



**Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Opera School presents:**

**LA CALISTO
Francesco Cavalli**

SATURDAY 20 MAY, 6.30PM
TUESDAY 23 MAY, 6.30PM
THURSDAY 25 MAY, 11.30AM
SATURDAY 27 MAY, 2PM

MUSIC WORKSHOP, SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



SYDNEY
CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC

Sydney Conservatorium of Music Opera School presents

LA CALISTO

Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676)

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giovanni Faustini

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Pitch: A = 440 Herz

Temperament: 1/4 comma meantone

Approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes,
with one interval of 20 minutes

Director

Elsie Edgerton-Till

Music Director

Professor Neal Peres Da Costa

Set and Costume Designer

Isabella Andronos

Lighting Designer Christopher Page

Warning - this production contains
adult themes.

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Cover image Isabella Andronos

CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

NATURE (LA NATURA) (SOPRANO)

Transcendent mystical woman of power,
controlling all mortal lives

ETERNITY (ETERNITÀ) / FURY (FURIA)

(SOPRANO) Transcendent mystical woman
of power, controlling all mortal lives

DESTINY (IL DESTINO) / FURY (FURIA)

(MEZZO SOPRANO) Transcendent mystical
woman of power, controlling all mortal
lives

JUPITER (GIOVE)/JUPITER AS DIANA

(BARITONE) Smooth talking good time
guy and god of the heavens and of all
humankind

MERCURY (MERCURIO) (BARITONE)

Jupiter's wingman and god of trickery

CALISTO (SOPRANO) A young woman and
follower of Diana

ENDYMION (ENDIMIONE) (MEZZO

SOPRANO) A young man of humble origins

DIANA (MEZZO SOPRANO) A powerful,
independent woman and goddess of the
hunt

LINFEA (COUNTER TENOR) A playful
woman and follower of Diana

YOUNG SATYR (SATIRINO) (SOPRANO)

A young faun and follower of Pan

PAN (PANE) (TENOR) Lust-sick leader of
the pack and god of the fauns

SILVANUS (SILVANO) (BASS) A world weary
faun and wingman to Pan

JUNO (GIUNONE) The long-suffering wife
of Jupiter and matriarchal goddess of the
heavens and of all humankind

FEMALE CHORUS Young women and
followers of Diana

MALE CHORUS Young men and followers of
Pan

Synopsis

Prologue

Giving a preview of the opera's ending, Destiny, Eternity and Nature decide that Calisto deserves a place with them in the heavens.

Act 1

Jupiter (Giove), king of the gods, comes down to earth to restore order after a war. He sees the nymph Calisto looking for drinking water and is struck by her beauty. Jupiter replenishes a spring to impress Calisto, but as she is a follower of the goddess Diana, sworn to chastity, so his amorous advances are firmly rejected. Mercury, Jupiter's son and right-hand man, suggests that he should take on the form of Diana and press his suit again. Calisto is very happy to receive 'Diana's' affection.

The real Diana appears with Lynfea and her followers. The young man Endymion is in love with Diana and tells her his feelings; she feels much the same, but feigns disinterest. Calisto turns up and joins the party, elated from her recent encounter, and tells the real Diana how much she enjoyed their caresses. Diana doesn't understand; she is shocked at what she hears and banishes Calisto. Linfea has her own encounter with the advances of the lusty young faun Satirino. Pane, a satyr, also lusts after Diana but has an idea that she is interested in someone else. Sylvano, god of the woods, and his satyr friends – half human half animal – concoct a plan to remove Diana's lover, though who this might be they don't yet know.

