



Dear Friends,

### Box Office

Ticket sales for *Juditha Triumphans* began, for newsletter subscribers, on 2 July. Sales to the public open 16 July. So far, we have seen the fastest rate of sale of any of our productions and, with luck we might have four sellout performances. If you have not bought your tickets yet, and especially if you are planning to go on opening night or the Sunday matinee, we do suggest that you book now.

Although there is no prize, the first person to book seats for *Juditha Triumphans* was Renée Goossens. Renée is the daughter of the late Sir Eugene Goossens, one of the giants of Sydney music. As well as being Director of the NSW Conservatorium of Music and Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony he was the person who first suggested the idea of an opera house on Bennelong Point to J J Cahill when Cahill became Premier in 1952. Goossens was also a composer of note. He composed an opera called *Judith* (based on the same story as *Juditha Triumphans*) which was performed at the NSW Conservatorium in 1951. A young soprano called Joan Sutherland made her opera debut in the production. We are proud to have Renée among our supporters.

### Absent Friends

Liz and Ken were in Europe recently. They went to Venice to meet Attilio Cremonesi, who will conduct *Juditha*, and also met some other friends of Pinchgut in London and Paris. Attilio lives, with his wife and young daughter, on The Lido - just outside Venice. He is looking forward to coming to Sydney - he was here with Renée Jacobs in



# Juditha Triumphans

## BOX OFFICE

The box office for our production of **Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*** is now open!

### The prices are:

A Res \$110 B Res \$90 C Res \$70

**Group booking for over 10 people on any night:**

A Res \$99 B Res \$81 C Res \$58

**Under 27 Years prices any night are:**

B Res \$45 C Res \$30

(We don't offer a senior's or pensioner's concession price.)

### You can book:

~ **In person** at the book office in Angel Place (near the Pitt Street entrance). Hours are 9-5 weekdays and extended hours if there is a performance in the Hall.

~ **By phone** to (02) 8256 2222 or 1300 797 118 (for the cost of a local call).

~ **Online** at [www.cityrecitalhall.com](http://www.cityrecitalhall.com) or [here](#).

### The performances are:

Wednesday 5 December 7:30 pm

Saturday 8 December 7:30 pm

Sunday 9 December 5:30 pm

Monday 10 December 7:30 pm

1995 for Musica Viva - and hopes to bring his family. He spent ten years with Jacobs and in the last few years Attilio has been spending much of his time conducting - usually early music and usually from the harpsichord. As an Italian, Attilio tells us that Vivaldi is very important to him. He believes he can bring the spirit of Vivaldi's music to Sydney in a way that non-Italians cannot. Attilio was born in Crema, a town just outside Cremona whose other famous son was Francesco Cavalli (1606-1672) who, like Vivaldi, worked in Venice and composed many wonderful operas. We are also looking forward to having Attilio in Sydney and watching him work with the Pinchgut company.

*Attilio on a fine summer's day on The Lido di Venezia*

Liz and Ken also caught up with Mark Tucker and Paul Agnew. Mark is spending much of this year performing around Europe in the Jonathan Miller production of *L'Orfeo* conducted by Philip Pickett. He also performs regularly with lutenist Paula Chateauneuf in programmes of arias and English songs. (We hope you are reading this, *Musica Viva*). Paul is also very busy. As well as singing with many of Europe's early music ensembles in the 2007-08 season he will be conducting Les Arts Florissants several times over the next few months. Both Mark and Paul would love to return to Sydney and Pinchgut.

Another Pinchgut alumnus soprano Miriam Allan, outlined her schedule over the next few months: Innsbruck, Utrecht, Pisa, Wrocklaw, Paris, Hemstedt, Auckland. She works often with John Eliot Gardiner and, in between, finds time to teach music at a school where Henry Purcell was once a pupil. We are very proud of Miriam and hope that she can come back to work with Pinchgut again.

### Pinchgut at the Powerhouse

We have established a relationship with Powerhouse Museum which has an excellent collection of musical instruments. The museum kindly loaned us a Bill Bright harpsichord for the production of *L'Orfeo*. We have been working with the Powerhouse to increase awareness of the instrument collection and to raise money to buy important Australia instruments. On 11 August there will be a concert called *The Sound of Innovation: Australian instrument design in concert* presented by the Powerhouse Museum and Pinchgut Opera featuring recorder player Genevieve Lacey, cellist/gamba player Danny Yeadon & harpsichordist Neal Peres Da Costa.

