

SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA  
TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

IN CONCERT

# ANTARCTICA

**ANTARCTICA** BY MARY FINSTERER AND TOM WRIGHT  
CONDUCTOR – JACK SYMONDS

WITH ANNA FRASER, CHLOE LANKSHEAR, SIMON LOBELSON  
JESSICA O'DONOGHUE, AND MICHAEL PETRUCELLI

**TASMANIAN PREMIERE**  
**THEATRE ROYAL**

APRIL 18, 2024



UNIVERSITY of  
**TASMANIA** 





# ANTARCTICA

## In Concert

Tasmanian Premiere – Theatre Royal

APRIL 18, 2024

1 hr 45 mins (no interval)

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## PERFORMED BY

Sydney Chamber Opera and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Music by Mary Finsterer

Libretto by Tom Wright

Conductor: Jack Symonds

Sound Designer: Bob Scott

The Daughter: Chloe Lankshear

The Theologian: Jessica O'Donoghue

The Natural Philosopher: Anna Fraser

The Cartographer: Michael Petruccelli

The Captain: Simon Lobelson

Spoken voices

The Daughter: Eve Kreutz

Interviewer: Tom Wright

Electro-Acoustic Creation: Alistair McLean

Audio Programming: Elliott Hughes

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra players

Violin: Ji Won Kim *Concertmaster*

Lucy Carrig-Jones *Principal Second*

Viola: Caleb Wright

Cello: Jonathan Békés

Double Bass: Stuart Thomson

Flute: Katie Zagorski

Oboe: Dinah Woods *Principal Cor Anglais*

Clarinet: Andrew Seymour

French Horn: Greg Stephens

Trumpet: Darcy O'Malley

Trombone: David Robins

Percussion: Gary Wain

Timpani: Matthew Goddard

Harp: Melina van Leeuwen

Piano / Celeste: Karen Smithies

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## CREDITS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

COLLEGE OF ARTS, LAW AND EDUCATION

Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor: Professor Kate Darian-Smith

Project Coordinator: Tony Bonney

Marketing and Communication: David Beniuk

Production Manager: Lauren Makin

Stage Manager: Simon Rush

Technical Support: School of Creative Arts and Media - Oren Gerassi

With special thanks to guest artists

Viola d'amore: Phoebe Green

Electro acoustic sound effects operation: Alexander Rodrigues

THE TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CEO: Caroline Sharpen

Director Operations: Jacqui Walkden

Production Manager: Kayne Johnson

Production & Venue Assistant: Gavin Wolfe

Production Coordinator: Nick Van Den Enden

Orchestra Coordinator: Emily Becker

Orchestra Librarian: Lara O'Brien

Director Artistic Identity: Simon Rogers

Manger Artistic Operations: Meriel Owen

Artist Liaison: Alethea Coombe

Director Audience & Experience: Peter Kilpatrick

Brand Manager: Frances Darcey

Digital Manager: Carlia Fuller

## SOUND

Antarctica is presented in d&b Soundscape processing, a high resolution sound system technology utilising spatial positioning and acoustic emulation software to enhance the localisation of performers on stage to the audiences individual listening perspective. The d&b Soundscape increases the connection between eyes and ears, providing a depth of field and imaging to the sound that enhances the audiences listening experience and provides artists with new creative possibilities.

We would like to thank d&b for supporting this production with the use of 1 of only 4 soundscape engines in the Country .

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Antarctica was commissioned by Asko|Schönberg, with the generous assistance of The Julian Burnside AO Trust for Mary Finsterer and the University of Tasmania.

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Mary Finsterer would like to thank: Elaine Smith, Prof. Kate Darian-Smith, Julian Burnside AO QC, Kim Williams AM, Tony Bonney, Dean Golja, Troy Beer, Wil Anton, Harry Jay, Yvonne Stern-Campo, Christian Hoesch, Dr. Sophie Bestley, Prof. Zanna Chase, Dr. Joel Crotty, Dr. Jacqueline Halpin, Prof. Craig Johnson, Prof. Elizabeth Leane, Prof. Mary-Anne Lea, Assoc. Prof. Vanessa Lucieer, Dr. Felicity McCormack, Dr. Amelie Meyer, Dr. Taryn Noble, Dr. Christina Schallenberg, Assoc. Prof. Kerrie Swadling, Assoc. Prof. Patti Virtue, Assoc. Prof. Guy Williams, Ceri Flowers, Monica O'Neill, Fr. John O'Neill, Maureen Wheeler AO, the late Jane Mathews AO, Sydney Chamber Opera, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, The University of Tasmania and Schott Music.

For the Theatre Royal: Chris 'Wolfie' McBride, Richard Causby, Jan Rosenthal. Bump in / out crew: Eric Jaques, Karl Sanger, Alex Chatwin-Dalgleish, Jan Rosenthal, Saxon Hornett. Thanks to Reuben, Aron, Kim Jaeger, Meyrick, Nicole, Erica and the Front of House Team.

# ANTARCTICA

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## UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

I am delighted that Tasmanian audiences have the opportunity to see *Antarctica*, a new and powerful contemporary opera composed by Professor Mary Finsterer, Creative Fellow in the College of Arts, Law and Education at the University of Tasmania and one of Australia's leading composers. Taking inspiration from conversations held between Mary and librettist Tom Wright with Antarctic scientists and researchers at the University, this work has premiered in the 2022 Holland and 2023 Sydney international Arts Festivals to great critical acclaim. It is a truly remarkable musical journey that explores Antarctica as a place of dreams and transformation, but also points to the mystery and environmental exploitation of the southern continent.

