

THE MELBA

MAGAZINE OF MELBA OPERA TRUST



2008

Year by year we celebrate Melba Opera Trust

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About Melba Opera Trust

Melba Opera Trust is Australia's premier scholarship program for promising young opera singers and repetiteurs.

Driven by Dame Nellie Melba's conviction "a beautiful voice is not enough", the program nurtures artistic development alongside business training, mentoring and performance experience. We are the next step for artists preparing to become professionals on the world stage.

Inspiring Excellence Realising Potential Forging Careers

Cover images

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WELCOMING THE

In 2008 a new philanthropic body founded on the distinguished history and traditions of Melba Conservatorium of Music was formed: the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust.

Dame Nellie taught at the Conservatorium of Music, Melbourne (later renamed in her honour) and was especially fond of the institution for its nurturing and supportive approach.

Following a widespread feasibility study and community 'think-tank', Melba Opera Trust was established

to embody precisely the same purposes and values that sustained the Melba Conservatorium for 108 years: to ensure that promising young Australian singers are supported financially during a crucial phase of their development – in this case, postgraduate training as the bridge to a professional operatic career. The Trust was

determined to carrying forward the three commitments implicit in Dame Nellie Melba's legacy – namely to students, singing and scholarships.

The existing company identity, structure and independence of Melba Conservatorium were preserved within the new entity and its reimagined purpose.

The Board, led at the time by Chair Robert G. Logie-Smith AM,

expressed a clear objective: to grow a capital endowment that would provide valuable scholarships to support the development of young Australian operatic talent into perpetuity "so that another Melba may arise". This vision was led by then-General Manager, Amy McPartlan (now CEO Amy Black) with the transition from Conservatorium to Trust wisely guided by then Director, Professor Melville Waters.

Chair's Welcome

I am very pleased to welcome you to the first of two commemorative editions of *The Melba* to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of providing scholarships to young artists.

In this edition you will learn about the evolution and development of the Melba scholarship program since 2008. In the second edition, to be published in May 2020, we will explore the impact our programs have had on our 51 alumni over the past decade.

Many of our readers will recall the decision to transition from the Conservatorium to the Trust; at that time the Board was fully aware of the risks of entering into unknown territory. It took a lot of courage and determination to make that move, but what started as a hope has become a successful and enduring reality.

Our success is founded in strong leadership and hard work based on the vision of financial sustainability and good governance. This approach has ensured our future as the pre-eminent organisation for the training and professional development of Australia's emerging opera stars.

We are here also because of a loyal, generous and growing community of benefactors, mentors of the highest calibre and talented and dedicated scholars. We take pride in the high standards applied to all of our endeavors.



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As you read this magazine I hope you will agree that Melba Opera Trust has much to celebrate and much to look forward to as we continue to inspire excellence and to prepare our young artists for a career on the world stage. It is also a great privilege to be carrying forward the legacy of Dame Nellie Melba.

As we move into our next decade, our principal focus is on building our endowment to sustain the Melba's activities for future generations.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board, I thank those of you who have been on this exciting journey with us in our first decade. We look forward to continuing our journey with you into the future.

Roz Zalewski-Ruskin
Chair, Melba Opera Trust Board

Launching a new era

On 22 July 2008 Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust was launched to a large gathering of supporters in the Great Hall at the National Gallery of Victoria. It was a fitting setting for an organisation with big ambitions and a commitment to artistic development into the future. Themes of opportunity and excellence resonated in the speeches delivered at the launch. Then Artistic Director of Victorian Opera, the late Richard Gill AO, stated: "The advent of Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust is a happy circumstance in expanding the opportunities and financial support for young artists to make the contributions we need for opera in all guises to thrive."

Then-Chairman of Melba, Robert G. Logie-Smith AM, told guests Melba Opera Trust would not only provide valuable training for young opera singers, but aim to sustain such a program "long into the future to ensure that these opportunities are present for generations of opera singers to come".

International soprano, Rosamund Iling, proudly launched Melba Opera Trust by paying homage

to the unique link the Melba organisation shares with the great Dame herself. "What might Dame Nellie have said at the beginning of a venture such as this? Undoubtedly, she would have begun with an expression of supreme optimism and a determination to overcome all obstacles... and she would have hoped, humbly of course, that her example of personal accomplishment might be emulated by those fortunate enough to receive patronage from the enterprise bearing her name."

Performances on the evening featured Melba Conservatorium alumnus, bass-baritone Shane Lowrencev, soprano Joanna Cole and the Victorian Opera chorus led by conductor Nicholas Carter. MC for the evening was media personality Christopher Lawrence and principle sponsor was Eastlink, thanks to the launch coinciding with the opening of the Melba tunnel.

As a special commemorative gift, all who attended the launch received a signed copy of *I Am Melba*, Ann Blainey's biography that had been released earlier that year.



THINKING OF THE FUTURE

As Melba Opera Trust laid the foundation for a ground-breaking new development program and endowment campaign, it turned to its community for guidance. Led by consultant, Helen Woods, around 60 community representatives fed into the strategic direction of the new organisation.

Complementing this was a series of community events involving supporters who had previously donated to the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship, the Alfred Ruskin Appeal and the Melba Conservatorium more generally. This was an event series that would turn into annual highlights in the years to follow.

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

The Melba Board

2005-2016	Robert G. Logie-Smith AM, Chair
1996-2010	Arnold Mayfield, Deputy Chair & Treasurer
1999-2010	Peter Hansen
2007-2011	Lewis Johnson
1986-2012	Jenny Sutherland
1999-2010	Professor Mel Waters
2006-2011	Barbara Yeoh

Executive Management

1999-2010	Professor Melville Waters, Director
2005-2019	Amy Black (nee. McPartlan), General Manager

2009



M
10
YEARS

NEW MELBA

The endowment campaign was launched with \$4.3 million of seed funding thanks to the successful sale of the Conservatorium's York Street property in Richmond, and the two existing funds that would continue on the Melba journey: the Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship bequeathed by Dame Nellie Melba in 1931 and the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship established in 1989.

This was a time of foundation building for the Melba. The launch of the Founding Benefactors program heralded the beginning of what would be a vibrant community of loyal and generous supporters, as did a series of hosted Boardroom lunches to generate donor interest and industry understanding of the Melba's new approach.

All of these advances set the scene for the development in the following years, creating the Melba program that we know today.

Since our first pioneer supporters (46 in 2008), our community has grown to nearly 600 strong, represented through our accumulative Melba Benefactor Circles. In our 10th Anniversary year, the capital endowment campaign is now sitting at just over \$10 million thanks to the donations, pledges, grants, bequests and the expertise of our investment managers, JB Were.



MATCHING MUSIC AND WINE

De Bortoli and Melba Opera Trust embarked on a wonderful relationship in 2009 which continues today. As event sponsor for our 2009 Gala event, De Bortoli launched a new range of wines in 2009 paying tribute to Dame Nellie Melba in *La Bohème* created by Leanne De Bortoli and Steve Webber, Chief Winemaker.

The two organisations enjoy a synergy, as both value their legacies – De Bortoli being one of Victoria's oldest family wine companies, and the Melba infusing the intentions of its namesake. Both are also strongly motivated by helping young people realise their potential: the Melba through our program, and De Bortoli through mentoring winemakers.

A decade later, *La Bohème* wines remain a firm fixture at Melba events.

ESTD 1928

De BORTOLI

FAMILY WINEMAKERS

The first Melba Scholars

— Alumni Stephanie Gibson & Siobhan Stagg (L to R)



Scholarship provision was a longstanding feature of the Conservatorium, but the first scholarships awarded under the banner of Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust were a wonderful milestone.

In 2009, two recipients were selected to receive funding from the Melba's longest standing

scholarships. Stephanie Gibson was awarded the Dame Nellie Melba Memorial Scholarship and Siobhan Stagg the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship.

The Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship is the scholarship bequeathed by Dame Nellie in 1931 to provide financial support for a promising young singer "in

the hope that another Melba may arise".

The Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship is a special award that was instituted with the Melba Conservatorium of Music by the Joscelyne family and friends, following Amelia's death. Amelia cherished her short time at the Conservatorium and, above all,

loved to sing. This scholarship continues to provide opportunities to young singers in her memory.

Today, Stephanie continues to perform as a freelance artist in Australia and the UK. Siobhan has established an impressive international operatic career and has emerged as one of Australia's finest young artists.

“I know that the best of me will live” – Dame Nellie Melba

When faced with a new future, Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust turned to its namesake for inspiration. The key to keeping her vision alive and emulating her generosity is seen in her £8000 bequest, directed to the Conservatorium in 1931 to establish a perpetual scholarship for the development of young opera singers. Her actions also inspired the way forward to establish a durable model of endowed named funds, valuable and generous bequests, and the great success of annual giving.

Melba Opera Trust, as well as having the direct responsibility of being Caretaker of Dame Nellie's Memorial at Lilydale, has thus based the core principles of our program on her legacy. After all, Dame Nellie believed that, alongside a beautiful voice, a singer must learn about the presentation and business aspects of life as a professional artist. As well as personally supporting the development of young singers financially, she also mentored and created performance opportunities for them. She always insisted

they should sing only repertoire appropriate for their age and stage of development, always remaining focussed on technique.

All of this underpins the Mentor, Performance and Artistic programs at the Melba that continue today. We at the Melba are immensely proud of our

association with Dame Nellie Melba and of her incredible story of resilience, determination and strength of character. After all, what could be more inspiring than a woman from a then-provincial town called Melbourne who went on to conquer the most famous opera houses in the world?

Melba



MELBA AND TALLIS



The Melba/Tallis association is one that has spanned the better part of a century. It began when Sir George Tallis, theatrical entrepreneur and Managing Director of giant entertainment company J.C. Williamson, collaborated with Dame Nellie Melba to promote several highly successful opera seasons in Australia. The lucrative business

partnership forged a lasting friendship between the two.

The support continued with the Tallis Foundation providing a scholarship to the Melba Conservatorium of Music in memory of Sir George's youngest son, musician and composer John Tallis. In 2009 it was announced this association would continue, with the scholarship extending to

the Melba Opera Trust program. Janet Szepei Todd was to be its first recipient the following year.

Since then, the Tallis Foundation and Beleura House & Garden have provided additional financial support to the Mentor Program, hosted master classes and co-produced several entertaining Opera in the Garden performances at Beleura.

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Founding Patrons Appointed

Pamela, Lady Vestey
Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM



A tailored Artistic Development Program

After its first full year of operation, Melba Opera Trust provided support to seven scholarship recipients, distributing a total of \$60,000. Melba’s inaugural selection panel included Professor Melville Waters, Michael Leighton-Jones and Suzanne Johnston.

With its first cohort of scholars came the launch of a tailored Artistic Development Program. Taken from Dame Nellie’s approach of nurturing all aspects of development and engaging in the “business” of singing, recipients worked with Melba management to develop their own

intensive development program. Each program is required to satisfy four criteria that Melba Opera Trust considers essential training tools for developing a well-rounded performer: vocal tuition, intensive language training, stagecraft/movement and professional development.

Funded activities can vary from vocal lessons and coaching, to performance psychology, allowances for music purchases, the preparation of business cards, professional headshots and allowances for performance attire.

This holistic, individualised and intensive approach has been a building block for the Melba program and has been sustained throughout its ten years. As well as helping to promote independence, it encourages recipients to be accountable for their own development and ensures that each artist is supported at their own pace while addressing their own priorities.

Memories at Como

The seven 2010 Melba Scholars were introduced at a reception at Como House in South Yarra on 19 May – fittingly, the date of Nellie Melba’s birthday (born 1861).

It was to be the first *Meet the Scholars* soirée, an event which is now the cornerstone of our annual activity calendar.

