

# VICTORIAN OPERA

VICTORIAN OPERA 2017







## Welcome

In twelve years, over 300,000 audience members have experienced a performance by Victorian Opera – over 20,000 of those attending regional performances.

A national leader and state icon, Victorian Opera is one of the most celebrated opera companies in Australia. During our short history, we have created 21 new Australian works and collaborated with some of Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions. We employ hundreds across the creative industries and recruit some of the finest singers from Australia and around the world. We are committed to the accessibility of opera through tactile tours, and audio described and relaxed performances. We have inspired over 500 young singers through our Youth Opera Program and developed over 30 emerging artists. Our vision – to reimagine the potential of opera, for everyone.

## 2017 Highlights

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An audience of over 45,000.

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A sold-out fully-staged opera presented with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Dark Mofo in Hobart, Tasmania.

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Two new works: *'Tis Pity* and *The Snow Queen*.

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Over 3,000 students and teachers engaged through Education Workshops and Performances.

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Victorian Opera created an interactive livestreamed event about the creation process for the new work *Three Tales*.

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*La Sonnambula* was streamed on Opera Europa's OperaVision gathering more than 8,000 viewers worldwide.

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Victorian Opera announced *Coraline*, a co-commission and co-production with Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Opera de Lille, Theater Freiburg and Folkoperan (Stockholm).

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Victorian Opera received an Innovation Award nomination from Classical:NEXT – the most important global classical music meeting.



# Reimagining the potential of opera, for everyone



**“We continued to re-imagine the potential of the art-form and ensured that opera remained accessible to everyone.”**

## A Year of Fables

From hidden gems to cult classics and celebrated masterpieces, our season of ‘Fables’ brought many operas to the stage with rich imagination, daring innovation, and musical excellence.

Highlighting our commitment to new Australian works, 2017 was bookended with the world premiere of new productions: a work of my own creation *'Tis Pity*, starring Meow Meow and Kanen Breen, and Gordon Kerry’s community opera, *The Snow Queen*, staged exclusively at The Cube Wodonga.

Director Nancy Black enlivened Respighi’s delightful account of *The Sleeping Beauty* in a production which captured the hearts of audiences in Melbourne and Hobart with its pure magic. An acclaimed cast of singers and puppeteers shared the stage, jointly manipulating spectacular life-sized puppets in a production filled with joyful fantasy.

Star soprano Jessica Pratt made her annual trip home for an electrifying concert of Bellini’s *La Sonnambula*, uniting her with tenor Carlos E. Bárcenas, bass Paolo Pecchioli and myself as conductor.

Leoš Janáček’s unique soundscapes are unlike anything else in the operatic repertoire, as is the case with his vital and life-affirming celebration of nature

in *Cunning Little Vixen*. A master creative team gave this charming opera vibrant colour and sense of wonder including old friends: director Stuart Maunder AM and costume designer Roger Kirk AM.

The musically gifted Artistic Director of Sydney Chamber Opera (SCO), Jack Symonds marked his Victorian Opera debut as the conductor of *Vixen*, while both companies entered our first co-production with Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* – presented in partnership with Carriageworks in Sydney.

The spirit of collaboration continued as we joined forces again with Malthouse Theatre for Tom Waits and William S. Burroughs’ *Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*. This macabre carnival of vaudevillian theatricality featured marvellously madcap music direction by our Head of Music, Phoebe Briggs, with the overall preparation being excellently supervised by Iain Grandage.

Creating opera for the next generation of opera lovers and singers alike is central to our mission. The Australian premiere of Ernst Toch’s fairy tale *The Princess and the Pea* delighted many young audience members. Our annual Youth Opera engaged fifty singers aged 13-25 and provided an essential step in their development; participating in an intense two-week rehearsal period

before a series of performances of Copland’s *The Second Hurricane*.

Members of VOYCE (Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble) brilliantly performed in productions such as our Youth Opera, in children’s chorus roles in *Cunning Little Vixen* as fox cubs, insects and amphibians, as well as other performance opportunities.

Talented emerging Youth Artists sang alongside established performers as we returned to our regional hubs, including Bendigo, Mildura, and Sale. Community choruses of every age joined our cast and chamber orchestra in the *Heroes and Villains* concert at night, while we performed our Education production of *Hansel and Gretel* to regional schools during the day.