Tonight's performance is the result of a partnership between the University of Tasmania, the Theatre Royal, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Chamber Opera. Congratulations to all who have made it happen, especially Jack Symonds from Sydney Chamber Opera; Caroline Sharpen, Simon Rogers and the amazing TSO team; Simon Wellington at Theatre Royal; producer Tony Bonney and a host of academic and professional colleagues at the University; and our philanthropic supporters.

My warmest congratulations and thanks to Mary: *Antarctica* is a creative triumph.

### Professor Kate Darian-Smith

Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor  
College of Arts Law and Education

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## TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

We've been Tasmania's orchestra for over 75 years.

We're proud to be one of Australia's leading performing arts companies and part of the DNA of Tasmanian cultural life – we have been inspiring, invigorating, and delighting audiences through music since 1948. We are recognised across the island and throughout the world for our distinctive artistic identity that is forged from our people and our place.

Our 47-piece orchestra performs an extensive and varied concert season in Hobart, a smaller season in Launceston, and concerts across regional Tasmania; as well as undertaking a significant recording schedule; undertaking meaningful community engagement projects; and delivering intensive training programs for players, composers, and conductors.

Regardless of what we perform or where we play, every performance is an emotional adventure. Whether it's the full Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in the Federation Concert Hall, intimate chamber music at Woolmers, the TSO Chorus raising the roof, an experiential *Obscura* performance at the Odeon, or a Live Sessions pub-style gig, experiencing the TSO live is to experience something joyous.

It happens because we create unique moments in time that connect performers and audience. Composer and conductor. Orchestra and community. And it's something we're incredibly proud of.

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## SYDNEY CHAMBER OPERA

Resident company at Carriageworks, Sydney Chamber Opera, is a fresh and youthful answer to some of the difficult questions facing today's opera industry. As one of "Australia's most innovative arts groups" (Sydney Morning Herald) we have "redefined operatic performance in Australia" (Australian Book Review) to show "an astonishing new vision of what contemporary Australian opera can achieve" (Time Out).

Louis Garrick and Jack Symonds established SCO in 2010 and it has rapidly developed into an important and distinctive voice in the Australian music and theatre landscapes. SCO is critically acclaimed for its innovative programming, musical rigour and strong focus on compelling theatre-making. SCO makes opera with a 21st century outlook that resonates with a new, younger audience, and that shows how vibrant and relevant the artform can be. Its program aims for a balance of specially commissioned work by leading homegrown composers, the latest international operas in their Australian premieres, song cycles and cantatas in unusual stagings, and canonical repertoire reinvigorated by the country's most daring theatrical talent. We have fostered deep engagement with a wide range of artists across music, text, design, and theatre at the intersection of many cultural practices, and we have a unique methodology where we approach opera as chamber music – where each individual has equal responsibility for their part – a prerogative that we extend to all of our creatives. SCO has given the world or Australian premieres of major stage works by Benjamin, Britten, Dusapin, Finsterer, Gyger, Kancheli, Kurtág, Ricketson, Romitelli, Saariaho, Smetanin & Styles and has also been presented by the Holland Festival, Tokyo Festival, Sydney Festival (eight times), Biennale of Sydney (twice) Melbourne Festival and Dark MOFO among others. 2024 sees SCO's first collaboration with Opera Australia with *Gilgamesh*.



# ANTARCTICA

# CONTENTS

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## COMPOSER'S NOTE

*At the frontiers of the imagination is a land of nothingness*

*To go is to find emptiness*

*A land without a land*

*A mirror-land*

Antarctica is a library of hidden mysteries.

Throughout the planet's history, stories have been accruing – in the sastrugi of the surface, in the ice sheet, and in rocks below, preserved under each new layer. A palimpsest of narratives, waiting to be excavated.

While other continents have the past laid bare, Antarctica is different. These stratified deposits are hidden, lying metaphorically and magnetically at the bottom of the world. It is a brooding place, not designed for humans. Too cold, too dark, without nourishment. It is not a heaven, nor a hell. It is a non-place; silently, noisily, instantaneously, eternally, holding the history of the world.

ANTARCTICA is a contemporary opera dealing with historic, mythic and scientific narratives flowing around the southern continent.

In a time when anthropogenic climate change is destabilising centres (political, cultural, scientific), Antarctica becomes a stage for a drama of the future. There are vested interests and systems of thought in contest over what is actually happening on this distant stage – a stage without human performers, a stage without scripts, a stage without sets, a stage of wind and ice, of glaring reflectivity and competing song.

Integral to building this opera was a development phase in which disciplines – music, dramaturgy, visual arts, digital media, humanities, cultural studies and a multiplicity of fields within science – converged. In July 2019, Tom and I attended Opera Antarctica Symposium: FIRST LIGHT. Organised through my role as the University of Tasmania CALE Creative Fellow, and co-ordinated in association with scientist Associate Professor Guy Williams, this two-day forum gave Tom and I the opportunity to meet with creative industry specialists and scientists from the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

The scientific research presented, including graphical representation, raw data, audio and visual material, provided a rich resource and foundation to map out a reimagining of these fields in relation to Antarctica. Through an interplay between English (as a constantly-mutating language) and Latin (as an unchanging, 'eternal' one) in the libretto, and by delving into my own geology as a composer (coalescing Middle Ages and Renaissance musical practice with electronics and serial composition techniques), our aim is to create layers that capture the epic scale of the southernmost continent.

The opera that Tom and I have made hopes to awaken a vastness of thought, stirring something beyond language in an interweaving of metaphor and imagined events. It is a place where non-human forces are given voice, such as krill, a ship, ice. It is a fable that offers an invitation to explore our imagination, a place to be child-like.