Recipients were presented with a signed copy of Founding Patron Pamela, Lady Vestey’s book *Melba: A Family Memoir*. Jacqueline Porter, holder of the Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship for 2010, spoke on behalf of the scholars, providing insight into the program: “I have been challenged, questioned and encouraged to work at a higher level – now I feel inspired and excited by new possibilities in my singing.”



Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship



In recognition of one of Australia’s leading pianists, and her achievements as a musician and educator, the Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship was established by her family to assist a promising early-career student at the Melba Conservatorium where Margaret taught and accompanied for many years.

Margaret’s children, Andrew and Fiona Cochrane, decided to continue the scholarship with Melba Opera Trust. “Our mother’s life was devoted to music. She had a great affection for the Melba Conservatorium as

— Margaret Schofield; 2011 scholarship recipient Samuel Sakker (L to R)

it existed during her life and was a great supporter of singers and opera in Melbourne,” says Dr Andrew Cochrane.

In 2010 it was awarded to mezzo-soprano Sophie Yelland who now continues her operatic career in the UK. Following Sophie, tenors Samuel Sakker and Matthew Reardon received the scholarship. Samuel was accepted into the Jette Parker Young Artist Program with Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and is now enjoying a busy and successful freelance opera career around Europe and the UK.



Matthew was awarded the Australian International Opera Award to study with renowned tenor Dennis O’Neill in Cardiff, Wales. He is currently touring with Opera Australia.

In 2015, following the launch of Melba’s new opera repetiteur scholarship, Andrew and Fiona agreed to direct the scholarship for that purpose. Since then, it has provided an invaluable pathway to Simon Bruckard, Jonathan Wilson and Adam McMillan.

Birthday Surprise for Pamela, Lady Vestey

In early 2010, Melba Opera Trust was thrilled to visit the Yarra Valley’s Coombe Cottage, once Dame Nellie’s retreat and later the home of her beloved granddaughter and our Founding Patron, the late Pamela, Lady Vestey. The reason for the visit? A birthday gathering, together with a special Melba presentation.

On that day, in front of family and friends – including her own granddaughter, The Hon. Saffron Foster – Pamela, Lady Vestey was awarded the prestigious Melba Medal for her exceptional generosity and dedication to Melba Opera Trust, and its previous incarnation as the Melba Conservatorium of Music.

Pamela, Lady Vestey became Patron of the Conservatorium in 1993 and later, Founding Patron of Melba Opera Trust. Over the years, Pamela, Lady Vestey was known for the marvellous garden party fundraisers she would host at Coombe where the students of the Conservatorium would perform around the gardens, a tradition that she continued from her own grandmother. Her granddaughter, The Hon. Saffron Foster, would later become Melba Opera Trust’s Honorary Patron.

Our first Melba champions

John and Elizabeth Wright-Smith had their first introduction to the Melba at a candlelight concert at Domaine Chandon as part of the 2009 Melba Festival.

Performances from Stephanie Gibson and Nathan Lay clearly made an impact, as it was from that moment that John and Liz began their plans to support emerging singers. In 2010 it was announced that Melba Opera Trust would receive its first commitment to endow fully into perpetuity a scholarship in its

program: the John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship.

The first recipient was, fittingly, baritone Nathan Lay with the scholarship’s launch in 2011. The purpose of the scholarship was (and remains) to provide talented young singers with the funding to undertake a comprehensive operatic training program, continue their vocal development and help them to create strong foundation from which to launch a successful career. “I hope we see some

young singers mature, go free, go wild, achieve their maximum potential – and be happy with themselves.” John said at the time. Subsequent recipients, Brenton Spiteri, Nicholas Tolputt and Samuel Piper have certainly achieved that mission.

Their pioneering spirit continued in 2015, when John and Liz became the first supporters to also provide endowed perpetual support to Melba’s flagship Mentor Program.



— John & Liz Wright-Smith with 2017-2019 recipient Samuel Piper



The gift of music

In March 2010, David Jones, opera enthusiast and Melba supporter, gifted a digital piano to Melba's Siobhan Stagg at a reception and morning tea at Ruskin Hall in Richmond. David had purchased the Yamaha CLP-330 Clavinova Digital Piano as an auction prize at the Melba's inaugural gala dinner in the previous November and decided to donate it to Siobhan who was

living at Trinity College – The University of Melbourne.

At the time, David said Siobhan had a promising voice, passion and dedication, and that the piano would help her with practice at a time when her funds were in limited supply. "I have been fortunate to raise money for a number of promising young

opera singers and it is a great pleasure to closely watch their development."

In 2018, then living in Germany, Siobhan contacted Melba Opera Trust and reciprocated the generosity by donating the instrument back to Melba so that it could be a perpetual source of support for future scholars.

JOSCELYNE SCHOLARSHIP 20 YEAR CELEBRATION

In a legacy that endures, 2010 marked the 20th anniversary of the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship. The inaugural recipient was Fiona Chatwin in 1990; the year before, friends and relatives of Amelia Joscelyne, a young student at the Melba Conservatorium, established the scholarship in her memory. The benefaction is made up of donations large and small from a group of passionate individuals and its impact over the years has been profound.

Amelia's mother and Founding Patron of Melba Opera Trust, Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM, has enjoyed getting to know the scholarship recipients, many of whom stay in touch with letters, updates and invitations to performances. "I'd like them all to go as far as they wish to go in their singing careers – its lovely to see them fulfil their dreams," she says.

Melba Opera Trust remains the trustee for the Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship and this year, we celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Melba Artists

In 2009 Melba Opera Trust was proud to launch its performance initiative, Melba Artists. The program was designed to complement the artistic development of scholarship recipients by providing performance experience for singers to put their learning into practice.

It also served the dual purpose of providing the Melba community with an avenue to enjoy opera 'up-close', at an event or even in their own home. The program has grown from strength to strength and now provides an entrée to life as a freelance artist. Melba has the role of guiding the experience, ensuring that performances are prepared, rehearsed and delivered to the highest standard.

A rich 2010 performance program set the scene for years to come. Events included Fiona Jopson presenting a program of operatic delights at a private Melbourne home and an exclusive dinner

party enjoyed a program of Puccini and romantic opera for a birthday celebration; afternoon tea and opera at St John's Anglican Church in Toorak with Stacey Alleaume and Sophie Yelland giving a recital to parishioners and guests; Ann Blainey, author of *I Am Melba*, giving an insightful Melba presentation at the Ian Potter Museum followed by a musical recital from Trust recipient Stephanie Gibson; a recital at Melbourne's Opera Society to celebrate Christmas in July; a performance by Sophie Yelland at a Bastille Day luncheon at an exclusive Melbourne club and five Melba Scholars performing at Domaine Chandon for the Gala Opening of the Melba Festival in October.



2017 Scholars in performance

Opera in the Garden

The launch of *Opera in the Garden* at Beleura House & Garden was a highlight of the year and continued to be a much-anticipated event for several years to follow.

Guests enjoyed semi-staged performances set amidst the beautiful gardens of the Tallis Estate, hosted by Director of the Tallis Foundation, Anthony Knight OAM.



©Haydn Godony

Patrick and Vivian Gordon Award

This Award was established in 2010 through a bequest from Patrick Gordon, a past teacher of Melba Conservatorium. The Award was aligned with the Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and was inaugurally received by Jacqueline Porter.

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board

2010-2012	Fiona Menzies
2010-2011	Paul Crapper, Treasurer
2010-present	Roz Zalewski-Ruskin

Professor Melville Waters retires after 11 years. Mel & Nina Waters award created in recognition.

2010-2019	Peter Garnick, Managing Director.
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2010 SCHOLARS

Jacqueline Porter	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship
Stephanie Gibson	Dame Nellie Melba Reserve Scholarship
Fiona Jopson	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Siobhan Stagg	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Reserve Scholarship
Sophie Yelland	Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust Scholarship
Stacey Alleaume	Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust Scholarship
Janet Todd	Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust Scholarship



©Andrea Russell



Launch of the Mentor Program

2011 introduced the beginning of the three-part program for which Melba is now renowned. Already in place was the tailored and intensive Artistic Development Program and the performance experience of Melba Artists. With the advent of the new Mentor Program, scholarship recipients were now to be supported with business skills and to work directly with leaders in the industry.

This provided a fully holistic experience, nurturing all aspects of the performer and demonstrating Melba's philosophy for young singers to be "more than a voice". From its outset, the Mentor Program was intended to equip scholars with practical skills and to encourage a business maturity to help drive their operatic careers.

In the pilot program of 2011, initial mentors included Yvonne Kenny AM, Cheryl Barker AO, Opera Australia's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini AM and artist manager Graham Pushee.

Mentor Marko Letjona
with Rebecca Gulinello;
Mentor Cheryl Barker AO
with Nathan Lay (L to R)

The program encompassed sessions on style, presentation, public speaking, time management and networking, stage presentation in recital, legal and accounting concepts for freelance artists, media training, recording and vocal health.

Audition preparation, preparing for an agent, movement and stagecraft workshops were also part of the many seminars in which experts in a particular field – performers, conductors, coaches, business

professionals – were engaged to share their skills and experience.

While 2011 was the launch of the Mentor Program, it developed in further years. Whilst in 2011, 50 sessions were piloted, by 2019, 104 sessions were being delivered. The philosophy remains the same, however the breadth of syllabus has expanded and there is a strong focus on involving experts with international experience to help pave the way for our own scholars' international careers.



Dame Nellie Melba: the 150th

Melba Scholars at BMW Edge;
Siobhan Stagg and Janet Todd at
Government House, VIC



In 2011, Melba Opera Trust was proud to announce our inaugural Patrons-in-Chief, His Excellency, the Honourable Alex Chernov AO QC, then-Governor of Victoria, and Mrs Elizabeth Chernov.

Among the many celebrations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Dame Nellie's birthday on 19 May 1861, our new Patrons-in-Chief hosted a special

reception at Victoria's Government House. As Ambassadors for the Melba, they would go on to raise the profile of the organisation and help support its work to carry forward Dame Nellie Melba's vision for young singers.

The Government House event debuted the commissioned work, *Nellie in Her Own Write*, created by Stephen McIntyre AM, a narration of Melba's life told in her own words drawn from her autobiography *Melodies and Memories*, and interwoven with signature musical pieces from Melba scholars Siobhan Stagg and Janet Szepei Todd.

In another event, at Federation Square's BMW Edge theatre, more than 300 people enjoyed a community performance of *Nellie in Her Own Write* featuring scholars Angela Brun, Janet Todd, Nathan Lay and Hannah Dahlenburg.

Other anniversary celebrations included a special operatic performance at Richmond's Dame Nellie Melba Kindergarten, a series of Melba performances



accompanying talks from author of *I Am Melba*, Ann Blainey, the unveiling of the Melba plaque at Scots Church, and an afternoon celebration at the Athanaeum Theatre entitled *Memories of Melba*.

Collaborations with Australia Post and the Perth Mint resulted in a special edition stamp and commemorative coin released in Nellie's honour.

I Am Melba



How is it that since the Melba's inception, our young singers have been able to replicate Dame Nellie's path so closely? Melba expert and author of *I Am Melba*, Ann Blainey, wonders whether it could be the similarity between Mathilde Marchesi's "finishing school" for prima donnas in Paris which Melba attended in 1887, and the Melba Opera Trust's own 21st century-version of such a program.

Like Melba Opera Trust, the aim at École Marchesi was to give a brilliant finish to an already well-trained voice.

When singers left Madame Marchesi's care, they could hold their own in any opera house in Europe and in the top ranks of European society. They

had opportunities to perform, as well as communal and individual lessons, opera and music history, acting and mime classes. Deportment classes were also important, as it was there that students learned how to sit, walk and eat elegantly, as well as how to receive guests and how to keep their heads in any situation.

