

## CARRIAGEWORKS

Carriageworks is the largest and most significant contemporary multi-arts centre of its kind in Australia. The Carriageworks Artistic Program is ambitious, risk taking and provides significant support to leading Australian and international artists through commissioning and presenting contemporary work. The program is artist-led and emerges from Carriageworks' commitment to reflecting social and cultural diversity.

**BOARD** Sam Mostyn (Chair), Sue Cato, Michael Gonski, John Mitchell, Cass O'Connor

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**TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS** Oranges & Sardines Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, Crown Resorts Foundation, Packer Family Foundation, Nelson Meers Foundation

Carriageworks acknowledges the traditional custodians, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



CARRIAGEWORKS

KAWAI  
THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO

## SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** Jack Symonds

**PRINCIPAL ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE** Huw Belling

**ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES** Danielle Maas, Mitchell Riley, Jane Sheldon, James Wannan, Pierce Wilcox

**BOARD** Christine Williams (Chair), Ban-Foo Leong, Chris Morrison, Patrick Nolan, Penelope Stannard, Jack Symonds, Maryam Tabari

**SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA THANKS THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE OSCAR AND LUCINDA PRODUCTION CIRCLE**

**PRODUCTION PARTNERS (\$15,000+)** Martin & Susie Dickson, Kim Williams AM

**PRINCIPAL ARTIST PARTNERS (\$10,000- \$14,999)** Anonymous (1), Meredith Brooks, Neil Burns, Penelope Seidler AO, Christine Williams & The Macquarie Foundation

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**ROMANOV** Andrew Andersons AO, Bryan Belling, Dr. Robert Mitchell

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**MAECEANAS** Anonymous (1), Anderson Chang, Colin Spencer, Penelope Stannard, Brian Zulaikha

**THANK YOU** Karen Cochet, Ian Johnson, Heidi Harrington-Johnson, Samuel Hodge, Harrison Milas, St Andrew's Cathedral School, St Catherine's School

CARRIAGEWORKS AND SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA PRESENT

# OSCAR AND LUCINDA

27 JUL - 3 AUG

Carriageworks is honoured to present the world premiere of *Oscar and Lucinda*, a co-production and co-commission of Sydney Chamber Opera, Opera Queensland and Victorian Opera.

Peter Carey's beloved novel *Oscar and Lucinda* was awarded the 1988 Booker Prize and the 1989 Miles Franklin Award, now adapted for the stage by composer Elliott Gyger and librettist Pierce Wilcox. In 2015 Carriageworks premiered their succinct and bold interpretation of David Malouf's novella *Fly Away Peter* described as a work of 'great coherence and beauty' and a 'good'un' [SMH].

Under the experienced hand of Opera Queensland's Artistic Director and CEO Patrick Nolan, this inspired reworking of the love story between the orphaned proto-feminist industrialist and the man who believes he is touched by God is a moving feast. The stage space is simple and open, with Elliott Gyger's intricate music and the myriad of characters front and centre. Anna Tregloan's design, in her Carriageworks debut, expertly navigates the fragility of relationships between glass and water.

Ideas of chance and destiny feature strongly in this production. As the Acting Director of Carriageworks this is my last show, and it's my pleasure and delight to partner with Sydney Chamber Opera on this and I hope you will share my sentiment that this too is a good'un.

Carriageworks is able to present our New Music program due to the support of the Australia Council for the Arts and the ongoing support of the NSW Government through Create NSW and we thank them for their assistance.

**EUAN UPSTON**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR, CARRIAGEWORKS**

After the phenomenal success when Sydney Chamber Opera (SCO) premiered Elliott Gyger's *Fly Away Peter* in 2015, I immediately asked Elliott to write us his second opera. *Oscar and Lucinda* was his first choice of subject matter and I knew this most refined and virtuosic of Australian composers would give us an epic opera made with the same perfection of facture as the glass which features so heavily in the story.

Pierce Wilcox's libretti for SCO have become ever more poetic, and his achievement in condensing, focussing and lightly contemporising Peter Carey's beloved novel with precision and wit is a constant wonder. For me, Elliott is Australia's master harmonist – a musical alchemist capable of using the most basic properties of combining notes to create totally original sensations, colours and depths of characterisation. In *Oscar and Lucinda* he has constructed an entire world for his largest work (so far) to live in; a musical cathedral of mystery, tenderness, violence – and visionary love. He has given SCO its most ambitious new work to realise, and it has been the most extraordinary process for all of us getting to know and perform this vast, complex and exceptionally beautiful opera. I have only admiration for the fearless cast who have put this music inside their bodies and voices with rare understanding and endless generosity.