In an age of increasing socio-political intensity and concern for our ecology, displacement of populations and heightened awareness of the vulnerability of our oceans, Tom and I wanted to position ANTARCTICA as a fable for the twenty-first century: a made-up story that has, at its heart, a 'mythic quest' that examines human motives.

Mary Finsterer

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**PROLOGUE** (Instrumental with spoken voice)

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**OVERTURE** (Chorus)

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## ACT I

**MAPPA MUNDI** (The Theologian, The Natural Philosopher, The Cartographer)

**PRIMA CREATURA** (The Theologian, The Natural Philosopher, The Cartographer)

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## ACT II

**THE QUEST** (Instrumental)

**THE JOURNEY** (The Daughter of the Captain & The Captain)

**THE SHIP** (Chorus)

**THE PHILOSOPHER'S DREAM** (Aria: The Natural Philosopher)

**THE LIST OF LATIN NAMES** (The Natural Philosopher with Chorus)

**THE CARTOGRAPHER'S DREAM** (Aria: The Cartographer)

**THE CREATION OF THE CONTINENT** (The Cartographer with Chorus)

**THE THEOLOGIAN'S DREAM** (The Theologian with Chorus)

**ETERNAL CITY** (Aria: The Theologian)

**NEARING CIRCUMPOLAR** (Chorus)

**THE SALP AND THE KRILL** (Chorus)

**THE GALAXY BENEATH ME** (Aria: The Daughter of the Captain)

**THE ICE AND THE SHIP'S LAMENT** (Instrumental)

**THERE NEVER WAS A SOUTHERN LAND** (The Cartographer & The Captain)

**THE SPLINTERING** (Chorus)

**HEAR THIS** (Aria: The Captain)

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## ACT III

**INTO THE DARK** (The Daughter of the Captain, The Theologian, The Natural Philosopher)

**EVERYWHERE, NOWHERE** (Aria: The Natural Philosopher)

**SOMEWHERE WHICH IS NOT FOR US** (The Daughter of the Captain, The Theologian)

**THE UNDERWATERFALL** (Chorus)

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## EPILOGUE

**THE TURNING AWAY** (Instrumental with spoken voice)

**END**

# ANTARCTICA

# LIBRETTO

by Tom Wright  
as set by Mary Finsterer

## PROLOGUE

**Interviewer**

So, do you remember anything about...when they found you?

**Daughter**

I remember white

**Interviewer**

White?

**Daughter**

White. Everywhere.

**Interviewer**

Like snow? Ice?

**Daughter**

Yes. But I wasn't cold. I was there a long time. In the white.

**Interviewer**

And you were alone?

**Daughter**

There were others. There were others. Once.

**Interviewer**

What happened to them? (*no answer*)

**Daughter**

It was a long time ago. I was very small. So it is...unclear.

**Interviewer**

Take your time.

**Daughter**

They were red and orange and green. They had lights and machines.

**Interviewer**

Who? The others? From your ship?

**Daughter**

No. The men. From now. They dug me out. They said I was old.

**Interviewer**

Cold?

**Daughter**

No, old. My clothes. I was from a long time ago.

**Interviewer**

You were from somewhere else?

**Daughter**

From a long time ago.  
And...  
She was singing  
She was singing, she...

**Interviewer**

From the ship, the others, where are they?

## OVERTURE

**Chorus**

*Map  
Tablet  
Painting  
Boat  
Pole  
Map  
Tablet  
Painting  
Boat  
Pole*

*Picture*

*Question  
Altar  
Pole*

**Natural Philosopher**

*What is  
And what might be  
What is  
And how it works  
What is  
And the truth*

**Theologian**

*The world  
And what it is for  
Tabula Rasa*

**Cartographer**

*Knowledge  
And how it ends  
Knowledge  
and what it is for  
Knowledge  
completing the map*

*The world  
And the dreams of our Lord  
The world  
And serenity  
Our map*

## ACT I

### MAPPA MUNDI

**Natural Philosopher**

I've never seen anything like it.

**Cartographer**

My blood fizzled  
My breath went tight-

**Natural Philosopher**

And where did you find this?

**Cartographer**

Deep in an archive, in a monastery.  
*Mappa Mundi!*

**All**

How can this be?  
*Mappa Mundi*

**Natural Philosopher**

The lettering is strange

**Theologian**

Is it Arabic  
Or Persian?

**Cartographer.**

See here, this is Jerusalem  
And here the oceans  
Spill as vast rivers flowing from Eden

**Natural Philosopher**

Look at all the oceans of the world!

**Cartographer**

*This is Ultima Thule, the end of the earth.*  
All this I've seen before.

**Theologian**

The end of the earth  
Vast rivers flowing from Eden

**Natural Philosopher**

The end of the world

**Cartographer**

But this –  
I've never seen this!

In any other map,  
mountains of cloud blow their  
winds from fattened cheeks,  
sea monsters revel,  
a bleak emptiness stretched.  
But see, islands,  
I think these are places of ice.

This is no act of imagination.

This is a record, an encounter.  
Some mariner,  
at some point,  
has ventured deep south.

Deeper than ever.  
And there is a land there.  
Another continent...

**Chorus**

One last act.

**Cartographer**

A finishing.

**Chorus**

A new land,  
Untouched

What is there?

What beasts?  
what flora?

**Cartographer**

Perhaps where creation is ordered  
afresh

**Cartographer**

With new flora  
Or fauna?

*Novam terram*

**Cartographer**

But see here?  
This small mark?  
It seems,  
On empty land?

**Natural Philosopher**

What does it mean?

**Chorus**

On empty land!  
What does it say?

**Cartographer**

*It says, 'Ilk yatalik'*

**Chorus**

What does this mean?

**Cartographer**

"The Original Animal"  
Primigenius!