Just as Melba benefited from her comprehensive period of study at École Marchesi, so too have scholars over their tenure with Melba Opera Trust. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of Dame Nellie, they didn't have to travel all the way to Paris for their "finishing touches"!

The Melba is grateful to Ann Blainey for her input with this article, originally published in 2008.



Artistic Leadership



In 2011, the Melba announced the appointment of Sharolyn Kimmorley AM as Artistic Advisor (now Artistic Manager and Scholar Advisor) and Chair of the Selection Panel. Sharolyn, one of Australia's finest coaches and accompanists, considers herself fortunate to have been guided in her early years by some of the world's best conductors and coaches during her tenure with Opera Australia.

Sharolyn and then General Manager, Amy Black, focused on developing the three streams of Melba's program: Artistic, Mentor and Performance. "It's not enough to have a good voice; you have to be the total package," Sharolyn states.



A national program

Humble beginnings saw the first two intakes of scholars living in Victoria, but from the outset the aspiration was to provide a national program for Australia's most promising young singers. This was achieved in 2011, when for the first time Melba sought applications from across the country.

The selection process had been forged by this time, with applicants needing to fulfil criteria around age (21-28), experience, as well as demonstrating outstanding potential, dedication, commitment and self-motivation.

The process has remained consistent since. Each year, the selection panel is chaired by

the Artistic Advisor (now Artistic Manager) Sharolyn Kimmorley AM who is joined by rotating panellists who are involved in the industry and have international experience. Often fellow panellists are singers, conductors, coaches, agents or directors.

The number of scholarships awarded depends entirely on the quality of the applicants. As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, 51 scholars have been successful in receiving Melba's support.

Mentor Yvonne Kenny AM and Brenton Spiteri



WINE, CHEESE, ATMOSPHERE AT ASTOLAT

Melba Opera Trust supporters, Peter Reilly and Linton Soderholm opened their Camberwell home Astolat for a special 'bohemian' community occasion. To mark the release of De Bortoli's latest range of Melba-inspired wines, the home was temporarily transformed into Melba's own Café Momus where guests enjoyed wine tasting of De Bortoli's *La Bohème* range, matched with gourmet cheese from De Bortoli's cheese maturation room. Each 'Act' of wine was similarly accompanied by performance from the corresponding act of the opera, featuring Siobhan Stagg, Jacqueline Porter, Fiona Jopson and Janet Szepei Todd.

Melba supporters have continued to enjoy Peter and Linton's hospitality at Astolat thanks to the variety of events that they have hosted for Melba. Most recently, guests enjoyed an evening of art song with Renaissance Tours and a master classes with Australian Heldentenor Stuart Skelton.



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board
2011-2014 The late Lorraine Elliott
2011-present Peter Reilly
Patrons-in-chief appointed
HE The Hon Alex Chernov AC QC, former Governor of Victoria and Mrs E Chernov
Artistic appointment
Sharolyn Kimmorley AM appointed Artistic Advisor and Chair of Selection Panel



2011 SCHOLARS

Lauren Fagan	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award
Siobhan Stagg	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Samuel Sakker	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship
Nathan Lay	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship Mel & Nina Waters Award
Janet Todd	Beleura-Tallis Opera Scholarship
Hannah Dahlenburg	Melba Opera Trust Scholarship
Angela Brun	Melba Opera Trust Scholarship

Founding the Harold Blair Scholarship

A landmark achievement in 2012, Melba Opera Trust proudly announced the establishment of the Harold Blair Opera Scholarship. Named after Australia's first Indigenous opera singer, tenor Harold Blair (1924-1976), the scholarship's foundation was to ensure promising young Indigenous singers have the opportunity to develop their potential and excel.

Harold Blair was born at the Cherbourg Aboriginal Reserve and raised at the Purga Mission near Ipswich, Queensland. He received little or no formal education and from the age of 16 worked as a labourer on a sugar farm. His singing ability was 'discovered' in a radio talent quest in 1945 but, although funds were raised for voice training by a group of supporters, he was denied entry to the Sydney and Melbourne Conservatoriums because he did not have the requisite educational qualifications. This prompted Australian composer Margaret Sutherland to call her friends, John and Gwenda Lloyd. The Lloyds nurtured him, taught him to read and write and after much agitation Harold was accepted



into the Melba Conservatorium where he completed a three-year diploma in 1949 with honours.

Following John Lloyd's death in 1964, Gwenda set up a fund in his memory, created in the spirit with which they had supported Harold, and it provided valuable support for Indigenous education programs. After Gwenda died a year later, it became the John and Gwenda Lloyd Trust, championed by the Lloyd's children, Philip and Elizabeth Lloyd, Jenny and Neville Crew and their son David Crew.

In 2009 the family approached Indigenous opera singer Deborah Cheetham AO about the future of the John and Gwenda Lloyd Trust. Deborah had been associated with Melba Opera Trust through her opera company, Short Black Opera, and in 2011 Melba supported the Melbourne premiere of Deborah's opera, *Pecan Summer*. On Deborah's recommendation, the Lloyd Trust funds were transferred to Melba Opera Trust for the purpose of establishing an Indigenous opera scholarship in Harold Blair's honour.

The Melba has since continued to raise money to endow this scholarship in perpetuity with recipients benefiting from the Melba's staple program of artistic development, mentoring and performance.

In 2012, Yorta Yorta baritone Tiriki Onus was honoured to receive the inaugural Harold Blair Opera Scholarship. Following in Tiriki's path were Wiradjuri sopranos Shauntai Batzke and Georgina Hall.

— Harold Blair; Dorothy Blair with inaugural recipient Tiriki Onus (L to R)



The Ruskin Opera Award

The Ruskin family's commitment to opera has been long-standing, with the late Alfred Ruskin AM (1914-1996) and his wife Pamela being tireless supporters of opera, ballet and the theatre for many years.



Yet Alfred had a particular fondness for the Melba Conservatorium, where he served as Chairman of Council from 1972-1996 and indeed it was Alfred's foresight that saw the Conservatorium purchase their premises in York Street Richmond, the subsequent sale of which became seed-funding for Melba Opera Trust.

Following his death, Alfred's son Jeremy and his wife Roz Zalewski, both lawyers, made a substantial donation to the Conservatorium in 2004, instituting the Alfred Ruskin Memorial Award. This generosity continued following the closure of the Melba as a

teaching conservatorium at the end of 2008 and, from 2012, the family confirmed the Award would become endowed in perpetuity.

Thanks to a loyal syndicate of supporters who have joined Roz and Jeremy in contributing to the Award, it is now recognised as a scholarship. The community enjoy annual soirées featuring performances from Ruskin recipients: Stacey Alleaume, Nikki Hill, Panayiota Kalatzis, Daniel Carison and Georgina Hall.

— The late Alfred Ruskin AM; Roz Zalewski-Ruskin and Jeremy Ruskin with recipient Daniel Carison (L to R)

Government House honours

Patrons-in-chief His Excellency, the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC, then-Governor of Victoria and Mrs Elizabeth Chernov, hosted a special reception at Government House to honour and raise the profile of the recently established Harold Blair Opera Scholarship.

Moving performances from inaugural recipient Tiriki Onus, together with Short Black Opera's Deborah Cheetham AO and Toni Lulich OAM, thoroughly inspired audiences.

— Top: Deborah Cheetham AO with recipient Tiriki Onus in performance. Bottom: HE, the Honourable Alex Chernov AC QC & Mrs Elizabeth Chernov with Tiriki Onus





Cranlana ‘Meets the Scholars’

The 2012 *Meet the Scholars* was held for the first time at Cranlana, the magnificent Toorak mansion owned by the Myer family. It was a fitting venue. Following a welcome by our generous host Lady Southey AC, returning scholar Lauren Fagan addressed the guests. In her inspiring delivery, Lauren told of her decision to do a business degree at university, and then how her acceptance into Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust gave her the

opportunity to take her singing more seriously. “To put it in perspective, just over a year ago I was working as a Sales Manager at an IT company, wondering where my dreams of becoming an opera singer were going. Now I am preparing to move to London to study opera full time.” Since then, Lauren was a young artist with Royal Opera, Covent Garden and was recently selected to represent Australia in the Cardiff Singer of the World.

—
2012 Scholars in performance;
Hannah Dahlenburg;
Zoe Drummond (L to R)

Lady Southey AC continues to support Melba Opera Trust as a driving force behind the Mentor Program and has hosted many of our master classes at Cranlana.



A new arena



—
Sharolyn Kimmorley AM and 2016 scholars in performance

In May 2012 the Wright-Smith family's dressage arena was transformed into a unique operatic setting for an intimate family concert to celebrate John Wright-Smith's birthday. Featuring holders of the scholarship, baritone Nathan Lay (2011) and Brenton Spiteri (2012), this was to be the first in a series of *Opera in the Arena* performances, with audience sizes growing with each passing year.

In 2019, for the first time the performance featured all of the Melba scholars, marking the far-reaching impact that John and Liz have made on the entire Melba program.



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THE FIRST ‘BIG WIN’ FOR MELBA

Brenton Spiteri's win in the 2012 Herald Sun Aria, one of Australia's most prestigious singing competitions, represented a significant breakthrough for the Melba – the first time one of our scholars won a national singing prize.

Brenton awed audiences with his wonderful performances of ‘Il mio tesoro’ from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and ‘Una furtiva lagrima’ from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*.



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board
2012-present Dmitry Danilovich, Treasurer

Jenny Sutherland retires from Board after 31 years.

2012 SCHOLARS

Lauren Fagan	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship	Brenton Spiteri	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Siobhan Stagg	Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award	Kyla Allan	Melba Opera Trust Scholarship
Stacey Alleaume	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship	Hannah Dahlenburg	Melba Opera Trust Scholarship
Samuel Sakker	Amelia Joscelyne Reserve Scholarship	Janet Szepei Todd	Mel & Nina Waters Award
	Ruskin Opera Award	Tiriki Onus	Beleura-Tallis Opera Scholarship
	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship		Harold Blair Opera Scholarship



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The launch of *Melba's Will*



When Dame Nellie Melba died in 1931, her will emphasised the purpose of her legacy gift: it was to be a scholarship to support a young singers' development "in the hope that another Melba may arise". This aspiration shaped the values and activities of Melba Opera Trust today, embodying the true impact of a legacy.

Since then, Melba Opera Trust has built successfully on her vision by establishing endowed, perpetual scholarships, complemented by a robust annual giving program. In 2013 Melba launched the capstone of any responsible organisation striving for sustainability, its

bequest program *Melba's Will*. It was announced fittingly in the music room at Dame Nellie's own Coombe Cottage, with a gathering of about forty of the Melba's major benefactors.

The aim of *Melba's Will* is to encourage supporters to leave their own legacy to Melba Opera Trust, by contributing to the endowment, establishing their own perpetual fund, directing support towards one of the Melba programs – Mentor, Performance, Indigenous, Repetiteur – or contributions to an existing scholarship. The ultimate motivation, of course, is to ensure that the work of Melba Opera Trust

is sustained for future generations of exceptional young artists.

The program has been championed by benefactor Dr Patricia Armstrong-Grant OBE, who announced at the launch her own intention to endow a perpetual scholarship via bequest. "The Melba Mentor Program, in my opinion, delivers to singers tailored knowledge and experience," she said. "Not only does Melba provide the right knowledge and experience at the right time, but this information is provided by mentors of international standing. It is this combination of content, international standard and timing

that make the Melba Opera Trust program unique, outstanding and successful." Patricia's confidence in Melba led directly to her generous decision to establish the scholarship and several generous supporters have followed her lead.

