

Calendar

December 2009

Wednesday 2 December 2009
Performance #1 — 7.30 PM

Saturday 5 December 2009
Performance #2 — 7.30 PM

Sunday 6 December 2009
Performance #3 — 5.00 PM

Monday 7 December
Final night performance — 7.30 PM

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Almost Last Chance

Have you bought your tickets yet? What? You haven't? I cannot imagine why not after all that we have told you about the production. Perhaps you don't live in Sydney. No excuse, airfares are very reasonable now. We are sure that this will be a five star event - worth a special journey. In case you have forgotten the important details, here they are again. Only four performances: 2, 5, 7 December at 7.30 pm and 6 December at 5 pm. Prices range from \$75 to \$115 with special prices for under 27 and groups of 10 or more. Bookings with the box office at City Recital Hall Angel Place, in person or by phone on (02) 8256 2222 or online at cityrecitalhall.com. Booking fees might apply.

Italian Cultural Institute

We are delighted to announce that The Italian Cultural Institute in Sydney will be sponsoring Nicole Dorigo, our language coach for *L'Ormino*. The Italian Cultural Institute is committed to fostering the cultural exchange between Italy and Australia and what better way by helping us with such an amazing work of Italian origin.

Recordings



So far all of our productions have been recorded for CD by ABC Classics. The two CD set of Charpentier's *David & Jonathan*, our 2008 production, will be available for sale at the merchandise desk at City Recital Hall Angel Place on opening night. We expect that it will also be available soon after at ABC shops and centres as well as leading record stores including Fish Fine Music in Sydney, and www.buywell.com should have it for online ordering.

ABC Classics have told us that they will not be able to record *L'Ormino* this year. We entirely understand the reasons and are very grateful to them for supporting us so long. They have been wonderful.

We hope to be recording this year's production ourselves - in conjunction with ABC Classic FM who are broadcasting it on Sunday 7 December at 8pm - and to release it, probably under the Pinchgut Live label. There are a few hurdles to overcome before this is definite but we are optimistic that it will happen. We are excited about this new episode in the Pinchgut story. Timing of the release will be announced in next year's newsletter and on our website.

And that's it for us. Best wishes Ken, Alison, Anna, Liz, Andrew, John, Antony & Erin.

Radisson Plaza Hotel



We're delighted to announce that Radisson Plaza Hotel Sydney have released more rooms for our special accommodation package during the *L'Ormino* season. For only \$210 per couple you can stay in style with a complimentary upgrade to a chic Premier room. This offer has proved very popular and is available from 1st to 8th December 2009, bookings can be made by calling 02 8214 0000 and quoting "Opera". With the Radisson Plaza Hotel Sydney located diagonally opposite the City Recital Hall it's the perfect spot to stay and make a night of it.

Don't forget during the *L'Ormino* season every evening Bistro-Fax restaurant will be offering a special main course served with a glass of wine and followed by dessert for only \$35 per person. To take advantage of this great offer simply present your *L'Ormino* ticket upon arrival at the restaurant. Avoid the rush and reserve a table in advance, call 02 8214 0400.

The ABX Bar also have something special for us. Visit the bar before the performance between 5pm and 7pm and take advantage of "It's Our Shout" - there is a different special each night. Alternatively, you can also present your *L'Ormino* ticket and receive 10% off your total bill. You can also reserve a table in the bar by calling 02 8214 0333. Radisson Plaza Hotel Sydney would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy festive season.

