



MUSIC &  
OPERA SINGERS  
TRUST LTD



# 2025 Annual Report



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HOW TO GET INVOLVED

# VISION & MISSION

## OUR VISION

Music & Opera Singers Trust Limited (MOST) aims to support the career development of operatic and classical musicians by providing performance and educational opportunities. The organisation embraces cutting edge technologies, as it continues to provide professional management and consultancy services for competitions, events, scholarships, prizes, awards, and grants.

## OUR MISSION

Music & Opera Singers Trust Limited (MOST) promotes excellence in music, the performing arts and related education sectors through the creation and management of programmes and activities which recognise creative talent. MOST tailors development opportunities to suit and benefit individuals as they move into the next stage of their profession.



(L-R) Wesley Haotian Yu, Britney Northcott, Sidra Nissen, Aidan Hodder and Sophie



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2025 proved to be a unique and defining year for the Music & Opera Singers Trust Ltd. (MOST©), one that both challenged and reaffirmed our commitment to the power of music and the artists who bring it to life. As a not-for-profit arts organisation, our mission has always been clear: to support, nurture, and elevate the extraordinary talent of singers and musicians across Australia and beyond.

In a time when the arts continue to navigate rapid change - economically, technologically, and culturally - MOST© has remained steadfast in its dedication to preserving the legacy of opera and classical music, while embracing the opportunities of the future. Reflecting on the past year, I am pleased to share some of the accomplishments and progress we have made.

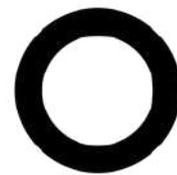
## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Presenting the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, culminating in the Finals Concert with the Opera Australia Orchestra
- Continued support from Opera Australia through the highly sought-after Opera Australia Finalist Audition prize
- Broadcasting the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition Finals Concert on ABC Classic Lunchtime Concert Series and introducing Nina Korbe as compere
- Presenting the MOST Achievement Award (MAA) posthumously to John Painter AM for his service in music education and to the early days of the Australian Singing Competition

- Introduced new educational grants for the Finalists of the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, including the Zeny Edwards Educational Grant of \$20,000
- Partnering with The Women's Club to feature 2024 Mathy Winner Eden Shifroni and accompanist Sharolyn Kimmorley AM as part of their women in music series
- Presenting in partnership with the Australian Friends of Keshet Eilon the Keshet Eilon Music Center Recital, welcoming Jean Judes, Chair of Keshet Eilon and Nitza Avidan, CEO of Keshet Eilon.
- Recognised and highlighted three exemplary professional Australian opera performers at the Finals of the Opera Awards
- Supported three vitally important oral history projects, recording the life stories of respected Indigenous elders



Roland Gridiger OAM



As we close out 2025, it's clear this year has brought significant challenges—not just for MOST, but for not-for-profits and arts organisations across the country. Rising operational costs, shifting donor expectations, and ongoing funding uncertainties have demanded that we think differently, act boldly, and stay grounded in our purpose. Through it all, I've been inspired by the resilience of our team, the creativity of the artists we support, and the generosity of our community.

Of course, the arts industry continues to move through uncertain times. That's why I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the MOST Board for their unwavering commitment throughout the year. Their efforts have been invaluable in helping us build our capabilities and deliver events and opportunities that are bigger, bolder, and more impactful than ever before. Together, we've continued to find new ways to deliver meaningful programs, champion Australian talent, and ensure the arts remain accessible to all.

Thank you for your continued trust and belief in our work. Your support has never been more vital, and it's what allows us to carry our mission forward into 2026 - with renewed energy, purpose, and hope.

Roland Gridiger OAM  
Chief Executive Officer  
Music & Opera Singers Trust Ltd. (MOST®)



ASC MasterClass participants: (L-R) Wesley Haotian Yu, Aidan Hodder, Sophie Blades, Roland Gridiger OAM, Jeffrey Black, Sidra Nissen, Brittney Northcott



# GOVERNANCE & COMMITTEES



## Board of Directors

**Frank Varapodio** - Chair of MOST; Frank is a qualified CA + CPA and Registered Tax Agent and Director of V & A Accountants and Business Advisors.

**Jeffrey Black** - International operatic baritone, vocal consultant and voice teacher who won the Marianne Mathy Singing Competition in 1983 and was the National Adjudicator in 2025.

**Roland Gridiger OAM** - Roland is the CEO of MOST; Trustee of the Rona Tranby Trust, Principal of Gridiger Lawyers, author, and a long-term supporter of the arts and philanthropist.

**Ilana Gridiger** - Registered Non-Practising Psychologist with training and experience in event management, supporter of the arts and philanthropist.

## MOST staff

**Roland Gridiger OAM** - Chief Executive Officer

**David Langley** - MA Hons. (Art & Design), BA (Eng/Art) - Manager

**Saskia Shearer** - B. (Music performance) - Events & Communication Coordinator

**Solomiya Sywak** - B. Hons. (Visual Arts & Politics) - Events & Marketing Assistant

**Kym Yeomans** - BAcc Accountant

\*Photographed above (L-R) Frank Varapodio, Roland Gridiger OAM, Ilana Gridiger, Jeffrey Black

# GOVERNANCE & COMMITTEES

**Auditor** - Perk Accountants

**Accountants** - V&A Accountants & Business Advisors

**Financial Advisors** - Principal Edge Financial Services

**Legal Representative** - Gridiger Lawyers

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## IFAC HANDA AUSTRALIAN SINGING COMPETITION COMMITTEE

Jeffrey Black (Chair), Janice Black\*, Lisa Gasteen AO, Emma Matthews AM, Patricia Price, Linnhe Robertson

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## TRUSTEES OF THE RONA TRANBY TRUST