SCO is grateful for the support of this project through the Australia Council for the Arts, NSW Government through Create NSW and the *Oscar and Lucinda* Production Circle of donors. Lastly, making this kind of work would not be possible at all were it not for our long-term home - Carriageworks. This building and its artistic program are unique, and I simply can't imagine our existence anywhere else.

**JACK SYMONDS**  
**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA**

CARRIAGEWORKS AND SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA PRESENT

# OSCAR AND LUCINDA

27 JUL - 3 AUG

Opera in two acts. World premiere.

**Music** Elliott Gyger  
**Libretto** Pierce Wilcox  
**After the novel by** Peter Carey

**Conductor** Jack Symonds  
**Director** Patrick Nolan  
**Set & Costume Designer** Anna Tregloan  
**Lighting Designer** Damien Cooper

**Oscar Hopkins** Brenton Spiteri  
**Lucinda Lepplastrier** Jessica Aszodi  
**Elizabeth Lepplastrier/ Betty Stratton / Miriam Chadwick** Jane Sheldon  
**Dennis Hasset/ Wardley-Fish** Mitchell Riley  
**Theophilus Hopkins/ Arthur Phelps/ Percy Smith** Simon Lobelson  
**Rev. Stratton/ Boatman/ Mr. Jeffris** Jeremy Kleeman

**Violins** Peter Clark, Veronique Serret  
**Violas** James Wannan, Henry Justo  
**Cellos** Judith Hamann, Paul Zabrowarny  
**Double Bass** Muhamed Mehmedbasic  
**Oboes** Ben Opie, Jasper Ly  
**Clarinets** Jason Noble, Georgina Oakes  
**Horns** Gergely Malyusz, Neil O'Donnell  
**Piano** Benjamin Kopp  
**Harp** Emily Ann Granger  
**Percussion** Claire Edwardes

**Production Manager** Damion Holling  
**Stage Management** Ellen Castles, Mattison Tabone  
**Assistant Conductor** Huw Belling  
**Assistant Director** Constantine Costi  
**Surtitles** Johannes Macdonald

**Piano sponsored by** Kawai Pianos, Australia

Oscar and Lucinda is a co-commission and co-production of Sydney Chamber Opera, Opera Queensland and Victorian Opera.

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## SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA (SCO)

Sydney Chamber Opera, resident company at Carriageworks, is a fresh and youthful answer to some of the difficult questions facing today's opera industry. Artistic Director Jack Symonds and Louis Garrick established SCO in 2010 and it has rapidly developed into an important and distinctive voice in the Australian music and theatre landscapes. SCO is critically acclaimed for its innovative programming, musical rigour and strong focus on compelling theatre-making. SCO makes opera with a 21st-century outlook that resonates with a new, younger audience, and that shows how vibrant and relevant the artform can be. Their program aims for a balance of specially commissioned work by leading homegrown composers, the latest international operas in their Australian premieres, song cycles and cantatas in unusual stagings, and canonical repertoire reinvigorated by the country's most daring theatrical talent.

# OSCAR AND LUCINDA

## ACT ONE

### Prologue - Glass and Stone

In Hennacombe, England, a young Oscar throws a stone to decide his future. To his father Theophilus' despair, Oscar believes he must join the Anglican church led by Mr. Stratton. In rural New South Wales, Elizabeth Leplastrier dreams of her daughter Lucinda's future as a compassionate industrialist.

### Scene One - Apostasy

In New South Wales, Elizabeth grieves her husband's accidental death. In England, Oscar asks God to confirm his path. Receiving a sign, he goes to Mr. Stratton.

### Scene Two - To Build a Life

After Elizabeth's death, Lucinda inherits a fortune and goes to Sydney. A chance sighting of a glassworks reminds her of a childhood obsession with glass and she decides to buy it.

### Scene Three - Doubt

Oscar debates with the intellectual Betty Stratton and prepares to attend Oxford to study holy orders.

### Scene Four - Some Surprising Properties

Lucinda, hoping to learn about glass and commerce, visits fellow glass enthusiast Reverend Hasset. Hasset is inspired by her passion and commits to represent her in business.

### Scene Five - Two Gamblers

At Oxford, Oscar meets Wardley-Fish, who invites him to a horse race. In Sydney, Lucinda discovers the thrill of a card game.

### Scene Six - A Horse Named Desire

Confronted about their gambling, Oscar and Lucinda are unable to admit or abandon their passions. Oscar is convinced he must atone by taking a missionary posting abroad. Lucinda, frustrated by life in Sydney, heads to London.

### Scene Seven - Babylon / Leviathan

Oscar is farewelled at the docks. Lucinda, having failed to secure a husband in London, resigns herself to return home. They both board the ship *Leviathan* from London to Sydney.

### Scene Eight - Confessions

Oscar and Lucinda meet. The two gamblers begin a game together. A storm strikes.

