Australian Major Performing Arts Group

AMPAG MEMBERS’ COMPANY PROFILES

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AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, led by charismatic Artistic Director Paul Dyer, celebrates the music of the baroque and early classical period with excellence, flair and joy. Comprising leading specialists from all over Australia, the Brandenburg performs using original edition scores and instruments of the period, breathing fresh life and vitality into baroque and classical masterpieces.

A cultural experience quite unlike any other, since its establishment in 1989 the Brandenburg has presented scores of sold out concerts to enthusiastic audiences all over Australia, undertaken international tours, made 16 recordings, achieved consistently excellent reviews and won five ARIA Awards for the Best Classical Album in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

At the ACO’s core is a string orchestra of leading musicians of Australia, supported by a cohort of outstanding international guests and a growing company of next generation artists at the outset of their careers. The ACO’s versatility and adaptability enable it to perform repertoire from six centuries, playing instruments from the baroque period through to electronics, and to collaborate with an extraordinary range of artists from many disciplines.

The ACO is Australia’s only national orchestra, presenting a subscription series in eight major cities around the country and reaching regional audiences in every state and territory. Internationally, the orchestra consistently attracts rave reviews and receives frequent return invitations to perform on all of the great stages of the musical world including Vienna’s Musikverein, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, London’s Southbank Centre and New York’s Carnegie Hall.

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

Bangarra Dance Theatre is Australia’s leading Indigenous performing arts company. Established in 1989, Bangarra is recognised nationally and internationally for distinctive dance theatre performances that combine the spirituality of traditional culture with modern story-telling. Presenting over 110 performances each year, Bangarra tours internationally as well as extensively to national, regional and remote centres across Australia.

Bangarra celebrates and respects Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures. It is committed to developing the next generation of Indigenous storytellers through mentoring and training of creative Indigenous young people.

BELL SHAKESPEARE

Bell Shakespeare is Australia’s national theatre company specialising in Shakespeare and the classics. Founded in 1990 by John Bell, one of Australia’s most acclaimed theatre creators and directors, Bell Shakespeare has grown to become a national company of significance: a history rich with legends of the stage; the establishment of a creative development arm, Mind’s Eye, which ensures artistic vibrancy; theatre, education and community programs characterised by unrivalled national reach and impact; and a loyal and passionate audience that has transformed the company that began in a circus tent into a national icon.

Bell Shakespeare is using universal insights of Shakespeare and other iconic classic writers to bring inspiration and truth to people living in an uncertain world, enabling us to imagine and to transform, to picture a different world, to know that it can be one of our own making and to connect beauty and art with imagination at all ages.
CIRCUS OZ

Created from a truly Australian perspective, Circus Oz packs a resounding punch that has moved audiences over three decades and helped shape the landscape of contemporary circus nationally and internationally.

Circus Oz is Australia’s premier internationally acclaimed contemporary circus. The company was founded in 1978 and brings together elements from all of the live performing arts (circus, dance, music, theatre and comedy) through a multi-skilled ensemble of some of Australia’s foremost artists. Circus Oz is seen as both a worldwide and Australian leader in the development of the form of contemporary circus.

The company tours capital cities, regional centres, remote communities and internationally every year. Circus Oz has performed in 26 countries across five continents to over 3.4 million people. The company aims to entertain, inspire and challenge the broadest possible audience.

MUSICA VIVA

Musica Viva stands for the transformative power of live music and for the unique creative force that is unleashed through a life-long engagement with music.

Founded in 1945, it is Australia’s oldest independent professional performing arts organisation. As a non-profit arts organisation, Musica Viva relies on the essential support of donors, funding partners, government support, corporate partners, and the many volunteers who freely give their time. Thanks to their help, Musica Viva continues to share the delights of chamber music with audiences throughout Australia, presenting over 2400 concerts in capital cities, regional communities and schools every year—not to mention the national and international artists it supports throughout its vast range of programs.

OPERA AUSTRALIA

Intense, inspiring, imaginative—Opera Australia is the national opera company, dedicated to enriching the nation’s cultural life with exceptional opera that excites audiences and sustains and develops the art form.

It is Australia’s largest and busiest performing arts organisation, with over 600 opera performances a year, including two mainstage opera seasons in Sydney and Melbourne and free outdoor performances in Sydney’s Domain and Melbourne’s Myer Music Bowl.