**Dr. Belinda Russon (Chair)** - CEO of Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education & Training

**Roland Gridiger OAM** - Representative of the Estate of Thomas Rona

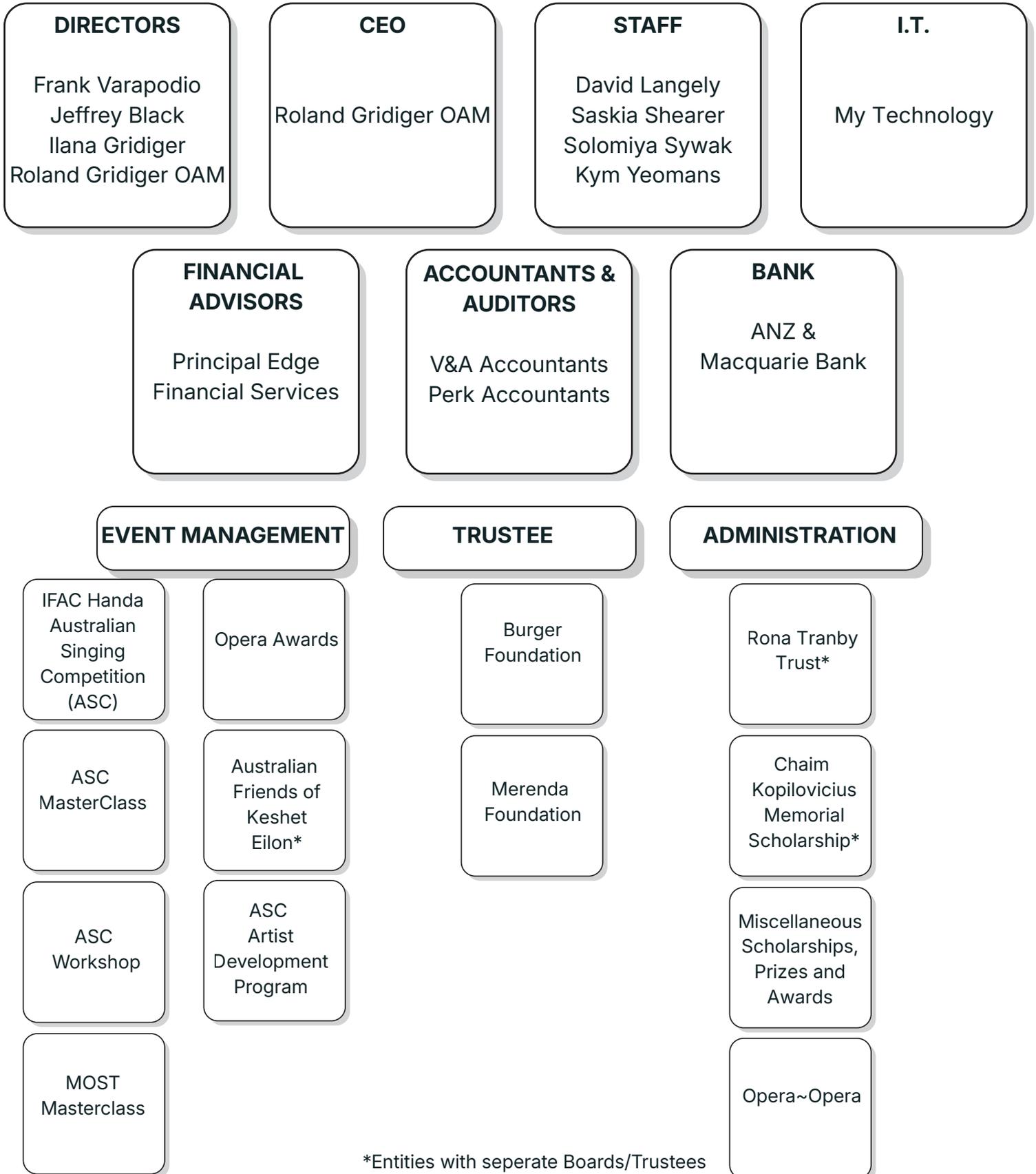
**Dr. Lisa Sarzin** - Representative of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies

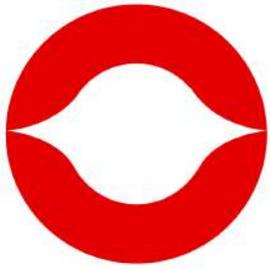
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## AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS OF KESHET EILON COMMITTEE

Dr. Lina Safro, Dr. Ian Kern, Roland Gridiger OAM, Ilana Gridiger, Dr. Ruth Safier

# 2025 Organisational Chart





# IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

**Discovering and supporting young singers since 1982**

The IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition (ASC) evolved from the Marianne Mathy Scholarship, established through a bequest made by Marianne Mathy-Frisdane. Marianne was a coloratura soprano and distinguished teacher of opera and classical singing both in Australia and abroad. This year, the Competition celebrated its 44th birthday of discovering, rewarding, and providing career opportunities to emerging opera and classical singers.

Historically, the Competition has been open to singers under the age of 26 years - the age within which Marianne Mathy-Frisdane believed a singer would reveal their potential.

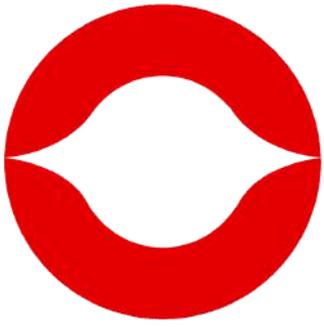
## 2025 ASC

In the 2025, heats were held in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and London. Acclaimed international operatic baritone and vocal consultant, Jeffrey Black, diligently served as the National Adjudicator.

During the Heats, Jeffrey Black was assisted by panels of renowned local adjudicators. Dr Anke Höeppner-Ryan and Joanne Goodman in Sydney; Natalie Jones and Stephen Grant in Melbourne; Emma Matthews AM and Nicole Youl in Perth; Gregory Massingham and Leanne Kenneally-Warnock in Brisbane, and, Linnhe Roberston and Yvonne Kenny AM in London.