Act 2

Endymion looks up at the moon (Diana is the goddess of the moon) and falls asleep to beautiful dreams. Diana just can't help herself. She gives him a kiss, and he wakes happily and continues the embrace. Neither of them notices that Satirino is spying on them. Juno (Giunone) descends to earth

to check up on her husband – she knows him well, and knows that he is a serial philanderer. She comes across Calisto who innocently tells her that she has been intimate with Diana. But Juno is suspicious and believes that this may have been one of her husband's tricks; this is confirmed when 'Diana' arrives with Mercury, looking for Calisto. To complicate things, Endymion arrives and starts to woo 'Diana' – not surprisingly, as this is really Jupiter, he doesn't get far. Now the satyrs know Diana's secret admirer and they action their plan to deal with him. They capture Endymion and mistreat him, mocking his true love in favour of their more earthy and uncomplicated lust. Even Diana's chaste companion Linfea seems ready to get some action.

Act 3

Juno and three of her Furies from the underworld confront Calisto. Juno curses Calisto and turns her into a bear. Jupiter admits that he loves Calisto, but can't do anything about Juno's curse. The real Diana remains the object of many desires and lusts. She and Endymion have fallen in love, but the satyr Pane still wants her. Eventually, Pane and his boys decide that he has no chance and leave in disgust. Jupiter, as king of the gods, allows Calisto a brief time on Earth wandering the woods as a bear.

The opera ends with him taking her up into the heavens and turning her into the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear. She is still there now!

Director and Designer's Note

True love and unbridled lust. These two immutable human experiences sit at the heart of the narrative of *La Calisto*.

Calisto, the virgin follower of Diana, is an object of desire. After refusing the advances of Giove, she is tricked into a sexual encounter with the man who lusted after her.

Diana, the fiercely independent goddess of the hunt, swears she and the young virgin women who follow her have no need for a man. Teased and taunted for her convictions by the men who lust after her, Diana's world is turned upside down when she falls head over heels in love. And in a true meeting of souls, the young man loves her back.

This is the point of departure for this epic opera's narrative. Based loosely on two Greek myths, Giovanni Faustini's libretto is a titillating interpretation of the seduction of Calisto and Diana's adventure with Endymione.

La Calisto explores love and lust exclusively through a masculine, hetero-normative gaze. To honour the delightful comedy and frivolity of the score and libretto, we felt it was important to shift the implicit power imbalance: the women need to be more than objects of desire; love and lust need to exist outside a heterosexual paradigm. In keeping with the baroque precedent of male singers taking female roles, we have cast a number of roles cross-gender. As we still hear the gender of each singer performing the role, the comedy of the opera is revealed.

This production of the opera is set at a modern wedding reception venue. The wedding in contemporary Australian society remains, for the most part, a celebration of gender binaries and

heterosexuality with the bride in virginal white, the groom in a suit, bridesmaids and groomsmen. 'Male' and 'female' groups have been created through costuming. Combined with the singers performing travesty roles, the performative binaries of gender and sexuality that exist in a contemporary wedding are playfully questioned.

The myths on which *La Calisto* is based are populated with many well known Greek and Roman gods. These gods have imperfections and jealousies; they are lustful and succumb to emotion. It is these amplified human characteristics that this production embraces. Here, the gods are guests at the wedding reception, distinguished in status through their entrances and their regal attire.

The world of the opera is rooted in reality and with a touch of old world magic. The set echoes the period when the opera was written and performed. It evokes an ancient, majestic space with deep blue ceilings with painted gold stars. In the opera's prologue, the three Fates promise the audience that tonight we will witness Calisto's ascent to the stars. By the epilogue of the opera, Calisto has become the constellation Ursa Major. This is a story these women, who have seen all, have told before. Tonight they are singing it for you.

We would like to thank the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Opera Division and the Early Music Ensemble. Our special thanks to our wonderful cast, production team and creative team for bringing this world and music to life.

Elsie Edgerton-Till and Isabella Andronos

Music Director's Note

It is splendid and extremely rewarding to bring the talented students of the Opera and Vocal, Historical Performance and Orchestral Studies Divisions together to work on Cavalli's opera *La Calisto*. I am grateful to Dr Stephen Mould for his unstinting dedication to preparing this work with the singers and for the incredible work of the vocal teachers and coaches. Working with Elsie Edgerton-Till is also a complete delight – her staging ideas are inspirational.

