

THE CITY OF STONNINGTON PROUDLY PRESENTS

FREE
EVENT

THE
CLAS—
—SICS

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
OPERA



THE MUSIC OF SHAKESPEARE
UNDER THE STARS

CONDUCTED BY TREVOR JONES

Saturday 10 February, 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Victoria Gardens, Prahran



City of
STONNINGTON

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

A very warm welcome to **The Classics 2024**

We're proud to present *A Midsummer Night's Opera*, which rounds out our summer events calendar.

The Classics: Opera is once again under the artistic direction of the incredibly talented Ali McGregor and follows the huge success of last year's Opera on the Silver Screen.

Thank you for visiting Stonnington's magnificent parks and gardens to experience some of Australia's finest musical talent.

I'm sure you will enjoy all that *The Classics: A Midsummer Night's Opera* has to offer.

**Cr Joe Gianfriddo, Mayor
City of Stonnington**



ARTISTS & TEAM

Artistic Director
Ali McGregor, FLUXUS

Conductor and pianist
Trevor Jones

Orchestral arranger
Trevor Jones

Host and soprano
Ali McGregor

PRINCIPAL CAST

Pictured right (top to bottom)

Soprano
Natalie Jones

Mezzo-soprano
Dimity Shepherd

Tenor
Henry Choo

Baritone
Kiran Rajasingam





ARTISTS & TEAM

ENSEMBLE CAST

Pictured left (top to bottom)

Soprano – **Eliza Bennetts O'Connor**

Mezzo-soprano – **Chloe James**

Tenor – **Jack Jordan**

Baritone – **Giovanni De Simone**



AUSLAN STAGE LEFT INTERPRETER

Nicole McRae



CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I – **Marianne Rothschild**

Violin II – **Margaret Butcher**

Viola – **Sandra Ionescu**

Cello – **Karina Di Sisto**

Double bass – **Jill Griffiths**

Oboe – **Kathryn Saunders**

Flute – **Eliza Shephard**

Clarinet – **Rina D'Cruz**

Trumpet – **Nicholas Corkeron**

French horn – **Katie Pryce**

Trombone – **Harrison Steele-Holmes**



A MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: **ALI MCGREGOR**

The relationship between Shakespeare's text and music is rich and enduring, spanning centuries and inspiring diverse musical compositions, operas and songs. With their vivid characters, dramatic narratives and poetic language, Shakespeare's timeless works have provided fertile ground for musical interpretation and adaptation.

Within Shakespeare's own plays, music plays a crucial role. Whether it's the enchanting melodies of Twelfth Night, the haunting dirges of Hamlet or the whimsical songs in As You Like It, music is interwoven into the fabric of his narratives, enhancing the emotional impact and theatrical experience.

One of the most prominent forms of musical engagement with Shakespeare is the creation of operas based on his plays. Composers like Verdi, Gounod and Britten have transformed his iconic works into operatic masterpieces.

This evening, as we bask in the evening sun in this beautiful garden, we are going to present a selection of music that Shakespeare's texts have inspired.

Our principal cast is made up of highly respected Melbourne-based opera singers. **Natalie Jones** is a soprano of international renown who recently returned from Sweden, where she was based for more than a decade. **Dimity Shepherd** is one of the most in-demand mezzo-sopranos in the country, having sung for every major opera company and orchestra. **Henry Choo** is regarded as one of Australia's finest lyric tenors and baritone **Kiran Rajasingam** is a rising star who has won multiple awards for his operatic roles and recitals.

Joining these singers is an ensemble of recent graduates: **Eliza Bennetts O'Connor**, **Chloe James**, **Jack Jordan** and **Giovanni De Simone**, who will be weaving our program together with playful sonnets and songs.





A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S OPERA

PROGRAM

ACT 1

Wedding March (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream),
Felix Mendelssohn
Performed by the Orchestra

If We Offend (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Giovanni De Simone, Jack Jordan, Chloe James and Kiran Rajasingam

Be Kind and Courteous (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Ali McGregor

Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind (As you like it), Roger Quilter
Performed by Kiran Rajasingam

It Was a Lover and His Lass (As you like it), Vaughan Williams
Performed by Jack Jordan & Giovanni De Simone

An Sylvia (Two Gentlemen of Verona), Franz Schubert
Performed by Henry Choo

Full Fathom Five (The Tempest), John Ireland
Performed by Eliza Bennetts O'Connor & Chloe James

Gentles, Perchance You Wonder (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Giovanni De Simone

Wall: In this same interlude (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Chloe James, Kiran Rajasingam & Jack Jordan

Juliette's Waltz (Opera: Roméo et Juliette), Charles Gounod
Performed by Natalie Jones

Ah! Leve-toi (Opera: Roméo et Juliette), Charles Gounod
Performed by Henry Choo

Somewhere (Musical: West Side Story), Leonard Bernstein
Performed by Dimity Shepherd

THE MUSIC OF SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS



ACT 2

Dance of the Knights (Opera: Roméo et Juliette), Sergei Prokofiev
Performed by the Orchestra

Sigh No More (As you like it), Kate Miller-Heidke and Kier Nuttall
Performed by Ali McGregor, Jack Jordan, Giovanni De Simone, Eliza Bennetts O'Connor and Chloe James

Ascolta! Se Romeo (Opera: I Capuleti e i Montecchi), Vincenzo Bellini
Performed by Dimity Shepherd

Where the Bee Sucks (The Tempest), Thomas Arne
Performed by Eliza Bennetts O'Connor, Jack Jordan, Giovanni De Simone and Chloe James

Come Away Death (Twelfth Night), Gerald Finzi
Performed by Kiran Rajasingam

Lion: You, Ladies, You (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Giovanni De Simone and Jack Jordan

Pyramus: Sweet Moon (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Jack Jordan and Kiran Rajasingam

So In Love (Musical: Kiss me Kate), Cole Porter
Performed by Ali McGregor

Che Ascolto (Opera: Otello), Gioachino Rossini
Performed by Henry Choo

Ave Maria (Opera: Otello) Giuseppe Verdi
Performed by Natalie Jones

Now, Until the Break of Day (Opera: A Midsummer Night's Dream), Benjamin Britten
Performed by Ali McGregor, Dimity Shepherd, Eliza Bennetts O'Connor and Chloe James

Brush Up Your Shakespeare (Musical: Kiss me Kate), Cole Porter
Performed by Full Cast and Ensemble



City of
STONNINGTON

UPCOMING EVENTS

From performing arts, to vibrant festivals, there's always something to see in Stonnington. Explore our upcoming events at stonnington.vic.gov.au/Whats-On



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The Classics: A Midsummer Night's Opera is proudly supported by

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