**Chorus**

*Prima Creatura!*

## PRIMA CREATURA

**Natural Philosopher**

*Prima Creatura*  
The very first  
From which all proceeds,  
The secrets of life.  
*Prima Creatura,*  
The first to breathe.

**Theologian**

*Prima Creatura*  
Place of pure silence  
Wash away my tears  
Inscribe my soul  
*Prima Creatura,*  
The journey of yearning.

**Cartographer**

*Prima Creatura*  
Discovery

The source of truth

The secrets  
Of life and the mystery of my  
journey  
Lies in a quest  
To trace unfinished lines  
No shadow left on earth

**Theologian**

*Tabula Rasa*  
Story of the spirit's journey  
Story of the soul  
Soak my sins and my tears

**Natural Philosopher**

My journey lies in a quest to  
Discover the secrets of a creature  
Unmoved by time.

*Prima Creatura*

**Cartographer**

To complete the map is my life's  
work  
Great truths of the world  
Will be mine when the map is  
done  
To trace unfinished lines

**Natural Philosopher**

Written in blood  
Locked in bones the secrets of life

**Theologian**

In union, oneness,  
Inscribe my soul  
*Authenticum*  
Angels in the making  
*Prima Creatura*

**Cartographer**

Every corner known  
Great truths of the world  
Will unfold

**Theologian**

First One,  
Lamb of God  
Saviour  
Angels

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## ACT II

### THE QUEST

**Daughter**

They paid my father.

**Interviewer**

Your father was the captain? Of  
the ship?

**Daughter**

To take them.

**Interviewer**

Who were they?

**Daughter**

South. South.

**Interviewer**

You were sailing south?

**Daughter**

She was afraid.

**Interviewer**

You were afraid?

**Daughter**

No. She was. The ship.  
The ship was afraid. She told me.

**Interviewer**

How did she tell you?

**Daughter**

She -  
Was singing.

### THE JOURNEY

**Captain**

This endeavour  
It is not driven by good  
There is a malodour about it

**Daughter**

But our passengers  
They are not dangerous  
They are not monsters

**Captain**

Not to look at  
Not on their skin  
not in themselves  
But in their quest  
Monstrous!  
No good will come of this

**Daughter**

Father!  
Why are they quiet?  
Father, are they sad?  
And where will we take them,  
Father?  
  
Father, where we go,  
is it not dangerous?  
And what is there, Father?

**Captain**

Please forgive me!  
If only there was another way!

**Daughter**

Father, they are sad!

**Captain**

Worse than sad  
They are proud

**Daughter**

And why so quiet?

**Captain**

Obsessed by ambition  
Blinded with pride

**Daughter**

And where will we take them,  
Father?

**Captain**

'Just sail south' they say

**Daughter**

And is it not dangerous, Father?

**Captain**

It is perilous, my child.

**Daughter**

So why do we take this journey?

**Captain**

If only there was another way!  
I fear no good will come of this!

**Daughter**

Oh Father, why did you agree?

**Captain**

Child, we must eat!  
Please forgive me!

**Daughter**

What awaits us?  
Oh Father, what is there?

**Captain**

No good will come of this!  
How far south say I  
'More south than ever before'  
they say  
'South until there is no more'

I know their type –  
Their pride and pomp  
Is far from eyes  
But as great  
As any emperor or prince.

They are not sad  
They grow sick from the waves  
They are bewitched  
By moans of the sails  
And the bowstrings of the hull  
No good will come of this!

### THE SHIP

**CHORUS**

*Here be dragons*

Southway  
Deep southway  
Lean and swell.  
Heave on!  
We are going  
Where no wooden being  
Has ever been.  
Heave on!  
Wooden me.  
Sleep and dream.  
Swell and lean  
Fleet of keel.  
Ohhh sure!  
Heave on sea.

Lean and swell.  
Ohh sure  
Deep southway!  
Heave on sea  
Fleet of keel!  
Hold me!  
Deep south way  
Ohh sure!  
  
Sky  
Sleep and dream

### THE PHILOSOPHER'S DREAM

**Natural Philosopher**

Who are you?  
Where did you come from??  
You  
You are not real  
I imagine you

**The Ship**

Do you know where you are  
going?

**Natural Philosopher**

No, that is the point.  
You are not real  
You are a fantasy.

**The Ship**

Why are you going?

**Natural Philosopher**

I am not seeking  
I am merely going in hope  
When I was small  
There was a door under the stairs  
In shadow, locked.

**The Ship**

And you were not allowed to  
open it?

**Natural Philosopher**

No, not even that,  
It wasn't even spoken of.  
It was as if the door was not there;  
As if I could only see it.  
But I could hear little things on  
the other side.  
Whisperings

And I would knock and gently call  
Hello

Hello  
What are you in there?

Just murmurs  
Just whispers  
But I grew older

And learned to ignore the door  
Until one night

A wind blew up  
all through the house

I was awakened  
A low moaning

From downstairs  
So down I went

The low sound  
Was wind blowing in keyhole  
Of the forgotten door

As if something had been lost  
As if coming to awareness

And I placed my mouth on the  
keyhole

And blew,  
And I blew gently

**The Ship**  
Why?

**Natural Philosopher**

I do not know  
But as I blew  
The keylock clicked  
The doorframe  
Unstuck  
A sound  
Like tearing a bandage  
From an ancient wound  
And the door  
That ignored door  
Swung slowly open...  
Swung slowly open...  
*Tardius aperta*