Sharing the joy of singing and the power of music is the cornerstone of Victorian Opera, and we continued this work with pride throughout 2017.

**Richard Mills AM**  
Artistic Director, Victorian Opera

2017 marked a year of constructive transition in Victorian Opera’s short history; a year of continued growth, many firsts, and broader recognition of the company’s contribution to the world of opera.

Following the National Opera Review’s Final Report recommendation that Victorian Opera join the Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG), we were immensely proud to receive official endorsement to join the ranks of Australia’s most esteemed arts organisations from 2019. While celebrating this achievement, we have begun strategic preparations to accommodate this shift and future expansion of the company, including securing a new building in West Melbourne.

During the first half of the year the company undertook a brand exploration resulting in the launch of a new logo and official company belief: *we exist to reimagine the potential of opera, for everyone.*

Victorian Opera broke barriers and crossed borders in 2017 through livestreamed projects and touring productions. Our concert performance of Bellini’s *La Sonnambula* was viewed across the world via the streaming platform, OperaVision. This concert marked the first full-length opera performance from Australia to be streamed online. In October, we also invited viewers into our rehearsal room to preview three new compositions based on Flaubert’s *Three Tales*; livestreamed following a week-long development workshop.

Our acclaimed production of Respighi’s *The Sleeping Beauty* toured Tasmania for a sell-out season at Dark Mofo in Hobart; Victorian Opera’s first fully-staged production to tour south. Presented in partnership with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, this marked the first year of a new annual commitment, thanks to the generous support of the Australia Council for the Arts.

In yet another first, we announced a co-commission and co-production with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden: an adaptation of Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline*. Victorian Opera celebrates its first co-production in Europe, which also includes Opéra de Lille (France), Theater Freiburg (Germany) and Folkoperan (Sweden). Following its London debut in March 2018, the new opera makes its way to Melbourne for its Australian premiere in our Season 2019.

Our reach overseas continued with further links to Europe; becoming the first Australian company to join European opera service organisation, Opera Europa. Similarly, Victorian Opera also received an Innovation Award nomination from Classical:NEXT – the most important global classical music meeting.

Reflecting on a year of milestones, we jointly reflect on the many individuals and organisations who enable us to achieve such goals. We are deeply grateful for the generous assistance of the Australia Council for the Arts, the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria, and our long-standing Foundation partnership with the Robert Salzer Foundation. Similarly, we extend thanks to our Trusts and Foundations, corporate supporters, and our generous Supporters and Patrons: including our Artistic Director’s Circle and our New Work and Education Syndicates. This generous support allows us to reimagine the potential of opera, for everyone.

**Jane Hemstrich**  
Chairman, Victorian Opera

**Andrew Snell**  
Managing Director, Victorian Opera



# Productions in 2017



## Cunning Little Vixen

“Victorian Opera goes from strength to strength in terms of imagination and execution. Vixen is the perfect addition to its repertoire.” ★★★★★

– *The Age*, 23 June 2017

## La Sonnambula

“Jessica Pratt could bring the house down in her sleep.” ★★★★★

– *Limelight*, 7 May 2017

“Victorian Opera’s annual concert opera presentations have become a highlight of Melbourne’s opera scene. After *La Sonnambula* was over, I was shaking with excitement, my pulse certainly racing”

– *Opera Chaser*, 7 May 2017

“Future bel canto presentations from Victorian Opera are highly recommended, especially if we are lucky enough to have Pratt back in Australia again.”

– *Simon Parris: Man in Chair*, 6 May 2017



## The Sleeping Beauty

“Victorian Opera’s inspired production in which every element – humans, puppets, design, orchestra, lighting, costumes – meld into a night of pure magic.” ★★★★★½

– *The Age*, 12 March 2017

## Black Rider

“Stylish and soulful, wild and disturbing and darkly funny, *Black Rider* is almost worth selling your soul to see.”

★★★★½

– *The Age*, 21 September 2017

## The Rape of Lucretia

“The entire cast perform with complete conviction on David Fleischer’s simple set, reminiscent of the base of a classic Greek theatre, superbly lit by Damien Cooper.”