(L-R) Braley Gilchrist, Sophie Blades



# ASC Workshop



\*Pictured above; (L-R) Sophie Blades, Brittney Northcott, Ruth Burke, Brea Holland, Sarah Hubbard, Jeffrey Black, Sky Kim, Wesley Haotian Yu, Lauren Towns, Aidan Hodder, Sidra Nissen

On Thursday, 14 August 2025, the Semi-Finalists had the unique opportunity to attend an exclusive workshop at the Opera Australia Studios in Surry Hills. Hosted in the Phillip Bacon Studio, the session was led by National Adjudicator Jeffrey Black.

This dynamic, hands-on workshop focused on developing stagecraft skills tailored to each performer's individual artistry and chosen repertoire. Through a series of engaging exercises, participants explored techniques designed to energise the body and enhance emotional expression, freeing the voice and physicality from unhelpful tensions in the body, breath, and articulators.

The session was enriched by the presence of répétiteur Jem Herbert from Opera Australia's Young Artist Program, who provided accompaniment throughout the workshop.



# ASC Semi-Finals

The Semi-Finals Concert was held at the Independent Theatre in North Sydney on Sunday, 17 August 2025.

## Awarded at the ASC Semi-Finals Concert:

- **The Jane Ede Prize** was won by Wesley Haotian Yu
- **The Andrea Catzel Prize** was won by Sky Kim
- **The Ingrid Davidson Award** was won by Sophie Blades
- **The Goethe-Institut Prize** was won by Ruth Burke
- **The Instituto Italiano Di Cultura Award** was won by Lauren Towns
- **The Radzysinski Family Prize** was won by Brea Holland
- **The Songmakers Prize** was won by Brittney Northcott
- **The Tinkler Encouragement Award** was won by Sarah Hubbard



Sarah Hubbard

All Semi-Finalists also received the Running Bare Prize and the Huntington Estate Wine Prize.

## Finalists:

- Soprano **Sophie Blades**
- Baritone **Aidan Hodder**
- Mezzo soprano **Sidra Nissen**
- Mezzo soprano **Brittney Northcott**
- Tenor **Wesley Haotian Yu**.



(L-R) Brittney Northcott, Wesley Haotian Yu, Ruth Burke, Sidra Nissen, Sophie Blades, Aidan Hodder, Brea Holland, Sarah Hubbard, Sky Kim, Lauren Towns

# ASC MasterClass

The ASC MasterClass was held at The Opera Centre on Monday 18 August 2025. The MasterClass is an opportunity for the five ASC Finalists to work with the National Adjudicator and refine the pieces they've selected to perform at the ASC Finals Concert.

(L-R) Wesley Haotian Yu, Sophie Blades, Aidan Hodder, Jeffrey Black, Sidra Nissen, Brittney Northcott



Aidan Hodder, Jeffrey Black

# ASC Finals

The ASC Finals Concert was held at The Concourse, Chatswood, on Thursday 25 September and was attended by International Foundation for Arts and Culture (IFAC) International Executive Director, Midori Miyazaki, Former Chairman of the Opera Australia Board, David Mortimer AO, the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss, former Prime Minister of the UK, and many influential figures in the opera world.

The Finalists were accompanied by the Opera Australia Orchestra under the baton of Maestra Natalie Murray Beale and we were delighted to hear the overture from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini and Bizet's famous *Carmen Suite No. 1*. "The Mathy" was presented by David Mortimer AO to mezzo soprano Sidra Nissen, the 42nd Winner of 'the Mathy'!

David Mortimer AO addressed the audience on behalf of Dr Harisha Handa and IFAC. MOST CEO, Roland Gridiger OAM, presented the MOST Achievement Award (MAA) posthumously to John Painter AM, who had a pivotal role in formalising the ASC and founding the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Nina Korbe compered the Finals Concert, and the broadcast partner was ABC Classic.



## AWARDED AT THE ASC FINALS CONCERT:

### 23-year-old mezzo soprano Sidra Nissen won:

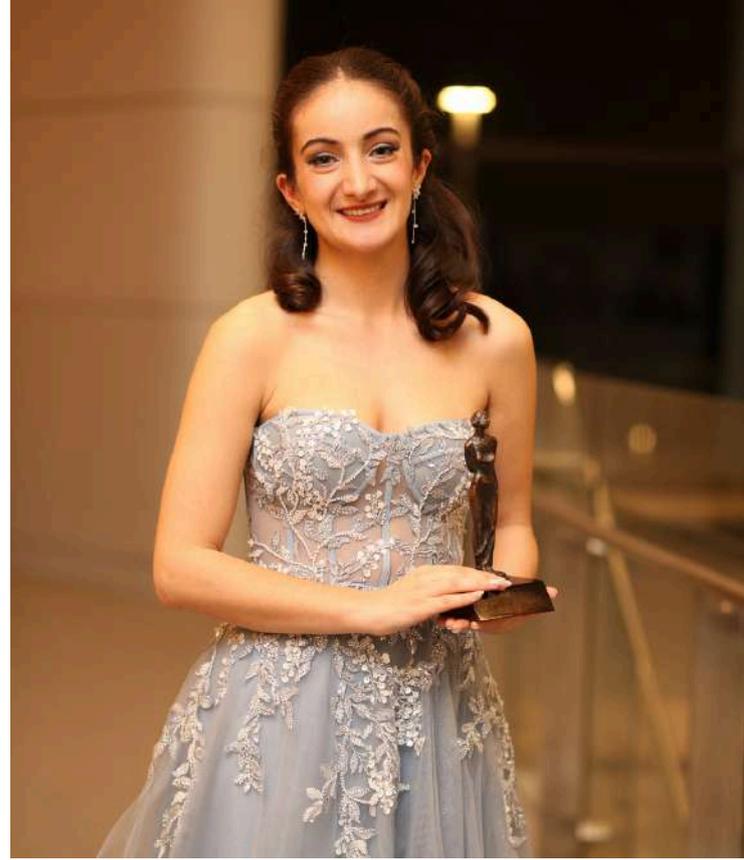
- The Marianne Mathy Scholarship Audition Prize from Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center
- Lili Ussher Portrait Prize
- Oral History Award
- The Mathy Statuette
- The Winkipop Media Prize
- Canadian Vocal Arts Institute (CAVI) Montreal Scholarship

