

Melba Opera Trust
HEROINES & ANGELS

Tuesday 12 July 6pm, Salon
Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre & Melba Opera Trust

ARTISTS

Janet Todd, soprano
Zoe Drummond, soprano
Bronwyn Douglass, mezzo-soprano
Jonathan Wilson, piano

PROGRAM

DOMENICO CIMAROSA (1749-1801)
'Le faccio un inchino' from *Il matrimonio segreto*
Ensemble

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
'Apparition' from *Quatre chansons de jeunesse*
Zoe Drummond soprano

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)
'Der Engel' from *Wesendonck Lieder*
Bronwyn Douglass mezzo-soprano

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)
'Ach ich liebte' from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*
Janet Todd soprano

CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786-1826)
'Einst träumte meiner sel'gen Base' from *Der Freischütz*
Zoe Drummond soprano

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)
'Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix' from *Samson et Dalila*
Bronwyn Douglass mezzo-soprano

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)
Ich trage meine Minne
Janet Todd soprano

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)
Morgen
Janet Todd soprano

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803-1869)
'Nuit paisible et sereine' from *Béatrice et Bénédict*
Zoe Drummond soprano
Bronwyn Douglass mezzo-soprano

LUIGI ARDITI (1822-1903)
Il bacio
Janet Todd soprano

JEROME KERN (1885-1945)
'Life upon the wicked stage' from *Show Boat*
Ensemble

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Tonight's program spans time and genre, from the operatic music of Cimarosa to the toe-tapping show tunes of Kern. Featuring composers as diverse as Berlioz and Ardit, we showcase the talents of three current scholars of Melba Opera Trust, Zoe Drummond, Bronwyn Douglass, and répétiteur Jonathon Wilson, as well as alumna, Janet Todd. The program demonstrates the breadth of our artists, diving into Weber's beloved *Der Freischütz*, and Saint-Saëns grand opera *Samson et Dalila*, before stepping into the world of Berlioz's little known opéra-comique, *Béatrice et Bénédict*. Our artists also explore the world of Lied with songs from Debussy, Strauss and the less-performed Italian composer, Ardit, who began as a violinist before discovering operatic composition. His piece, 'Il bacio', or 'The kiss' was dedicated to the Italian soprano Marietta Piccolomini who rose to fame in Britain after performances as Violetta in *La traviata*.

TEXTS

'Le faccio un inchino' from *Il matrimonio segreto*

We are in the household of Geronimo, a wealthy citizen of Bologna; he has two daughters, Elisetta (Janet) and Carolina (Zoe), and a sister Fidalma (Bronwyn), who runs the household. Carolina is already secretly married, so she purposefully deters her suitor, a Count, and encourages him to fancy Elisetta. In this trio, Elisetta is boasting about the potential of becoming a Countess, and Carolina mocks her. Their Aunt, Fidalma, tries to separate them and silence this argument.

'Apparition' from *Quatre chansons de jeunesse*

Apparition

La lune s'attristait. Des séraphins en pleurs
Rêvant, l'archet aux doigts, dans le calme des fleurs
Vaporeuses, tiraient de mourantes violes
De blancs sanglots glissant sur l'azur des corolles.
C'était le jour béni de ton premier baiser.
Ma songerie aimant à me martyriser
S'enivrait savamment du parfum de tristesse
Que même sans regret et sans déboire laisse
La cueillaison d'un rêve au cœur qui l'a cueilli.
J'errais donc, l'œil rivé sur le pavé vieilli
Quand avec du soleil aux cheveux, dans la rue
Et dans le soir, tu m'es en riant apparue
Et j'ai cru voir la fée au chapeau de clarté
Qui jadis sur mes beaux sommeils d'enfant gâté
Passait, laissant toujours de ses mains mal fermées
Neiger de blancs bouquets d'étoiles parfumées.

Apparition

The moon was saddened. Seraphims in tears
dreaming, bows at their fingers, in the calm of filmy flowers
Threw dying violas of white sobs
sliding over the blue of corollas.
It was the blessed day of your first kiss;
My reverie, loving to torture me,
wisely imbibed its perfume of sadness
That even without regret and without setback
leaves the gathering of a dream within the heart that gathered it.
I wandered then, my eye riveted on the aged cobblestones.
When, with light in your hair, in the street
and in the evening, you appeared to me smiling
and I thought I had seen the fairy with a hat of light
who passed in my sweet dreams as a spoiled child,
always dropping from her carelessly closed hand
a snow of white bouquets of perfumed stars.