Sponsors



PINCHGUT OPERA

A Day in the Life of *L'Ormino*

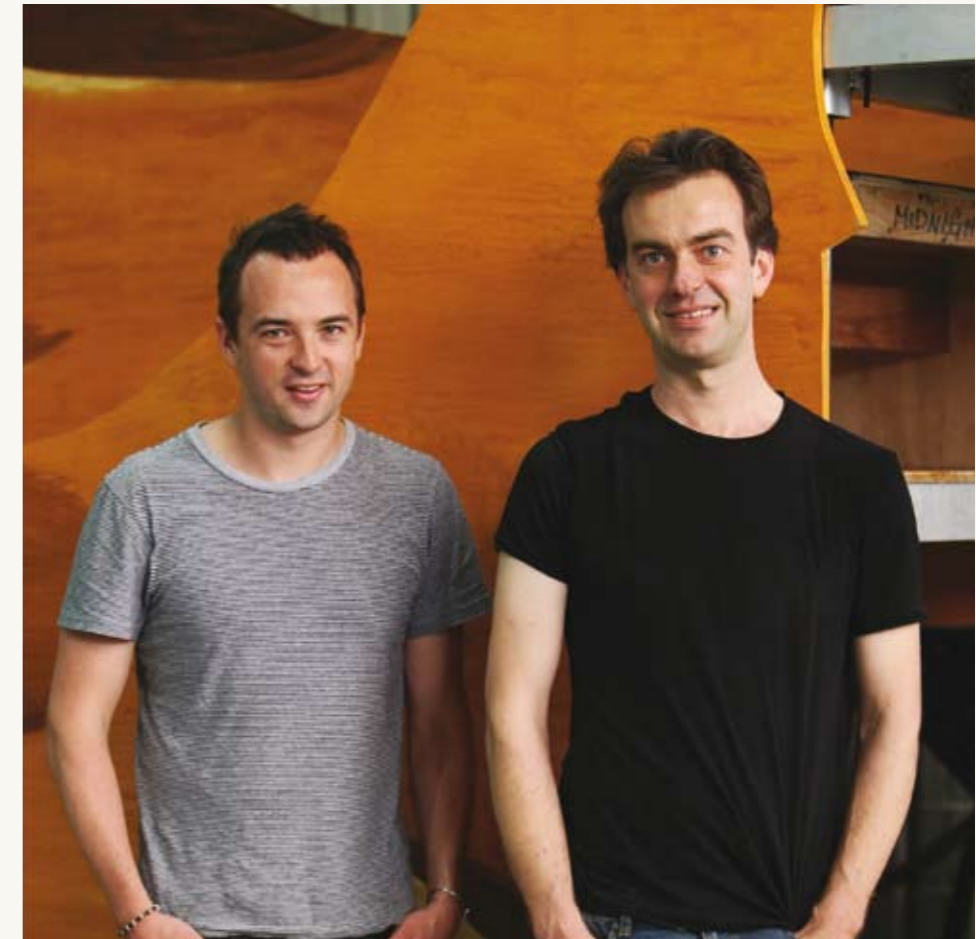
Rehearsals for *L'Ormino* started on 4 November at the Opera Centre (thank you, Opera Australia). Pinchgut's Liz Nielsen says that this is her favourite stage in the whole process of opera, except, possibly, opening night. We asked her why.

An opera is created in rehearsal. The singers come fully prepared (knowing their parts), the conductor comes knowing how he wants to shape the music and the director comes with clear ideas of how she wants to tell the story and move the audience. But it takes about four weeks of hard work from all before we have an opera.

First everyone has to meet each other. Talya Masel and Adam Gardnir present their design, sets and costumes to the cast and Talya explains her broad approach to the production. This time we have a big advantage as the set is already installed in the rehearsal space. It's a fairly complicated set and Talya thinks it important for the singers to get to know it early in the process. Andrew has done a great job getting it built and installed, with Adam's assistance.

We have had two days of just music where Erin Helyard worked with the singers individually so he knows where they are in understanding Cavalli's style. Then it's into a series of music and production calls working through the opera. Erin is musically in charge and has lutenist Deborah Fox alongside to help with the continuo. Nicole Dorigo is there to help the singers with the (very complicated) Italian text.

Talya manages the production part of the calls. But in practice it is a co-operative effort. The music and action have to go together. In fact Cavalli is so good at writing music appropriate to the action and emotion being portrayed that it is generally obvious. Talya often seeks suggestions from the cast about how a scene should be played



Adam Gardnir and Andrew Johnston. Photo by Bridget Elliot.

or a character presented. Then she moulds and works with that suggestion and her view of it in the whole context.

In one scene I watched, Fiona Campbell (Erisbe) and Anna Fraser (Mirinda) are discussing the shortcomings of marriage to an old man. It's very funny with sensuous and gorgeous singing. It also sets the stage well for the story to unfold. How does a beautiful young woman cope with being married to an old man even if he is a king? Later I saw Taryn Fiebig (Sicle disguised as a gypsy) completely fooling the innocent Nerillo (Jane Sheldon). Kanen Breen (Eric) and Anna (now Melide) watch with barely suppressed giggles.

This is the first opera we have produced since *Fairy Queen* that can be described as a comedy with a more-or-less happy ending. It requires a different touch from the company. We have a cast that can bring all this off in a funny, beautiful way. I just wish I did not have so much else to do so I could spend all day watching. The night after watching this I went to a Musica Viva concert at City Recital Hall. It was strange watching the Jerusalem String Quartet (who were wonderful, by the way) and imagining what the space will look like in a few weeks with a very large set installed.

Introducing Trev



Trevor Pichanick

Perhaps the youngest member of the cast this year is tenor Trevor Pichanick who will be singing the role of Amida, Prince of Tremisene. Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Trev came to Australia, aged 17, to study medicine. Here he discovered his passion for music and enrolled at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, and then went on to focus on early music performance at the Sydney Conservatorium. Trev's 'break' came when he stepped into the title role of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at very short notice for the Queensland Music Festival (and received rave reviews). For the past two years he has been full-time member of the Opera Australia chorus, but is now leaving them to pursue his solo career. In *L'Ormindo* Trev's character Amida is the focus of both Erisbe's (Fiona Campbell) and Sicile's (Taryn Fiebig) affections. A scary yet exciting place to be for a young singer. We asked Trev a few questions:

What made you decide to switch from medicine to music and was it a difficult decision?