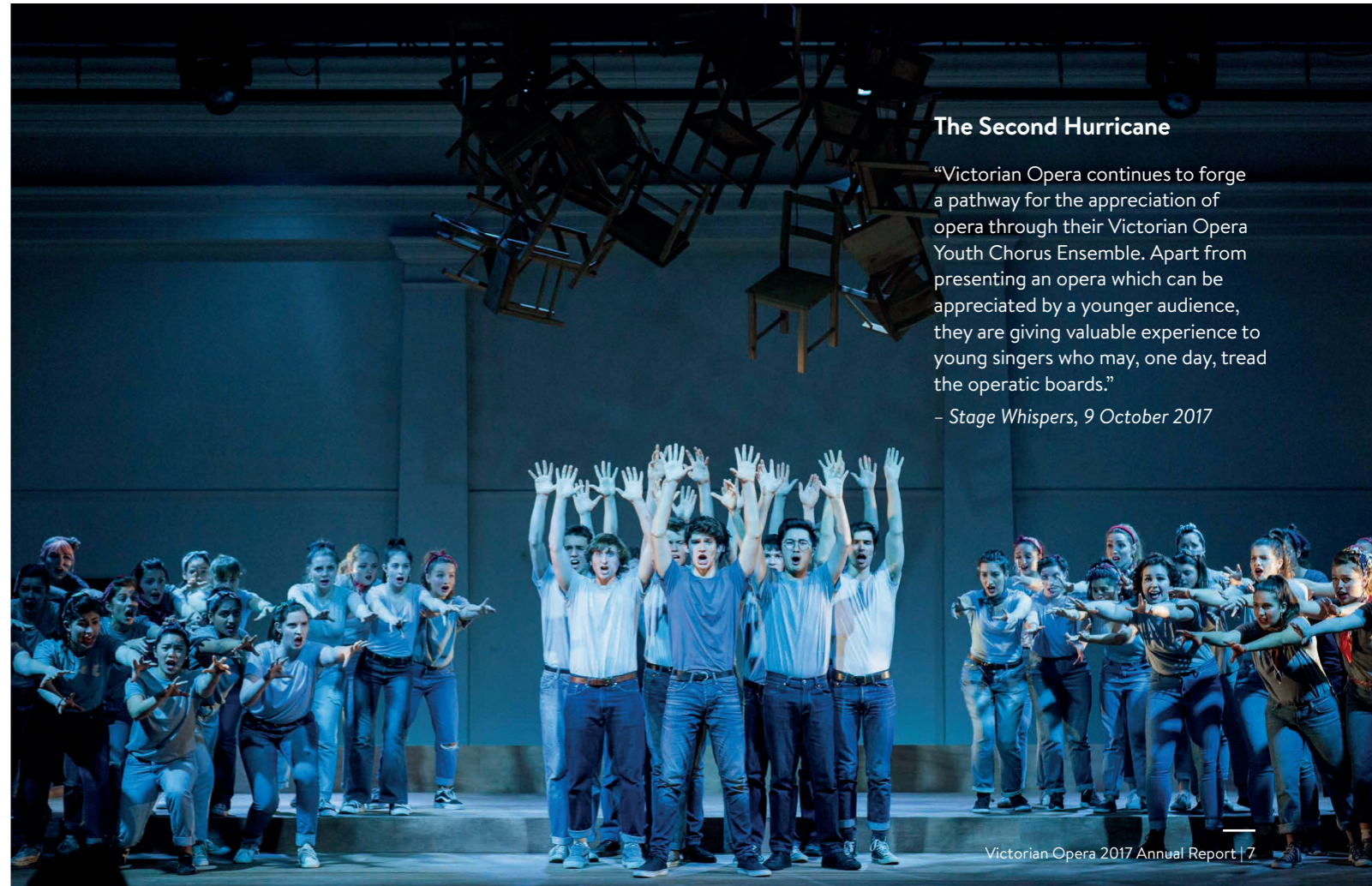
– *Australian Book Review*, 21 August 2017



## The Princess and the Pea

“Victorian Opera presented another authentic introductory opera experience with this highly accessible, sweetly amusing production”

– *Simon Parris: Man in Chair*, 26 March 2017



## The Second Hurricane

“Victorian Opera continues to forge a pathway for the appreciation of opera through their Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble. Apart from presenting an opera which can be appreciated by a younger audience, they are giving valuable experience to young singers who may, one day, tread the operatic boards.”

