

Musica Viva and Victorian Opera present the world premiere tour of the brand new chamber opera, *Voyage to the Moon*, starring leading singers Emma Matthews and Sally-Anne Russell

15 February - 12 March 2015



Musica Viva kicks off its 2016 Concerts Season in February with a sensational new co-production with Victorian Opera, ***Voyage to the Moon***, a **brand new chamber opera** written and directed by theatrical luminary **Michael Gow**, which comprises a musical score constructed by the late international Baroque guru **Alan Curtis**.

Featuring reigning Australian singers, soprano **Emma Matthews** and mezzo **Sally-Anne Russell**, *Voyage to the Moon* will also welcome brilliant newcomer, bass-baritone **Jeremy Kleeman** to the stage, along with a handpicked band of leading chamber musicians with experience in period performance, led from the harpsichord by **Phoebe Briggs**, Head of Music at Victorian Opera.

“It is many years since we last presented a theatrical music performance,” says Carl Vine AO, Artistic Director, Concerts at Musica Viva. “But the perfect combination of factors has finally arisen with this wonderful new co-production with Victorian Opera, *Voyage to the Moon*.”

A pasticcio work using music from a wide range of Baroque operas to support a new libretto based loosely on the Renaissance epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*, Vine says audiences can expect some amazing juxtapositions, masterful singing and luminous music.

Speaking about the creative process, Michael Gow says, “I was asked to write the libretto for a Baroque pasticcio. I decided to go to one of the greatest sources of Baroque libretti, Ariosto’s epic poem, *Orlando Furioso*.”

He continues, “Most of the score was assembled in collaboration with Alan Curtis, a towering figure in the modern rediscovery of the music of this era. Sadly Alan passed away before we finished it, but most of it was done.”

The storyline in *Voyage to the Moon* is an off-the-wall tale of madness, marvels, magic and healing.

“Orlando (Matthews) goes mad when he learns that his beloved loves another, and he goes off rampaging around the world,” explains Gow. “His friend Astolfo (Russell) learns that everything that has been lost on Earth is stored on the moon. With the help of a Magus (Kleeman), Astolfo goes to the moon and through his loyalty persuades a fierce Lunar to let him take Orlando’s sanity. He returns to Earth and cures his friend.”

A semi-staged, costumed theatre piece, there will also be a visual element to the production, Gow explains.

“The visual element we will use will be very simple, able to be put up and taken down quite quickly. Lighting will tell a lot of the story.”

Finally, Gow encourages everyone to come hear *Voyage to the Moon*, even if they’ve never seen anything like it before.

“You’ll hear some great music. There’s Handel and Vivaldi and there’ll be pieces you’ve never heard before, sometimes by composers you’ve never heard of, performed by three wonderful singers who are also very good actors,” he says. “It is the best of both worlds: theatre and music.”

***Voyage to the Moon* will tour to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth and Adelaide. For full tour information visit musicaviva.com.au/Voyage.** The production is presented in partnership with the Performance Program of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, led by Professor Jane Davidson. The tour is supported by the Musica Viva Amadeus Society.