'Der Engel' from *Wesendonck Lieder*

Der Engel

In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hört ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

The Angel

In childhood's early days,
I often heard them speak of angels
Who would exchange Heaven's sublime bliss
For the Earth's sun

So that, when an anxious heart in dread
Is full of longing, hidden from the world;
So that, when it wishes silently to bleed
And melt away in a trickle of tears;

So that, when its prayer ardently
Pleads only for release,
Then the angel floats down
And gently lifts it to Heaven.

Yes, an angel has come down to me,
And on glittering wings
It leads, far away from every pain,
My soul now heavenward!

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'Ach, ich liebte' from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*

The Pasha Selim finds Konstanze weeping and asks her why she is sad. She responds with this aria, saying that she once was in love and happy, but now she has lost that joy because she is separated from her love and is in complete misery.

'Einst träumte meiner sel'gen Base' from *Der Freischütz*

Ännchen tries to console Agathe, whose dream has frightened her. She tells her of an experience that her aunt had with a ghost that turned out just to be a dog.

'Mon cœur s'ouvre a ta voix' from *Samson et Dalila*

In an attempt to close the trap that she has set for Samson, Dalila tells Samson seductively that she will surrender herself entirely to him if he wants her. She begs him to respond to her caresses, hoping that he will finally forget about the Israelite rebellion he is leading against the Philistines. If Samson concentrates completely on her, the High Priest of Dagon may be able to capture him.

Ich trage meine Minne

Ich trage meine Minne

Ich trage meine Minne
vor Wonne stumm
im Herzen und im Sinne
mit mir herum.

Ja, daß ich dich gefunden,
du liebes Kind,
das freut mich alle Tage,
die mir beschieden sind.

Und ob auch der Himmel trübe,
kohlschwarz die Nacht,
hell leuchtet meiner Liebe
goldsonnige Pracht.

Und lügt auch die Welt in Sünden
so tut mir's weh,
die arge muß erblinden
vor deiner Unschuld Schnee.

Morgen

Morgen

Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen,
und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,
wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen
inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde . . .

Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,
werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,
stumm werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,
und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen.

I carry my love

In childhood's early days,
I often heard them speak of angels
Who would exchange Heaven's sublime bliss
For the Earth's sun

So that, when an anxious heart in dread
Is full of longing, hidden from the world;
So that, when it wishes silently to bleed
And melt away in a trickle of tears;

So that, when its prayer ardently
Pleads only for release,
Then the angel floats down
And gently lifts it to Heaven.

Yes, an angel has come down to me,
And on glittering wings
It leads, far away from every pain,
My soul now heavenward!

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Tomorrow

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
and on the path I will take,
it will unite us again, we happy ones,
upon this sun-breathing earth...

And to the shore, the wide shore with blue waves,
we will descend quietly and slowly;
we will look mutely into each other's eyes
and the silence of happiness will settle upon us.

© Emily Ezust

'Nuit paisible et sereine' from *Béatrice et Bénédict*

In this Duo-Nocturne, Héro is overwhelmed with happiness: the invading Moors have fled and she is finally to be reunited with her love Claudio who will be returning from war. Ursule, Héro's attendant comforts her and they sing of the peaceful and serene night (Nuit paisible et serene). The moonlight and shadows, the breeze's caress, the harmony of the murmuring nightingales and crickets, and the aroma of spring blossoms.

Il bacio

Il bacio

Sulle labbra se potessi
dolce un bacio ti darei.
Tutte ti direi le dolcezze dell'amor.
Sempre assisa te d'appresso,
mille gaudii ti direi, Ah! ti direi.
Ed i palpiti udirei
che rispondono al mio cor.
Gemme e perle non desio,
non son vaga d'altro affetto.
Un tuo sguardo è il mio diletto,
un tuo bacio è il mio tesoro.
Ah! Vieni! ah vien! più non tardare! a me!
Ah vien! nell'ebbrezza d'un amplesso ch'io viva! Ah!