La Calisto has given us all a rich and rare opportunity to immerse ourselves in the intriguing world of mid seventeenth-century Italian (Venetian) opera. This was a time in Western art music performance when the meaning of words and clarity of delivery and pronunciation were of paramount importance. The text and story was all; to be delivered in the style of a master orator. Interestingly, during this era all well-educated musicians received in-depth training in oration and rhetorical delivery. This style of delivery receded sometime through the second half of the 19th century or later but is essential for this early form of opera.

So, our vocal students have really been coming to terms with this and expanding their palate of expressive means. To support them, our orchestral players (on period instruments) in the Early Music Ensemble have been learning about seventeenth-century performance style. It is exciting for us to have not only the complement of bowed string instruments (violins, violas, cellos, viola da gamba and violone), but also a range of plucked strings (theorboes – lutes with long giraffe-like necks, guitar, harpsichords), organ and the not-so-often-heard precursor to the bassoon – the bass dulcian. Added to this, is our recorder playing team and of special interest (and

for the first time for a Conservatorium student), the cornetto – the instrument that was much favoured during the Renaissance and early Baroque eras. For some students, this will be their first time playing on these instruments – a great introduction which will give them more choice in future career paths.

In forming our interpretation of *La Calisto*, we have had to come to grips with a style that, while pushing forward, retains (at least in its notation) vestiges of late-Renaissance practice. In particular, we have experimented with ideas of keeping regular the large-scale beat (the *tactus*), and we have had to decipher a multiplicity of time signatures that look backwards rather than forwards. For information about this I have consulted experts from around the world. Ornamentation, phrasing (based on word stress rather than line), and instrumental colour from the basso continuo team are among other important considerations that have gone into bringing this amazing and colourful opera to life.

We hope you enjoy it.

Professor Neal Peres Da Costa,
Program Leader, Postgraduate Research
and Professor of Historical Performance

Artistic Director of Con Opera's Note

In 1651, an opera, *La Calisto* was performed in Venice on 11 occasions, thereafter remaining silent until the early 1970s, when the score was rediscovered and its performance history effectively re-started. The death of the impresario (who was also the librettist) during those initial performances was probably a factor in *La Calisto* not becoming as widely performed as other Cavalli operas of the period. Most operas of this period shared a similar fate of being forgotten until the twentieth century interest in works of the past, along with the decline in the composition of new operas, caused such works to be rediscovered in the dusty shelves of neglected libraries.

Since then, *La Calisto* has emerged as a major opera by the standards of any era, a genuine lost masterpiece that rivals other works by its composer, Francesco Cavalli, as well as his more visible teacher, Claudio Monteverdi. The poetry of librettist Giovanni Faustini, (one of the earliest opera librettists) along with the melodic and declamatory gifts of Cavalli, combined with an unexpected, tantalisingly dissonant and frequently plangent harmonic palette, have produced a work that retains a clear appeal to modern sensibilities, as complex infatuations, liaisons and betrayals are portrayed and explored with a frankness, humour and suggestiveness that reveals

to modern audiences a reflection of the society that existed in the liberal fabric of Venice that in many ways mirrors our own.

In recreating a work nearly 400 years old, we have been fortunate for the inspiration, enthusiasm and encyclopaedic knowledge of Professor Neal Peres Da Costa, who has worked tirelessly with our cast, and who leads this performance authentically from the harpsichord with his Early Music Ensemble. We are very grateful to Neal for his leadership and patience in demystifying this work for us. I am delighted to welcome back to the Conservatorium Elsie Edgerton-Till, who follows her poignant staging of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* with another, more challenging Baroque work. Elsie has helped us to realise that love and lust have traversed the centuries unchanged, and that the human passions and dilemmas that ignite this work are as alive today as they were over four centuries ago. We are grateful to Elsie and her extraordinary team for taking our students (and hence our audience) on this brave journey that has not been without moments of rawness and revelation.

I hope that you will enjoy this production of one of the masterpieces of the seventeenth century.