**THE LIST OF LATIN NAMES**

*Eukaryota*  
*Eucampia antarctica*  
  
*Heterokonta*  
*Hemiaulaceae*  
*Bacillariophyta*  
  
*Eukaryota animalia*  
*Ihlea racovitzai*  
  
*Urchodata*  
*Thalicea*  
*Salpida*  
  
*Animalia*  
*Balaenoptera intermedia*  
  
*Animalia*  
*Chordata*  
*Mammalia*  
*Balaenoptera*  
*Artiodactyla*  
  
*Animalia*  
*Chordata*  
*Mammalia*  
*Primates*  
*Haplorhini*  
*Homininae.*  
  
*Homo*  
*Simiiformes Hominidae.*  
  
*Haplorhini*  
*Mammalia*  
*Chordata*  
*Homininae*  
  
*Hominini.*  
*Homo stultus*  
*Antarcticus*  
  
*Antarctica.*

**THE CARTOGRAPHER'S DREAM**

**The Ship**

Ohhh Sure  
Ohhh Sure  
Ocean  
Shore

**Cartographer**

Who is there? Who speaks?

**The Ship**

Ohhh Sure

**Cartographer**

I cannot see you -

**The Ship**

Am  
All  
Around You

**Cartographer**

You speak as you creak

**The Ship**

And hear  
Through ears of wood.  
Man  
What seek You?

**Cartographer**

If you can hear through thick  
cabin walls  
I will tell you of the door in my  
house  
Has ever been closed.  
I am small  
In the house of my father  
Our family have lived here  
for centuries  
I walk these hallways  
I know these stones  
I draw their lines  
In my mind  
  
The cracks on the paving stones  
The stairways creak  
The library shelves are teak  
Mahogany, rosewood,  
tiny glass panes  
In the mullion  
bubbles trapping time  
All this I know  
All this I have  
Laid out in my mind  
  
But here  
Underneath the staircase  
A small door  
it has no handle  
No keyhole,  
It can never be opened  
My little feet push it  
To my mother I say  
'Mother,  
what is behind that small door?'  
To my sister I say 'what is behind  
that little door?'  
'Nothing' they say 'there is nothing  
Turn your mind  
Pay no heed'

Years and years  
Every room  
Every cupboard every corner  
Of my home I knew  
But the door, it remained  
Unopened.

What was being denied  
It swelled in my skull  
Hard deep in the night  
I crept down the stairs  
The door  
Dumb  
But in the silence...

'No  
I am not here' it said

And I kicked it in  
Splintered timber  
And what was there you might  
ask.

There was  
A coldness...

**THE CREATION OF THE CONTINENT**

Lines  
of fault  
Lines of folding  
Fault lines at fault  
Lines of fault  
Fold, fold lines  
Lines of folding  
  
The ocean floor  
Folded and creased  
A bed freshly made  
A blanket turned  
Sheet taut  
  
Fault lines.  
Lines of fault.  
Fold lines  
Folded and creased.  
  
Unseen continents slide, skim on  
softness  
Rub  
Ground  
Glide on slime  
Heavy ocean  
Liquid metal beneath  
They move apart  
And let the magma through  
They collide  
And crumble into mountains  
They roll their shoulders  
Out of the sea  
They squat  
They hunch  
They lump  
They tear themselves  
They cry in the deep  
They move  
At fault  
Folding  
The earth is folding the seabed  
wrinkling  
Floating  
Sinking  
Far below  
The universe of minerals  
At war with itself.

**THE THEOLOGIAN'S DREAM**

**Theologian**

*O Euchari in leta via*  
*O Euchari,*  
*in leta via ambulasti*  
*ubi cum Filio Dei mansisti,*  
*illum tangendo*  
*et miracula eius que fecit videndo*

**The Ship**

Ohh  
Sure

**Chorus**

*Tu eum perfecte amasti*  
*cum sodales tui exterriti erant,*  
*pro eo quod homines erant,*  
*nec possibilitatem habebant*  
*bona perfecte intueri.*

**Theologian**

I feel your presence  
I sometimes feel  
Out here, on the sea

That I am not here  
As if my body had gone far away  
As if I am still at home -  
There was a door

**The Ship**

Door  
Door

**Theologian**

A door  
In our house  
When I was small  
A locked door

**The Ship**

Locked  
Door

**Theologian**

And with this door  
I always felt.. I...  
I felt I knew what was in there,  
Somehow; and many years I went  
back...

I found the door -  
It was wide open

**ETERNAL CITY**

**Theologian**

*Vanitate*  
*Nihil*  
*Urbs aeterna*  
*Caelesti civitate*  
*Sanctificetur nomen Tuum*

Vain glory  
Empty  
Eternal City  
*adveniat regnum Tuum*  
*fiat voluntas Tua*  
*sicut in coelo*  
*et in terra*

What lies at the end of the earth?  
Quod est at finem?

What fills the last space?

All rivers of the soul, spirit flow

And water gardens there

Towers of gold

Of Diamonds

From which light shines

*Vanitate*

*Nihil*

*Urbs aeterna*

*Caelesti civitate*

*Sanctificetur nomen Tuum*

What fills the last space?

*Quod spatium implet novissimis*

What is there at the end?

Streets of prayer

Rods of song

Contemplation, nearness

Towers of gold, of light

Propinquum,

*Vanitate*

*Nihil*

*Urbs aeterna*

*Caelesti civitate*

*Sanctificetur nomen Tuum*



## NEARING CIRCUMPOLAR

### Daughter

There Slender  
On the horizon. A sliver  
It is not here yet, but I feel it

### Interviewer

The ice?

### Daughter

Here  
In the space between my eyelid  
and my eye Yes, a wall of ice  
Enveloping blankness We near it  
It is just over the lip, over the edge  
of the world.

