

VOYCE Youth Opera Program 2025

General Information

Rehearsal Venue

Our main rehearsal venue is Hemstritch Studio at our homebase Horti Hall, 31 Victoria Street Melbourne. At times Hemstritch Studio is unavailable due to rehearsal and staging requirements for our mainstage operas. These dates are marked on the rehearsal schedule along with performances at external venues. Details regarding these venues will be communicated in the lead-up to the change in venue.

Rehearsal Supervision and Child Safety

Victorian Opera is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and all staff working on VOYCE Youth Opera Program have a valid Working With Children's Check or VIT registration and have completed online compliance training including reading and agreeing to Victorian Opera's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.

Rehearsals will be supervised by Victorian Opera's VOYCE Administrator or their appointed representative. Rehearsals will be led by the VOYCE Director or their appointed representatives and accompanied by the Head of Music or their appointed representative. When the Youth Opera Program is being rehearsed a Director and Stage Manager will be appointed to work with the cast and Victorian Opera's Production Team will assist. Where required Child Chaperone's will be employed for production week rehearsals and performances.

Participants under the age of 15 undertake an application for child employment through Victoria's Wage Inspectorate, for production week rehearsals and performances and Child Chaperone's will be employed for these periods. Parents of participants under the age of 15 will be required to sign-in and sign-out their child from production week rehearsals and performances.

Entry and Exit of Rehearsal Venues

For Hemstritch Studio, VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants enter this venue through the southern door of the staff carpark, which is accessed from Mackenzie Street (rear of the venue). Here you will be met by the rehearsal's supervisor and have your attendance marked on the roll. The main entrance via Victoria Street and the staff carpark door (at the Victoria Street end of the carpark) are not to be used unless directed to do so. Participants exit Hemstritch Studio from the same way they entered. There is plenty of parking on Mackenzie Street for drop off and pickup, the staff carpark is not available for this purpose.

Details regarding entry and exit procedures for alternate rehearsal venues will be communicated in the lead-up to the change in venue. A safety briefing will be held at the beginning of the first rehearsal in a new venue. Please be on time to ensure important information is not missed.

Rehearsal Schedule

The rehearsal schedule for the 2025 program can be found on the VOYCE Participant Page. Please print this out or enter the dates in your calendar. The calendar will be updated at the beginning of each term.

Kitchen Facilities

When at Hemstritch Studio the kitchen is available for use, however due to its small size we ask that participants take turns when using this facility – it is not a place for social gathering.

Bathroom facilities

When at Hemstritch Studio, VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants will be strictly limited to using the non-gendered bathroom facilities located off the courtyard. Participants under 15 years of aged are strictly limited to using the accessibility toilet located off the courtyard.

Music

Repertoire for 2025 is being finalised, which will be sent via email in late January. To save on paper, we recommend that participants use a tablet to read their music from within an app that will allow notations to be made. Please note, we will not be providing printed copies, if you would like a printed copy, you'll need to organise your own.

Participant Information Form

All new VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants are required to complete the online participant registration prior to the first rehearsal. Continuing VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants are asked to complete registration process as well to ensure contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

Parents / Guardians will be included in all email communications.

Terms of Participation

The Terms of Participation for the 2025 season of VOYCE Youth Opera Program, includes important information regarding attendance, fees, and COVID-19 safety requirements. VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants and their parents/guardians are required to read this document and agree to the terms.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this document, please don't hesitate to contact Victorian Opera's Education Manager.

Photography and Filming Consent

Victorian Opera at times takes photographs and video footage of people participating in a range of activities as part of the company's productions and programs. Victorian Opera complies with government guidelines regarding privacy. For VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants to appear in photos and video footage as described in the document, consent must be given.

VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants and their parents/guardians are required to read this document and agree to the terms.

Attendance and Correspondence

Attendance at all required rehearsals is compulsory unless illness or other matters approved by the VOYCE Director via the VOYCE Administrator have been cited. VOYCE Youth Opera Program is an ensemble and relies on all members to be present to build the associated group skills and allow the VOYCE Director and Head of Music to refine and blend the sound being produced. An attendance rate of 80% must be maintained in order to secure a place in the program.

All correspondence related to VOYCE Youth Opera Program should be directed to contacts below. This especially includes notifications relating to rehearsal/performance attendance. Please save these details into your phone for quick accessibility.

Email: voyce@victorianopera.com.au

Phone: (03) 9012 6659

VOYCE Youth Opera Program 2024

Terms of Participation

Mission

The Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE) Youth Opera Program reimagines the potential of opera for young, aspiring singers through regular training, excursions, and a range of performance opportunities.