## ACT TWO

### Prologue - Know

The storm passes.

### Scene One - Ruins

Under Hasset's stewardship, the glassworks fails. Foreman Arthur Phelps abandons his post. Lucinda is aghast to discover this failure. Hasset chooses his calling over Lucinda and leaves to take a rural posting.

### Scene Two - Black

In Boat Harbour, the recently-widowed Miriam Chadwick watches the arrival of Dennis Hasset with interest.

### Scene Three - Damage

Oscar and Lucinda have an unexpected reunion. They play cards again, but are discovered and Oscar is disgraced. Lucinda takes him in as a lodger in the face of societal disapproval.

### Scene Four - Happiness

Oscar and Lucinda build a life together.

### Scene Five - Made of Glass

Lucinda shows Oscar the glassworks. They concoct the idea of a church made of glass. Oscar, believing she loves Hasset, bets her he can deliver it to Boat Harbour in exchange for her entire inheritance.

### Scene Six - Folly

The ambitious Mr Jeffris and the kindly Percy Smith sign up for Oscar's expedition. Oscar and Lucinda misunderstand each other's feelings for the last time.

### Scene Seven - Glass Cuts

Jeffris leads Oscar and Percy on a journey into the outback which descends into delirium and horror.

### Scene Eight - Into Light

Oscar enters Boat Harbour with the glass church in triumph, winning his wager with Lucinda. Miriam Chadwick seduces him. Oscar is convinced they must marry to save her reputation.

### Epilogue - A Song for Oscar

Oscar returns to the church in despair. Miriam and Lucinda exchange letters, and as Miriam inherits Oscar's assets after his death, Lucinda finds herself penniless.

# OSCAR AND LUCINDA

Peter Carey's novel *Oscar and Lucinda* is a panorama of the impossible – in its visionary imagery and the wild dreams of its characters, not to mention the sheer scale of the book. Opera makes a natural home for the impossible, conjuring surreal encounters, emotional extremes and the vast gulfs of understanding between people, that music may bridge when words fail.

We were captured by the idea of taking a chance: the feeling of surrender to some higher power, and the unexpected consequences that come tumbling after. Our two protagonists make that idea of chance concrete in their fascination with gambling, though they understand its force in completely different ways – Oscar as divine providence, Lucinda as joyous but undirected coincidence.

Because of this, as well as for their resolute refusal to conform to nineteenth-century gender stereotypes, Lucinda and Oscar find themselves tragically at odds with the conventions of the world around them. In the opera this world is populated by the other four singers, who act not only as a variety of colourful secondary characters but also as a complex choral voice, by turns prophetic, beguiling and threatening, a force that could be seen as random chance or the hand of Oscar's God.

The guiding metaphor for the music is one not found in the novel, although it reflects Carey's key images of chance and glass. In a kaleidoscope, small fragments of coloured glass fall into arbitrary relationships, which are then mirrored geometrically to create the illusion of order; each turn of the kaleidoscope instantly rearranges everything into a new pattern. The score applies this metaphor to the treatment of harmony. Different settings of the kaleidoscope generate particular harmonic colours – associated with characters, emotions, places and ideas – which may dissolve and re-form at any moment, in a perilously coruscating soundscape which the central characters must navigate.

**ELLIOTT GYGER, Composer**  
**PIERCE WILCOX, Librettist**

Developing the concept and design for a new production requires a complex mix of vulnerability and certainty. Decisions have to be made about creating a space that is fixed and open (enough) to allow chance to play a role (the latter being particularly significant in the context of *Oscar and Lucinda*). In this tension between the known and unknown, a design process unfolds.

Over time, listening to the music, interrogating the libretto and continually asking questions, a design is arrived at. With *Oscar and Lucinda* however, there was one vital element missing – the music. Whilst we had Elliott's score it is yet to be recorded. In fact, no one in the production had heard the opera as composed until the Sitzprobe, the first full rehearsal of the opera with singers and orchestra that took place a week before opening night.

This is exhilarating and terrifying. If the classics demand deconstruction and excavation, a new work needs nurturing; a careful process of listening and exploring that launches it into what will hopefully be a long and fruitful life.

In creating our design we identified two key elements – water and glass – whose significance to the title characters filters through every layer of the story, refracting, mirroring or distorting the way in which they perceive themselves and each other. These same qualities of reflection and distortion are shared by light, so we created a space that would hold and play with light in as many ways as possible.

Chance and destiny were the other two influences. Rather than fixing the story in a specific locale, we use the elements of wood, cloth, and earth to conjure different worlds where the myriad of characters can dance with the music and each other, alive to what may be revealed.

**PATRICK NOLAN, Director**  
**ANNA TREGLOAN, Set & Costume Designer**  
**DAMIEN COOPER, Lighting Designer**