### The Ship

Ohhhh  
Sure

### Chorus

Deep southway  
Heave on sea  
Lean and swell  
Your breath in my sails  
Do not drag me down  
We are going where  
No wooden being  
Has ever been.  
Sleep and dream.  
Hold me deep sea.  
Wooden me  
Southbound heave  
Do not drag me down  
Heave on.  
Your skin is cold.  
Your thoughts in my belly.  
Wrench back.  
Hold me.  
Twist out.  
Stretch back.  
Creak spine.  
Ohh sure.  
Lean and swell.  
Heave on sea  
Hold me.  
Ohh sure.  
Sleep and dream.  
Lean and swell.  
Hold me.

### Daughter

So many voices. As we got colder.  
More voices.

### Interviewer

The ship?

### Daughter

Yes. Her. And more. Like the stars,  
but – underneath us.

## THE SALP AND THE KRILL

### Salp

Oor  
Oor and gloob  
Oor and gloob and oor  
Pool  
Pool and Spoor and Lure  
Gruel  
Gruel and Cruel and Duel  
More

More  
More

Me and me and me

Aboolp  
Gaboopl  
Kagaboolp  
Bookagaboolp

Alp  
Abalp  
Gabalp  
Kagabalp  
Sookagabalp

Salp salp  
Me and me and me and me

### Krill

Iskeel  
Ikseel  
Chitter chatter click and tick  
Ikseel  
Bicker clicker bicker click  
Iskeel  
Me and me and me and me

### Salp

Oor and glob  
And gruel and cruel  
And duel and pool and lure  
More and more and more  
Duel and cruel and  
Gruel and duel and pool and spoor  
And lure and oor and glob and oor  
and more, more

### Krill

Iskeel  
Ikseel  
Chitter chatter click and tick  
Ikseel  
Bicker clicker bicker click

### Salp

Oor and glob  
And gruel and cruel  
And duel and pool and lure  
More and more and more  
Duel and cruel and  
Gruel and duel and pool and spoor  
And lure and oor and glob and oor  
and more, more

### Krill

Iskeel  
Ikseel  
Chitter chatter click and tick  
Ikseel  
Bicker clicker bicker click  
Iskeel  
Me and me and me and me  
Me and me, more and more

## THE GALAXY BENEATH ME

### The Ship

Sleep and dream.  
Swell and lean.  
Southway  
Deep

### The Daughter

Solitude  
True solitude  
The night

Black  
Horizons melt sky and sea  
Somewhere...  
Solitude

Milky Way  
Smear over all  
Oh shatter of stars  
Crashing in vastness  
Far from the lights of home  
Oh see -  
There is no soul awake to see  
The shimmer of the night sky  
Hanging in the water  
The multitude of lights  
Swimming

Tumble of starlight down among  
us  
To sleep in our darkness  
Solitude  
Underfoot  
Underdeck  
A million tiny creatures  
Underspace  
A galaxy  
beneath me

## THE ICE AND THE SHIP'S LAMENT

### The Ship

Ohhhh  
Sure  
Fleet of keel  
Heave on wooden me  
Sleep and dream.  
Swell and lean.  
South way, deep southway  
As ever been  
No woode n being  
Where going are we?  
Sea heave.  
Ohh sure.

### Interviewer

What do you mean, you were  
'still'?

### Daughter

In the ice.  
Pressing, pressing. Creak, crush.  
She cried.

### Interviewer

So, the ship was frozen, stuck in  
the ice?

### Daughter

It hurt her.  
Rubbing, stretching, she cried

Is where this chart says  
It should be  
Nothing  
These islands here  
Were nowhere to be seen  
And according to your chart  
We should be seeing land  
See?  
We are here  
This vast shoreline it should be  
There  
But when we cast our eyes  
What do we see?  
What do we see?

### Daughter

I see ice

### Captain

Yes ice

### Daughter

Ice at first  
The size of statues  
The size of churches  
Then all around us

### Captain

There is no ice  
On this chart

### Theologian

This may be  
A test

### Natural Philosopher

Can you explain  
Why there is no concurrence  
Between map  
And the world?

### Cartographer

It is true  
That is to say  
It is false  
There is no chart  
This is no map  
There never was a map  
I never found it  
I drew it myself.

### Captain

So  
We are here  
As the ice grows thick  
at the end of the earth  
with no knowledge  
No plan  
And no course

### Cartographer

You would never have come  
None of you  
No idea can be uncovered  
Without risk!

### Captain

Enough!  
We turn about

### Cartographer

No soul would follow  
When I said we must find new  
lands it is act of faith can't you see  
But if I invent  
A new map  
The dream seemed real  
It seduced you  
Your inner voices

## THERE NEVER WAS A SOUTHERN LAND

### Captain

I have followed your chart  
Religiously  
We have followed the course  
You laid down  
But for nothing  
Nothing



**Captain**

This vessel is mine  
We turn back!  
False pretences end today  
This place is no place for human beings

**Cartographer**

Can't you see?  
We stay the course  
We have come too far  
We see it through!  
It is an act of faith!  
We can't go back  
Can't you see?  
The point is not the map  
The point is belief!  
We turn about

**Captain**

This stretch of waste  
This air  
These terrifying nights  
This is no place for human beings

**All**

Strange and beautiful/  
But this is not a place for human beings/  
We must go on! We stay the course!  
We must find new lands,  
Can't you see?/  
Hearken, Ohh sure, wooden you!  
Can you explain why there is no concurrence between the map and the world??  
We must turn about now, in our bones we know!

**Daughter**

No!  
  
Ohh sure!  
Heave on!

**Chorus**

Lean and swell  
Heave on sea  
Southway  
Wrench back  
Twist out  
Stretch back  
Creak spine  
Wrench back  
Twist out  
Stretch back  
Creak spine

**THE SPLINTERING****Daughter**

And she was splintering. The ship.