Proceeds of the concert will go towards the acquisition of a recorder made by the late Fred Morgan who is considered by many to have been the greatest recorder maker of modern times. Fred was a pioneer that both raised the level of reproduction instruments and influences many of the best makers still working today. Genevieve will talk about recorders as well as play some of her instruments and Danny will also showcase some of the gambas currently in the collection. *The Sound of Innovation* will be held at the Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris Street Ultimo at 6.30 pm for 7 pm, booking are essential on ph: (02) 9217 0600. Tickets are \$40 (or \$35 for Pinchgut newsletter subscribers) and the price includes refreshments.

### You are Wonderful

So far this year, you have given \$79,000 to the Pinchgut Opera Public Fund. That is more than the same period last year. Thank you. If you have not made a tax deductible donation yet this year, will you think about it? Cheques, payable to the **Pinchgut Opera Public Fund** should be sent to PO Box 239, Westgate 2048. For more information, phone Liz on (02) 9908 1962.

**Our hotel sponsor** this year is the Amora Hotel Jamison Sydney in Jamison Street Sydney. We have great affection for this hotel because under its previous name, Le Meridien, it was sponsor of our first production, *Semele* in 2002. The Amora is a very pleasant place to have a quiet drink or dinner - Liz and Ken have already tried it out and recommend it for a romantic dinner *a deux*. Our soloists will be very comfortable there during the performance run.

The Amora has an offer for those coming to our production: A special rate of \$260 for a Deluxe King room including breakfast for two. Available between 1 and 16 December.

If you would like to try the Amora before December, they have made us another special offer:

Discover Amora...from the moment you arrive, you'll love the Amora experience. Centrally located, this award-winning hotel combines contemporary style and warmth to provide the ultimate ambience for business or pleasure. Including 415 stylish guest rooms, exceptional dining facilities, Angsana Spa and complimentary recreation and relaxation facilities...you'll know you've arrived! Amora Winter Wine & Cheese \$235 includes Deluxe overnight accommodation, cheese platter and bottle of Australian red wine and buffet breakfast for two the following morning in the Gallery Restaurant. Mention Pinchgut Opera to receive a premium bottle of Australian red wine and an upgrade to a Deluxe Corner King. Note the offer is subject to availability and valid from 01 July - 31 August 2007.

For either of these offers, please phone the hotel's reservations manager Martine Wittholz on 9696 2620. We are sure that Martine and all the staff of the Amora will make you welcome.



AMORA HOTEL  
JAMISON SYDNEY

## What is Vivaldi's magic?

Vivaldi is possibly the most popular composer of the baroque period these days. His *Four Seasons* is one of the most-recorded and most-performed piece of music ever composed. We have been wondering why this is so? As you will hear in *Juditha*, he was a very versatile composer, capable of writing wonderful arias and choruses as well as the violin concertos he is famous for. We asked Lyle Chan for his opinion. Lyle was, until recently, Artists and Repertoire Manager at ABC Classics and is now a consultant working with the ABC and other organisations. He is also a composer. [www.lylechanmusic.com](http://www.lylechanmusic.com). Here are Lyle's observations:



Vivaldi is very listenable. The music is appealing and comprehensible with no effort or study required. Vivaldi is very listenable in the way that, for instance, so much of Bach isn't. This undeniable attractiveness is a large factor in why Vivaldi's music is often dismissed by connoisseurs (and snobs) as mere populism.

Indeed success was very important to Vivaldi. He enjoyed popularity and money. Actually he was quite egotistical and greedy. He boasted that the Pope asked for a private performance but we only have Vivaldi's word for it. Towards the end of his life he stopped publishing concertos because he could charge more by selling his handwritten manuscripts (Charles Jennens, librettist for Handel's *Messiah*, discovered this when he tried to buy some). But his populism shouldn't disguise the fact that he was a highly original composer. Actually, to create music more popular than any before, he had to write in a way no-one had before; he had to be innovative. Paramount was his emphasis on beautiful melody. So important was melody that in many of Vivaldi's works it subsumed everything else, and so his solo concerto's accompaniments were often reduced to block chords, exquisitely voiced and orchestrated though they were. This practice earned him the criticism of CPE Bach, who said Vivaldi wrote his basslines too high and assigned them to the violins. Most composers before Vivaldi took care to write good counterpoint, where several melodies played give and take to the appreciation of the trained ear. Vivaldi did away with that, and made one and only one melody stand out like a king. Melodic primacy became a very Italian trait. It is nowhere more evident than in opera, that most Italian of art forms. As late as Verdi, you'll find large chunks of opera where the voice is accompanied by unadorned chords designed to stay out of the way of the tune. Vivaldi's melody-and-accompaniment dichotomy fitted naturally with the soloist-and-orchestra polarity, so it is with good reason that he is widely credited as the founder of the modern solo concerto.