Dr Stephen Mould, Senior Lecturer in Conducting and Opera Studies



Biographies

Elsie Edgerton-Till Director

Elsie Edgerton-Till's extensive theatre experience includes directing engagements for Sydney Conservatorium of Music, New Zealand Playhouse, The Ensemble Theatre, National Institute of Dramatic Arts, The Court Theatre, World Busker's Festival, The Forge and the New Theatre. As assistant director she has worked for Sydney Theatre Company, Opera Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Auckland Theatre Company and Sydney Chamber Opera. She is a 2017 Glorias Fellowship recipient.

Recent directing credits include *The Fairy Queen* [Sydney Conservatorium of Music], a national tour of *Phone A Friend* [New Zealand Playhouse], Moira MacKenzie's *Wheel of Fortune* [The World Busker's Festival], *Boys, Rausch, The Red Shoes* [National Institute of Dramatic Arts], *Book of Days* [The New Theatre], *The Great Piratical Rumbustification, Antarctic Adventure, Goldilocks, The Elves and the Shoemaker* [The Court Theatre], *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [The Canterbury Young Shakespeare Company], *Punk Rock* [International Screen Academy]. In her time spent working in professional theatre as an actor, Elsie has appeared widely in productions of new New Zealand works, contemporary comedy, musicals and classics. Performance highlights include *The Seagull, Under Milk Wood, Cabaret, The Female of the Species, The Country Wife* [The Court Theatre], *POE* [The Forge], *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [The Christchurch Arts Festival]. For many years she was a member of The Court Theatre's 'Court Jesters', the longest running professional improvisational theatre troupe in Australasia.

www.elsieedgerton-till.com

Professor Neal Peres Da Costa Music Director

A graduate of the University of Sydney, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London), the City University (London) and the University of Leeds (UK), Neal Peres Da Costa is a renowned performing scholar and educator. He is Professor of Historical Performance within the Historical Performance Division and Program Leader of Postgraduate Research at the SCM. His monograph *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Bärenreiter Urtext performing edition of Brahms chamber sonatas have received critical acclaim. Neal has recently received prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) funding for a three-year Discovery Project (2017-19) for performance research in 19th-century piano playing.

Neal regularly performs with Australia's leading ensembles including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera, the Song Company, the Australian Haydn Ensemble and Ironwood. With Ironwood, Neal undertakes cutting-edge creative research that has led to performances and recordings of late-Romantic chamber repertoire in period style. Winner of the 2008 Fine Arts ARIA for Best Classical Recording for Bach's Sonatas for violin and obbligato harpsichord (ABC Classics, 2007) with Richard Tognetti and Daniel Yeadon, Neal's discography includes: *Bach's Complete Sonatas for Viola Da Gamba and Harpsichord* with Daniel Yeadon (ABC Classics, 2009), *The Baroque Trombone* with Christian Lindberg and the ACO (BIS, 2009); *The Galant Bassoon* with Matthew Wilke and Kees Boersma (Melba, 2009); *Baroque Duets* (Vexations 840, 2011) which he directed with Fiona Campbell, David Walker and Ironwood; *Music for a While* with Ironwood and Miriam Allan (2012); 3 with Genevieve Lacey and Daniel

Yeadon (ABC Classics, 2012); *Mozart: Stolen Beauties* with Anneke Scott and Ironwood (ABC Classics, 2015) and most recently *Brahms: Tones of Romantic Extravagance* (ABC Classics, 2016). He has also recorded extensively on the Channel Classics label with Florilegium, the British ensemble which he co-founded in 1991 and of which he was a member for 10 years.

music.sydney.edu.au/people/professor-neal-peres-da-costa

Isabella Andronos Set and Costume Designer

Isabella Andronos is a set and costume designer who works across theatre, film and opera. She holds a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts (Design) from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts and a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours: Class I) from Sydney College of the Arts. Isabella has been nominated for four Australian Production Design Guild (APDG) awards. Winner: APDG Award for Emerging Live Performance Design 2014, Set Design: *The Greeks* (Dir. John Sheedy, NIDA). Nominations: APDG Award for Emerging Live Performance Design 2014, Set and Costume Design: *Fewer Emergencies* (Dir. Susanna Dowling, NIDA), APDG Award for Costume Design for Stage 2015: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Dir. Susanna Dowling, Sport For Jove) and *Blood Wedding* (Dir. Kristine Landon-Smith, NIDA).

