



**celebrating
35 years**

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P R O S P E C T U S

www.co-opera.com.au



CREATIVE STAFF:



Nicholas Cannon



Mark Simeon
Ferguson



Adam Goodburn



Bryan Griffiths



Joseph Ingram



Deborah Johnson



David Lampard



James Nicholson



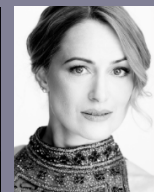
Nerissa Pearce



Macintyre Howie
Reeves



James Scott

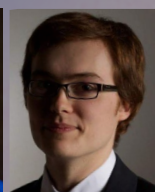


Alexandra Woolston

PERFORMING CAST:



Nicholas Cannon



Christian Evans



Deborah Johnson



Fiona McArdle



Joanna McWaters



Robert MacFarlane



Jessica Mills



James Nicholson



Mark Oats



James Scott



Jeremy Tatchell



Alexandra Woolston

REPERTOIRE

2025

OCTOBER:

Franz Lehar: **The Merry Widow**

DECEMBER:

Sir Aurthur Sullivan: **The Zoo – A Musical Folly**

2026

JANUARY – FEBRUARY:

A Celebration of Kurt Weill:

Kurt Weill: **Suite from The Threepenny Opera**

Paul Hindemith: **Konzertmusik für Blasorchester op 41**

Kurt Weill: **Berliner Requiem**

Kurt Weill: **Mahagonny Songspiel**

MAY:

Charles Gounod: **Faust**

JULY:

An American Double Bill:

Samuel Barber: **A Hand of Bridge**

Gian Carlo Menotti: **The Medium**

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER:

Carl Maria von Weber: **Der Freischütz**

2027

MAY – JUNE:

Adam Goodburn/Mark Ferguson: **The Unknown Man**

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER:

Gian Carlo Menotti: **Amahl and the Night Visitors**

REPERTOIRE 2025

OCTOBER 2025:

Franz Lehar: The Merry Widow

This staging of Lehar's masterpiece accentuates the comedy and glamour in its unforgettable melodies, including The Merry Widow Waltz, Vilja, I'm off to Chez Maxim's and the number made famous by a young Maurice Chevalier, Girls, Girls, Girls.

Macintyre Howie Reeves and James Nicholson have conceived a production that transports the original Operetta's European setting into Hollywood's glistening Golden Age. With Jessica Mills and Joanna McWaters sharing the title role... glitz, romance and laughter take over the stage.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Macintyre Howie Reeves

Designer: James Nicholson

Musical Director/Pianist: Joseph Ingram

Cast

Hanna Glawari: Joanna McWaters, Jessica Mills

Victorian performances will be presented as part of 2025 German Week celebrations.

PERFORMANCES

Saturday 4 October, 2025 6:00pm

Sporting Car Club of SA, Unley
main course+dessert incl.

Sunday 5 October, 2025 3:00pm

Sporting Car Club of SA, Unley
grazing platter incl.

Friday 24 October, 2025

Bentleigh Shopping Centre, VIC

Sunday 26 October, 2025

Moe Shopping Centre, VIC

Wednesday 5 November, 2025 6:00pm

Vine Shed, McLaren Vale
grazing platter, pizza and dessert incl.

Friday 7 November, 2025 6:00pm

Echunga Memorial Institute
BYO food + beverages

Saturday 8 November, 2025 6:00pm

Osborne Community Hall, Osborne
BYO food

Sunday 9 November, 2025 3:00pm

Centenary Hall, Goolwa
BYO food + beverages

Tickets with catering included:

McLaren Vale, Unley -bar available

Adults \$107 / \$89 matinee

Concession \$95 / \$77 matinee

Early Bird \$87 / \$69 matinee *closes 31 July 2025*

Tickets for BYO performances

Adults \$67 | Concession \$52

Early Bird \$48 *closes 31 July 2025*

BOOKINGS NOW OPEN

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REPERTOIRE 2025

DECEMBER 2025:

Sir Aurthur Sullivan: The Zoo A Musical Folly

In 1875, three months after writing the sensationally successful one act opera, Trial by Jury, Sullivan wrote another one-acter, The Zoo, with Bolton Rowe as librettist. A farcical story concerns two pairs of lovers: one involving a nobleman, who goes to the zoo to woo the girl who sells snacks there and tries to impress her by buying and eating all of the food. And another couple involving a young chemist who believes that he has poisoned his beloved by mixing up her father's prescription with peppermint that he had meant for her. A light-hearted tale elevated with sprightly, charming music from the hand of the composer described by WS Gilbert himself as "incomparably, the most accomplished English musician of his age". The stage was ripe for the remarkable successes struck by these two icons over the following twenty years.