Vivaldi always had one ear out looking for musical devices that increased his music's appeal. An example is the sequence, where a fragment of melody is repeated again and again, each time getting higher or lower. Several famous examples occur in the first movement of the *Winter* concerto, right after the 'teeth-chattering' and 'winter-gale' introduction. Sequences invariably build tension, because while the sequence is operating the 'action' in the music halts, and listeners mentally hold their breath until the sequence is broken and the music 'continues'. A listener's attention intensifies during a sequence. The Germans sometimes call it *fortspinnung* or 'spinning out' and it certainly has a dizzying effect if used indiscriminately. Even the Vivaldi biographer Michael Talbot has acknowledged that his use of *fortspinnung* is "dangerous in his more facile moments."

There had to be a degree of facility to such a prolific composer. Vivaldi boasted to Charles de Brosses that he could compose a concerto faster than a copyist could copy it. His score for the opera *Tito Manlio* was inscribed "Music by Vivaldi, made in five days". Remember the old joke (attributed to Stravinsky) that Vivaldi didn't write 500 concertos, but he wrote one concerto five hundred times? If Vivaldi's music sounds banal or formulaic to us (it shouldn't), it's only because the style he invented was so successful that many subsequent composers just copied it. In this, Vivaldi suffered the same fate as the widely-imitated Corelli. Actually Vivaldi was thrillingly original, and his inventions only became hackneyed in overuse by others. We take for granted that a standard concerto has three movements and that the slow movement is of equal importance with the fast ones, forgetting that Vivaldi was responsible for establishing these now-ubiquitous precepts.

Clearly Vivaldi attracted criticism in his day, for in the dedication to his Opus 4 concertos he observed defensively that his efforts are "spoken ill off by the critics." Few though would have gone as far as Goldoni, his sometime librettist who called him "an excellent violinist and a mediocre composer." Then as now, Vivaldi's success in creating a music of mass appeal drew ire. Now as then, Vivaldi needs his defenders.

## Correction

In an earlier newsletter, we estimated the number of recordings of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* at over 200. Bernd Prillwitz has written from Berlin to tell us that there are 350 recordings with the violin as solo instrument and another 50 of transcriptions using other instruments.

## What's Happening Now?

There is something going on among the Pinchgut team most of the year, but from now on the pace picks up. Here is an outline of what's happening now:

Mark Gaal (director) and Hamish Peters (designer) are developing the design concept of *Juditha Triumphans*. That is the set, costumes and the overall visual approach to presenting the work. As they come up with ideas, they involve Andrew Johnston (production manager) who checks the feasibility of installing the set in the City Recital Hall and makes sure that it can be done within budget. At the moment Mark is in Hungary with a group from NIDA so there are many phone calls and emails flying around. This will culminate in a presentation by Mark, Hamish and Andrew to Alison, Liz, Anna and Ken in early August. They will see the model box - a scale model of the stage with the set - and costume sketches. Mark and Hamish will explain how the work will be presented. (It was at this stage that Mark disclosed that he wanted a snake in the cast for *L'Orfeo*).

Alison Johnston (artistic administrator) is assembling the chorus and the orchestra and preparing the schedule for rehearsals. If there is one person in the team who is really responsible for the musical quality of our shows, it is Alison. Alison and Antony are also working on 2008's performance.

Anna Cerneaz (marketing manager) is working on advertising and publicity for the show. Our graphic designers, [www.thisisrealart.com](http://www.thisisrealart.com), have delivered the image to be used on posters, flyers and advertising. You can see this on a large poster at the Pitt Street entrance to City Recital Hall (it's also the image on the front page of this newsletter). Anna works with our advertising agency The Beach Communications to design and place advertising. She also works with press, magazines, radio and TV to develop stories about Pinchgut. Whenever you see a story about Pinchgut in the media, you will know Anna has been busy.

Liz Nielsen (Chair) is approaching sponsors and working with current sponsors to make sure they get value from the relationship. She also prepares contracts with soloists, books flights and accommodation and arranges visas for those coming from overseas. She talks to several opera support groups about us and the production. She is often told that she is the most interesting speaker they have had all year.

Andrew Johnston (production manager) has been given some clues as to what the set will be for this year, and he is pricing these and working on logistics, and talking to Bernie Tan (our lighting designer). Andrew is also responsible for hiring all the production staff, and keep overall tabs on the budget.

Natalie Shea has been working on the translation of the libretto, and will soon start work on the surtitles and the program.

Although Antony Walker is not conducting *Juditha Triumphans*, he is involved as Artistic Director. His two opera companies in the US - Washington Concert Opera and Pittsburgh Opera - keep him busy, but he is in constant touch by phone, email and conference calls.