**Interviewer**

While you were on board?

**Daughter**

No. We were on the ice.

**Interviewer**

All of you?

**Daughter**

Not my father. He was fighting.  
With the map man.  
She broke into pieces and was sucked down.

**Interviewer**

And your father? Did your father-?

**Daughter**

He went.  
He went with her.

**CHORUS**

Ice  
*Crystallos*  
*Gelum*  
*Glacies*  
  
*Anguish*  
*Bind, connect*  
  
*Freeze, blind, press, squeeze, freeze*  
Ice

**HEAR THIS****Captain**

I curse you  
I curse you all  
You, with your certainty  
Your fantasies  
Your vainglory  
  
I curse you  
For ever  
I curse you all  
You who made my ship  
A hive of lies  
You, with your schemes, your dreams, your pride  
Hear this  
  
Hear this  
Hear this  
Let it curl through time  
From a man  
Who simply tried to plough the sea and stay alive  
Who had no choice, who now dies  
  
I curse you  
I, a mindless servant  
Curse you  
You, with your beliefs that torture  
Your maps to nowhere  
Are your maps to hell!  
  
Damnation to you all  
I curse you  
Damnation  
For ever  
For all time  
You and your grandiose dreams  
I curse you  
For all time  
  
See where you brought us  
I curse you  
For all time  
  
All those among us  
And those who are still to come!

**ACT III  
INTO THE DARK****Daughter**

Which way?

**Natural Philosopher**

Radius everywhere circumference  
nowhere

**Daughter**

So which way?

**Natural Philosopher**

This way

**Daughter**

They are following us. They are with us.

**EVERYWHERE, NOWHERE****Natural Philosopher**

Beauty  
As in marble  
Japonica  
and pearl  
The innocence of brides,  
benignity of age;  
majesty of Justice  
Spotlessness  
Panic to the soul  
Horrors ghastly  
Terror pulsating.  
Gliding ghostliness, silence of death  
Clouds of wonderment and dread,  
Secret of the spell;  
Strange glory  
From that pallor of the dead,  
we borrow the shroud. We wrap them.  
A snowy mantle round phantoms;  
All ghosts rising in a milk-fog-  
king of terrors on his pallid horse.  
rollings of a milky sea;  
rustling frosts of mountains;  
shiftings of the windrowed  
snows;  
this invisible world seems formed  
in love,  
the invisible, formed in fright.  
By its indefiniteness it shadows  
forth  
the voids of the universe,  
and stabs us from behind  
annihilation,  
absence of colour;  
and at the same time  
the concrete of colours;  
all other hues are deceits,  
laid on from without;  
so Nature paints like a harlot,  
whose allurements cover nothing.  
Nothing but the charnel-house  
within;  
and when we consider that the  
mystical cosmetic  
which produces every one of her  
hues,

the great principle of light,  
forever remains colourless in  
itself,  
the universe lies before us  
a leper.

**SOMEWHERE WHICH IS  
NOT FOR US****Daughter and Theologian**

Somewhere which is not for us  
Somewhere we should not be  
This empty heaven  
Our disease  
And the door between the two...  
  
Nowhere which is not for us  
Nowhere where we should not be  
This teeming world  
Our disease  
And the door between the two...  
  
*The Theologian stops.*

**Daughter**

Come, we must go on.  
  
It is death to be still

**Theologian**

This is as far as I go  
  
I thought  
I was a fool  
I thought  
There was an end  
There is no end  
  
There is no end  
  
One  
Simply  
Stops.

**THE UNDERWATERFALL****Chorus**

*Tumble under tears*  
*In unending dark*  
  
*At the end of the dark*  
*Unseen*  
*Ocean*  
*Sea of salt*  
*Flow*  
  
*Waterfall*  
*Source of tears*  
*Like a heart and lungs*  
*Pumping*  
  
*Large waterfall*  
*Reaching out to all the oceans*  
*Renewing life*  
*Nourishment*  
  
*Wrath, Renewal*  
*Unlimited tide*  
*Connecting to life*  
*Fear*

## EPILOGUE THE TURNING AWAY

**Daughter**

But I can only say what I saw.  
Of course, it may have been  
delusions, I'm not saying that,  
maybe my mind was playing  
tricks on me I don't know, I was  
alone, I was –

**Interviewer**

But you saw  
Or you believe you saw A  
What did you call it? A creature?  
Or person?

**Daughter**

Yes  
But this is so hard to say This  
place  
All things begin there  
I was going forward in my life But  
going back  
To something from before

**Interviewer**

But how is that possible? How  
did you  
Of all of them, survive?

**Interviewer**

And you say you are from long  
ago?

**Daughter**

Yes. I am sorry I confuse you. But  
the places where all this All this  
Stuff  
Fall away.  
I was there  
I have seen the answer