Melba's Will Bequest Circle

Dr Patricia Armstrong-Grant OBE
Michael Bertram
Garry A Fehring
Ian & Dale Johnson
Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM
Ann McFarling
Diane Morris
Mary Ryllis Clark
Anonymous (3)

Aria Trifecta

Following Brenton Spitieri's success from the previous year, Melba alumni again stole the Herald Sun Aria stage, taking out the trifecta: Stacey Alleaume winning first place, Samuel Sakker was awarded second and third place went to Nathan Lay. In following years, Melba winners have included Fiona Jopson (2015) and Panayiota Kalatzis (2016).

Melba alumni have also enjoyed great success with winning other major singing competitions and awards around the country including the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship (formerly the McDonalds Aria), Opera Foundation for young Australians, IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, Australian International Opera Award and the Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonyng Foundation Bel Canto Competition.



ANNOUNCING THE REPETITEUR SCHOLARSHIP

The inaugural repetiteur scholarship, awarded in 2013, was made possible due to a significant three-year grant provided by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. It had long been a desire of Melba Opera Trust to invest in the important role that is played by the repetiteur in operatic preparation.

Then CEO of Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Andrew Brookes, recognised its value immediately: "Repetiteurs possess a set of performance, musicianship, teaching and coaching skills. We know there are excellent graduate pianists in Australia, but few professional repetiteurs and a lack of specialised training. In supporting this scholarship, we believe the Melba will be equipped not only to develop a pool of talented repetiteurs, but to assist its singing scholars to achieve a higher standard of performance."

One of Australia's finest coaches, and Melba's Artistic Manager, Sharolyn



Kimmerley AM, has close involvement in the mentoring of this scholarship. "A repetiteur requires extra skills," she says. "You have to have all the pianistic techniques and musicality, but replicating an orchestral score is

a particular art. I will be working with recipients on this."

The inaugural recipient of the scholarship, Amir Farid, was excited at the prospect of developing his skills to prepare and support singers, along with his language skills. Since his two years with Melba, Amir has relocated to USA where he is now on music staff at the Julliard School of Music. Second to receive scholarship support was Stefan Cassomenos, followed by Simon Bruckard, Jonathan Wilson and Adam McMillan.

Following the initial scholarship grant, Melba continued to raise funds to secure this important pathway for aspiring opera repetiteurs in Australia. This is helped significantly by the Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship.

—
Adam McMillan with Mentor Johannes Fritzsche; Stefan Cassomenos; Kyla Allan with Amir Farid (L to R)





A Sydney debut

With the Melba program becoming increasingly national, the Melba Board focused on expanding its events into Sydney. Melba's Sydney debut coincided with another very important announcement: the launch of the Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award.

Created by the world-renowned mezzo-soprano, this award was established by bequest. In December 2013, friends of Dame Heather Begg together with supporters of Melba Opera Trust gathered at Elaine, the historic Fairfax estate in Sydney, to celebrate its launch.

The Award has been designed to provide funding to a suitable young singer from Australia or New Zealand who has already taken successful first steps in a professional principal career, and who would benefit artistically from

having access to funds for travel and tuition to refine and mature an already evident talent.

During her long operatic career, Dame Heather was associated with many of the world's finest conductors, directors, coaches and singers, and her inspiring legacy led the executors of her estate, Moffatt Oxenbould AM, Dame Heather Begg's partner Joe Diflo and lawyer Katherine Grinberg, to create a structure that would reflect Dame Heather's express wishes and her own career as authentically as possible. Moffatt noted that Heather "never stopped learning, and dedicated all her concentration and energy to every role... she knew that the music and drama could only come alive if she was prepared, technically secure and able to be flexible." This Award hopes to instill these values in others.

Melba Opera Trust was approached by the Trustees to administer the Award after being identified as an organisation that shared similar ideas and aspirations. The inaugural recipient of the Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award was Melba Conservatorium alumni, Samuel Dundas, who is a principal artist with Opera Australia and other state opera companies. Subsequent recipients include Janet Szepei Todd, Jeremy Kleeman, Amina Edris, Emily Edmonds and Lauren Fagan.

We are proud to announce that the 2019 recipient of the Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award is accomplished tenor Nicholas Jones.

—
Dame Heather Begg DNZM OBE;
Janet Szepei Todd; Nicholas Jones (L to R)



An international touch

The Melba's growing global network has worked in both directions and 2013 was graced with impressive developments here and abroad. As the Melba has grown, scholars have garnered increasing international successes at prestige competitions, opera houses and educational settings. Through the Melba's careful attention to its mentor program, the organisation's artistic integrity has been bolstered considerably in providing scholars with exclusive access to some of the world's most accomplished artists, conductors and répétiteurs for vocal master

classes and private coaching. This enables scholars to gain precious insights into the business of opera, extend their professional networks and expand their development as freelance artists.

Welsh baritone Sir Bryn Terfel CBE was the first of several guests from abroad in 2013, conducting a session with scholars, and he was followed during the year by a master class and discussion with UK soprano Susan Bullock CBE. Other mentors included Teddy Tahu-Rhodes, Peter Coleman-Wright AO, Covent Garden Director Andrew Sinclair and international conductor Marko Letonja along with 'repeat performances' from Yvonne Kenny AM, Cheryl Barker AO, Stuart Skelton, New York director Chuck Hudson and European répétiteur Semyon Rozin.

The opportunity for our scholars to work with these experienced artists in master class and private coaching has become invaluable; the scholars have the chance to learn from the career experiences

of these mentors, who generously share reflections from their own career paths and provide valuable insights to scholars understanding of the industry.

The Melba's Mentor Program was designed to fill a significant gap that existed in the spectrum of artist training in Australia, demonstrating the mission to inspire excellence, realise potential and forge careers. This has been borne out in the continuing successes of scholars abroad, and 2013 was a bountiful year: Siobhan Stagg made her house debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin singing

the Rhinemaiden Woglinde in the first installment of Wagner's *Ring*, and she was also awarded first place in the 2013 Stuart Burrows International Voice Competition in Wales. Meanwhile, Lauren Fagan won the 2013 Patrick Libby Prize for most improved dramatic work at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and was accepted into the Banff Centre's Opera as Theatre program. And while Samuel Sakker performed in New Zealand Opera's *La traviata*, Samuel Dale Johnson prepared to take his place in the Jette Parker Young Artist Program in 2014.



—
2013 Scholars with
Susan Bullock CBE



Continuing a family tradition



In 2013 the Hon. Saffron Foster became Melba Opera Trust's Honorary Patron, continuing a long family tradition of patronage for the Melba. Saffron's great-great-grandmother, Dame Nellie Melba, herself acted as Patron of the Melba Conservatorium, passing the role to her daughter-in-law Evie Armstrong, followed by her granddaughter, Pamela, Lady Vestey.

The announcement was celebrated with a reception and soirée at Coombe Cottage. Jenny Sutherland, also a descendant of Dame Nellie Melba and Director of the Board for 31 years, summed up the appointment perfectly: "Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust is so privileged to have the Hon. Saffron Foster as its Patron. Saffron is a very dear, sensitive, fun-loving young mother of four children. She will be a great support and we are very lucky. Her patronage is music to my ears."

While residing in the UK, Saffron regularly visits Australia to attend and host Melba events. She has arranged several occasions at Stowell Park Estate, Lord Vestey's estate in the UK, attended performances featuring Melba alumni living abroad and next year plans to organise a Melba garden party at Coombe, reminiscent of the fundraising afternoons hosted by her grandmother and great-great grandmother.

2013 SCHOLARS

Emily Edmonds	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award
Rebecca Gulinello	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Leilah Fox	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship
Samuel Johnson	RJ Hamer Opera Scholarship
Brenton Spiteri	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship

Christian Gillett	Beleura-Tallis Opera Scholarship
Robert Barbaro	Opera Society Vocal Scholarship
Tiriki Onus	Harold Blair Opera Scholarship
Panayiota Kalatzis	Ruskin Opera Award Mel & Nina Waters Award
Matthew Reardon	Opera Arts Support Group Award
Amir Farid	Repetiteur Scholarship



2014

Covent Garden successes

Continuing our international forays, the Melba had three alumni selected for 2014's prestigious Jette Parker Young Artists Program at The Royal Opera. A coveted program that selects only five recipients each year, it is widely considered to be one of the world's best programs.

While Melba scholars and alumni continued to enjoy great success throughout Australia's competitions and awards, our Covent Garden successes gave us one of the strongest indicators that our program produces artists that are competitive on the world stage.

From over 400 applicants worldwide, Melba alumni Lauren Fagan, Samuel Dale Johnson and Samuel Sakker were selected for the Jette Parker program. The



Jette Parker Young Artists work as salaried members of The Royal Opera for two years, during which time they perform in a variety of main-stage productions, concerts and recitals, as well as covering lead roles. They also receive coaching in all opera disciplines, including role interpretation, language and stagecraft.

As with the Melba's programs, the Jette Parker is very self-driven, with each young artist designing their own activities for each week.

Like the Melba, it only selects the best young opera singers. The three artists – joined by Emily Edmunds in 2015 – followed in the footsteps of Dame Nellie Melba, who made her final farewell to her beloved Covent Garden 88 years previously.



Sydney salons

In order to forge ahead in the Sydney arena, in 2014 Melba hosted a second Sydney event at Rosemont, the beautiful house and garden of Margot, Lady Burrell, in Woollahra.

Stacey Alleaume, Jade Moffat and Matthew Reardon gave an intimate performance reminiscent of a nineteenth-century European salon.

Since making our scholarship program national, many more scholars and philanthropic supporters have hailed from New South Wales and the Melba now holds at least three events a year in Sydney.

INTERNATIONAL DEBUT AT STOWELL PARK ESTATE



With alumni now succeeding around the world, it was time for Melba Opera Trust to make its international debut with a special event at Stowell Park Estate, Lord and Lady Vestey's home in the Cotswolds.

Organised by Honorary Patron, The Hon. Saffron Foster, the invitation-only affair had guests enjoying canapes and Coombe Farm wines in the picturesque gardens before a ballroom concert featuring Melba alumni Siobhan Stagg, Emily Edmonds and Samuel Sakker, accompanied on piano by Royal Opera House's Susanna Stranders.

The Vestey family has continued a long-standing and generous involvement with Melba Opera Trust and were key in facilitating this international debut at Stowell Park. The sense of Australian pride was undeniable through the rousing finales of 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'Home Sweet Home'.

Following its successful debut, another occasion was hosted in 2016, and in 2020 Stowell Park Estate will be host to a black-tie dinner in celebration of Melba Opera Trust's 10th anniversary.



A MELBA MEDAL TRADITION



Visionary and generous Melba supporters John and Elizabeth Wright-Smith's enthusiasm for Melba Opera Trust's mission has been expressed in many ways over the years. It was a pleasure for the Melba to award them the 13th Melba Medal at the AGM, held at the Yarra Valley restaurant of our generous partners, De Bortoli Wines. The Wright-Smiths have left their mark on every aspect of the Melba program, actively engaging in mentoring and supporting scholars' education, and regularly attending performances, as well as hosting what has become the annual "Wright-Smith Opera in the Arena" event at their Yarra Valley property. And, of course, they have directly supported scholars' artistic development with scholarship funding made available

through the endowment of the Melba Opera Trust's first named scholarship, the John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship.

Now a time-honoured tradition, the Melba Medal is bestowed to acknowledge and pay tribute to exceptional generosity and support. The first was presented in 1993 to Joan Arnold OBE for her outstanding service as director of the Melba Conservatorium from 1975 to 1986.