It certainly was as I thoroughly enjoyed my medical studies. My desire to be a musician was inescapable, but I had serious doubts about my actual talent; so when I was accepted into the Con I took it as a sign that I should go for it. What I really want to do with my life is help people, and it took me a little while to reconcile that with a career in the arts.

What was it like having to step in for an ill Greg Massingham very suddenly in the 2007 production of Orfeo?

Ah! Devastating because I carry a great affection and admiration for Greg, who inhabited Orfeo in every respect. Stepping into his shoes, I instantly understood his attachment to the role - it's amazing, and the experience was incredible. But yes, I prayed. A lot.

What has been like being in the OA chorus for the past two years? It must be very challenging learning music and several productions at once while performing others.

The OA Chorus was a wonderful opportunity for me and yes, the sheer volume of repertoire that a new chorister is faced with creates a very steep learning curve - but that's what I was there to do. I loved being exposed to such a wide range of operas and productions, and being able to observe more experienced artists close-up.

What are your plans now you are leaving the chorus?

I'm still very young (even 'embryonic' as one coach that I work with likes to call me) so I'm going to keep training my voice, studying and gaining as much experience as I can. *L'Ormindo* has been wonderful for me, so I'm looking forward to other such opportunities.

What's on

ANAM CONCERT

For those unable to be in Sydney for *L'Ormindo*, but Melbourne, the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne will host two of Australia's finest singers, (Pinchgut regular) Sara Macliver and Steve Davislim in an evening of Haydn. ANAM concert will offer 10% discount to all Pinchgut newsletter subscribers. Thursday 3 December at the South Melbourne Town Hall. Call Ticketmaster on 136 100 and quote 'Arts Partner Offer' or book online at ticketmaster.com.au

CANTILLATION

Cantillation is singing in four performances of Haydn's masterwork *The Creation*, with the Sydney Symphony on December 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the Concert Hall at the Sydney Opera House. The story goes that Haydn, seeking to rival the success of Handel's *Messiah*, was handed a Bible and advised to begin at the beginning. He did, and created his magnificent oratorio, *The Creation* (it was also the first bilingual choral work, composed simultaneously in German and English). From its amazing Representation of Chaos to the divine bliss of the conclusion (this is Adam and Eve before the Fall), *The Creation* is a masterpiece, and it created such a buzz at its premiere in 1798 that performances sold out and police were hired for crowd control. With a wonderful cast of Sara Macliver, Steve Davislim and Florian Boesch, and conducted from the fortepiano by classical specialist Martin Haselböck, these will be great performances. Tickets from the Sydney Symphony on (02) 8215 4600 or the Opera House (02) 9250 2777 or online at www.sydneysymphony.com.

THE ORIGIN CYCLE

Soprano Jane Sheldon, who will be singing the part of Nerillo in *L'Ormindo*, has been working on a very important project of her own in the last few years. 2009 is the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth and 150 years since the first publication of the Origin of Species. Jane, and philosopher of science Peter Godfrey-Smith, commissioned eight Australian composers for 'The Origin Cycle' to celebrate this occasion. Jane and Ensemble Offspring will perform the work among the exhibits of the Australian Museum on the 19th November at 7PM. Bookings: (02) 8256 2222 or tickets available at the door.

David Walker's last performance



David Walker as Holofernes in 2007's *Juditha Triumphans*. Photo: Simon Hodgson

When David Walker arrived a couple of weeks ago he told Liz that this would be his last opera performance. He is ready for a change of career and in the New Year will start to build a new career in arts administration, especially opera. We are honoured that he has chosen Sydney - and Pinchgut - for his last performance. Liz and Ken first heard David in a production of *The Elephant Man* for Minnesota Opera - Antony Walker was conducting - and found it one of the most moving experiences they have seen in opera. So when Antony suggested David for our 2007 production of *Juditha Triumphans*, it was an easy decision. All of us at Pinchgut wish David well for the future. We have asked him to be sure to stay in touch. Meanwhile we are looking forward to seeing, and hearing, him in the role of Ormindo when *L'Ormindo* opens on 2 December.

A Cavalli Boom?

There seems to be a mini boom in the production of Cavalli's operas. Over 2009-10 there will be eight different productions of his works around the world. *La Calisto* is the most popular - Basel, Brussels, Geneva Linz, Munich, Paris, Pforzeim, Portland. Our friends at Chicago Opera Theatre are doing *Giustino* (the story of Jason) directed by another good friend Justin Way. We are the only opera company anywhere over this period producing *L'Ormindo*.