Opera Australia also performs in regional centres and capital cities, while the Opera Australia’s Schools Company gives around 450 performances a year in metropolitan and regional schools in Victoria and NSW. In collaboration with the ABC, it broadcasts live and recorded opera performances on radio, TV and in cinemas.

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

For five decades The Australian Ballet has been the defining face of ballet in Australia, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2012. Each year, the company performs classical and contemporary works, and new commissions by leading Australian and international choreographers, composers and designers. Its diverse repertoire reflects the company’s motto: caring for tradition, daring to be different.

One of the world’s busiest ballet companies and a leading cultural ambassador for Australia, The Australian Ballet annually presents over 630 performances and education events in cities and regional areas around Australia, and regularly tours overseas. The Australian Ballet has visited 37 countries and 87 cities since it was founded in 1962 and in a recent season in London won the UK Critics’ Circle award for Best Foreign Dance Company. Its 2015 tour to China marks the company’s 24th international tour.
BELVOIR

In 1984 more than 600 people-ardent theatre lovers together with arts, entertainment and media professionals formed a syndicate to buy the former Nimrod Theatre building which was to become ‘the city’s most exciting and beloved theatre’ (Sydney Morning Herald), known today as Belvoir.

Thirty years later, under the artistic leadership of Ralph Myers and General Manager Brenna Hobson, Belvoir engages Australia’s most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise an annual season of work that is dynamic, challenging and visionary. As well as performing at home, Belvoir regularly takes to the road, touring both nationally and internationally. Recent accolades include the 2015 Helpmann Award for Best Play for The Glass Menagerie and a Sydney Theatre Awards Best Ensemble Cast for is this thing on?

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

Sydney Dance Company has led the way in the creation of a new era in Australian contemporary dance, commissioning some of the world’s most in-demand choreographers. It is one of Australia’s leading contemporary dance companies, presenting new works in Sydney, around Australia and internationally.

The company also runs one of the largest dance schools in Australia with almost 65 000 students developing their skills with Sydney Dance Company each year. It also reaches almost 3000 students and teachers learning about the world of dance through an extensive school incursion program and accessing Sydney Dance Company’s online digital portals.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Sydney Symphony gives concerts of exceptional quality, driven by its ability to maintain a community of musicians which is among the world’s best. To meet the needs of 21st century audiences, the orchestra both preserves and re-invents the experience of symphonic music.

Resident at the Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. Tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

The Sydney Theatre Company has been a creative incubator for many of the country’s most distinguished artists and continues to be a platform for discovering new talent. Artists such as Baz Luhrmann, Judy Davis, Toni Collette, Hugo Weaving, Cate Blanchett, Miranda Otto, Geoffrey Rush and Benedict Andrews honed their skills at STC.

From its home base at The Wharf in the Walsh Bay cultural precinct of Sydney, the company produces a diverse range of works seen by more than 300,000 people each year. It performs in The Wharf’s own two theatres, as well as in the 900-seat Ros Packer Theatre in Walsh Bay, in the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House, in theatres throughout NSW, nationally, and increasingly on stages around the world.
OPERA QUEENSLAND

Opera Queensland’s mission—to reflect, celebrate and enrich life in its communities—is animated by three activity streams connecting the artistic program to its broader community and business aspirations.

Metropolitan Brisbane—home to the company’s core audience. On Brisbane’s main stages and in a diverse range of environments it presents opera in all its forms to the widest possible audience. Regional Queensland—the company distinctively expresses its creative and community aspirations through extensive touring and by creating unique opportunities to build grassroots support and showcase regional projects and artists.

Education and engagement—programs include in-school residencies, specially-created productions for children, and all-ages participation activities to connect the company with communities in ways and places that the main stage program cannot.

QUEENSLAND BALLET

With 25 young, athletic and technically accomplished dancers, Queensland Ballet is a vibrant and creative company that connects people across Queensland with dance through a varied program of exciting and challenging works throughout the year. One of only three full-time professional ballet companies in Australia, the company is the centre of dance in Queensland and part of the state’s thriving arts culture.

Queensland Ballet presents around 100 performances every year. Its repertoire ranges from popular classics and full-length story ballets to new works in a variety of dance styles by renowned Australian and international choreographers, as well as emerging local talents. Works that appeal to children and families are also a much-loved feature of its annual program.

QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Queensland Symphony Orchestra is renowned for its high quality, breathtaking performances of both classical and modern compositions that engage audiences of all musical tastes, interests and ages. As the largest performing arts company in Queensland employing 88 full-time musicians and the state’s only professional symphony orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra plays a vital role in Queensland’s cultural community. In 2010 Queensland Symphony Orchestra performed 134 concerts, both paid and free, travelled 5229 kilometres with one of the largest performing arts groups in the state, sold 40 037 tickets to its concerts and had 11 051 student participants in workshops, education concerts and open rehearsals.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

Queensland Theatre Company offers audiences diverse, entertaining and inspirational mainstage programming of classic and contemporary theatrical works, complemented by artist development, regional and Indigenous programs, and dynamic offerings for the education and youth sectors.

It is the state’s flagship professional theatre company. Each year the company presents an annual season of plays at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre which showcase an array of acclaimed theatre artists. It’s a dynamic mix of plays from exciting new Australian work to outstanding international classics. The company also runs The GreenHouse—a space where artists and audiences intermingle in programs including creative developments, productions of new works, playwrights’ programs, workshops, master classes and forums. The company tours throughout the state and nationally.
MALTHOUSE THEATRE

Malthouse Theatre is at once a treasured building, a theatre company, a creative site and an engine for change. It is also the imaginative expression of a committed team of artmakers reaching out to an even larger number of local, national and international artists. All are dedicated to an ongoing conversation with audiences of exciting diversity and character. This conversation chooses contemporary theatre as its vehicle: a compelling annual program of adventurous, multi-disciplinary work inspired by writers, directors, designers, choreographers, audio artists and performers.

Here, the combined possibilities of all theatre arts are offered centre stage—for entertainment, for inspiration, and even for fun!

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

With a reputation for excellence, versatility and innovation, the internationally acclaimed Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is Australia’s oldest orchestra, established in 1906. Renowned for its performances of the great symphonic masterworks with leading international and Australian musicians, it has also enjoyed hugely successful performances with such artists as Sir Elton John, John Farnham, Harry Connick Jr, Ben Folds, KISS, Burt Bacharach, The Whitlams, Human Nature, Sting and Tim Minchin.

The first Australian symphony orchestra to tour abroad, the MSO has received widespread international recognition in the USA, Canada, Japan, Korea, Europe, China (2002), Russia (2003), Japan (2005) and Europe (2007).

Each year it extends its audience beyond the concert halls through regular broadcasts on ABC Classic FM, and through extensive education and community outreach activities.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

Founded in 1953, Melbourne Theatre Company is the oldest professional theatre company in Australia. It is a semi-autonomous department of the University of Melbourne. Producing up to twelve plays in a subscription season, a full education program and a studio season, it is not only Victoria’s major theatre company, but one of the largest theatre companies in the English-speaking world.

In January 2009 Southbank Theatre, the company’s new performance home, opened in the heart of Melbourne’s cultural precinct.

The company’s mission has changed little since the first season sixty years ago: To produce classic and contemporary Australian and international theatre with style, passion and excellence in order to entertain, challenge and enrich audiences.

ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

Orchestra Victoria inspires Victorians through great orchestral music. It is the proud performance partner of Australia’s premier performing arts companies—The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, Victorian Opera and The Production Company.

The orchestra was established in 1969 and now, in its fifth decade, it continues to deliver performances of artistic excellence. On 1 July 2014 Orchestra Victoria began an exciting new chapter when it became a wholly owned subsidiary of The Australian Ballet.
**ADELAIDE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

With an impressive program of events and world-class musicians, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra strives to take every audience on an inspirational musical journey.

The orchestra is widely regarded as one of Australia’s finest with an enviable reputation for vitality and versatility, reaching state audiences through its more than 100 performances, and national audiences through its excellent recordings and broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. In 1998 and 2004 the ASO came to the attention of the international community with its exemplary playing of Wagner’s Ring Cycle.

**STATE THEATRE COMPANY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

The State Theatre Company of South Australia is the state’s flagship theatre company performing an annual season of classic and contemporary Australian and international theatre works to audiences of about 50,000 per year at its main performance home—the Dunstan Playhouse in the Adelaide Festival Centre.

