

Alastair Jackson
International
OPERA
Award

2027
AJIOA
Information

melbaoperatrust.com.au





Cover: Eden Shifroni (2025 Award), *La finta giardiniera*, Royal College of Music
image: Chris Christodoulou

Above: Greta Bradman (2013 Award), *La bohème*
image: Opera Australia

About the Alastair Jackson International Opera Award

The Alastair Jackson International Opera Award provides the opportunity for an Australian or New Zealand singer with exceptional operatic potential to complete a two-year postgraduate Artist Diploma in Opera at the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London.

Valued at over \$180,000 AUD the Award provides a full-tuition scholarship plus travel and living expense allowance. The Award is provided every two years for the duration of the course. Auditions for the next recipient open on 10 August and will close on 31 August 2026. The recipient will commence studies at the Royal College of Music in September 2027.

Management of the AJIOA, formerly the AIOA, transitioned to Melba Opera Trust in 2023, and it will continue in perpetuity thanks to the extraordinary generosity of philanthropist Dr Alastair Jackson AM.

Royal College of Music – Artist Diploma (ArtDip) in Opera

The Artist Diploma (ArtDip) in Opera is designed for students with the potential to become professional opera singers. The program is rich in individual and class provision as well as performance opportunities. Students will develop not just their vocal technique but also their acting skills and the number of roles in their repertoire.

The ArtDip in Opera may be studied for up to two years. The duration for individual students will depend on their individual progress and readiness for assessment. Most students will complete the program over two years.

For more information visit:

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/artdipopera/>



ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

London



Nathan Lay (2016 Award), centre, *Così fan tutte*, image: Opera Australia

Important Information for Applicants

Eligibility Criteria

Applications are invited from Australian or New Zealand singers currently living in Australia, New Zealand or abroad. There is no cost to apply. Applicants should be:

- between the ages of 24 and 30 years of age on 1 January 2027.
- Australian or New Zealand citizens.
- Able to demonstrate a high level of ability at Master's degree standard, or equivalent.

Selection Criteria

Applicants should be aware that the quality of application documents, recordings, live audition and interview will be considered equally in the selection process.

The successful recipient will be an artist who demonstrates the potential to become a professional opera singer and a commitment to developing their career.



Important Information for Applicants

Georgia Melville (2023 Award), *The Merry Widow*, Royal College of Music, image: Christopher Christodoulou

Application Guidelines

- The selected recipient must be available to travel to London and reside there during the period required by the Royal College of Music Opera Studio (RCMOS) for its ArtDip in Opera (2 years).
- The intention of the AJIOA is for the recipient to undertake the ArtDip in Opera for two years of study, commencing September 2027. This is subject to the recipient meeting RCM and Melba Opera Trust requirements.
- The Award is subject to the successful applicant obtaining a UK Visa – known as a UKVI Tier 4 Visa (General) Student Visa – to enable them to attend the program for the duration of the two-year opera program. Go to www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa.
Note: the visa can only be applied for three months prior to commencing the program.
- The applicant is responsible for ensuring they have gained permission from referees to provide Melba Opera Trust with their contact details.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all attached files and links are provided in the appropriate file type and links are functioning. Should any links to audition material be password protected, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide that password with the link.
- In submitting an application, the applicant certifies that the information contained in the application form and the documents submitted is all true and correct, is not misleading or deceptive and that no material information has been omitted or deleted.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- Decisions of the panel are final and applicants agree to accept the outcome. There is no forum to challenge or appeal the decision on any ground, nor is feedback given.
- Communication or attempts to communicate by or on behalf of an applicant with any member of the selection panel is not permitted.
- Melba Opera Trust reserves the right not to award any or all scholarships and awards in any given year.



Application Process – Actions to Complete

Jeremy Kleeman (2019 Award), *The Marriage of Figaro*, State Opera South Australia, image: Andrew Beveridge

Stage 1 Written Application with Video Audition

Applications can be made through the Melba Opera Trust website and will close at 11.59pm AEST on Monday 31 August 2026. Applications that are incomplete or submitted after this time will not be accepted. Receipt of your application will be acknowledged by email.

1. Online form

Complete the form on the Melba Opera Trust website. To do so, you will be required to provide:

- The names and telephone contact details of two referees who can be approached by the selection panel to discuss your application.
- A written summary of your personal goals and career plans.
- Detail of any other awards/scholarships being applied for within the same timeframe.
- A signed declaration that the information provided is accurate and true to the best of your knowledge.