Her set and costume design credits include: *Il Tabarro* (Opera, Dir. Constantine Costi, Alfie's Newtown), *The Fairy Queen* (Opera, Dir. Elsie Edgerton-Till, The Sydney Conservatorium of Music), *The Screwtape Letters* (Theatre, Dir. Hailey McQueen, Clock and Spiel Productions), *This, This Is Mine* (Theatre, Dir. Duncan Ragg, Corinthian Food Store Collective), *Rausch* (Theatre, Dir. Elsie Edgerton-Till, NIDA), *The Greenhouse* (Feature film, Dir. Tom Wilson), *Green River I and II* (Short Films, Dir. Nick Andrews) and *Stranger* (Short Film, Dir. Peter Skinner). Isabella was a

recipient of the William Fletcher Foundation Tertiary Grant in 2014, and was selected to exhibit in World Stage Design 2017 in Taipei. Isabella has also worked as a swing dresser on *Matilda: The Musical* (HOD: Sue Lyons, Sydney Lyric Theatre) for Miss Honey/Mrs. Wormwood, the child cast and the female ensemble. She also had the great fortune of collaborating with director Agnes Baginska on a miniature for her film *Last Tree Standing*, which was created as part of the MA in Film David Lynch Scholarship. The film was selected to premiere at Festival de Cannes. www.isabellaandronos.com

Christopher Page Lighting Designer

Christopher is a creator of worlds and has crafted unique lighting environments for a diverse range of shows. Recent credits include: *Odd Man Out, Betrayal, A History of Falling Things, The Good Doctor, Blue/Orange* and video design on *E-Baby* (Ensemble Theatre); *A Life In The Theatre, The Man With Five Children and Ride/Fourplay* (Darlinghurst Theatre); *BU21, 4:12* (Outhouse Theatre); *Journey's End* (ATYP Cameo's); *Defying Gravity, Blood Brothers, Do You Hear The People Sing?* (Enda Markey Presents); *Lighten Up, The Witches, Five Properties of Chainmale* (Griffin Theatre); *Between the Streetlight and the Moon, House of Ramon Iglesia, Platonov* (Mop Head); *Black Jesus, His Mother's Voice, Great Expectations* (Bakehouse Theatre); *The Dark Room, Windmill Baby, As You Like It* (Belvoir) and *Truck Stop* (Q Theatre).

Chris' site-specific work include: *Ancient Lives* (Powerhouse Museum), *El Anatsui* (Carriageworks); *Action Stations* (National Maritime Museum); *Becalmed Heart, Met You in a City That Isn't on a Map* (Underbilly Arts Festival); *Mangroves* (Kate Richards and UNSW) and Parramasala Festival 2012 (Parramatta City Council).

www.cpage.design.com.au

Production Credits

Director

Elsie Edgerton-Till

Music Director

Professor Neal Peres Da Costa

Production Manager Marrienne Carter

Set and Costume Designer

Isabella Andronos

Lighting Designer Christopher Page

Costume Supervisor Caitlyn Elliott

Choreographer Kylie Bonaccorso

Stage Manager Olivia Benson

Assistant Conductors TaeSoo Kim,
Luis Fernando Madrid

Assistant Director Clemence Williams

Repetiteurs Julia de Plater,

Josephine Flores Tam, Jasmine Wei

Italian Language Coach Tanith Bryce

Production Assistants Cassidy Lobb,
Jack Ayoub

Surtitle Operation TaeSoo Kim

Score and Music Preparation
Stephen Yates

Hair and Make-up Rachel Dal Santo

Lighting Programmer Matthew Tweedle

Lighting Board Operator
Geoffrey Bellingham

Carpenters and Staging Technicians
Alex Pringle, Anthony Arnold,
Rhys Robinson, Anthony Danaro

Orchestral Management Scott Ryan,
Tom Westley

Publicity Jacqui Smith,
Aaron Cornelius

Production Photography
Patrick Boland

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Salmon, Dr David Kim-Boyle and Guy

McEwan.