### 24-year-old soprano Sophie Blades won:

- The Merenda Legacy Prize
- The Linnhe Robertson Prize
- The Nell Pascall Award
- The MOST® Audience Prize

### 25-year-old baritone Aidan Hodder won:

- The Perth Symphony Orchestra Prize
- AUD \$5,000 to assist with travel expenses
- \$1,000 to support the professional A/V recording of the PSO performance



### 24-year-old mezzo soprano Brittney Northcott won:

The Zeny Edwards Education grant  
The Royal Northern College of Music Award  
The Pasqualina Lipari Prize

### 24-year-old tenor Wesley Haotian Yu won:

The Sherman Lower Study prize  
The Merenda Travel Prize



(L-R) Sophie blades, Brittney Northcott, Wesley Haotian yu, Iana Hodder, Sidra Nissen, Jeffrey Black



# Opera Awards

Pursuing Operatic Excellence at the Highest Level.

Since 1986, the Opera Awards has supported professional Australian opera singers seeking to further their studies or advance their careers overseas. The program offers some of the most respected opportunities in the field, including the YMF Australia Award and the Armstrong-Martin Scholarship.

Eligibility requires entrants to have performed at least two principal roles with a recognised professional opera company in the two years preceding judging. There is no age limit. During a private adjudication session, each singer presents four self-selected arias and participates in an interview about their proposed study or career development plans.

The Opera Awards originated within the Australian Singing Competition, which for many years operated in two streams: one for singers under 26 and another for professional opera performers. In 2001, the professional stream became an independent, privately judged competition— now known as the Opera Awards.

The premier prize, the YMF Australia Award valued at \$30,000, reflects the central aim of the competition: to help recipients pursue overseas study and develop their language, vocal, and musical skills within the global operatic and classical singing industry.



Raymond Lawrence, Ashlyn Tymms



## OPERA AWARDS 2025

The 2025 Opera Awards were held on 17 November in the Primrose Potter Salon at the Melbourne Recital Centre. Dr Di Bresciani OAM chaired the adjudication panel, joined by soprano Rosamund Illing, baritone Simon Meadows, and musicologist and performer/conductor Peter Tregear OAM.

From 21 submissions, a strong group of finalists auditioned with piano accompaniment, then participated in panel interviews. The adjudicators praised the high standard, noting the technical skill and artistic maturity shown by all competitors.

Following a full day of auditions and discussion, the panel named mezzo-soprano Ashlyn Tymms the winner of the 2025 Opera Awards, receiving the YMF Australia Award of \$30,000.

Baritone Lachlann Lawton was awarded the Armstrong-Martin Scholarship of \$5,000, sponsored by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, as well as the Glyndebourne Festival Prize, offering the opportunity to attend rehearsals and audition for the Glyndebourne Festival. Additionally, tenor Iain Henderson was awarded the inaugural MOST Travel Grant, valued at \$2,000.00, to support career development.



Ashlyn Tymms

### Ashlyn Tymms:

Australian mezzo-soprano Ashlyn Tymms is recognised for her rich tone, versatility, and expressive musicality across opera, concert, and chamber music. In 2025 she made her Opera Australia debut as Dorothee in *Cendrillon* and returned as Ježibaba in *Rusalka*. She also appeared with State Opera South Australia as the Stewardess in *Flight*.

In 2024 she debuted major roles with West Australian Opera as Ježibaba in *Rusalka* and Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, and performed Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* for New Zealand Opera. Her long association with West Australian Opera includes roles such as Carmen, Dorabella, Santuzza, Hansel, and Flora.

Ashlyn's 2025 concert engagements feature Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Verdi's and Mozart's Requiem, Rossini's Petite messe solennelle, and multiple performances of Handel's Messiah with leading Australian orchestras. She has previously appeared with the West Australian, Queensland, Melbourne, and Sydney

Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Committed to contemporary music, she has premiered works by Melody Eötvös and Katy Abbott. Trained at the University of Melbourne and London's Royal College of Music, Ashlyn's upcoming 2026 engagements include performances with West Australian Opera, Opera Queensland, Pinchgut Opera, and her debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. She continues focused international development through training and auditions across Europe.



## Lachlann Lawton:

Western Australian baritone Lachlann Lawton is an award-winning lyric baritone celebrated for his warm tone and engaging stage presence. In 2024–2025 he was a Young Artist with Opera Queensland, performing roles such as Aeneas (cover), a Sailor in Dido and Aeneas, Guglielmo (cover) in *Così fan tutte*, and Marcello (cover) in *La Bohème*. A former Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist with West Australian Opera, he has appeared in numerous productions, including Elijah in a staged *Elijah*, Duke Robert in *Iolanta*, Fiorello in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Silvio (cover) in *Pagliacci*, Morales in *Carmen*, and roles in *Into the Woods*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Dido and Aeneas*, and *Madame Butterfly*.



Lachlann Lawton

Lachlann was twice a finalist in the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Bel Canto Award, receiving both a Finalist Prize and the John Wegner Award. In 2024 he made his Victorian Opera debut as Anthony Hope in *Sweeney Todd*, reprising the role for the company's 2025 Dubai tour. He holds a Master of Music from the Royal Northern College of Music, where he studied as a Waverley Scholar, and completed his Bachelor of Music and Graduate Diploma at WAAPA.