The Zoo project is conceived and managed by Deborah Johnson, who has an association with Co-Opera going back to Co-Opera's first production of The Magic Flute in 1994.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Nicholas Cannon
Designers: Deborah Johnson/Alexandra Woolston
Theatre Technician: Aaron Woolston
Head Administrator: James Scott
Musical Director/Pianist: Nerissa Pearce

Cast

Laetitia Grinder: Alexandra Woolston
Aesculapius Carboy: Mark Oates
Eliza Smith: Deborah Johnson
Thomas Brown: Nicolas Cannon
Mr Grinder: James Scott

PERFORMANCES

Monday, 1 December, 2025 5:00pm
Monday, 1 December, 2025 7:00pm

Tuesday, 2 December, 2025 5:00pm
Tuesday, 2 December, 2025 7:00pm

Wednesday 3 December, 2025 5:00pm
Wednesday 3 December, 2025 7:00pm

All Performances at the
Fig Tree Function Centre, Adelaide Zoo
Arrival drink, canapes and grazing platters incl.

Tickets:

Adults \$89 | Concession \$77
Early Bird \$69 *closes 30 July 2025*

BOOKINGS NOW OPEN

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www.co-opera.com.au



Made possible with the support of
THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [SA]



REPERTOIRE 2026

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2026:

A Celebration of Kurt Weill:

Kurt Weill:

Suite from The Threepenny Opera
for Wind Orchestra

Paul Hindemith:

Konzertmusik für Blasorchester op. 41

Kurt Weill:

Berliner Requiem
for Male Choir, Soloists and Wind Orchestra

Kurt Weill:

Mahagonny Songspiel
Operatic Production with Wind Orchestra

Creative Staff

Musical Director: Bryan Griffiths
Stage Director: Macintyre Howie Reeves
Stage Designer: James Nicholson
Repetiteur: Joseph Ingram

These iconic works, from the peak of Weimar Republic cultural freedom, constitute a collaboration with the Adelaide Wind Orchestra, the Adelaide Hills Chamber Players and Co-Opera. The celebrated Adelaide Wind Orchestra under the Musical Direction of Bryan Griffiths, will provide the instrumentalists needed for the vocal works and present wind-only pieces to enrich the program.

The Mahagonny Songspiel is a condensation of the full evening opera The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny by Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill. It graphically concentrates the decadence of life in Mahagonnyits despair, sexual corruption and pervading sense of helplessness.

The Berliner Requiem is a Cantata dedicated to the forgotten dead [unknown casualties in World War I], based on poems by Bertold Brecht. The titles of the poems betray the sentiments.....Great Chorale of Thanksgiving / Ballad of the Drowned Girl / Memorial Tablet /Gravestone 1919 / Report on the Unknown Soldier / To Potsdam under the Oak Trees.

The Konzertmusik für Blasorchester [Concert music for Wind Orchestra] op. 41 was composed in a few days for the contemporary chamber music festival Donaueschinger Kammermusikstage in response to a commission issued by the festival organisers for a concert featuring "original compositions for military band". This was an experimental event presenting new works for military bands of the Weimar Republic. Konzertmusik has remained in the standard wind orchestra repertoire ever since.





Cast: Mahagonny Songspiel

Jessie: Fiona McArdle
Bessie: Deborah Johnson
Charlie: Robert Macfarlane
Billy: James Nicholson
Bobby: Christian Evans
Jimmy: Jeremy Tatchell

Artists: Berliner Requiem

Tenor: Robert Macfarlane
Baritone: Jeremy Tatchell
Male Chorus: Heysen Singers

Intrumental ensemble

Adelaide Wind Orchestra

PERFORMANCES

Wednesday 28 January, 6:00pm

Vine Shed, McLaren Vale
grazing platter, pizza, dessert incl.