Special thanks to Carey Beebe for the generous loan of the Zuckerman Italian harpsichord after Grimaldi.



The Fairy Queen – Con Opera, 2016

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Siro Battaglin
Julia de Plater
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Robert Andrew Greene
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Anke Hoepfner (German)
Simon Lobelson (French)

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Olivia Ansell
Jo Ansell

Stagecraft

Dr Narelle Yeo

Acting

Paige Gardiner

Theatre Studies

Simon Lobelson
Andy Morton

Ensemble

Dr Stephen Mould
Julia de Plater

Opera Performance Class

Barry Ryan OAM

Opera History

Associate Professor Michael Halliwell

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Early Music Ensemble
The Fairy Queen - Con Opera, 2016

Cast (in order of appearance)

***Juno and Nature* (soprano)**

Aimee O'Neill

***Eternity and Fury 1* (soprano)**

Esther Song

***Destiny and Fury 2* (mezzo soprano)**

Victoria Hodgkinson

***Jupiter/Jupiter as Diana* (baritone)**

Tristan Entwistle *
Allen Qi †

***Mercury* (baritone)**

Jeremy Dubé

***Calisto* (soprano)**

Samanta Lestavel *
Ashlee Woodgate †

Endymion

(mezzo soprano)

Rebecca Hart

***Diana* (mezzo soprano)**

Viktoria Bolonina *
Jia Yao Sun †

***Linfea* (countertenor)**

Robert Adam

***Young Satyr* (soprano)**

Sitong Liu

***Pan* (tenor)**

Joshua Oxley

***Silvanus* (bass)**

Vincent Farrell

Female Chorus

Soprano 1

Meredith Cheng
Katherine Allen

Soprano 2

Madeleine O'Dea
Victoria Bromberger

Male Chorus

Tenor

Nathan Bryon
Alexander Young

Baritone

Gabriel Hole
Brendan Zlatkis

* Performing 20 and 25 May

† Performing 23 and 27 May

Early Music Ensemble

Professor Neal Peres Da Costa, Director

Violin

James Tarbotton (leader)
Cameron Chan
Joshua Kok
Calvin Leung
Tania Ma
Kathryn Parker
Holly Smith

Viola

Dana Lee
Samuel Lord
Eunice Wong
Nicole Forsyth (tutor)

Cello

Sophie Funston
Yosiah Oshiro

Viola Da Gamba

Anna Reid
Daniel Yeadon (tutor)

Violone

Serena Lim

Dulcian

Hamish Spicer

Cornetto

Lachlan Mahoney

Recorder

Aimee Brown
Isabelle Palmer
Peter Petocz

Theorbo

Dean Gray
Daniel Morris

Guitar

George Wills

Harpsichord

Nathan Cox
Jasmine Wei
Neal Peres Da Costa (Tutor)

Special thanks to tutors
Daniel Yeadon, Nicole
Forsyth and Matthew
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Cox for preparation and
tuning of the chamber organ
and harpsichords.

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Both courses concentrate on core operatic skills in singing, languages, role preparation and repertoire, stagecraft, acting, dance, ensemble and opera history.

Con Opera

Con Opera, our opera studio, presents two fully-staged operas with orchestra each year, and features the work of up and coming directors. These are ideal opportunities for students to immerse themselves in all aspects of the craft of staging an opera, and to acquire experience singing entire character roles. In Semester 2, 2017, Con Opera will present a fully staged production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) sung in German.



The Fairy Queen – Con Opera, 2016

Auditions and Further Information

Early round auditions will be held in September 2017 (later round audition will be held in November 2017) for entry in 2018. For more information about our opera and vocal studies programs, please visit:

music.sydney.edu.au/opera