Ken Nielsen writes most of the newsletter, fiddles around and tries (often unsuccessfully) to avoid getting into everyone else's way. [Not so - editor].

In between all this, there are discussions about 2008 and 2009 and the soloists we will need. There is some discussion (still confidential) about performances outside Sydney in the future. Pinchgut has no office. We all work from home and have meetings in coffee shops or, often, in Anna's flat. Communication - several times a day - is by phone and email. We can say that it would be impossible to manage Pinchgut without the internet.

### Have you seen the website lately? [www.pinchgutopera.com.au](http://www.pinchgutopera.com.au)

On opening, you will hear a clip from the Naive recording of *Juditha*, used with kind permission of Naive. There is also a slideshow of photos from *Idomeneo*, with a recording from the production in the background. For the *Juditha* production, there are bios of the soloists and the other artists involved, an outline of the plot and the libretto in Latin and English. There is, of course, info about our past productions as well as the company itself. Lots of good reading.

**We are doing a short survey** which will either come to you separately as an email or is included with this newsletter (if you are on the snail mail list). We'd be very grateful if you could take the time to fill in the very short survey for us which will help with our future planning. Thank you in advance.

### The Bulletin's Smart 100 - Australia's best & brightest

We were delighted to read the cover article in the Bulletin two weeks ago (June 26 issue). 100 Australians were named as people who are changing our world (for the better!) in ten categories. Antony Walker was nominated in the Arts & Entertainment category. It's a very nice summary of his work, and has a fantastic quote about us in it "Walker is a co-founding artistic director of the local Cantillation chorus and the independent Pinchgut Opera, which is dedicated to presenting rarely performed operas, and which (Brett Sheehy) describes as "one of the great success stories of new 21st-century companies"." Congratulations Antony and congrats to us. You can look at this online at <http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=273708>

### Fab concert concert coming up - Steve Reich's Tehillim

Halcyon & Ensemble Offspring join forces with the internationally renowned Synergy Percussion, to present Steve Reich's seminal work, *Tehillim*. This inspirational piece for four female voices, six percussionists and large instrumental ensemble, is an explosive mix of ethnic, folk and sacred music, with its crisp, ecstatic rhythms and exotic melodic lines. Also on the program are pieces by Ligeti, Vivier and Ricketson. This will be an amazing concert and is on Saturday 4 August at 8.00 pm at the City Recital Hall Angel Place. Tickets can be bought through the Recital Hall box office on 8256 2222. Come along and support Pinchgut singers Alison Morgan, Belinda Montgomery, Jenny Duck-Chong and Jo Burton. More information on the Recital Hall website [www.cityrecitalhall.com](http://www.cityrecitalhall.com) or click [here](#).

### Music with a View

Annie Whealy is holding another series of 'at home' classes in July/August. The topic will be *Music of the Baroque Period* - including the music of Antonio Vivaldi. It will be a series of five lessons - both day and evening sessions available. This of course would be a terrific introduction and background information to *Juditha Triumphans*. Gorgeous music, spectacular views and a glass of wine are all included. Classes are a maximum of ten people. Ring Annie on 8904 9150 or email her on [awhealy@bigpond.net.au](mailto:awhealy@bigpond.net.au) for further details.

**The winner of the last Latin contest** was Daniel Brass to whom we have sent a coffee mug with the words "Intelligentior Te Sum" on it. The answers were:

1. Portaveramus.
2. Sopranos had never swum in the sea.
3. Bibite vinum, canite carmina, virgines!

There is no contest in this newsletter - I need to do some more research to prepare something difficult. You are getting too good for my simple questions. If anyone would like to be a guest setter, please get in touch. We still have some prizes, including a copy of *Doctore Seuss - Virent Ova! Viret Perna!*, a cap with the words "Have you hugged a Judith today?" and, for our less delicate readers, a T Shirt with the words "Opera Kicks A\*\*".

However, so that you can continue your studies, I refer you to the world's only radio programme in Latin - a weekly summary of the news from Radio Finland. As they explain it: *Nuntii Latini, conspectus rerum internationalium hebdomadalis, est programma Radiophoniae Finnicae Generalis (YLE) in terrarum orbe unicum. YLE Radio Finland eosdem nuntios undis brevibus et per satellites et per rete informaticum Internet ubique terrarum divulgat. In Finnia programma in primo reti YLE emittitur.* You can listen, and read more (in Latin, of course) on the [Nuntii Latini website](#).

And that's it from us. Best wishes from Ken, Alison, Liz, Anna and Andrew.

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