Friday 30 January, 7:30pm

Village Well, Aldgate *Theatre style: NO BYO*

Saturday 31 January, 7:30pm

Elder Hall, Adelaide *Theatre style: NO BYO*

Sunday 1 February, 3:00pm

Centenary Hall, Goolwa *Theatre style: NO BYO*

Tickets for McLaren Vale

Adults: \$107 | Concession: \$95
Early Bird: \$87 *closes 30 September 2025*

Tickets for other performances

Adults: \$67 | Concession: \$52
Early Bird: \$48 *closes 30 September 2025*

BOOKINGS OPEN 1st July 2025

www.adelaidehillschamberplayers.com
www.awo.org.au
www.co-opera.com.au



This project enjoys the generous support of THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [SA] but is still subject to the success of funding currently sought from the SA Government through Arts SA. The project will be confirmed or cancelled in June 2025.



A Sparkling Intermezzo

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REPERTOIRE 2026

MAY 2026:

Charles Gounod: Faust

With its irresistible stream of melodies, Gounod's Faust has long been a favourite in the international world of opera. Like Carmen, it began life as an Opera Comique with dialogue interspersed with musical numbers and, also like Carmen, was only transformed into "Grand Opera" with sung recitatives in order to satisfy the demands of Paris Opera House.

Again, like our rendition of Carmen, 30 years ago!, we plan to take Faust back to its "comique" roots with spoken dialogue and a flirtation with its treatment in different countries in its "formative" years, including Valentin's aria which was only composed (in English) for the Covent Garden premiere and later translated into French for the Paris Opera House season.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Nicholas Cannon
Musical Director/Pianist: Joseph Ingram

Cast TBA

Faust
Mephistopheles
Margeurite
Valentin
Wagner
Siebel
Marthe

PERFORMANCES

Friday, 22 May, 2026, 6:00pm

Echunga Memorial Institute
BYO food and beverages

Saturday, 23 May, 2026, 6:00pm

Sporting Car Club, Unley
two course meal incl.

Sunday, 24 May, 2026, 3:00pm

Sporting Car Club, Unley
grazing platter incl.

Wednesday, 27 May, 2026, 6:00pm

Vine Shed, McLaren Vale
grazing platter, pizza and dessert incl.

Saturday, 30 May, 2026, 6:00pm

Osborne Community Centre, Osborne
BYO food and beverages

Sunday 31 May, 2026, 6:00pm

Centenary Hall, Goolwa
BYO food and beverages

Tickets with catering included:

McLaren Vale and Unley – bar available
Adults \$107 / \$89 matinee
Concession \$95 / \$77 matinee
Early Bird \$87 / \$69 matinee *closes 30 June 2025*

Tickets for BYO performances

Echunga, Port Adelaide, Goolwa
Adults \$67 | Concession \$52
Early Bird \$48 *closes 28 February 2026*

BOOKINGS OPEN 1st November, 2025

www.adelaidehillschamberplayers.com
www.co-opera.com.au



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THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [SA]



REPERTOIRE 2026

JULY 2026:
AN AMERICAN DOUBLE BILL

Samuel Barber: A Hand of Bridge

One of the shortest operas to be regularly performed (it lasts about nine minutes), consists of two unhappily married couples playing a hand of bridge, during which each character has an arietta in which he or she professes his or her inner desires.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Mark Oates
Designer: Deborah Johnson
Designer: Alexandra Woolston
Repetiteur: Nerissa Pearce
Head Administrator: James Scott
Theatre Technician: Aaron Woolston

Cast: A Hand of Bridge

Geraldine: Alexandra Woolston
Bill: Mark Oates
Sally: Deborah Johnson
David: James Scott



Made possible with the support of THE
ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [SA]

Gian Carlo Menotti: The Medium

First performed in 1946, *The Medium* tells the story of Madame Flora who, with the help of her daughter Monica and Toby, a mute servant, tries to cheat her clients through faked seances. She is touched herself by a hand during one of them, an occurrence she cannot explain and which drives her to insanity and murder.