# MOST<sup>®</sup>

## TRAVEL GRANT



### **IAIN HENDERSON**

Australian Baritone Iain Henderson was awarded the MOST Travel Grant. Iain is an Australian tenor acclaimed for his dynamic performances with Opera Australia. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, where he completed both his Master of Music and International Artist Diploma, he has appeared in roles including Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), and the Dean of Faculty in *Cinderella*. Upcoming engagements include Don José (*Carmen*, 2025) and Pong (*Turandot*, 2026). His concert work spans Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's 9, and *Das Lied von der Erde*, showcasing his versatility across operatic and symphonic repertoire.



## Rona Tranby Award and Collection

Supporting the recording and preservation of Indigenous Australian Oral History

The Rona Tranby Trust is a not-for-profit, charitable entity that supports the recording and preservation of Indigenous Australian histories. The Trust has established the Rona Tranby Award and Collection.

To date, the Trust has given 29 Rona Tranby Awards to support a range of projects across Australia. Each award plants a seed that continues to grow over the years and helps to preserve stories important to all Australians, strengthening identity and community.

The Rona Tranby Collection is an ongoing work in progress, consisting of all projects funded by the Trust. It is a repository of stories and experiences, managed with the approval and in collaboration with the Indigenous award recipient and their communities. The collection will be a resource for Australians and those from other parts of the world who would seek to understand our ancient land and broad cultural traditions.



(L-R) Linda Burney, Beryl Carmichael



(L-R) Dr Belinda Russon, Elsie Amamoo, Aunty Donna Ingram

## Current Projects:

### **Aunty Margret Campbell: Djunghutti-Djirringanj woman, activist, teacher and knowledge Elder**

Aunty Margret Campbell, a Djunghutti-Djirringanj woman, activist, teacher, and knowledge Elder, has shared her remarkable life story through four in-depth audio interviews. These sessions trace her early life on the Southwest Rocks mission, her movement between family after her mother's

passing, and her move to Sydney as a teenager. They explore her activism during the 1960s–70s Redfern Aboriginal rights movement, including her involvement in the Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs led by Charles Perkins. Aunty Margret's pioneering work in education is highlighted through her role in establishing an Aboriginal preschool, founding the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, setting up Pemulwuy High School, and teaching at Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative. Her later work in tourism reflects her commitment to sharing Aboriginal history and culture. Future sessions will explore her ancestral connections, cultural knowledge, and vision for the future, ensuring her legacy educates and inspires generations to come.



Aunty Margret Campbell

### **Collecting the oral story of Aunty Dr Matilda House-Williams by her son, Paul Girrawah House**

Aunty Matilda Williams House, a respected Ngambri-Ngunnawal Elder and lifelong activist, has been a key figure in the Aboriginal protest movement since the 1950s. Through a series of in-depth interviews led by Arrernte filmmaker Rachel Perkins, her powerful life story—from her birth at Erambie Aboriginal Mission in 1945 and upbringing on the Hollywood Aboriginal Reserve, to her pivotal role in founding the Canberra Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972—is being documented to preserve her wisdom and legacy for future generations. These interviews aim to honour her role as a political leader and cultural custodian, ensuring her experiences continue to inspire and educate.



Aunty Dr Matilda House-Williams



## Current Projects:

### Telling the story of the passing of the Land Rights Act 1976

Telling the Story of the Passing of the Land Rights Act 1976 is an oral history project that documents the pivotal role of First Nations people in the Land Rights Movement of the 1970s and the creation of the Central Land Council (CLC). Focusing on voices that were historically unheard or are no longer able to speak,

the project aims to preserve these important contributions for future generations. Led by David Parsons SC and supported by a distinguished team including The Hon. Geoffrey Eames AM KC, Professor Michael Dodson AO, and Professor Patrick Keyzer FAAL, the team will conduct interviews across Alice Springs, Canberra, and Melbourne. Featuring prominent figures such as Professor Marcia Langton AO, Neville Perkins OAM, David Ross AM, and Senator Patrick Dodson, the project will also include stories from CLC staff and families of key advocates, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive record of this landmark moment in Australian history.



David Parsons SC

### The Australian Light Horse Project: Travelling Exhibition

In 2017, the Rona Tranby Trust supported 13 descendants of Indigenous Light Horse soldiers who served in the Sinai–Palestine campaign of WWI to travel to Beersheba, Israel, for the Centenary Commemoration of the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade's 1917 Charge. The Trust provided travel, tours, and accommodation to ensure these families could honour their ancestors' service. On Anzac Day 2022, the Trust launched *'The Australian Light Horse Project: Travelling Exhibition'* at Pilliga Public School, sharing the stories and military contributions of these Indigenous soldiers. At the launch, descendant Terry Hutchison spoke about his great-uncles, Francis and Ernest Firth of the Australian Light Horse and Charles Firth of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, while Education Consultant Fran Grant provided culturally informed curriculum resources. The exhibition subsequently visited Waverley College on 28 April 2023, with presentations by descendant Elsie Amamoo and Fran Grant. In May 2025, the Travelling Exhibition visited the Moriah College, with descendent Aunty Doris Paton discussing her ancestor David Mullet and the treatment of returned Indigenous soldiers from WWI.



(L-R) Jennifer Symons, Pastor Raymond Minniecon



(L-R) Members of the Australian Light Horse Project, Pastor Raymond Minniecon



# MOST Masterclass

The MOST Masterclass is an annual event to support the development of talented opera singers, répétiteurs, and instrumentalists. The MOST Masterclass offered performers a rare chance to work closely with leading professionals, receive hands-on coaching, and hone their craft in a supportive, high-energy environment. This unique presentation attracted a large audience and ticket allocations were quickly exhausted, showcasing the communities' interest in these style of events.