The Kiss

If I could only give you
a kiss on your lips,
It would tell you all the delights of love,
Abiding to speak
a thousand joys to you!
Ah, thus it would speak
to you along with my heart's palpitations.
I do not desire gems or pearls,
nor do I seek others' affections.
Your look is my delight,
your kiss is my treasure.
Ah! Come! Do not delay!
Ah! Come! Let us enjoy love's life-giving intoxication. Ah!

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'Life upon the wicked stage' from *Show Boat*

Based on Edna Ferber's best-selling novel of the same name, *Show Boat* follows the lives of the performers, stagehands and dock workers on the Cotton Blossom, a Mississippi River show boat, over 40 years from 1887 to 1927. This playful tune is originally performed by stage stars Ellie and Frank as they document the pitfalls of life in the spotlight.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Soprano **Janet Todd** was recipient of a Melba Opera Trust scholarship from 2010 to 2012. She won the 2010 Opera Foundation Australia AIMS Award and was runner up in the 2009 Herald Sun Aria. Janet made her acclaimed professional debut with Victorian Opera as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* in 2011. She also performed Lieschen in Bach's *Coffee Cantata* that year (a Greenroom Award nomination). Under the 2014 Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award, Janet embarked on a two year Master's program at the Manhattan School of Music, New York where she recently featured in Mozart's C minor mass. In 2016, Janet has starred as Zelmira in Haydn's *Armida* for Pinchgut Opera and will be featured in Opera Australia's *Sydney Opera House: The Opera* in the roles of Daughter, Clare Godring and Socialite.

Soprano **Zoe Drummond** is the recipient of the 2016 Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award with Melba Opera Trust. In 2015, Zoe was the RJ Hamer Opera Scholarship recipient with the Trust. A graduate of The Sydney Conservatorium of Music with First Class Honours, Zoe was awarded numerous scholarships for academic and musical excellence, and was selected to perform in the Estivo Music Festival in Verona, Italy. Operatic highlights include *The Medium* with Opera Prometheus, Papagena in Pacific Opera's *The Magic Flute*, *The Turn of the Screw* with Victorian Opera and *The Telephone* with Penrith Symphony Orchestra. Zoe has performed extensively as a soloist, notably in the Sydney Town Hall *Messiah* and in Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs. Zoe also performs nationally and internationally with The Seven Sopranos and Voci Stupende. Zoe looks forward to competing in a number of notable upcoming finals including of the IFAC Australian Singing Competition, the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship and Mietta Song Competition as a semi-finalist.

Mezzo-soprano **Bronwyn Douglass** graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium in 2014 with a Masters of Operatic Performance, receiving an award for Academic Excellence and the Wagner Society in Queensland Encouragement Award. Bronwyn is currently the beneficiary of the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Award from Melba Opera Trust. Bronwyn was also a finalist in the 2015 Herald Sun Aria. Various roles include Miss Baggot in Britten's *The Little Sweep* for the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Second Witch in *Dido and Aeneas* for the Brisbane Baroque Festival, Nadezhda von Meck in *Angel of Music*, and Flora in *La traviata* for ONE. Bronwyn is soon to compete in the finals of the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship and Opera Arts and Opera Arts and Support Group Vocal Scholarship.

Repetiteur **Jonathan Wilson** recently returned to Australia after being awarded a Doctorate of Music (Piano Performance) by the University of Montreal. He previously studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with Joan Havill. In 2016 he is studying under the Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship with Melba Opera Trust. Jonathan is the winner of many awards including the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition (1st Prize) and has performed with several orchestras including the European Union Chamber Orchestra and Finchley Chamber Orchestra. This year, Jonathan is a repetiteur with Pacific Opera, Sydney and looks forward to being a finalist in the Mietta Song Competition in the coming days.

ABOUT MELBA OPERA TRUST

Melba Opera Trust is Australia's premier scholarship program for promising young opera singers and répétiteurs. Our program prepares scholars for the rigors of an especially competitive industry, bridging the gap from tertiary study to professional opportunities. We enlist esteemed mentors from a variety of fields to help the artist learn to operate as a business. Networks and connections made during our program can have an enduring impact on one's career and have proven invaluable for our alumni.

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