*This Double Bill,
presented in the
American Independence
season, was conceived
and produced by
Deborah Johnson.*

Admin staff:

Venue Communication: Deborah Johnson
Rehearsal Scheduling: James Scott
Ticketing: Alexandra Woolston
Budget Control: Mark Oates
Publicity: Alexandra Woolston
Graphic Design: Deborah Johnson

Cast: The Medium

Monica: Alexandra Woolston
Madame Flora: Deborah Johnson
Mr Gobineau: James Scott

PERFORMANCES

Thursday, 2 July 2026, 7:30pm
Friday 3 July 2026, 7:30pm
Saturday 4 July 2026, 7:30pm
Sunday 5 July 2026, 3:00 pm

All Performances at
Ayers House Ballroom, Adelaide

BOOKINGS OPEN 1st November, 2025

www.adelaidehillschamberplayers.com
www.co-opera.com.au



REPERTOIRE 2026

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2026:

Carl Maria von Weber: Der Freischütz

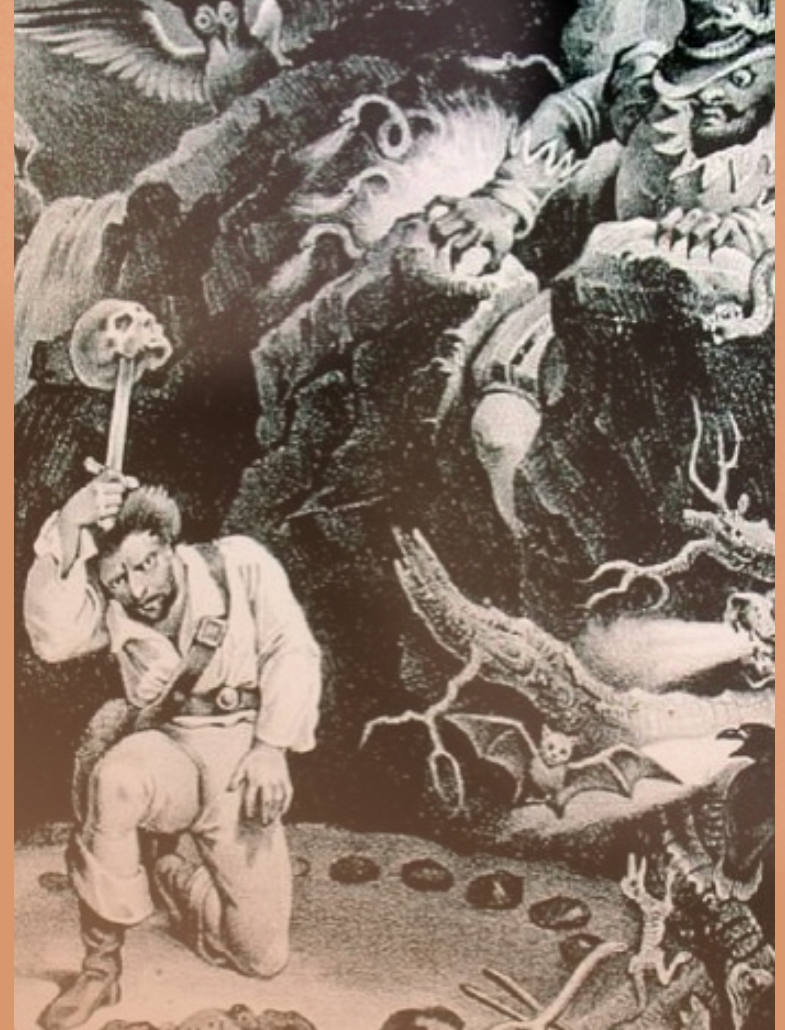
This seminal work stylistically bridges the period between Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Wagner's first success, *Rienzi* and is considered the first German Romantic Opera. The opera integrates German folklore and folk music but contains glorious arias and ensemble pieces that are famous as concert pieces as well as competition pieces in top-end Eisteddfods. True to its folk origins, it is a dark tale of a young forester who finds himself, unknowingly, in league with the Devil as he attempts to win a shooting contest so as to earn his girlfriend's hand in marriage.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Macintyre Howie Reeves
Designer: Ulricke Barbara von Radichevich
Lighting Designer: Jens Milbret
Musical Director/Pianist: Joseph Ingram

Cast:

To be announced



PERFORMANCES: OCT–NOV 2026

Current plans are to present six performances in South Australia and two in Victoria, where they will form part of celebrations of German Week 2026. Specific dates to be announced late in 2025.