– *Stage Whispers*, 9 October 2017



# Inspiring Audiences

Victorian Opera reached a national and international audience of

## 45,817

across

## 184

performances, activities and streamed events.

## 5,099

audience members attended *The Sleeping Beauty* in Melbourne and Hobart.

## 6,618

audience members experienced Tom Waits' *Black Rider*, a co-production between Victorian Opera and Malthouse Theatre.

## 9,985

people acclaimed the return of soprano star Jessica Pratt live at Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall or on the streaming platform OperaVision

## SOLD OUT

*The Second Hurricane*, performed by Victorian Opera's young artists



"My friend and I enjoyed every minute of the performance (*Tis Pity*), and all aspects of it. Acting, dancing, singing and music. Wonderful witty libretto."

"A very thoughtful choice of repertoire. Clearly everyone involved was passionate. This was a great show (*Cunning Little Vixen*), which is what opera should be in my view, where the costumes, choreography, excellent acting, music and of course the singing combined seamlessly."

"Jessica Pratt is an outstanding singer and performer (*La Sonnambula*). Richard Mills is an amazing conductor and mentor. He shone the light on Jessica after her successes overseas but was unknown in Australia. A fantastic pair to watch during performances."

"I subscribe to Victorian Opera and live in Brisbane - that's how good they are! Always wonderful!"

"As always Victorian Opera excels in offering repertoire not often seen, and in an innovative way...I'm proud to be a regular subscriber"

"This was one of the most brilliant productions (*The Sleeping Beauty*) I have seen to date. I was captivated from start to finish"

"Fantastic performance and highly creative in reviving an unusual work integrating music and puppetry. (...) The ensemble singing in particular was outstanding and showed that Victorian Opera has not only fostered local talent over many years, but also established its own sound".



# Education and the Community

In 2017, Victorian Opera expanded the reach and engagement of its education and community programs with unique projects, more opportunities, and the beginning of livestreamed educational content.

The Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE) entered its fourth year and featured 40 singers aged 13 – 19 rehearsing weekly during school terms throughout the year. VOYCE received further performance opportunities including a dedicated concert, and a chance to sing at the Green Room Awards. Several members of VOYCE made their mainstage debut in Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen* with various roles in the children's chorus, such as fox cubs, insects and a frog.

VOYCE formed an essential part of the company's annual Youth Opera performing as chorus and in some lead roles in Copland's *The Second Hurricane*. The Youth Opera, staged at the company's base Horti Hall, starred a cast of 48 singers aged 13-25 in a production directed by Victorian Opera Developing Artist Alastair Clark.

In an Australian premiere, Ernst Toch's fairy tale opera *The Princess and the Pea* was staged as Victorian Opera's Education production for both schools and family audiences. Sets and costumes were designed by another Victorian Opera Developing Artist, Candice MacAllister. In a special performance, the production was also presented at the Royal Children's Hospital.

In a company first, Victorian Opera invited viewers into its rehearsal studio to witness the early stages of development for three new works based on French author Gustave Flaubert's *Three Tales*. In a private livestream, music and composition students were able to preview each work, hear from each composer, and participate in a Q&A.

Regionally, Victorian Opera toured to Bendigo, Mildura and Sale with two productions for audiences of every age; Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* was performed to primary students in each centre while older audiences enjoyed the *Heroes and Villains* concert,

featuring performances from local community choruses.

Victorian Opera strengthened ties in Albury-Wodonga with world premiere production, *The Snow Queen*. Created by acclaimed local composer Gordon Kerry, and librettist John Kinsella, the community opera was made for and in the region and featured a local chorus of 48 children and adults. Also designed by Developing Artist Candice MacAllister, the production projected mesmerising 3D digital scenery created by Professor Kim Vincs and the Department of Film and Animation at Swinburne University. This marked Victorian Opera's first touring production to use such technology.





