

OPERA FOR ALL NEWS

THE WA OPERA LOVERS SOCIETY OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2025 VOL 1, ISSUE 9

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



What a great night of food and entertainment at the UWA University Club this past week. Entertained by Shin, Emily, Ciaran and Sam, with Stephen and Emma Matthews AM our patron in attendance, it certainly was a gala night. Thank you to WA Opera for their donation of two A Reserve tickets to La Traviata for our raffle prize.

We have lots more entertainment for WA Opera Lovers next year, so please have your memberships up to date. We look forward to another (not so) Secret Garden Concert at Gail's early in 2026.

We are very happy for Beth Redwood, who will be taking up a position with Pacific Opera in Sydney. This is a major step in her career as it was for James Pinneri. While we are sad to see them leave us it is excellent to see their progress having been part of their development as artists. Much love and good luck Beth.

Thank you for all your wonderful support on the committee. You will be missed.

Meanwhile happy festive season to all.

Ian Westrip OAM, President

To see a full array of photos from the prize taken by our wonderful treasurer Shelly Miles, scan the code below



WA Opera Lovers Aria Prize

The 2025 WA Opera Lovers Aria Prize was held at WAAPA on 30 November.

It was a fabulous afternoon with eleven finalists: Jessica Goodwin, Sholto Foss, Sienna Freeman, Sarah Ganon, Bridie King, Olivia Muir, Aimee-Rose Keppler, Erin Tucker, Emily Chivers, Michelle Pryor and Devon Lake, all accompanied by Tommaso Pollio. The panel were Megan Sutton, Ian Westrip OAM, Robert Hofmann and Tommaso Pollio.

Congratulations to Devon Lake who took out first place, Michelle Pryor second place, Sholto Foss third place and Olivia Muir who received an honourable mention.

A wonderful afternoon in the Richard Gill Auditorium...
Bravi tutti!

Emma Matthews AM



Pictured: Sholto Foss, Devon Lake, Michelle Pryor

Festive Fun for All!

Members of WA Opera Lovers and friends were treated to a varied repertoire of operatic arias, musical theatre songs and Christmas songs, including an outstanding acapella version of Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas at the recent Opera for All Christmas Dinner at the University Club. Our resident artists, Emily Davis, Sam Claxton, Ciaran McChord and Shin-Hyun Jee provided the entertainment and, after the performance, delighted the audience by visiting each table and engaging in conversation.

The Patron of WA Opera Lovers, Emma Matthews AM and her husband Stephen were our special guests for a very special evening.

Gail Spiers



Pictured: Georgie Cunningham, Rebecca Viney, Mia Cunningham



Pictured: Ross and Kareena Ballard, Rosalie Nodwell



Pictured: Emily Davis, Shin Hyun-Jee, Emma Matthews AM, Ian Westrip OAM, Ciaran McChord, Sam Claxton



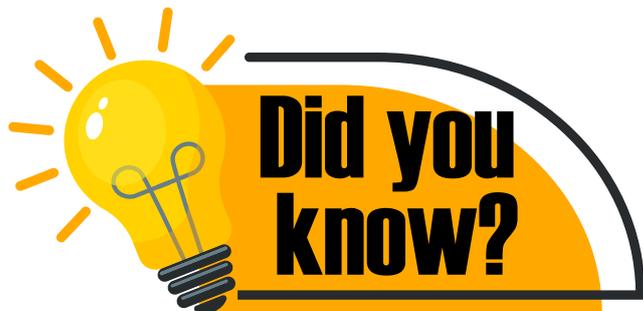
Pictured: Shin Hyun-Jee, Emily Davis, Emma Matthews AM



Pictured: Emma Matthews AM, Geri Springwater (raffle prize winner)



