



Media Release, 12 February 2007

Pinchgut Opera performs Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*

VIVALDI WROTE OPERAS?

Vivaldi wrote over five hundred concertos and his *Four Seasons* is perhaps the most popular piece of classical music today. But he also wrote nearly fifty operas and several dramatic oratorios. **Juditha Triumphans** is the only oratorio still in existence. Pinchgut Opera will present Australia's first professional production of this work at City Recital Hall Angel Place, Sydney opening 5 Dec 2007.

Juditha is a rarely performed work and is based on the biblical story of Judith. It was written for the Ospedale della Pietà, the orphanage in Venice where Vivaldi was head of music. The work was originally written for all female voices. It is quite unusual in the world of opera/oratorio in that the hero is a woman – Judith, a young widow who saves her town from the invading Assyrians by seducing then killing the Assyrian general Holofernes.

Pinchgut's artistic director **Antony Walker** (also Music Director at Pittsburgh Opera and Artistic Director and Conductor of Washington Concert Opera in Washington DC), will be conducting Opera Australia's new production of Handel's *Alcina* in Melbourne at the same time and is therefore delighted to pass the baton to **Attilio Cremonesi** who will conduct from the harpsichord. Appropriately, Signor Cremonesi comes from Venice.

"This is one of Vivaldi's most glorious music dramas", Antony said, "and it's a delight to have such an experienced exponent of Vivaldi's works conducting and playing the work from the harpsichord."

The cast will include some of Australia's favourite female voices. The role of Juditha will be sung by mezzo-soprano **Sally-Anne Russell** and the other soloists will be **Sara Macliver, Fiona Campbell and Renae Martin**. For a contrast with the female voices, up and coming American counter-tenor **David Walker** will sing the part of Holofernes. As usual, the Orchestra of the Antipodes will perform on authentic baroque instruments of the period and Cantillation will be the chorus. **Mark Gaal**, who directed *L'Orfeo* for Pinchgut in 2004, will direct the production.

Pinchgut Opera began in 2001 as an idea to give audiences a different experience of opera and make opera accessible to a whole new audience. Its aim is to showcase Australian talent, performing fascinating lesser-known masterpieces in an intimate venue with an excellent acoustic. **Juditha Triumphans** will be Pinchgut's sixth production.

Pinchgut Opera presents Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*

City Recital Hall Angel Place, Sydney

4 performances: 5, 8, 10 December 2007 at 7.30pm & 9 December 2007 at 5.30pm

Sally-Anne Russell, Fiona Campbell, Sara Macliver, Renae Martin, David Walker

Conducted from the harpsichord by Attilio Cremonesi

Director: Mark Gaal

Lighting Designer: Bernie Tan-Hayes

Chorus: Cantillation

Orchestra: Orchestra of the Antipodes

Bookings from 17 July 2007 from City Recital Hall Box Office ph: (02) 8256 2222

Tickets from \$45 to \$95

Sung in Latin with English surtitles

For media enquires including interviews, photos, further information on Pinchgut please contact: Anna Cerneaz, Pinchgut Opera – (02) 9362 5711 or 0412 093 063 e: acerneaz@pinchgutopera.com.au

www.pinchgutopera.com.au

Background information:

PINCHGUT OPERA

An Opera Company for the 21st Century

Pinchgut Opera was set up in 2001 to give music lovers a different experience of opera. It produces works that are not well known, but should be, in more intimate spaces and with young Australian professional artists. Our first production, Handel's *Semele*, was in December 2002. In December 2003 Pinchgut Opera produced Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, in 2004 Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, in 2005 the Australian premiere of Rameau's *Dardanus* and in 2006 Mozart's *Idomeneo*. ABC Classics recordings of all these operas are available (except *Idomeneo* which will be released later in 2007), and have been very well received both here and internationally. All of our operas have been broadcast live across Australia through ABC Classic FM.

People of Pinchgut

Artistic Directors	Erin Helyard & Antony Walker
Artistic Administrator	Alison Johnston
Marketing Manager	Anna Cerneaz
Production Manager	Andrew Johnston
Chair	Elizabeth Nielsen
Board Members	Alison Johnston, Ken Nielsen
Patrons	Kenneth W Tribe, Moya Henderson