Photographic Credits:  
Jeff Busby (pp. cover, 6, 7),  
Charlie Kinross (pp. 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12)

## Our People

Putting on a Victorian Opera mainstage performance takes a large and talented group of people months of preparation – planning, building, painting, tailoring, coaching and rehearsing – to create an unforgettable night at the opera. In 2017, Victorian Opera engaged hundreds of people in the creative industry.

# 472

performers, musicians and creatives across

# 43

mainstage performances

# 83

creatives, from directors and designers to technicians and production staff.

# 272

performers, including international guests, local singers and chorus, and young developing artists.

# 171

musicians including appearances from Orchestra Victoria.





# Victorian Opera Patrons

For the year 2017

If you would like to get more involved in the work of Victorian Opera by becoming a Patron, please contact Pooja Dutt, Individual Giving Manager on 03 9001 6408 or [poojad@victorianopera.com.au](mailto:poojad@victorianopera.com.au)

## Founding Patrons

The Late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE  
Lady Potter AC

## Patron in Chief

The Honourable Linda Dessau AM,  
Governor of Victoria

## Artistic Director's Circle (\$10,000+)

Deanne Bevan & Guy Russo  
Rob & Caroline Clemente  
John & Diana Frew  
Jane Hemstritch  
Hans & Petra Henkell  
Suzanne Kirkham  
Peter & Anne Laver  
Don & Angela Mercer  
Maureen Wheeler AO  
Dr John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith

## Platinum Patrons (\$5,000+)

Beth Brown & Tom Bruce AM  
Richard & Isabella Green  
Siobhan Lenihan  
Peter Lovell

Kaye Marion  
Michael Rigg & Gerard Condon  
Marian & Ken Scarlett OAM  
Greg Shalit & Miriam Faine

## Gold Patrons (\$2,500+)

Joanna Baevski  
Ian Baker & Cheryl Saunders  
Craig D'Alton & Peter Sherlock  
Bob Garlick  
Dr Jennifer George & Rev Matthew Williams  
Mary-Jane Gething and Joseph Sambrook  
Daniel Goodfellow & Matthew Burgess  
M Gordon & L Norton  
Ian Kennedy AM & Dr Sandra Hacker AO  
Ian Merrylees  
John & Elisabeth Schiller  
Tim & Lynne Sherwood  
Phillip & Sue Schudmak  
Lady Southey  
Liz & Peter Turner  
Earl & Countess of Wilton  
Secret admirers (3)

## Silver Patrons (\$1,000+)

Judith Augustine  
Kirsty A Bennett  
Laurie Bebbington & Elizabeth O'Keefe  
Box Family  
Anthony Buzzard  
Keith Chivers & Ronald Peel  
Ernest Dawes OBE & Nola Dawes  
Dr M Elizabeth Douglas  
Bill Fleming  
John & Gaye Gaylard  
Brian Goddard  
Nance Grant AM MBE & Ian Harris  
Hartmut & Ruth Hofmann  
Simon L Jackson & Brian Warburton  
Dr Garry Joslin  
Sean Kelly  
Rod & Daniele Kemp  
Alun & Patricia Kenwood  
Angela & Richard Kirsner  
Prof Kathy Laster  
John & Lynne Landy  
Joan & George Lefroy  
Dr Paul & Glenys Lejins  
Dr Anne Lierse  
Douglas & Rosemary Meagher  
Gillian Montgomery

Jane Morris  
Greg Noonan  
Ruth and Tom O'Dea  
Jillian Pappas  
Vivienne Reed OAM  
Prof John Rickard  
Tomasz & Elzbeita Romanowski  
Rev Dr John & Thea Scott  
Andrew Snell  
Andrea Tappe  
Prof Hugh Taylor AC & Dr Elizabeth Dax AM  
Caroline Travers OAM  
Dr Michael Troy  
Chris & Helen Trueman  
Caroline Vaillant  
David Valentine  
Megan Waller  
Catherine Walter AM  
Russell Waters & Marissa Barter-Waters  
Ian A Watts  
Secret admirers (2)

