards. Paul was awarded an Australia Council Fellowship (Theatre) for 2017-2019.



JIM ATKINS

Sound Designer

Jim Atkins designs and mixes sound for a host of live and recorded situations nationally and internationally. Recent highlights include *One Infinity* (Melbourne Festival); *Black Rider* (Victorian Opera/Malthouse); *En Masse and Pleasure Garden* (Sydney Festival/ National Sawdust New York); Armand Van Helden (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra); *24 Reasons to Party* (Kate Ceberano /Adelaide Symphony Orchestra); *Setan Jawa* (AsiaTOPA/ Humboldt Forum Kultur, Berlin); *Between 8&9* (Chamber Made, Castlemaine Festival, Chengdu China).



Ali McGregor

ABOUT US

Reimagining the potential of opera, for everyone.

A national leader and state icon, Victorian Opera is one of the most celebrated opera companies in Australia. Recognised for its unique voice and contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera becomes an Australian Major Performing Arts Company from 2019.

We are committed to presenting creative opera accessible to everyone, and evolving the art form in daring ways. Whether commissioning new operas or reimagining century-old works for new generations, we believe opera-making is a continuous process, and with each production we are excited by the opportunity to bring something entirely new.

Victorian Opera is at the forefront of creating opera in Australia. We premiere at least one new Australian work each year and have staged 22 new works since the company formed in 2005.

From opera diehards to first-timers, over 30,000 people experience our work annually through live performances and streamed events.

We employ hundreds of people across the creative industries, recruit some of the finest singers from Australia and

around the world, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

We regularly tour Victoria with community, family and concert productions and, in 2017, began an ongoing commitment to staging opera in Tasmania.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through the Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE) and our innovative Access All Areas: Livestream Program.

Victorian Opera inspires eclectic audiences with an imaginative approach to opera, and we invite you to join us.

Visit victorianopera.com.au to discover more about the company through podcasts, videos and blogs throughout the season.



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Antoinette Halloran

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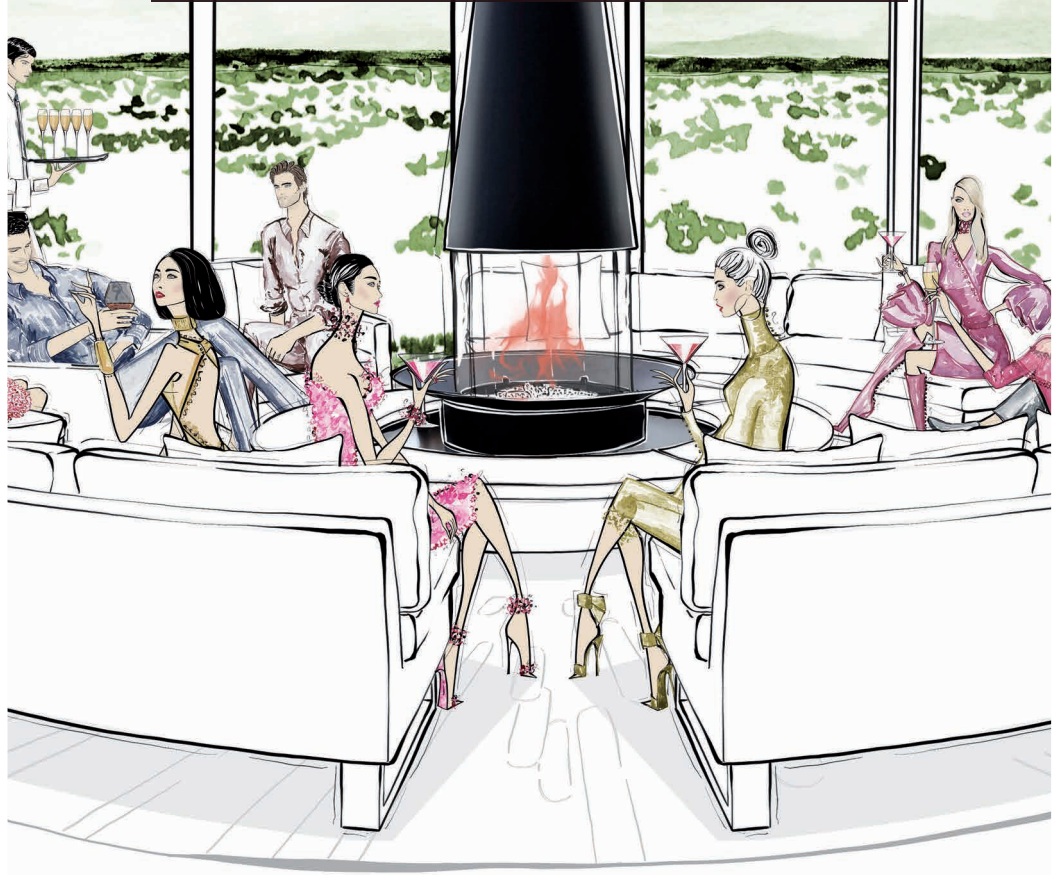
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