BOOKINGS OPEN 1st November, 2025

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REPERTOIRE 2027

MAY – JUNE 2027:

Adam Goodburn/ Mark Ferguson: The Unknown Man

Creative Staff

Composer: Mark Simeon Ferguson

Librettist: Adam Goodburn

Stage Director: David Lampard

Cast

To be announced

PERFORMANCES

May 2027

Current plans are to present a season of performances in urban and near regional South Australia.

BOOKINGS OPEN

1st November, 2026

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www.co-opera.com.au



This project is part of a trilogy of new operas overseen by Adam Goodburn, South Australian music theatre and opera identity, and former Co-Opera singer. Adam writes the following about his artistic collaboration with Mark Ferguson, jazz pianist and Head of Jazz Studies at the Elder Conservatorium and award-winning director, David Lampard, who is widely praised for his creativity, dark originality, and extensive experience in creating new work.

The Unknown Man is an intimate, melodic and atmospheric new opera. Combining the sung-through tradition of opera with raw and open immediacy, The Unknown Man is an utterly unique theatrical offering – and an exciting new South Australian work. Mark Ferguson's contemporary Bartok, Glass and Bernstein-inspired lyrical score, combined with powerful and exposed storytelling, fuse to create an eminently approachable new opera – that has the potential to engage both new and established opera audiences. With a small cast (3) and orchestra (3 to 4) as well as a small but striking gestural set, this opera is well-suited to a small performance spaces. The Unknown Man is a new South Australian work – a fictitious retelling of a well-known South Australian event. There has been increased media attention regarding The Somerton Man's true identity, and this has sparked local and international curiosity with the mystery. This makes The Unknown Man all the more topical and potentially draw a new audience into the opera genre. This is the first musical/operatic treatment of the subject matter and is a South Australian story with universal appeal. The opera is based on an idea explored in the novel Taman Shud: The Somerton Man Mystery (2012), written by noted Australian author Kerry Greenwood –author of the Phryne Fisher historical novels (filmed as The Miss Fisher Murder Mysteries) – who has given her approval for the work to be treated in operatic format.

Adam Goodburn



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REPERTOIRE **2027**

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2027:

Gian Carlo Menotti: Amahl and the Night Visitors

In the original program, Menotti wrote:

"....when I was a child I lived in Italy, and in Italy we have no Santa Claus. I suppose that Santa Claus is much too busy with American children to be able to handle Italian children as well. Our gifts were brought to us by the Three Kings, instead."

Amahl and the Night Visitors is a tribute to Menotti's precious memories of his childhood at Christmas. This production will also mark Co-Opera's return to educational outreach, with opportunities announced in late 2026 for educational groups to participate in workshop and production development in the months leading to public performances in December 2027.

This project is conceived and co-ordinated by Deborah Johnson.

Creative Staff

Stage Director: Nicholas Cannon
Designer: Deborah Johnson

Cast

To be announced. Opportunities for student involvement will be announced in late 2026.

PERFORMANCES

December 2027

Current plans are to present a season of performances in urban and near regional South Australia.

BOOKINGS OPEN

1st November, 2026

www.adelaidehillschamberplayers.com

www.co-opera.com.au





**From the Chair, Board of Management,
Libby Ellis OAM**

The Co-Opera Board is pleased to announce plans for performances in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

In January 2024, Brian and I were concerned to discover that there was a possibility of Co-Opera winding up and therefore accepted an invitation to resume our former positions. We resolved to use 2024 as an opportunity to gather evidence from key stake-holders regarding the advisability of dissolving the Company. After all, it had operated for over 30 years, and maybe its time had come.

The waters were tested with *pocket-sized* productions of *Mozart's Operatic Journey* and *Tosca* in July and November 2024 respectively.

The enthusiasm from highly talented emerging and mid-career artists to participate and the positive audience response to all 12 performances lent great weight to the argument that Co-Opera still had a role to play. But the most persuasive perspective came from over 30 "Co-Opera Alumni" who were invited to express frank opinions at planning meetings in June/July 2024. There was emphatic commentary that, as Co-Opera played a seminal role in kick-starting their own careers, currently emerging opera artists today need the performance opportunity Co-Opera provides as much if not more. Furthermore, now, as mid-career artists, they were adamant that the opportunity to practice their art with demanding operatic repertoire with Co-Opera was important for them as well.