Held on 11 December at 'The Church' in Alexandria, this year's Masterclass was led by internationally acclaimed soprano Helena Dix. An Australian-born superstar, Helena has performed leading roles around the globe, from Norma at the Metropolitan Opera to La Straniera with Chelsea Opera Group and Suor Angelica with Melbourne Opera. She has appeared with Scottish Opera, National Opera Canberra, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House, and performed in iconic venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and St Magnus Festival. Helena's recordings with the Bach Choir and BBC Concert Orchestra are available on Hyperion Records, and in 2022, she was awarded a Fellowship by the Royal Academy of Music for her exceptional contributions to opera. Beyond the stage, Helena mentors emerging artists worldwide and serves as Artistic Patron of Opera Scholars Australia.



Photo credit: Robin Halls



Helena Dix, Sky Kim



The 2025 MOST Masterclass featured four outstanding singers: Ziggy Harris, a baritone from Armidale and finalist in the MTO German-Australian Opera Grant; Sydney-trained baritone Matthew Hilberts; soprano Sky Kim, with performances in Sicily and Springboard Opera; and Sydney-based soprano Molly Ryan, winner of the MTO German-Australian Opera Grant and Audience Prize. Under Helena's guidance, they refined technique, stage presence, and interpretive skills, gaining insights that will shape their careers.

Répétiteurs played a vital role in the Masterclass. Julia An and Cara Eccleston, both Collaborative Piano students at Sydney Conservatorium, contributed their experience with opera productions and international masterclasses. Pianist and flautist Teoman Ayhan Özbakır brought his expertise from Rockdale Opera Company, and Hans Sangtoki added his dual skills as pianist and conductor, ensuring a fully collaborative and dynamic learning environment. The 2025 MOST Masterclass showcased the talent, dedication, and potential of Australia's young opera artists. By combining world-class mentorship, performance opportunities, and musical collaboration, the Masterclass reinforced MOST's vision of empowering emerging young musicians, helping them take confident steps into the professional world of classical music.



(L-R) Teoman Ayhan Özbakır, Hans Sangtoki, Julia An, Cara Eccleston, Helena Dix, Matthew Hilberts, Molly Ryan, Ziggy Harris, Sky Kim

# Australian Friends of Keshet Eilon

The Australian Friends of Keshet Eilon (AFoKE) is dedicated to supporting exceptionally gifted Australian string players by raising funds for scholarships to attend the prestigious Keshet Eilon Mastercourse in Israel.

Since its formation, AFoKE has hosted five major fundraising events. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, in partnership with the Australian Friends of Keshet Eilon, MOST presented the Keshet Eilon Music Center Recital, welcoming Jean Judes, Chair of Keshet Eilon, and Nitza Avidan, CEO of Keshet Eilon, to Australia. The concert was a cross-genre exploration through Bach, Mizrachi/Moroccan Ethno-Jazz and klezmer classics. Compèred by musician Daniel Rojas the concert hosted a variety of musicians including violinist Ben Adler, cellist Chris Pidcock, saxophonist Eli Vanunu and collaborative artist, Paul Khodor (pictured to the right) The stage was also graced by two talented singers, soprano Eden Shifroni and cantor Shimon Farkas OAM.

This year, we were delighted to support Edward Walton. He received the AFoKE Scholarship at the 2022 ABC Young Performers Awards and attended the Keshet Eilon International String Mastercourse, held from July 20 to August 7 at the Altea International School in Spain. The program brought together outstanding string players from around the world, along with a distinguished faculty of internationally renowned performers and pedagogues. Throughout the course, Edward participated in a range of lessons and performance classes with Professors Shmuel Ashkenasi and Ilya Kaler, gaining invaluable artistic and technical insights.

*"From the very first day, the atmosphere was inspiring, and I quickly realized how intense, yet rewarding the schedule would be. Beyond the formal learning, the Mastercourse offered cultural and social highlights, a day trip, and informal gatherings. These moments provided a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and cultivate new, lasting friendships." - Edward Walton.*



# Australian Friends of Arthur Rubenstein International Society

The Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition is widely regarded as one of the world's leading piano competitions. Since its inaugural event in 1974, when Maestro Rubinstein himself served on the jury, exceptional pianists from across the globe have travelled to Tel Aviv to take part in this prestigious contest. Its distinguished prize winners continue to play a vital role on the international piano stage.

The competition's continued success for more than four decades has been made possible largely through the dedication and generosity of its international supporters.

On 13 November 2025, MOST partnered with the Australian Friends of the Arthur Rubinstein International Music Society to present and oversee a special fundraising recital featuring Ms. Yukine Kuroki, Bronze Medallist of the 17th Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition in 2023.



Yukine Kuroki



# LAUREATES

## **Emma Pearson -IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition (2004), Opera Awards (2009)**

Emma Pearson, winner of the 2004 Marianne Mathy Scholarship and the 2009 Opera Awards, has established an exceptional international career. As principal artist at the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden for nine years, she performed more than thirty roles and was honoured as Kammersängerin. Her portrayal of the title role in Alban Berg’s Lulu earned her a nomination for Singer of the Year by Opernwelt Magazine. For Opera Australia, she has appeared as Elettra (Idomeneo), Contessa di Folleville (Il viaggio à Reims), the Queen of the Night (The Magic Flute) and Sophie (Der Rosenkavalier). Recent Australasian engagements include Musetta (La Bohème), Countess Adèle (Le Comte Ory), Fiordiligi (Così fan tutte), Semele, and Contessa Almaviva (Le nozze di Figaro), as well as Lucia and Violetta for Wellington Opera, Armida (Rinaldo) for Pinchgut Opera, and Laura in Voss for State Opera South Australia. Her international credits span Semperoper Dresden, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Theater St. Gallen, and major orchestras worldwide.

Emma will appear as Hanna Glawari in The Merry Widow in 2026 with Opera Australia. Emma also obtained her Masters of Musical Arts at the University of Wellington, New Zealand in 2025.