The company is a major community and cultural resource for all South Australians and is vital to the artistic life of the state. With a busy slate of commissions, STCSA is committed to developing new Australian works. It also plays an important role in the national theatre scene, contributing touring productions and providing employment and career development opportunities for South Australian artists and other theatre-workers.

**STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

State Opera of South Australia is renowned for its rich artistic experiences, its staging of specialist music theatre art in Australia and its development of highly skilled home-grown artists.

The company’s vision is to be renowned nationally and internationally as the performing arts company that keeps opera relevant and exciting through a mix of traditional and non-traditional specialist repertoire, including events that attract cultural tourism to South Australia. It presents, produces and conducts diverse operatic performances, including many Australian premieres, which promote theatrical arts and excite interest in the art form.

Each year, the State Opera presents at least three major operatic productions at the Festival Theatre in Adelaide as well as many smaller productions in The Opera Studio and regionally.

**TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Declared a Tasmanian Icon in 1998, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is at the forefront of concert life in Tasmania. Resident in Hobart’s purpose-built Federation Concert Hall, the TSO has a complement of 47 musicians and performs a wide variety of music. The orchestra has more than 60 CDs in its catalogue, including 20 titles in the Australian Composer Series and 10 in the Romantic Piano Concerto Series.

The TSO gives over 60 concerts annually including seasons in Hobart and Launceston, and appearances in Tasmanian regional centres. In recent years it has performed at the City Recital Hall in Sydney, Melbourne Recital Centre and the Adelaide Festival. International touring has taken the orchestra to North America, South America, Greece, Israel, South Korea, China, Indonesia and Japan.
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY

Black Swan—Western Australia’s Flagship Theatre Company—has earned both critical and popular acclaim for its world premiere productions and highly distinctive (re)interpretations of international theatre classics. These have included such landmark productions as Bran Nue Dae, Sistergirl, Tourmaline, Corrugation Road (winner of the prestigious The Age Critics’ Award), The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea, Cloudstreet (Perth, Sydney, London and Dublin seasons) and more recently The Sapphires (with Belvoir), Tim Winton’s first ever play, Rising Water and The White Divers of Broome.

In its inaugural year as the resident company in the new State Theatre Centre of Western Australia in 2011, Black Swan was the first Australian theatre company to broadcast a live stage performance in real time to audiences across regional Western Australia, part of its commitment to supporting all Western Australians wherever they are located.

WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET

West Australian Ballet was formed in 1952 by Madame Kira Bousloff, formerly a Prima Ballerina with the Ballets Russes. The company is proud of its heritage as Australia’s oldest ballet company, currently celebrating its 60th anniversary. An additional cause for celebration is its new $13 million State ballet centre, opened in 2012.

West Australian Ballet is committed to producing and acquiring repertoire of the highest standards. Classical ballet forms the foundation of the company’s vocabulary, combined with a distinct contemporary outlook. The company stages everything from full-length classical ballets to narrative ballets and shorter works that encompass a variety of choreographic styles. The company offers an extensive program of dance throughout the year: four major seasons in Perth, regional touring throughout Western Australia, choreographic workshops, a state-wide education program and other community activities.

WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA

The West Australia Opera is committed to the development, presentation and promotion of opera as an essential part of Australian cultural life. Established in 1967, the company presents operas drawn from the mainstream operatic repertoire and increasingly is involved in commissioning and developing new repertoire, forming new national and international partnerships.

The company offers an annual subscription season of main house productions as well as programs in regional Western Australia and a strong education program and ancillary activities, including concerts and community events in Western Australia. It presents three operas in His Majesty’s Theatre each year as well as an Opera in the Park to about 15,000 people in Supreme Court Gardens.

WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The West Australian Symphony Orchestra’s vision is to touch souls and enrich lives through music. Each year the orchestra reaches out into the community and gives people across Western Australia the opportunity to experience the magic of classical music through concert performances, touring, education programs, and other events.

It presents over 170 performances each year with some of the world’s finest conductors and soloists, to an audience of more than 190,000. It also regularly performs with the West Australian Opera and West Australian Ballet. WASO’s 82 full-time musicians perform a broad range of music, reaching a wide cross-section of the community.