Having accepted a persuasive rationale for Co-Opera to continue, the Board's focus turned to the financial means by which that might happen. It is patently obvious that any pathway back to the kind of public funding that Co-Opera enjoyed for 20 years [c. \$500,000 per year] and which allowed impressive national and international touring, would be a slow journey if, indeed, that destination could ever be achieved again. With public funding for the arts from the SA Government currently in a highly constrained phase, any financial solution to Co-Opera's current viability issues needs to be sourced from the private sector.

We are delighted to announce that stable, multi-year funding has been approved from the Royal Commonwealth Society of SA and from Henkell Brothers Investment Managers in Melbourne. With these contributions [averaging \$85,000 pa] we are confident of being able to offer repertoire each year that is challenging to artists and extremely attractive to our loyal audience members. Smaller contributions to our productions and running costs from new and existing benefactors will enable us to offer fair remuneration to our performers who put so many hours [too many unpaid] toward making these productions the artistic successes expected from Co-Opera.

I urge you to assist in any way that is possible.

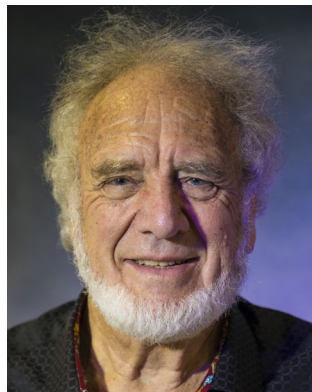
Notwithstanding our recognition of the need for private funds to help make Co-Opera viable now, we remain convinced that, for our company to continue to be the only entity in Adelaide in addition to the State Opera SA to provide regular professional opera performing opportunities, some [relatively modest] measure of reliable public funding will be essential in the medium and long term. To that end we continue to press the SA State Government for assistance on grounds that Co-Opera makes a significant contribution to the fabric of the South Australian classical music scene on which so much of our State's national and international cultural reputation depends.

We look forward to seeing you at our planned performances.

Libby Ellis OAM
Chair, Board of Management

**From the Artistic Director,
Brian Chatterton OAM**

For its 35-year history, Co-Opera had prided itself on offering mainstream operas in an intimate format. In so doing, we have offered an approach alternative to experiences in large opera houses. Hence, our cabaret style performances of *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*,



Madam Butterfly, *La Traviata*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and many other popular works have won enthusiastic receptions across Australia, in SE Asia and Europe.

From time to time, instead of well-known operas, more out of the way choices have been made. Accordingly, 2001–2002 saw hugely popular performances across Australia of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2006 saw a national tour of *The Portrait* by Adelaide composer, Becky Llewellyn, 2008 saw an extensive national tour of the Broadway Musical, *Kiss Me, Kate*, and 2015 saw, instead of a buffa or a singspiel, Mozart's infrequently performed opera seria, *La Clemenza di Tito*.

The repertoire contained in the 2025–2027 CO-OPERA PROSPECTUS continues our tradition of offering well-loved repertoire side-by-side with pieces that, whilst maybe less well known, we are confident our audiences will find in them the musical joy, the dramatic energy and the visual engagement that have become the hallmark of Co-Opera artists for so long.

Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, Gounod's *Faust*, are scheduled alternately beside Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel*, Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and a new work, the inspiration of former Co-Opera principal singer Adam Goodburn, entitled *The Invisible Man*, based on the story that all South Australians know to be *The Somerton Man*.

Join us in performances in venues that offer relaxed environments encouraging conviviality, along with artistic experiences that are serious and funny, lyrical and dramatic, energetic and peaceful....all that the miraculous operatic genre can offer.

Please say hello when you come to our performances with all your friends and acquaintances!

Brian Chatterton OAM
Artistic Director



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
South Australian Branch

The Royal Commonwealth Society (South Australia) is part of a vibrant network stretching across the 56 countries that comprise the Commonwealth.

Our core interests are

- Environment
- Literacy
- Arts
- Equality

We are proud to support Co-Opera Incorporated as part of our Arts agenda.

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Julie Gameau, Hon. Sec on 0407 203 035.

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GOVERNANCE: Board of Management

Libby Ellis OAM: Chair
Brian Chatterton OAM: Artistic Director [Ex Officio]
Debra Arnold: Treasurer
Jemimah Lanyon: Member
David Perry, Member

ENQUIRIES:

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Hans and Petra Henkell
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PROSPECTUS 2025 | 2026 | 2027

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