

PRESS RELEASE
3 August 2017

SUBLIME MUSIC, SUPERSTAR CASTING AND A SURPRISE MELBOURNE APPEARANCE

PINCHGUT OPERA ANNOUNCES 2018 SEASON

Pinchgut Opera's 2018 season sees some very exciting and bold directions with an Australian premiere production by 18th-century master Hasse, the company's Melbourne debut and sensational casting headlined by four-time Grammy Award-nominated queen of opera, Vivica Geneux.

Next summer will take an elegant, tender, and virtuosic tone with the Australian premiere production of *Artaserse* by Johann Adolph Hasse, universally regarded as one of the most perfect of operatic composers.

Superstar mezzo-soprano Vivica Geneux leads an all-star cast in this tale of murder, intrigue and royalty. Her appearance at the Brisbane Baroque festival in 2016 created a sell-out sensation with performances garnering glowing reviews.

Pinchgut favourites Australian countertenor David Hansen and tenor Andrew Goodwin return home, joined by Russell Harcourt and Emily Edmonds who are breaking from their flourishing careers in Europe to revisit the City Recital Hall stage. Renowned countertenor Carlo Vistoli completes this extraordinary cast, making his Pinchgut debut as Artabano.

Pinchgut Artistic Director Erin Helyard said: "I am absolutely delighted to be working again with Vivica Geneux – undoubtedly the first and foremost exponent of the difficult repertoire typified by the glittering world of Baroque *opera seria* at its height – and equally thrilled to be revisiting the world of Handel oratorios after my work with Barrie Kosky (*Saul*, Adelaide Festival) as well as Lindy Hume (*Theodora*, Pinchgut). But most exciting is that we are finally presenting a work by Johann Hasse, one of my favourite operatic composers for the voice."

In another first for Pinchgut, a special concert will be presented at Melbourne Recital Centre where Vivica Geneux will join an ensemble of Australia's finest early music musicians led by Erin Helyard for a jaw-dropping evening of arias and instrumental music by Handel, Hasse, Vivaldi and other baroque contemporaries.

Winter 2018 takes a vivid, dramatic twist as Pinchgut returns to Handel in an oratorio that explores controversial themes in a setting that pits a high priest against a violent despot. Commissioned for a performance in Oxford in 1733, Handel's *Athalia* is his third oratorio (his next work in this genre was *Saul* – a work for which Erin Helyard received the 2017 Helpmann Award for Best Music Direction of Barrie Kosky's Glyndebourne production of *Saul*, the centerpiece of this year's Adelaide Festival).

Following the success of the 2016 Pinchgut production of Handel's *Theodora*, *Athalia* reunites the phenomenal creative team led by Director Lindy Hume. Australian-born Emma Pearson takes on the title role alongside acclaimed South-African-born countertenor Clint van der Linde, both making their Pinchgut debuts. Making a welcome return to the Pinchgut stage will be Miriam Allan, Brenton Spiteri and David Greco.

The 2018 season continues the great Pinchgut tradition of presenting neglected masterpieces in extraordinary productions, featuring superb soloists together with the brilliance and sensitivity of the Orchestra of the Antipodes and the vocal power of Cantillation, all in the glorious acoustic of City Recital Hall.

2018 Season Works

ATHALIA By George Frideric Handel

Dates: Thurs 21 June 7pm | Sat 23 June 2pm | Sun 24 June 5pm | Tues 26 June 7pm |

Venue: City Recital Hall, Sydney

Bookings: pinchgutopera.com.au or phone 02 9318 8300

Tickets*: from \$90 – \$193, Under 30: \$40 – \$50

Running Time: 3 hours

The powerful plot comes alive in a hotbed of intrigue and devious characters. The murderous, idol-worshipping Queen Athalia is intent on eradicating the line of David, but one has escaped the slaughter: the child Joas has been raised in secret by Josabeth, the wife of the high priest Joad. Can Athalia succeed in her dreadful purpose that all heirs to the throne are to be destroyed?

Emma Pearson: Athalia, **Miriam Allan:** Josabeth, **Clint van der Linde:** Joad, **Brenton Spiteri:** Mathan, **David Greco:** Abner, **Joas:** Freddie Shaw

Cantillation, Orchestra of the Antipodes, **Conductor and Harpsichord:** Erin Helyard, **Director:** Lindy Hume, **Lighting Designer:** Matthew Marshall

ARTASERSE By Johann Adolph Hasse

Dates: Thurs 29 Nov 7pm | Sat 1 Dec 2pm | Sun 2 Dec 5pm | Tue 4 Dec 7pm | Wed 5 Dec 7pm

Venue: City Recital Hall, Sydney

Bookings: pinchgutopera.com.au or phone 02 9318 8300

Tickets*: from \$90 – \$193, Under 30: \$40 – \$50

Running Time: 3 hours

Vivica Genaux stars as Mandane, beloved of Arbace, who is accused of murdering her father to ascend to his throne. Will she stand by her lover, and what is the truth?

Vivica Genaux: Mandane, **David Hansen:** Arbace, **Carlo Vistoli:** Artabano, **Emily Edmonds:** Semira, **Andrew Goodwin:** Artaserse, **Russell Harcourt:** Megabise

Cantillation: Orchestra of the Antipodes, **Conductor and Harpsichord:** Erin Helyard, **Director:** Chas Rader-Shieber

VIVICA GENAUX IN CONCERT

Date: Fri 7 Dec 7pm

Venue: Melbourne Recital Centre

Bookings: pinchgutopera.com.au or phone 02 9318 8300

Tickets: \$92 - \$159

Vivica Genaux has appeared with some of the world's most famous early music ensembles, including Europa Galante, Le Concert Spirituel, Les Talens Lyriques and Akademie für Alte Musik. She joins an ensemble of Australia's finest early music musicians, led by Erin Helyard for a jaw-dropping evening of Handel, Hasse, Vivaldi and other baroque contemporaries for one night only.



PINCHGUT OPERA

***Save up to \$20 a ticket by purchasing a Set Package or a Custom Package subscription to Pinchgut Opera's 2018 season.**

For the first time Pinchgut Opera is introducing Set Packages for those who would like to book for the same performance type for both productions. Choose from Opening Nights, Saturday Matinees, Sundays @ 5pm or Closing Nights. You may also book a Custom Package if you would prefer to mix up the performance types between productions. The benefit of choosing a Set Package is that in 2019 you will have the option to renew the same seats.

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