Our Values

Humanity: Our people are vital to everything we do. We provide an environment that fosters personal development and professional growth so that our teams are our toughest critics, biggest challengers and loudest supporters.

Integrity: We strive to uphold the highest standards in all our actions and endeavour to be exceptional citizens in the communities in which we live and work.

Respect: We respect the individual human rights and privacy of everyone, overcoming all forms of discrimination, whether based on belief, ethnicity, nationality, gender or physical ability.

Diversity: We embrace diverse voices and stories and encourage their development whilst continually seeking to learn from them.

Leadership: We lead in our field by reimagining and evolving our art form through new Australian work, nurturing current and future talent and adopting emerging technology.

Creativity: Our creativity knows no bounds and we declare the wonder of the human voice and its capacity to touch heart, bring joy and open windows on the marvellous in art.

Excellence: We pursue excellence in everything we do.

Objective

As the State opera company, Victorian Opera strives to give young people in the VOYCE Youth Opera Program a learning experience that they would not otherwise have access to through school or community programs. In 2022, VOYCE merged with Victorian Opera's Youth Opera Program which saw participants form the entire cast of the selected work to be presented.

VOYCE Youth Opera Program provides regular training for secondary school and tertiary students between the ages of 13-20, focusing on dramatic works and singing, with heavy emphasis applied to the delivery of text (from different languages) and expression of dramatic intent and movement.

Throughout the annual program, participants have access to professional singers, répétiteurs, and directors from the performing arts industry, receiving educational and performance-based expertise and opportunities of state-company calibre.

VOYCE Youth Opera Program brings together like-minded and equally passionate young people to take part in a program that rehearses a range of operatic repertoire and develops skills essential to opera chorus and solo roles.

Attendance and absences

VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants are required to attend a minimum 80% of rehearsals each term. Failure to do so will result in the review of their position within the program and may result in removal from performance opportunities.

We recognise that participants will sometimes need to miss a rehearsal due to illness or other performance commitments. We do, however, encourage participants to manage their time so that their study requirements and other co-curricular activities do not interfere with the VOYCE Youth Opera Program schedule.

Acknowledging that VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants are often chosen for solo roles in school productions, we feel that committing to both programs will not allow participants to get the most out of VOYCE Youth Opera Program and the opportunities it presents. If a participant is selected to take part in their school's production at any point during the school year, please raise and discuss attendance options with VOYCE Youth Opera Program Music Director, Angus Grant and Victorian Opera VOYCE Administrator.

If a participant is running late to a rehearsal, please send an email to voyce@victorianopera.com.au. Parents/Guardians will be contacted, when no notification has been provided for a participant who has not arrived at rehearsal within 15 minutes of that rehearsal commencing. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to rehearsal start time to allow for settling and warmups to occur before rehearsals commence. We encourage parents to continue a discussion with their children about their commitment throughout the school year.

VOYCE Fees

The fees for VOYCE Youth Opera Program 2025 are as follows:

- Term 1: Tuesday 4 February – Tuesday 1 April
Fees due by Friday 31 January, \$210
- Term 2: Tuesday 22 April – Tuesday 1 July
Fees due by 13 May, \$250
- Term 3: Tuesday 22 July – Tuesday 16 September
Fees due by 12 August, \$200

Fees are payable within the first three weeks of each term except Term 1 where payment is required prior to the first rehearsal as part of the registration process. An email will be sent notifying that a terms fee payment has become available, and these are made via the Victorian Opera payment portal. Non-payment of fees may result in withdrawal from the program. Please contact the Education Manager to discuss your position if you are unable to pay fees by their due date. In some cases bursaries are available.

VOYCE Youth Opera Program Performances in 2025

- **VOYCE Youth Opera Program Open Rehearsal**
Date: Tuesday 1 April, 7.00 pm
Mandatory participation
An informal concert in the last half hour of rehearsal to wrap up term 1.
- **VOYCE Youth Opera Program Open Rehearsal**
Date: Tuesday 1 July, 7.00 pm
Mandatory participation
An informal concert in the last half hour of rehearsal to wrap up term 3.
- **Victorian Opera Showcase**
Rehearsal dates: Regular Tuesday rehearsals 5.45 pm – 7.45 pm
Intensive Rehearsal: Saturday 30 August, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Production Week: Tuesday 9 September to Thursday 11 September 29 May, 5.00 pm – 7.45 pm
Performances: Friday 12 September, 7.00 pm & Saturday 13, 2.00 pm & 7:00pm
Mandatory participation, lead roles by audition
- **New Work Opera Studio** will not go ahead in 2025. It will return in 2026
- **VOYCE Youth Opera Program – Chorus participation in Boojum!**
In term 4, 2025, The VOYCE participants will be offered an audition for roles in the chorus of *Boojum!* This work is our VO Emerges offering in 2025.
Performance Dates are as follows: Friday 7, Saturday 8, Sunday 9 November
Friday 14, Saturday 15, Sunday 16 November
Friday 21, Saturday 22, Sunday 23 November

More information regarding each of these performance opportunities will be provided in the lead up to their commencement date.