Pictured: Julia Singer, Marian Westrip



- The first operas were created in Italy during the late 16th century, with *Dafne* (1597) by Jacopo Peri often cited as the first opera
- **Alice Freeden: Teacher of singing, voice production:** The Freeden family's German heritage made life difficult during the war. Hans was forbidden from engineering work while Lotti was fired because of her accent. Having trained in and regularly attended the opera in Germany, Alice taught singing lessons to support her family. This would go on to be a passion the family cultivated. In 1947, they founded the WA Opera society, celebrating their love of music.
- The late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly following the Gold Rush, saw Perth's population and wealth dramatically increase. This created a demand for high culture, including opera.
- His Majesty's Theatre (The Maj): Opened in 1904, this venue was built during this boom period. It was, at the time, the largest theatre in Australia and featured an impressive design and stage. This theatre provided a grand and necessary space for touring opera companies (both international and from the eastern states, like J. C. Williamson Ltd) to perform classic works.
- When the notorious soprano Francesca Cuzzoni refused to sing the aria "Falsa immagine" from Handel's *Ottone*, Handel grabbed her by the waist and swore he would throw her out the window if she did not agree.
- The first performance of Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly* was one of opera's all-time worst flops. The audience made bird, cow, and goat calls and booed. *Madama Butterfly*, however, became one of the best-loved operas in history.
- Today, the word "diva" often refers to a temperamental celebrity, but in its original Italian, it simply meant "goddess." In opera, a diva was a celebrated female singer with exceptional talent and charisma. While some famous sopranos earned reputations for being demanding, many divas were beloved for their artistry and professionalism. So, next time you call someone a diva, remember - you're technically calling them divine.

Margaret River Getaway

WA Opera Lovers would like to thank Emily Paton-Spiers for donating a two-night getaway at the Country Cottage in Margaret River as a raffle prize at the Opera in the Secret Garden event in September.

'We lived the experience up to the full and loved our stay at Emily's Airbnb.'

Stan and Lefki Kailis



Pictured: Stan and Lefki Kailis with Nugget

WA Opera Lovers wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!
Keep an eye out for our 2026 event announcements. We would love to see you there. Opera for all.

ICW BAROQUE ENSEMBLE & CHORALE
 Musical Director Ian Westrip
 Presents:
A People's Messiah
 the sing_along concert
 December 13th
 2pm rehearsal, 7pm performance
 St Patrick's Church
 1st Avenue, Mt Lawley
 Limited (non-singing) audience
 also welcome

CHRISTMAS
AT THE QUARRY
FREEZE FRAME OPERA
 December 18 - 21

Saturday, 13th December, 2:00pm rehearsal, 7:00 pm performance- St Patricks Church, Mt Lawley

ICW Productions invites you to join us for an exhilarating afternoon rehearsal and evening performance singing along with the ICW Arts Orchestra and Chorale, at St Patrick's Church Mt Lawley. Experience as a singer is good but not necessary. You sing what you are able. Audience only members will only need to come to the performance at 7 pm but are also welcome to come to the rehearsal at 2 pm.

18th-21st December, 6:00pm- The Quarry Amphitheatre, City Beach

A beloved end-of-year tradition, this magical concert is a joyful way for family and friends to come together and celebrate the festive season under the stars. Pack your picnic, rug and wine and prepare for a wonderful evening of song. Freeze Frame can't wait to share this special event with you!

CHRISTMAS IN THE QUAD
 22ND DECEMBER 7PM
 ST GEORGE'S COLLEGE

Monday, 22nd December, 7:00pm- St George's College

Experience an enchanting program featuring Emma Matthews, Raymond Yong, Paul Wright and the West Coast Philharmonic conducted by Sam Parry. Enjoy an evening of music under the stars as we come together to mark the close of the year in true festive spirit. Bring your own food, low chairs, and picnic blankets, and relax in the picturesque surrounds of the College. Doors open at 5:30pm for a 7:00pm concert. All public seating is unreserved and general admission. Only picnic blankets, cushions & low chairs are allowed. Children under 12 are free, but must have a ticket and be accompanied by a parent or guardian with and adult ticket.

SUMMER GALA SOIRÉE
 25TH JANUARY 2026
 Woodbridge at Mandoon | 5:00pm

 EIMEAR FOLEY Soprano	 CLAIRE CONDIPODERO Soprano	 AMY FORTNUM Soprano	
 VIN TRIKERIOTIS Tenor	 DEVON LAKE Baritone	 SAM CLAXTON Baritone	 ADRIAN SOARES Musical Director & Accompanist

For tickets, tax deductible donations and more information see: sumnergalasoiree.com

Visit us online:
 Opera Lovers WA
Our recently updated website:
<https://www.operaloverswa.com.au/>

If you have any news items for the next issue, contact Sophie Elston (editor) (sophie.elstonyt@gmail.com) (0429 552 477)