Since 2009 there have been 10 Melba Medals awarded:

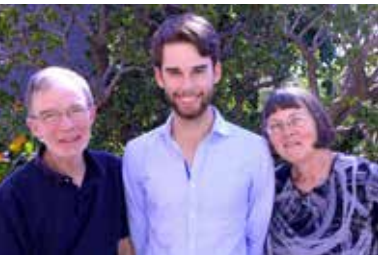
- 2009** Pamela, Lady Vestey
- 2009** Alfred Ruskin AM (posthumous)
- 2009** Stephen Bolton (posthumous)
- 2009** Graham Sellars-Jones
- 2009** Bill Joscelyne (posthumous) and Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM
- 2010** Prof. Mel Waters
- 2012** Jenny Sutherland
- 2014** John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith
- 2015** Professors Joseph Sambrook and Mary-Jane Gething
- 2017** Robert G Logie-Smith AM

Science and singing combine

2014 saw the establishment of a second scholarship endowment, the Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship. Established by Joe Sambrook and Mary-Jane Gething, the inaugural recipient of the scholarship was baritone, Jeremy Kleeman.

Both Joe and Mary-Jane had extremely distinguished careers in the fields of biochemistry and molecular biology. "Even though it might seem that scientific research and opera are worlds apart, you can see the same underlying requirements of people if they're going to succeed," said Mary-Jane. "They need that inner strength and drive. Nobody's going to give that to you if you haven't got it."

Joe and Mary-Jane's interest grew from receiving *The Melba* magazine in the mail. "We found it



very interesting and it matched our own ideas about that crucial period of a career when people need support, both in science and in the arts. It's that pre-professional stage, where there's a gap following university study."

Joe and Mary-Jane knew they could do something to help and, in the beginning, the intention was to endow the scholarship through bequest. Ultimately, they decided to give in their lifetimes so that they could enjoy seeing the progress of their scholars and follow their development.

Following Jeremy, Shakira Tsindos and Cleo Lee-McGowan were awarded the Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship. All are now continuing their studies in London at Guildhall School of Music and the Royal College of Music.

2014 SCHOLARS

Jade Moffat	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award
Rebecca Gulinello	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Brenton Spiteri	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Jeremy Kleeman	Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship
Nikki Hill	Ruskin Opera Award and Mel & Nina Waters Award
Alexandra Flood	RJ Hamer Opera Scholarship
Matthew Reardon	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship and Beleura-Tallis Opera Scholarship
Shauntai Batzke	Harold Blair Opera Scholarship
Stefan Cassomenos	Associate Repetiteur Scholarship



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board
2014-2016 Ross Elliott



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Mentoring at Cranlana

Lady Southey AC continued to show her great generosity to the Melba Opera Trust by inviting scholars into the Myer family home on three occasions in 2015.

Cranlana was a superb setting for scholars to undertake an intensive master class and private coachings with Italian soprano Daria Masiero, celebrated Australian soprano Yvonne Kenny AM and internationally celebrated tenor Simon O'Neill ONZM from New Zealand.

A select number of guests were invited to observe scholars working with Daria and Yvonne, while coaching from Simon culminated in a festive end-of-year celebration.

HISTORY REPEATS

One of the joys of some of the newer Melba scholarships has been watching young singers following the footsteps of those for whom their scholarships are named. A case in point in 2015 was Shauntai Batzke, two-time recipient of the Harold Blair Opera Scholarship, named after Australia's first Indigenous opera singer, tenor Harold Blair. Inspired by Harold's story – he had great success in America – and a hunger to continue her own operatic development abroad, Shauntai applied for and was accepted into the Cantos de las Americas – a Workshop for Aspiring Artists in the Vocal Arts held in New York.

The same can be said for Dame Nellie Melba. It is widely known that Covent Garden in London was Dame Nellie's "artistic home". An emerging trend shows recipients of Melba's scholarship following in her footsteps:

- Lauren Fagan: Guildhall School of Music in London, followed by the Jette Parker Young Artists Program then Royal Opera House
- Emily Edmonds: Jette Parker Young Artists Program then Royal Opera House
- Jade Moffat: Guildhall School of Music then Glyndebourne Festival Opera
- Zoe Drummond: Guildhall School of Music in London, then English National Opera.



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MENTOR ENDOWMENT BEGINS

The Melba's key point of difference for opera training is our innovative Mentor Program. In recognition, long-time benefactors John and Elizabeth Wright-Smith enhanced their already generous support, with a "leadership gift" towards the endowment of the Mentor Program. They thus joined other loyal donors providing annual support to the program: Lady Southey AC, Tallis Foundation, Robert Salzer Foundation, Opera Society of Victoria, Stuart Leslie Foundation and the Hamer Family Fund.

Their visionary commitment enabled us to enlist some of the most highly regarded national and international professionals from the industry as mentors.



—
Zoe Drummond with Mentor Renée Fleming

Renée Fleming and a recital series

Over our 10 years, Melba has enjoyed collaborations with a broad variety of partners to best support the development of our scholars.

A particularly valued collaboration is with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, regularly giving Melba access to the world-class artists they bring to Melbourne. In 2015 four Melba scholars worked with opera star Renée Fleming in a closed master class setting. Other activities made possible by MSO over the years have included industry seminars with international conductor Sir Andrew Davis CBE and Sir Bryn Terfel CBE, and master classes with Thomas Hampson and Stuart Skelton.

A special relationship emerged in 2015 with the Melbourne Recital Centre, which partnered with the Melba to deliver performances in the Primrose Potter Salon in the years to follow, designed to pair current scholars with Melba alumni.

A collaborative partnership with Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) emerged in 2015 with a new Mentor Program session to develop ensemble skills between singers and pianists. The collaboration was showcased with a chamber music concert presented by a selection of Melba and ANAM scholars for The Australian Club members.

MELBAS IN THE USA

While many Melba alumni were enjoying international successes in Europe and the UK, several alumni pursued careers in the USA:

Stacey Alleaume: Music Academy of the West, working with Marilyn Horne
Janet Szepei Todd: Masters at Manhattan School of Music in New York, then Opera Colorado
Shauntai Batzke: twice at Canto de las Americas in New York
Morgan Balfour: Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and San Francisco

Conservatorium then Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

In later years, alumni Rebecca Gulinello attended the American Vocal Academy in Philadelphia and Matthew Reardon attended Music Academy of the West to work with Marilyn Horne.

Courtesy of the winning the Lady Fairfax Award through the Opera Foundation for Young Australians, alumni Zoe Drummond and Bronwyn Douglass, as well as current scholar Xenia Puskarz Thomas, have completed intensive study in the USA.

Patrons bringing opera into their everyday lives

Donors regularly express their joy from interacting with the Melba scholars, in particular as part of their everyday lives. In 2015 this included a series of performances held in personal locations:

Mary-Jane Gething and Joe Sambrook: an afternoon music soiree in their music room featuring Jeremy Kleeman and Stefan Cassomenos.
Warwick and Paulette Bisley: a garden soiree at their Yarra Valley



property featuring performances from Zoe Drummond and Jeremy Kleeman
Jenny and David Sutherland: their Golden wedding anniversary with performances from Nikki Hill and Amir Farid at Coombe.
Roz Zalewski-Ruskin: Melba Scholars involved in a private birthday dinner at Fitzroy restaurant Pinotta
The Joscelyne community: 'behind the scenes' event featuring Australian soprano Emma Matthews working with Melba Scholars in master class.

2015 SCHOLARS

Jade Moffat	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship
Morgan Balfour	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Nicholas Tolputt	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Jeremy Kleeman	Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship
Nikki Hill	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship and Ruskin Opera Award
Zoe Drummond	RJ Hamer Opera Scholarship
Daniel Carison	Opera Society Vocal Scholarship and Beleura-Tallis Opera Scholarship
Shauntai Batzke	Harold Blair Opera Scholarship and Mel & Nina Waters Award
Stefan Cassomenos	Associate Repetiteur Scholarship



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LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board
 2014-present Kate Shelmerdine

2015-2016 Olivia Giglia
 appointed Acting General Manager



A change of leadership

2016 marked a change of leadership for Melba Opera Trust following the retirement of long-standing Chair, Robert G. Logie Smith AM and the appointment of Roz Zalewski-Ruskin.

Rob was awarded the prestigious Melba Medal for his sterling leadership and vision of Melba Opera Trust from 2005-2016. When reflecting on his legacy to Melba Opera Trust, Rob said “the journey

for me as Chair has been amazing and rewarding. I love watching the scholars’ progress and seeing them achieve their dreams, both locally and internationally. I am particularly proud of the Mentor Program, in which we have acknowledged international industry leaders work with our scholars. The achievements of our alumni reflect the effectiveness of this approach.”

Prior to becoming the Melba Chair, Roz Zalewski-Ruskin had already spent six years serving on the Board as Deputy Chair. A retired lawyer with qualifications in professional ethics and business governance, Roz’s vision for the Melba has been inspiring. Her focus is on implementing best practice with contemporary governance structures that acknowledge and respect the

rights and responsibilities of all.

Roz is motivated by her dedication to young people attaining their full potential. Her love of opera is deep: “Opera tells a story like no other dramatic platform. Opera feeds my soul. The young people I meet through Melba inspire me with their passion, intelligence, determination and sophistication.”

A MELBA PILGRIMAGE

As part of Melba Opera Trust’s commitment to championing Dame Nellie Melba’s legacy, in 2016 the program launched its inaugural Melba Pilgrimage – a chance for scholars to learn more about the namesake whose memory they are championing.

The Pilgrimage took scholars to Melba’s beloved Yarra Valley where they visited her Memorial at Lilydale Lawn Cemetery and enjoyed a talk from a local Melba expert. Following this, scholars visited Melba’s home, Coombe – The Melba Estate for a private tour of Melba’s home.

Following years included a visit to Yarra Ranges Museum to view Melba artefacts and a drive on the Melba Highway to enjoy the hospitality of Melba partners, De Bortoli wines.



World Class Mentors

It was a great pleasure to add Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ CH DBE AC and Dame Felicity Lott DBE FRAM FRCM to the Melba’s exceptional line up of Melba mentors in 2016.

British soprano Dame Felicity Lott gave a master class at Beleura House & Garden. Among the audience was Anthony Knight OAM, Director of the Tallis Foundation, which generously supports the Mentor Program. He found it fascinating to see how a master class works: “I suspect there is no better way to perfect something than being guided by a master in the field – an experienced person at the peak of their career and somebody who has given and achieved so much...We are very happy to be part of the Mentor Program, particularly as it accords



with John Tallis’ hope that the Foundation can help young people, and what better way than through expert mentoring.”

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ CH DBE AC was hosted by Lady Southey AC for a master class at Cranlana. It was an enlightening opportunity for the singers involved, who received wonderful “industry truths” and helpful technical support. Having created the Kiri Te

Kanawa Foundation more than ten years ago, Dame Kiri is passionate about assisting young singers with financial support, judicious mentoring and career assistance. She generously imparted significant knowledge with our scholars.

—
Mentor Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ CH DBE AC with Timothy Newton

PAULETTE BISLEY OPERA SCHOLARSHIP

The Melba’s fifth fully endowed scholarship was announced in 2016, thanks to the wonderful and long-term generosity of Paulette and Warwick Bisley. They have nurtured life-long passions for music and the arts and Paulette’s mother was an accomplished singer. They were introduced to the Melba by attending one of our first Boardroom lunches in 2009.

Their decision to endow a perpetual scholarship reflects Paulette’s passion for opera. It pays tribute to her mother and was born from a desire to help ensure the future for young Australian opera singers. The inaugural Paulette Bisley Opera Scholarship recipient was awarded to baritone, Daniel Carison, to be followed in 2018 by baritone Stephen Marsh.



Return to Stowell Park Estate



A reprise of the hugely successful event held two years earlier, Lord and Lady Vestey, alongside our Honourary Patron, The Hon. Saffron Foster, generously opened their Cotswolds estate, Stowell Park, to host *An Evening of Opera*, featuring Melba alumni, Lauren Fagan, Jade Moffat and Samuel Sakker and acclaimed Australian vocal coach, Linnhe Robertson, on piano.