Image credit: Emma Pearson



Emma Pearson

# LAUREATES

## Eden Shifroni - IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

Eden Shifroni, winner of the 2024 Marianne Mathy Scholarship and recipient of Melba Opera Trust's 2025 Alastair Jackson International Opera Award, is rapidly emerging as one of Australia's leading young vocal talents. Her operatic credits include Pamina in *The Magic Flute* at the Vienna Summer Music Festival, Musetta in *La bohème* and Suor Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica* at the Mediterranean Opera Festival, and Poppea in the Australian premiere of Elena Kats-Chernin's re-orchestration of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*. She also created the role of Ada Crossley in *Percy* and originated Jess in *Track Works*, a site-specific pastiche opera at Sydney's Mortuary Station.

On the concert stage, Eden has appeared with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra in Vaughan-Williams' *Benedicte* and with the North Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Zeisl's *Requiem Ebraico*. Her accolades also include the Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship, Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award, Ryman Healthcare Opera Scholarship, and the 2024 JSRB Foundation Award.

Eden made her professional opera debut in June 2025, starring in Pinchgut Opera's production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, a reimagining of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where she played multiple roles, including a fairy and a bride, receiving acclaim for her performance in this innovative, modern take on the baroque classic.



Eden Shifroni performing at ASC 2024



Eden Shifroni at the W. Allen Ford Masterclass 2023

# LAUREATES

## Mariana Hong - Opera Awards

Mariana Hong, winner of the 2002 Opera Awards, continues to enjoy a distinguished international career. In 2025 she appeared as Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly for West Australian Opera, receiving exceptional critical praise, with reviewers describing her performance as “breathtaking,” “magnificent,” and “a splendour... anchoring all three hours of runtime.” In 2026 she will sing Woglinde in Das Rheingold for Korean National Opera. Her extensive operatic engagements include Madama Butterfly for Finnish National Opera, Opera Australia, State Opera South Australia, Opera Queensland, and at London’s Royal Albert Hall. For Opera Australia, she has sung many major roles, including Liù, Mimì, Pamina, the Countess, Fiordiligi and Donna Anna. On the concert platform, she has appeared in recital and in major works such as Carmina Burana, Missa Solemnis and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with leading orchestras internationally.



# LAUREATES

## David Parsons SC - Rona Tranby Trust

Leading the Rona Tanby Trust project, *Telling the Story of the Passing of the Land Rights Act 1976*, is David Parsons SC, a retired Judge of the County Court of Victoria with extensive experience in land rights and native title law. Parsons began his career as a solicitor with the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Service in Alice Springs (1974–1976) and is now actively researching and writing a major historical manuscript on the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The project documents the history of the Central Land Council and the 1970s Land Rights Movement, ensuring the contributions of First Nations people who did not, and cannot now, speak for themselves are preserved for posterity. Parsons' manuscript currently spans 230 pages, with a second draft of around 50,000 words including detailed coverage of the Woodward Royal Commission. As a Director of the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, he travels regularly to Darwin and Alice Springs, facilitating oral history interviews to strengthen the project's historical accuracy.



Kenbi (Larrakia) land claim hearing, Duwun



David Parsons SC

# Testimonials



*“It was an absolute pleasure to work with the singers and orchestra for the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition Final round and performance. I was so pleased to see each of the young singers enter the stage with such energy and poise. It was a delight to work with each of them, and I know how much they appreciated the support and sensitive playing of the Opera Australia Orchestra.”*

*Natalie Murrery Beale, 2025 ASC Finals Opera Australia Orchestra Conductor*



*“I have found them to be most valuable and I can’t believe I have debuted in the roles of Tosca and also Turandot as a result of these awards, as well as singing with the Rochester Symphony Orchestra (UK) and the Thüringen Philharmonie (Germany) in concerts. I am sure I would not have been able to do all these things had I stayed here in Australia and kept plodding along without the award, and so I very much appreciate the help and opportunities it afforded to me.”*

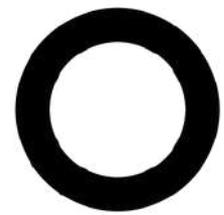
*Eleanor Greenwood, 2023 Opera Awards Winner*



*“Attending the Keshet Eilon Mastercourse 2025 was an unforgettable experience. The combination of world-class instruction, collaborative music-making, and supportive camaraderie will continue to shape my development as a violinist for years to come. Thank you, Friends of Keshet Eilon and MOST for making this incredible experience a possibility for me.”*

*Edward Walton, 2022 Young Performers Awards Finalist, and 2025 Keshet Eilon International String Mastercourse attendee*

# Connectivity



## Connecting to audiences digitally

*Impressive growth across all platforms with our commitment to sharing our programs to wider audiences continuing in 2025*

### YOUTUBE

#### IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

Views: 2M  
Subscribers: 3.01K  
Videos: 813

#### MOST

Views: 124,061  
Subscribers: 144  
Videos: 18

#### Opera Awards

Views: 41,632  
Subscribers: 123  
Videos: 51

#### Rona Tranby Award & Collection

Views: 2,469  
Subscribers: 15  
Videos: 12

### NEWSLETTERS

#### IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

Views: 15, 444  
Subscribers: 3, 205

#### MOST

Views: 4, 818  
Subscribers: 389

#### Opera Awards

Views: 2, 393  
Subscribers: 411

#### Rona Tranby Award & Collection

Views: 313  
Subscribers: 382

### FACEBOOK

#### IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

(@aussingcomp)  
4.8K Followers

#### MOST

(@mostgivesmore)  
301 Followers

#### Rona Tranby Award & Collection

(@ronatranby)  
1.2K Followers

#### Australian Cello Awards

(@celloawardsaustralia)  
497 Followers

### INSTAGRAM

#### IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition

(@aussingcomp)  
1,369 Followers  
Total 2025 views: 173, 597

#### MOST

(@mostgivesmore)  
733 Followers  
Total 2025 views: 45, 303



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We would like to acknowledge and thank many people and organisations for their ongoing support which enables us to have an impactful role on Australia's cultural landscape. The altruism of our patrons, prize sponsors, event sponsors, partners, musicians, musical institutions, volunteers, adjudicators, collaborators, and benefactors who give their time, skills, knowledge and philanthropy provides the foundation for all of MOST's activities.