VOYCE Youth Opera Program Added Benefits

As part of VOYCE Youth Opera Program, members receive:

- Special access to:
- *Follies* on Saturday 1 February, 1:00pm Exclusive access to the final dress rehearsal of this new production of Sondheim's, classic musical.
- *Abduction* on Tuesday 12 August, 7:30pm. Attend the opening performance of the new production of Abduction directed by Con Costi.
- *Katya Kabanova* on Tuesday 14 October at 7:30pm. Attend the opening performance of Janacek's masterpiece directed by Heather Fairbairn.

Attendance to these excursions is not compulsory but affords insight into how our company runs its rehearsals and the diversity of productions it stages. It also exposes participants to a variety of repertoire building their understanding and pushing their skill development. Times for General Rehearsals are yet to be confirmed.

COVID-19 Safety Requirements

Victorian Opera has implemented a COVID-Safe Plan and Safe Working Guidelines for all VOYCE Youth Opera Program participants whilst on site at a rehearsal or performance. If you would like a copy of the documents, please speak with the Education Manager to obtain them.

As the State opera company and a professional performing arts organisation, Victoria Opera takes very seriously its responsibility for the physical, mental, and financial health of all who are employed and associated with the company. The nature of our working environment requires many different people from different areas of Melbourne, Australia, and even the world, to mingle, cross paths and sing together. This factor, mixed with the transmissibility of the virus, results in our heightened interventions to minimise the risk of infection.

It is extremely important that participants do not arrive on site to rehearsal or a performance if experiencing any COVID, cold or flu like symptoms. These include but are not limited to:

- Loss or change in sense of smell or taste
- Fever
- Chills or sweats
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose

Participants experiencing any of these symptoms, must not attend rehearsal or performance. They must get tested for COVID-19 and inform the VOYCE Administrator immediately of a positive result.

Face Masks: Face masks are strongly recommended when a participant is recovering from minor colds and fevers or if preparing for performances. Our preference is for N95, P2 or KN95 face masks, however a properly fitted surgical mask or appropriate handmade cloth mask is also acceptable. Both nose and mouth should be fully covered. If a member of a participants household test positive for COVID19 we require the participant to wear a face mask when attending rehearsals during the infectious period.

RAT Testing: The Victorian Opera's **COVID-Safe Plan** and **Safe Working Guidelines**, no longer requires participants to take a RAT test prior to each rehearsal. We encourage a RAT to be undertaken if symptoms of COVID19 are being presented.

Breaks: During breaks, participants are asked to spread out and move outside when possible.

Ventilation: When possible and where safe and practical, doors and windows of rehearsal venues will be left open to allow fresh air to circulate into the space.

During Rehearsal: If a participant begins to feel unwell during rehearsal, they must let the rehearsal supervisor know. They will be taken to the Board Room (COVID-19 isolation room). Parents / guardians will be called and asked to collect the participant. If a positive test is returned in the days that follow, notify the VOYCE Administrator. We ask that the participant takes another test and receive a negative result before returning to regular rehearsals.

The above interventions, along with the individual's responsibility to take reasonable care for their own and others' health and safety, work together to keep everyone well and safe, as well as protecting the continuity of our all our rehearsal and performance schedules.

All information is deemed correct at the time of distribution or printing. Please note due to the ever-changing nature of the virus and Government health recommendations, all information is subject to change at any time without notice. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Education Manager to discuss them.

I have read and understood the above **VOYCE Youth Opera Program Terms of Participation and COVID-19 Safety Requirements**. Where I have not understood or been unclear as to the meaning of any part, I have sought clarification from the VOYCE Administrator at Victorian Opera. I acknowledge and accept that failure to meet attendance obligations, payment of fees by due dates and adhering to COVID-19 Safety Requirements as listed above, may lead to withdrawal from the 2025 season of VOYCE Youth Opera Program.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

If under 18 years of age

Parent/Guardian name: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____