Lady Vestey presented Lauren with “Granny Melba’s” necklace to wear

for the evening, a piece designed especially for Melba by Cartier. Lauren became the first person to wear it since Dame Nellie herself and was later involved in modelling the jewellery ahead of a recent Cartier exhibition.

Raising more than \$10,000 in ticket sales and donations, the event supported the continuation of the Dame Nellie Melba scholarship. Melba’s legacy lives on, in no small part thanks to the continued generosity of the Vestey family.

A performance for the Governor

Recipient of the Harold Blair Opera Scholarship, Shauntai Batzke, was honoured to sing at the inauguration of the 29th Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC. Shauntai sang the Governor’s favourite aria ‘O mio babbino caro’ from *Gianni Schicchi*.

The Governor and her husband, Mr Tony Howard AM QC later became Patrons-In-Chief of Melba Opera Trust.



2016 SCHOLARS

Zoe Drummond	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award
Bronwyn Douglass	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Nicholas Tolputt	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Shakira Tsindos	Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship
Daniel Carison	Paulette Bisley Opera Scholarship and Ruskin Opera Award
Michael Petrucelli	RJ & AF Hamer Opera Scholarship
Timothy Newton	Stuart Leslie Opera Scholarship
Jonathan Wilson	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship
Simon Bruckard	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Robert G Logie-Smith AM retires as Chair of Board
Roz Zalewski-Ruskin appointed as Chair of Board

Patrons-in-Chief announced
HE the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria & Mr Howard AM QC

Meeting the scholars, in style

The highlight of any new year is introducing our new scholars. In 2017 we did this in grand fashion, at three of Australia's most historic locations.

The first coincided with a visit from Melba's great-great granddaughter and our Honourary Patron, The Hon. Saffron Foster and featured an intimate soiree for supporters in Melba's music room at Coombe. For the singers, the greatest thrill was to perform in the same room where Nellie sang.

The second was at Government House Victoria, where Patron-In-Chief, Her Excellency, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria and Mr Anthony Howard AM QC, launched the year's scholarship program with a beautiful morning reception.

Finally, scholars were introduced to Sydney with a reception at Kirribilli House. Against the backdrop of expansive gardens and a stunning harbour view, the house came alive

with a stunning program delivered by current scholars and Sharolyn Kimmorley AM at the piano.

A feature of all three events was a scholar address, delivered by Zoe Drummond:

"It is a wonderful thing to have people on your side in life – to give you advice, cheer you on, guide your way. For three consecutive years, I have had the unwavering support of this amazingly unique organisation, Melba Opera Trust. In such a fierce industry, I feel so fortunate to have been taken under Nellie Melba's wing. With a Melba scholarship, I have the time, resources, energy and direction to really fine-tune my own singing business.

"Though for me, what makes Melba so particularly special is the people. The team in the Melba Opera Trust office – forever shaping the program with our best interests at heart. The mentors we meet are the best in their fields, always passionate, informed and willing to



go above and beyond to help. The patrons and supporters will always put a smile on your face. They are warm, enthusiastic and genuinely interested in our developmental paths. And of course, our fellow

scholars. Each of us is on our own journey, bringing new attributes to the table each year. We learn from one another, inspire one another and from what I can see, these will be lifelong friendships."

2017 Scholars with HE, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria & Mr Anthony Howard AM QC

Making mentoring possible

Among the many exciting initiatives launched over the past decade, a passion for developing young careers lies at the core. Board Director Peter Reilly helped further this aim by establishing the Reilly & Logie-Smith Mentor Endowment.

Peter believes our Mentor Program's unique structure and the resources it provides are the secret ingredient behind the program's success. As Melba Opera Trust prepared to farewell retiring Chair, Robert G. Logie-Smith AM at the end of 2016, Peter held an event at his home, Astolat, and announced his \$500,000 pledge to endow a fund in appreciation for Rob and his wife Sue's legacy.

The endowment, aligned to the Mentor Program, was designed as

a contributory fund, with the hope others in the Melba community would be inspired to become involved. Peter also recognised the fund would be a vehicle for donors who would like to support the Mentor Program specifically – the only one of its kind in Australia and a linchpin of Melba Opera Trust.

"The key to the program is that it goes beyond singing. It supports the whole singer and helps them to develop, not only professionally but also personally... anyone involved in business understands that you need to work on ALL aspects of a career to be successful."

Peter's benefaction reflects a deep desire to help ensure the Mentor Program is fully endowed so that its activities can be preserved for future generations of Australian artists.



Celebrating the Melba Circle

In September 2017, Melba Opera Trust launched its inaugural Melba Circle celebration. Hosted by Deputy Chair Kate Shelmerdine at Cranlana, the occasion celebrated the generosity of our Melba Circle donors with a performance and a reception featuring Melba scholars.

The event remains a highlight in our annual activities calendar.



Skills for life

Among our many achievements has been the refining of our Mentor Program over time, including a full review in 2016 for implementation in 2017. As part of the process, Melba Opera Trust went to industry and alumni to learn how the structure of the program could best reflect the needs of the global industry.

The outcome was a new approach to the program, with sessions

being grouped into seven key streams with sessions spread throughout the year:

Artistic Development

Master classes, private coaching with practising mentors

Languages

Regular conversational language classes, diction coaching

Stagecraft/Movement

Working with directors, acting classes, movement workshops

Wellbeing

Vocal health, time management, conflict resolution, access to performance psychologists

Business Development

Accounting, legal, philanthropic grant writing, negotiation etc.

Presentation

Public speaking, media coaching, style, etiquette etc.

Audition Preparation

Mock audition processes, working with agents

This approach ensures the development of the whole performer, complementing the scholars' individual Artistic Development Programs. Sessions incorporating foreign etiquette, auditioning in different countries and visa familiarity were also added.



Fostering reciprocity



“Once a Melba, always a Melba” is a saying that has been a building block of the Melba community since its inception, referring to the reciprocal relationships that have evolved over time between Melba scholars, alumni and mentors.

Learning from others who have traipsed the path before has been a focus of the Melba approach and, with so many alumni now treading the boards, it has become a feature of our program.

Alumni are increasingly invited to be involved in the Mentor Program to deliver candid industry chats about their own experiences and are always very generous with sharing their contacts. With alumni spread around the globe, scholars are encouraged to reach out to their alumni contacts as a way to establish their own international connections.

Where possible, we also actively program alumni in performance with current scholars as another layer of mentoring. In 2017, the Melba delivered the annual opera night for The Australian Club, with performances by then current scholar Damian Arnold, alumna Stacey Alleaume and Melba Mentors, Peter Coleman-Wright AO and Cheryl Barker AO. Damian commented, “Having the opportunity to work with artists who are further along their respective journeys really motivates me to work on my craft.”

Stacey agreed, reflecting that the experience of performing with professional singers when she was younger “encouraged me to want to excel further and gave me inspiration, as well as goals and direction – it still has the same effect!” As with many fellow alumni, Stacey regularly features in the Mentor Program.



‘Behind the scenes’ with Yvonne Kenny AM

A Sydney master class conducted by celebrated Australian soprano Yvonne Kenny AM with Sharolyn Kimmorley AM at the piano was a highlight of the year, generously hosted by Josephine Sukkar AM and Tony Sukkar AM in their home in Bellevue Hill.

An intimate group of Sydney supporters was invited to observe the “sacred space” of a master class. Three Melba scholars - Bronwyn Douglass, Daniel Carison and Damian Arnold - refined their arias with Yvonne, who was described by one supporter as a “truly sparkling in her presence, yet so focussed on each scholar’s performance”.

Bronwyn summed up the challenges of master classes succinctly as very valuable exercises for both singers and audience: “They can be more daunting than live performance in many ways, because you are performing arias you are still working on... you fully expect it to be picked apart by the teacher.”

These ‘behind the scenes’ experiences are featured events for Melba donors and allow supporters to access the inner workings of the program, understand the level of preparation that is required by the artist and see first-hand the benefit of their support.



2017 SCHOLARS

Zoe Drummond	Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award
Bronwyn Douglass	Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship
Samuel Piper	John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Cleo Lee-McGowan	Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship
Daniel Carison	Paulette Bisley Opera Scholarship and Ruskin Opera Award
Georgina Hall	Harold Blair Opera Scholarship and Mel & Nina Waters Award
Damian Arnold	Eleanor Blakemore Opera Society Scholarship
Jonathan Wilson	Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board
2017-present Chris Arnold AM

ANNIE MCFARLING OPERA SCHOLARSHIP

While Annie McFarling's strong connection with Melba Opera Trust extends back many years, it is the present and the future that have become especially meaningful for her, thanks to the establishment of a scholarship in her name.

The Annie McFarling Opera Scholarship pioneers a new structure of giving which enables Melba patrons to see and enjoy the fruits of their endowed support in their lifetime.

The majority of Melba endowments have in the past been established with a donation or bequest of \$500,000. The new structure underpinning the Annie McFarling Opera Scholarship includes an annual cash donation, supplemented by a bequest.

Annie McFarling had been considering a straightforward bequest to the Melba, but regretted a bequest would mean she would not have been able to witness the scholarship's positive effects. "The Melba looked into it, they came back with the really good news that I could start mine now."

Fleuranne Brockway was the proud inaugural recipient, followed in 2019 by Tessa Hayward.

—
Inaugural recipient
Fleuranne Brockway
with Annie McFarling



Meeting the scholars in concert

For the first time, this year's Melbourne Meet The Scholars was programmed as a large-scale concert performance at Deakin Edge. All donors who had contributed to Melba since its inception were invited, along with top industry organisations.

Another first for the Melba was incorporating an artistic director, Stuart Maunder AM, and a musical director, Sharolyn Kimmorley AM, into the preparation. The sophistication of the performance paved the way for what was to become a review of the Performance Program and the greater involvement of directors in the artistic process.



Masters at work

In 2018 three of the many great mentors we have hosted brought their skills to our scholars: New Zealand's Simon O'Neill ONZM, Sydney-born renowned Heldentenor Stuart Skelton and one of the world's foremost baritones, Thomas Hampson.

Simon's master class brought back to him memories of some of the highlights of his own illustrious career so far, including a master class he once did with a man he describes as "the master himself", Luciano Pavarotti, at New York's Juilliard Opera Centre.

For Stuart, being hosted by Peter Reilly and Linton Soderholm at their home Astolat helped the classes go brilliantly. Stuart says he is always impressed with the Melba scholars' level of preparation, attention to detail and their desire to improve.

Hampson has an opera repertoire of more than eighty roles, has sung in all the major opera houses of the world and has a discography of more than 170 albums. It was a privilege for scholars to spend four hours learning from someone with such experience.

RYMAN HEALTHCARE OPERA SCHOLARSHIP

Ryman Healthcare's announcement of an endowed scholarship with Melba Opera Trust has significantly deepened the connection between our two organisations, which began when Ryman Healthcare sought to name one of its retirement villages after Dame Nellie. David King, Ryman Healthcare's Corporate Affairs Manager, says the careful and thoughtful naming of villages has been a crucial part of the company's ethos, helping to give village communities a strong sense of character.

This endowment was announced at the Meet the Scholars concert at Deakin Edge, Federation Square with the Ryman Healthcare Opera Scholarship being offered for the first time in 2019 to Samuel Piper.

The Nellie Melba Retirement Village in Brandon Park made its debut in August 2018. Since then Melba Opera Trust has proudly been involved in delivering four performances at the village and looks forward to many more.



LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Appointed to Board

Inaugural interstate Director:
2018-present Kris Neill

2018 SCHOLARS

Jessica Harper

Paul-Anthony Keightley

Samuel Piper

Cleo Lee-McGowan

Stephen Marsh

Fleuranne Brockway

Adam McMillan

Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship and Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award

Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship

John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship

Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship

Paulette Bisley Opera Scholarship

Eleanor Blakemore Opera Society Scholarship

Ruskin Opera Scholarship and Annie McFarling Opera Scholarship

Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship and Mel & Nina Waters Award





2019

SCHOLAR UPDATES



Georgina Hall – soprano

Harold Blair Opera Scholarship
Ruskin Opera Scholarship

Working with Teresa Desmarchelier, I have made great strides in French and Italian language. This year, a performance highlight was singing in the Kaurua language aboard the Cunard Queen Elizabeth with the Australian Dance Theatre. Next year, I am thrilled to be contracted to perform all over Italy and Switzerland, an engagement made possible through connections I have made in my two years with Melba.



Tessa Hayward – soprano

Dame Nellie Melba Scholarship
Annie McFarling Opera Scholarship
Patrick & Vivian Gordon Award

It's been a wonderfully insightful and rewarding year with the Melba program. The privilege of working with such incredible mentors, conductors, singers and coaches has been invaluable and I have learnt so much. I particularly loved working on some challenging ensemble repertoire with renowned conductor, Johannes Fritzsich. I've really appreciated the opportunity it has provided to focus on certain areas of my art with more language, musical, acting and performance experience. I have challenged myself with new repertoire and roles which I plan on performing in concerts, competitions and auditions. For the remainder of 2019, I am focusing on continuing my development whilst planning an audition and study trip to Europe next year.



Stephen Marsh – baritone

Paulette Bisley Opera Scholarship
Eleanor Blakemore Opera Society Scholarship

This year I have had some fantastic opportunities to grow. I have been part of several productions such as *Parsifal*, *Alice Through the Opera Glass* and the *Heroic Bel Canto* gala concert, alongside artists such as Peter Rose, Jessica Pratt and Daniela Barcellona. The highlight of the year for me was the latest production I took part in which was *The Selfish Giant* with Victorian Opera in October. I will also be venturing to Europe in December to undertake auditions and explore the international operatic arena.



Cleo Lee-McGowan – soprano

Joseph Sambrook Opera Scholarship

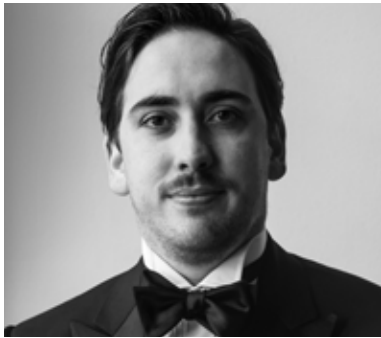
This year I was thrilled to make my debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as Niece 2 in *Peter Grimes*, singing alongside Melba mentors Stuart Skelton and Deborah Humble. I am looking forward to joining the SSO again in their 2020 season as a soloist in Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*. In July, I was honoured to have been named the winner of the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship, and a prizewinner in the finals of the JSRB Bel Canto Award with Melba alumni Zoe Drummond and Damian Arnold. I am excited to have just relocated to London to commence my studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.



Adam McMillan – repetiteur

Margaret Schofield Opera Scholarship
Mel & Nina Waters Award

This year I have gained experience working professionally in a number of projects. I had the pleasure of working as repetiteur and orchestral keyboardist for Victorian Opera's *Alice Through the Opera Glass* and Stonnington's *La bohème*. I have also continued to work with Opera Scholars Australia throughout the year. I enjoyed travelling to Adelaide in September to compete for the Geoffrey Parsons Award for collaborative pianists. All of these professional endeavours have been possible as a result of my training with the mentors at Melba Opera Trust.



Samuel Piper – baritone

John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith Scholarship
Ryman Healthcare Opera Scholarship

This year, like any other, has offered a great range of professional challenges and opportunities. Most recently, I performed with Victorian Opera for the first time in their *Heroic Bel Canto* gala concert at Hamer Hall. I'm excited to have just relocated to Italy, where I am undertaking an intensive, year-long study of core Italian baritone repertoire and the Italian language. I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to John and Liz for their ongoing support these past three years and to all at Melba Opera Trust for their tireless work in supporting our career development.



Xenia Puskarz Thomas – mezzo-soprano

Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship

This year I have been working on stagecraft, singing, languages and business skills. Through the mentor blocks, the Melba program has really challenged me in all of these areas and particularly inspired me to raise the expectations of my work and my capabilities. I have been preparing four full roles for my impending New York trip, through the Opera Foundation for young Australians Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship. In addition, I have just performed the role of Ramiro from Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* under the baton of Melba mentor Johannes Fritzsich.

Honouring an extraordinary woman

The Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholarship is a cornerstone of Melba Opera Trust's program. It has provided precious support to 27 gifted young singers thanks to the vibrant community of more than 400 supporters who make the scholarship possible.

Over the past two years, there have been two major celebrations associated with the scholarship. In July 2018 a huge crowd gathered at South Melbourne Town Hall for a concert in honour of Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM, Amelia's mother and Founding Patron of Melba Opera Trust.

Siobhan Stagg, an Amelia Joscelyne Memorial Scholar from 2009-12, has long had a close relationship with Mary-Jane, and she wanted to integrate somehow this much-loved woman into her performance. "Mary-Jane beamed the whole way through," Siobhan recalled. "It was the perfect example of Mary-Jane's generosity of spirit and quest to share joy with those around her."

Siobhan was one of many celebrating Mary-Jane and the legacy of Amelia's scholarship including fellow alumna Fiona Jopson (2010) and the 2018

recipient Paull-Anthony Keightley with scholar Adam McMillan.

This year, the community again gathered to mark the Amelia's 30-year anniversary. It was an evening of sentiment and memories showcasing a short video encapsulating the journey of the scholarship and heartfelt

words from alumni who are now carrying forward their careers around the world. Superb performances were delivered from Amelia alumni Bronwyn Douglass, Morgan Balfour, Fiona Jopson and fellow Melba alumni Brenton Spiteri and Amir Farid.





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M
10
YEARS

THE NEXT 10 YEARS

A strength of a milestone is that it encourages us to take a moment and reflect on the journey. For a decade, Melba Opera Trust has provided some of Australia's most valuable scholarship support for exceptional young opera singers and répétiteurs. As we gathered in 2008 in the Great Hall at the NGV for our launch, it was impossible to imagine the future of this unique program and the scale of the impact it would have on opera within this country and the world.

Certainly in 2008 we hoped and dreamed for global success stories but, more importantly, we actively and purposely worked towards pioneering an entirely fresh and innovative approach to training and developing young artists to support our vision 'that another Melba may arise...'

The first demonstrable indications that our program was having the desired impact came when Brenton



Amy Black

Spiteri became the first Melba to win the Herald Sun Aria, followed by Stacey Alleaume and Lauren Fagan receiving first and second place at the Sydney Aria. We began to expect to see Melbas represented in Australia's leading singing

awards, as well as being staple cast members in opera companies across the country. When not three but four of our Melbas were accepted into the coveted Jette Parker Young Artist Program at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it signified that our scholars were also competitive internationally.

Our scholarship journey started with two scholars and over ten years we have proudly nurtured 51 emerging careers. As we look at our long list of alumni, close to 90 per cent now enjoy thriving careers in the industry. Our scholars' successes instilled a baseline of excellence that has continued to drive our program development and has resulted in our alumni working around the world, an enormous achievement for a small, independent arts organisation.

We started this journey with an ambitious objective – to build a capital endowment that would

sustain the activities of Melba forever. We started with \$4.3 million and now, thanks to the donations, pledges, grants, bequests and the expertise of our investment managers, JB Were, our endowment is currently forecast at just over \$10 million.

Thanks to the faith, commitment and support of all within our Melba community, what began in 2008 as a promise has become a stunning legacy of support for opera in Australia. We are exceptionally grateful for every gesture of support that has been provided to Melba. The successes of our alumni are the direct outcome of that support.

Now that our method is proven, the mission remains – to ensure our world-class program is preserved for future generations. We're still a long way from the endowment sustaining our activities, and we remain focused on establishing a secure future.

I hope that our loyal community of benefactors will continue to be involved as we commit to our next decade of providing the highest standard of international training for our promising Australian singers and répétiteurs 'so that another Melba may arise'. Thank you for believing in us!

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Amy Black appointed as CEO and Director of the Board.
Olivia Giglia appointed as Director of Operations and Company Secretary
Sharolyn Kimmorley AM appointed as Artistic Manager & Scholar Advisor

Melba Opera Trust moved to new home in the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

PATRON IN CHIEF

HE the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria & Mr Anthony Howard AM QC

FOUNDING PATRONS

Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM

The late Pamela, Lady Vestey

HONOURARY PATRON

The Hon. Saffron Foster

IMPRESARIO

(\$500,000 and above)

Warwick & Paulette Bisley

Mary-Jane Gething & the late

Joseph Sambrook

John & Elizabeth Wright-Smith

PATRON

(\$250,000 – \$499,999)

Peter Reilly & Linton Soderholm

Roz Zalewski-Ruskin &

Jeremy Ruskin QC

GRAND CIRCLE

(\$100,000 – \$249,999)

Charles Allen AO & Jocelyn Allen

Janet Calvert-Jones AO &

John Calvert-Jones AM

A/Prof Andrew Cochran

Dr Fiona Cochrane

Joseph Diflo

Diana Gibson AO

The late Lady April Hamer

Peter Laver AM & Anne Laver

David & Sallie Prior

Andrew Sisson AO

DRESS CIRCLE

(\$50,000 – \$99,999)

Andrew & Victoria Fox-Smith

Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swan

Peter Hansen OAM &

Neroli Hansen

Ann & the late Ian McFarling

GALLERY CIRCLE

(\$25,000 – \$49,999)

James & Judith Beattie

Ernest Dawes OAM OBE &

Nola Dawes

Rose Downer & John Downer AM

Frank & Judith Firkin

Louise M. Gourlay OAM

Dale & Ian Johnson

David Jones

Tom & Ruth O'Dea

Kate & Stephen Shelmerdine

Anita Simon

Lady Southey AC

Anonymous (1)

BALCONY CIRCLE

(\$10,000 – \$24,999)

Jim Allen OAM

Judy Allen

The late Betty Amsden AO

Chris Arnold AM & Margot Costanzo

Peter & Jan Clark

Kevin & Margaret Collecutt

Val Diamond & John Funder AC

Ian Dickson & Reg Holloway

Dr Helen M Ferguson

Nance Grant AM MBE & Ian Harris

John & Jo Grigg

Hon Peter Heerey AM QC &

Mrs Sally Heerey

Hans & Petra Henkell

Margaret & Trevor Holborow

Gill & Giles Hunt

Dr Alastair Jackson AM

Suzanne Kirkham

Elizabeth Lithgow

Robert G Logie-Smith AM &

Sue Logie-Smith

Patricia McKenzie

The Family of the late Jack McLeish

The Hon Justice John &

Mrs Judith Middleton

Graeme Parncutt

Helen Paterson

Lady Potter AC CMRI

Judith Robinson & the late

Michael Robinson AO

Margot & Warwick Ross

Phillip & Susan Schudmak

John E Smith

Jennifer & David Sutherland

Dr Michael Troy

Michael & Cathryn Wheelahan

MAESTRO CIRCLE

(\$5,000 – \$9,999)