## Bronze Patrons (\$500+)

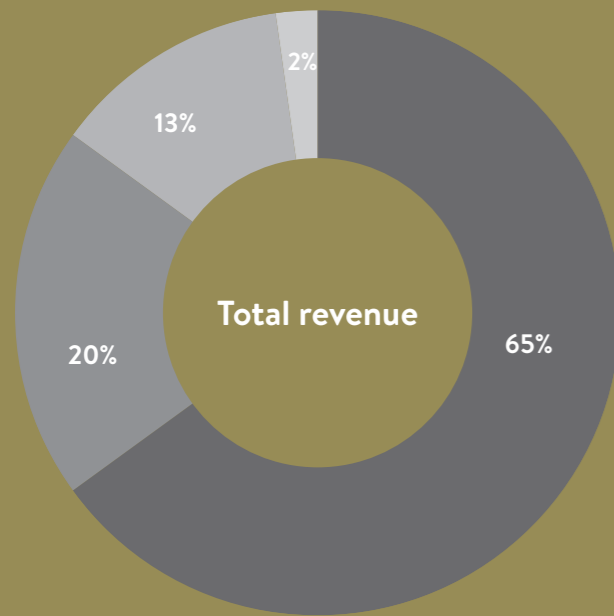
Prof Dennis Altman AM  
Jenny Anderson  
Ines & Dr Don Behrend

Shirley Breese  
Stuart Brown  
Susan Brownrigg  
Pam Caldwell  
Laurie David  
Beatrice & Richard Donkin  
Jean Dunn  
Dennis Freeman  
Dr Irene Irvine  
Angela Kayser  
Robert & Pamela Knight  
Richard Laslett  
Peter & Susan Martin  
Jocelyn & Andrew McLeish  
Ian Morrey & Dr Geoffrey Minter  
Jill Page OAM  
Lynette Payne  
Greg J Reinhardt  
Ruth & Ralph Renard  
Charles Roxburgh  
Graeme Samuel AC & Jill Davies  
Aubrey Schrader  
Prof Michael Smith  
Secret admirers (10)

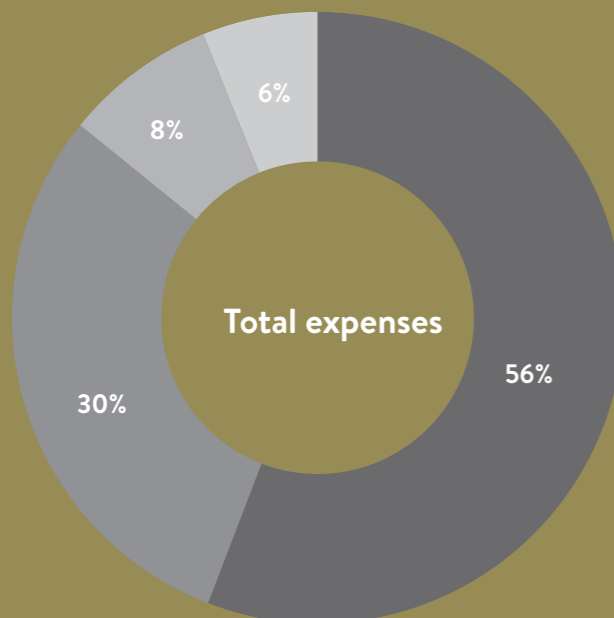
## Bequests

Jenny Anderson  
G Bawden and L DeKieviet  
Lesley Bawden  
Frank and Danielle Chamberlin  
Colin Gunther and Richard Laslett  
Jane Kunstler  
Tony Wildman and Robert Gibbs  
Secret admirers (2)

# Accounts



- Government funding revenue**  
65%
- Box Office and performance income**  
20%
- Sponsorship, philanthropic and donation income**  
13%
- Other income**  
2%



- Personnel expenses (including artists and production staff)**  
56%
- Production expenses**  
30%
- Administrative expenses**  
8%
- Marketing and Development expenses**  
6%

# Partners

Victorian Opera is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Victorian Opera would also like to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the contribution of the partners listed on this page.

## Government Partners



## Foundation Partner



## University Partner



## Awards



## Trusts & Foundations



## Official Partner



## Media Partner



## Supply Partners



## Performance Partners



Victorian Opera creates tailored partnerships to enable businesses to meet their strategic priorities. For a discussion about how your business can benefit from a partnership with Victorian Opera, please contact Louise O'Loughlin, Development Manager, on (03) 9001 6405 or [louise@victorianopera.com.au](mailto:louise@victorianopera.com.au)



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