MOST is a not-for-profit organisation, and we are proud to continue our work, ensuring that we maximise opportunities for artists and contestants in our competitions. We rely on our community who know that our organisation is a worthwhile cause to support, ensuring its continuity.



(L-R) Wesley Yu, Brittney Northcott, Sidra Nissen, Aidan hodder and Sophie Blades

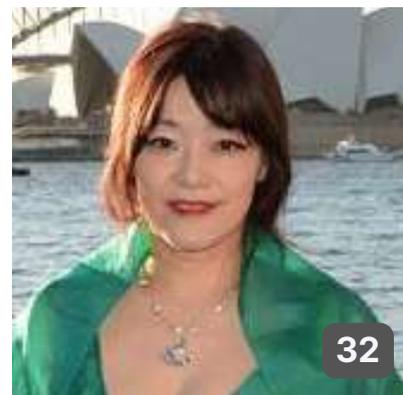
## Thank you to our 2025 Sponsors:

**We wish to acknowledge our Principal Partner & Honorary Patron of the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, Dr Haruhisa Handa AO, and the International Foundation for Arts and Culture (IFAC). We also are grateful for the support provided by Midori Miyazaki on behalf of IFAC.**

Dr. Haruhisa Handa AO



Midori Miyazaki



The International  
Foundation for  
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# Thank You

## Thank you to our 2025 Partners:

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## Thank you to our 2025 Donors:

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Huntington Estate Wines - Huntington Estate Wine Prize

Jane Ede - Jane Ede Prize

Lili Ussher - Lili Ussher Prize

Linnhe Robertson - Linnhe Robertson Prize

Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center - Audition Prize from Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center

WinkiPop Media - WinkiPop Media Prize

Nell Pascall Estate - Nell Pascall Prize

Opera Australia - Opera Australia Prize, and Opera Australia Finalist Audition Prize

Radzynski Family - Radzynski Family Prize

Royal Northern College of Music - Royal Northern College of Music Award

Running Bare Pty Ltd. - Running Bare Prize

Sherman Lowe - The Sherman Lowe Study Prize

Songmakers Australia - Songmakers Prize WinkiPop

The Australian Elizabethan Trust- Armstrong-Martin Scholarship

The Estate of the Late Francis Merenda - The Merenda Legacy Prize

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Robert Scott

Ronald Langley

Steve Davidson

# Thank You

## Special Thank you to:

Bradley Gilchrist - Official Accompanist

Camielle Merčep - Compère

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Lina Safro - Venue Partner

Lizzie Judson - Volunteer

Nina Korbe - Compère

Sarah Collins - Volunteer

Sebastian Stagg - Volunteer

Sophie Rogut - Volunteer

## Special Thank you to (Adjudicators):

### **ASC National Adjudicator**

Jeffrey Black

### **ASC Semi-Finals / Finals**

Dr Francis Greep

Dr Simon Lobelson

Kate Johnson

Joanna Goodman

Siobhan Stagg

### **ASC Heats**

Linnhe Robertson (London)

Yvonne Kenny AM (London)

Dr Anke Höppner-Ryan (Sydney)

Joanne Goodman (Sydney)

Natalie Jones (Melbourne)

Stephen Grant (Melbourne)

Emma Matthews AM (Perth)

Nicole Youl (Perth)

Gregory Massingham (Brisbane)

Leanne Kenneally-Warnock (Brisbane)

### **Opera Awards**

Dr Di Bresciani OAM (Chair of the Panel)

Rosamund Illing

Simon Meadows

Peter Tegar



Maestra Natalie Murray Beale conducting the Opera Australia Orchestra

# How to get Involved

## ***How to Get Involved***

Music & Opera Singers Trust Ltd. (MOST) has the vision, knowledge and capacity to create a valuable and enduring cultural legacy to benefit all Australians. In order to achieve this, we rely on the generosity of our donors, sponsors and supporters.

If you would like to know more about how to partner with us, as an individual or a business, we welcome your interest. You may want to support an existing scholarship or program, or become a partner or donor circle member in an upcoming program.

## ***Legacy Gifts***

Music & Opera Singers Trust is also highly experienced in the management of Estates and has a strong record of administering successful legacy programmes. If you would like to know more about leaving a gift to support future generations of gifted musicians, please get in touch with us.

## ***Help Support Australia's Creative Talent***

Music & Opera Singers Trust is experienced in managing the personal and legal issues involved in the establishment of bequests and has a strong proven record in the development and administration of successful legacy programmes. If you wish to discuss the establishment of a Bequest or Legacy Programme, contact us at any of the following: You can join us in assisting talented opera singers and classical musicians achieve their goals by making a donation to Music & Opera Singers Trust Ltd. (MOST®). A MOST donation enables you to give more to the arts, music, education, and the Australian community. You can support one of our existing Programs, join our Patrons Program, or create a Scholarship, Grant or Award that carries your name. To learn more about these opportunities, please get in touch with our office:

T. 02 9231 4293

E. [teammamanger@mostlyopera.org](mailto:teammamanger@mostlyopera.org)

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*Music & Opera Singers Trust Limited (MOST®) is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient by the Australian Tax Office (Subdivision 20-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, Item 1 Section 30-15; in Subdivision 30-B; Item 12.1.1 public fund on the register of cultural organisations). Endorsement date: 1 July 2000.*