Philip Bacon AM

The Hon Justice David Beach &

Marea Beach

Marc Besen AC & Eva Besen AO

Dr Dianne & Lino Bresciani, Youth

Music Foundation of Australia

Elizabeth Brown

The Hon Alex Chernov AC QC &

Elizabeth Chernov

Sandy Clark & Marie McDonald

Catherine & Mark Clisby

Jillian Cobcroft

Ann Cole

Rosie Cunningham

David Curtain QC & Sally Curtain

Jane Douglass AM

Sir Andrew & Lady Fairley Foundation

Catherine & the late

Roger Freeman

Fleur Gibbs

Peter & Elizabeth Goodman

Christine Hughes

Darvell Hutchinson AM &

Barbara Hutchinson

Mary-Jane Joscelyne OAM

Anne Kantor AO & the late

Dr Milan Kantor OAM

Bryan Keon-Cohen AM QC &

June Keon-Cohen

John Kiely & the late Lorraine Elliott

Kathryn Kings

Dr Peter A Kingsbury

Julie Lidgett

Peter Mander & Walter van

Nieuwkuyk OAM

Suzanne Maple-Brown

Mary-Ruth & Peter McLennan

Margaret & the late Patrick Mills

Susan Morgan

Diane & Tim Morris

The late Dame Elisabeth

Murdoch AC; DBE

Geoffrey Norris

Miki Oikawa

The late Nancy Petersen &

daughter, Dale

Tony & Elizabeth Rayward

Aubrey Schrader

Graham Sellars-Jones

Richard Stanley QC & Sue Stanley

Gillian Storey AM

The Lord & Lady Vestey

Prof Mel & Nina Waters

Cameron Wenck

Paul Worthington

Anonymous (2)

MELBA CIRCLE

(\$1,000 – \$4,999)

C A Alston

Dr Patricia Armstrong-Grant OBE

Robbie S. Barker

The Beale Family

Judy & Michael Begg

Elizabeth Beischer

Simon Bell & Jennifer Coghlan-Bell

Kenneth Betts

Ann Blainey

Chris Blanden QC

Caroline Brain

Jonathan & Anne Breadmore

H & J Burger

The Hon Justice David Byrne &

Jenni Harris

Adrienne & The late Ross Cameron

J S Chambers Foundation

Mitchell Chipman

Janet Clark & the late

John Clark AM

Libby Colenso

Jim Cousins AO & Libby Cousins

Caroline & Glenn Crane

Mr John Craven

Shaneen Crouch & the late

Michael J Crouch AO

Charles Curran AC & Eva Curran

Mrs David Darling

Arthur Day AM & Hilary Day

Ros & John Dowling

Terry & Linda Elliott

Jack & Vivian Faigenbaum

Barbara Fleischer

Shirley Fong

William J Forrest AM

The Hon Saffron Foster

Jenny Fullard

Peter Garnick

Christina Gebhardt &

the late Peter Gebhardt

Annie Gibson

Dr R & Ms K H Grinberg

Elisabeth Guinness

Hugh Hallard

The Hon Justice Hartley Hansen

QC & Mrs Rosalind Hansen

Dr Martin & Jacqui Higgs

Her Hon Judge Frances Hogan

Robert Hook

Rosemary & David Houseman

Dr Sam Howes & the late

Margaret Howes

Penelope Hughes

Alison Hyams

The late Phillip D Isaacs OAM

Cynthia Jackson AM

Barry & Prue Johnson

Lewis & Paula Johnson

William M.P. Jones

Grace & the late George Kass

Julia King

Lesley King

Anthony Knight OAM &

Beverly Knight

Peter Kolliner OAM &

Barbara Kolliner

Lynne Landy & John Landy AC MBE

Joy Laurence

Deirdre & The late Hon Justice

Leo Lazarus

Valerie & Dr Roger Le Maitre

John & Erin Lidgerwood

Janet Limb AO

Norma Lithgow

Dr Bruce & the late Dianne Livett

Colin Lovitt QC & Margaret Lovitt

Noreen Maher

Probus Club of Melbourne Inc.

Marin Charitable Trust

David & Jane Martin

Barbara Mayes

Denys & Ingeborg McCullough

Ian McDonald

Dr Sue McNicol QC

Ross McPherson AM

Dr Bryan Mendelson &

Mrs Debora Mendelson

Fiona Menzies

James Mighell SC

Michael & the late Judy Morrison

Kristin Moses

Dr Kenneth Muirden AO &

Lesley Muirden

Kris Neill

Margaret Nevett

Liz Nield

Ms Rosemary Norbury

Stephen O' Meara QC &

Kate Galvin

Jocelyn & the late John O'Neil

Sarah Patterson

Joan Pigdon

Roger & Catherine Poole

The late Joy Potter

Ms Georgia Bassingthwaighe &

Mr Andrew Powell

Clare & David Pullar

Kenneth R Reed AM

Greg J Reinhardt AM

Janice Roberts & Achim Leistner

Alexander & Rosemary Roche

Tom & Elizabeth Romanowski

Dr Paul & Gay Rosen

Margaret S Ross AM

Mr Nick Ruskin & Dr Annette Shiell

Susan Santoro

Graham & Lorraine Schmidt

Dr David Scott AM & Dr Lyndal Scott



Melba Scholars
and Alumni
2009-2019

Kyla Allan 2012
Stacey Alleaume 2010, 2012
Damian Arnold 2017
Morgan Balfour 2015
Roberto Barbaro 2013
Shauntai Batzke 2014–2015
Fleuranne Brockway 2018
Simon Bruckard 2016
Angela Brun 2011
Daniel Carison 2015–2017
Stefan Cassomenos 2014–2015
Hannah Dahlenburg 2011–2012
Bronwyn Douglass 2016–2017

Zoe Drummond 2015–2017
Emily Edmonds 2013
Lauren Fagan 2011–2012
Amir Farid 2013
Alexandra Flood 2014
Leilah Fox 2013
Stephanie Gibson 2009–2010
Christian Gillett 2013
Rebecca Gulinello 2013–2014
Georgina Hall 2017, 2019
Jessica Harper 2018
Tessa Hayward 2019
Nikki Hill 2014–2015

Samuel Johnson 2013
Fiona Jopson 2010
Panayiota Kalatzis 2013
Paull-Anthony Keightley 2018
Jeremy Kleeman 2014–2015
Nathan Lay 2011
Cleo Lee-McGowan 2017–2019
Stephen Marsh 2018–2019
Adam McMillan 2018–2019
Jade Moffat 2014–2015
Timothy Newton 2016
Tiriki Onus 2012–2013
Michael Petruccelli 2016

Samuel Piper 2017–2019
Jacqueline Porter 2010
Xenia Puskarz Thomas 2019
Matthew Reardon 2013–2014
Samuel Sakker 2011–2012
Brenton Spiteri 2012–2014
Siobhan Stagg 2009–2012
Janet Szepei Todd 2010–2012
Nicholas Tolputt 2015–2016
Shakira Tsindos 2016
Jonathan Wilson 2016–2017
Sophie Yelland 2010

10 Years of
Mentoring

Artistic Development

David Aronson (coach)
Matthew Barclay (director)
Cheryl Barker AO (singer)
Siro Battaglin (coach)
Judy Bellingham (breathing)
Tanja Binggeli (language)
Susan Bullock CBE (singer)
Jak Callick (movement)
Peter Coleman-Wright AO (singer)
Constantine Costi (director)
Sir Andrew Davis CBE (conductor)
Prof Lynne Dawson MIL, FRNCM (singer)
Teresa Desmarchelier (language)
The late Fra' Richard Divall AO OBE (conductor)
Giuseppe D'Orazzi (language)
Asher Fisch (conductor)
Renée Fleming (singer)
Johannes Fritzs (conductor)
Lisa Gasteen AO (singer)
Nathan Gilkes (director)
Julia Grace (actor)
Nance Grant MBE (singer)
Sylvia Greenberg (singer)
Jonathan Grieves-Smith (conductor)
Hugh Halliday (director)
Thomas Hampson (singer)
The late Eileen Hannan AM (singer)
Brendan Hanson (director)
Tim Harbour (movement)
Dr Erin Helyard (conductor)
Roxanne Hislop (singer)

Greg Holdaway (movement)
Chuck Hudson (director)
Lindy Hume (director)
Liane Keegan (singer)
Yvonne Kenny AM (singer)
Andrew Keshan (stage make-up)
Sharolyn Kimmorley AM (coach)
Dr David Kram (conductor)
Prof Michael Lansko (coach)
Yvette Lee (movement)
Marko Letonja (conductor)
Mary Li (movement)
Dame Felicity Lott DBE FRAM FRCM (singer)
Jenny Lovell (actor)
Jennifer Marten-Smith (coach)
Daria Masiero (singer)
Emma Matthews (singer)
Stuart Maunder OAM (director)
Cameron Menzies (director)
Dr Richard Mills AM (conductor)
Patrick Nolan (director)
Dennis O'Neill CBE (singer)
Simon O'Neill ONZM (singer)
Moffatt Oxenbould AM (director)
Valéria Palmieri (language)
Denis Passalent (language)
A/Prof Merlin Quaife AM (singer)
Semyon Rozin (coach)
Neil Semer (coach)
Andrew Sinclair (director)
Alexandra Sherman (singer)
Stuart Skelton (singer)
Andrew Strano (singer)
Anna Sweeney (director)
Marie-Claire Szekely OAM (language)
Teddy Tahu Rhodes (singer)
Dame Kiri Te Kanawa ONZ CH DBE AC (singer)

Jenny Thirtle (movement)
Guillaume Tourniaire (conductor)
James Wright (director)
Deborah Humble (singer)

Professional Skills

Ken MacKenzie-Forbes AM (business)
Dr Campbell Thompson (wellbeing)
Graham Abbott (presentation)
Dr Patricia Armstrong-Grant OBE (business)
Antoinette Bekos (presentation)
Linda Britten (presentation)
Julian Burak (presentation)
Geraldine Cook (presentation)
Lani Corbett (business)
Charles Cunningham (business)
Suzanne Dekyvere (presentation)
Bernard Despasquale (business)
Catrionadh Dobson (business)
Joe Eapen (business)
Jenifer Eddy OAM (business)
Naomi Eysers (wellbeing)
Judith Field (presentation)
Peter Garnick (business)
Craig Hassall (business)
Dr Karen Hill (wellbeing)
Rhonda Hirst (business)
David Hobson (business)
Sam Hunt (business)
Dr Phil Jauncey (wellbeing)
Daniel Johnson (business)
Trudy Johnston (business)
Corinne Jones (presentation)
Prof Diana Kenny (wellbeing)
Alexandra Kinloch (business)
Chong Lim (business)
L'Oreal Cosmetics (presentation)

Jenny Mate (business)
Sharron McBeth (presentation)
Nicky McCartney (wellbeing)
Jo McEniery (business)
Wendy Milner (business)
Wes Mudge (business)
Kris Neill (business)
Mairi Nicolson (presentation)
Diem Ngo (business)
Paul Noonan (business)
Monica O'Brien (wellbeing)
Tim Patston (wellbeing)
Slavko Periac (business)
Dr Debbie Phyland (wellbeing)
Graham Pushee (business)
Virginia Read (presentation)
Stephen Richardson (business)
Mark Roberts (business)
Leah Shmerling (wellbeing)
Shane Simpson (business)
Diane Steller (business)
Anthony Stockley (business)
Meaghan Sullivan (wellbeing)
Peter Taplin (business)
Cecellia Telkes (presentation)
Lyndon Terracini AM (business)
Richard Thomas (business)
Patrick Togher (business)
Dr Tim van Gelder (business)
Ron Vermeulen (business)
Katija Vlatkovich (business)
Andrew Wallace-Smith (presentation)
David Ward (business)
Derek Welton (business)
James Williams (business)
Susie Wilson (business)
Glen Winslade (business)
Helen Woods (business)

10 Years of
Leadership

2019 Melba Board

Roz Zalewski-Ruskin, Chair
Kate Shelmerdine, Deputy Chair
Dmitry Danilovic, Treasurer
Chris Arnold AM
Amy Black
Kris Neill
Peter Reilly

2009–2019
Retired Directors

Paul Crapper
The late Lorraine Elliott
Ross Elliott
Peter Garnick
Lewis Johnson
Robert G. Logie-Smith AM
Arnold Mayfield
Fiona Menzies
Jenny Sutherland
Professor Melville Waters
Barbara Yeoh

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