2. Supporting documentation

Prepare supporting documentation as a single PDF file (10MB maximum size), which will be uploaded as part of the website form. It should include:

- A current CV and professional artist biography.
- Proof of Australian or New Zealand citizenship and age – please include a copy of a passport or birth certificate or a similar official document that confirms date and birthplace.
- A brief budget to demonstrate the anticipated costs of living in London for the duration of the course (2 years).

3. Upload your audition videos to YouTube

For the first stage of the audition process, the selection panel will be assessing candidates exclusively by their video recordings and written responses. The quality of your audition video is critical, so please take care to ensure your performance files are suitable.

- Each applicant is to provide four contrasting arias, with at least one in Italian and one in English.
- Recordings are to be made by the applicant within six months of the date of application and with piano accompaniment.
- If any files are saved as private recordings, passwords must be provided.
- Ensure your full body is in the shot. If this is not possible, make sure your head, torso and hands are visible.

Once your application is finished, use the **CHECKLIST FOR AJIOA APPLICANTS** (see page 8) to ensure all areas have been completed before submitting your application.



Application Process: Actions to Complete

Fleuranne Brockway (2018 Award), *Der Rosenkavalier*, image: Detlef Kurth

Video Quality Standards and Specifications

Please take care to follow the guidelines and tips below to ensure the quality of your video is suitable.

YouTube Video Requirements

Refer to the latest recommended YouTube resolution and encoding settings at <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/1722171?hl=en>. YouTube will automatically compress videos that do not adhere to their standards, which may result in loss of quality.

Lighting

Film your video in a well-lit location, where you are facing the light source. Avoid light behind or directly above you.

Framing

Your full body should be in the shot. If you cannot fit due to space constraints or sound issues, make sure your head, torso and hands are still visible.

Sound

Test your microphone ahead of recording and make sure the sound is clear.

Tips

- Record a test video and review the resolution and sound. You should also do a test upload to YouTube to make sure the quality is maintained.
- Test for ambient sounds that your microphone is picking up from nearby appliances that you may need to turn off or move away from while recording.
- Be mindful of not standing too close or too far from the microphone. Test this as you want to avoid voice peaking where sound becomes distorted, or increased background noise from being too far away.



Application Process: Actions to Complete

Siobhan Stagg (2012 Award), *The Marriage of Figaro*, Royal Opera and Ballet, image: Clive Barda

Stage 2 Live Audition & Interview, London and Melbourne

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting process by Thursday 24 September 2026. Those artists selected to progress to Stage 2 will be invited to present a live audition and interview with the selection panel.

Auditions will take place in London and Melbourne.

Please note: There is no flexibility around these dates, and in-person auditions are required for this final stage.

London

Live audition and interviews will take place on **Tuesday 6 October 2026** in the Britten Theatre at the RCM.

Melbourne

Live audition and interviews will take place on **Friday 6 November 2026** at the Melbourne Opera Centre, Southbank.

Please note: These auditions will be recorded.

Audition Detail

- Any required travel and accommodation to attend a live audition and interview must be paid by the applicant.
- Accompanists will be provided for auditions.
- Once repertoire has been submitted, any changes must be requested and approved in writing by Melba Opera Trust at least one week prior.
- Auditions will last approximately 25 minutes.

Melba Opera Trust will notify all Stage 2 applicants of the outcome of the live auditions by **Monday 16 November 2026**.



Matthew Reardon (2015 Award), right, *Otello*, image: West Australian Opera

Checklist for Applicants

- ☐ I have read the AJIOA information brochure and noted the application and audition process.
- ☐ I have completed the online application form, including providing details for two referees.
- ☐ I have prepared my supporting documentation as a single PDF file (10MB maximum size) which includes:
 - ☐ a CV and professional bio
 - ☐ a scanned copy of passport or birth certificate, or a similar official document that confirms date and place of birth as proof of Australian or New Zealand citizenship and age
 - ☐ A draft budget for living expenses in London during study.
- ☐ I have provided YouTube links for my four application videos and provided passwords for any private links.
- ☐ I have submitted my application at
<https://www.melbaoperatrust.com.au/2027-ajioa-application/>

Alastair Jackson
International
OPERA
Award