**Interviewer**

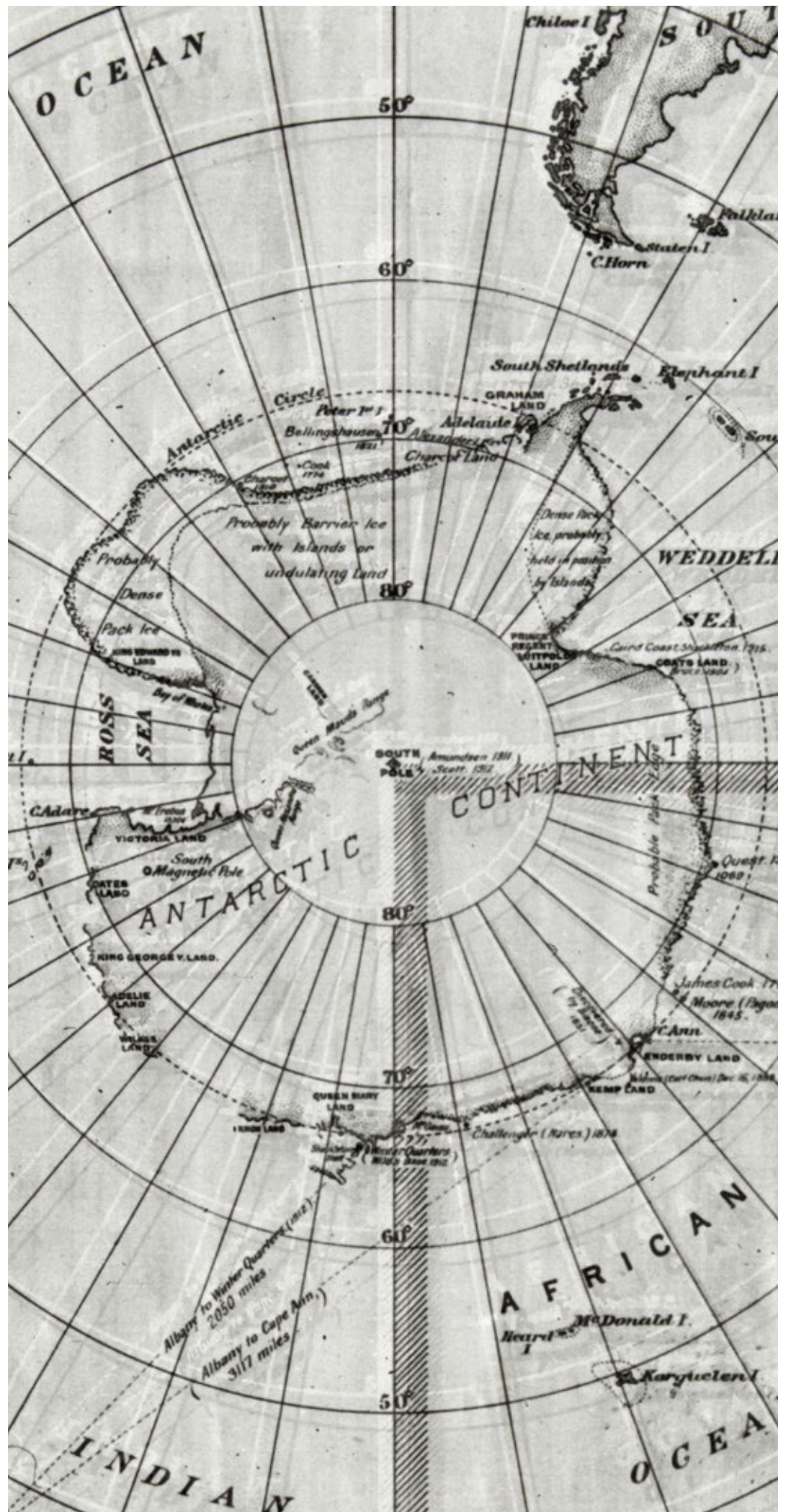
And what does the answer look  
like?

**Daughter**

It doesn't look like anything.  
It doesn't anything like this.  
(gesturing all around her)

It wasn't this.  
It was...  
The opposite.

**END**





# ANTARCTICA

## THE ARTISTS

Sydney Chamber Opera and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Music by Mary Finsterer

Libretto by Tom Wright

Conductor: Jack Symonds

Sound Designer: Bob Scott

The Daughter: Chloe Lankshear

The Theologian: Jessica O'Donoghue

The Natural Philosopher: Anna Fraser

The Cartographer: Michael Petruccelli

The Captain: Simon Lobelson

Spoken voices

The Daughter: Eve Kreutz

Interviewer: Tom Wright



# ANTARCTICA

## THE ARTISTS

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### MARY FINSTERER MUSIC

Mary Finsterer stands as one of Australia's preeminent composers. Her musical contributions have resonated not only in her homeland but have garnered international acclaim in Europe, Britain, the USA and Canada.

Throughout her career, Finsterer has earned many prestigious awards, including representation at five International Society for Contemporary Music Festivals, the highly coveted Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize, numerous Australian Art Music Awards and commissions from acclaimed ensembles such as Ensemble Intercontemporain, Arditti String Quartet, Ensemble Modern and Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne.

Mary's artistic evolution is marked by versatility. Earlier compositions resonate with the influences of 20th-century pioneers such as Lutoslawski, Berio and Andriessen while her later style fuses elements of contemporary practice with early music techniques. This ability to adapt to different musical styles and genres was noted by eminent musicologist Richard Toop, who likened her to Stravinsky for her 'remarkable capacity to adjust the basic characteristics of her music to very different circumstances, without any sense of compromise.' The legacy of her compositions is etched into two compilations, a double disc entitled *Altered States* encompassing her earlier work and *Pendulum*, which showcases her later compositions. Both compilations have been released on the ABC Classics|Universal label.

Also working in the field of screen music, Finsterer composed alongside renowned composer Marco Beltrami for the Hollywood blockbuster *Die Hard 4*. Her score for Shirley Barrett's feature film *South Solitary*, found recognition in the Film Critics Circle Australia Awards in 2010 and has also been released on the ABC Classics|Universal label.

In 2017 Finsterer's inaugural opera, *Biographica*, was premiered by Sydney Chamber Opera and Ensemble Offspring at the Sydney Festival and enjoyed a sold-out season. Described as 'inventive, engaging, stimulating, and profoundly moving,' it earned the title of an 'outstanding new opera that deserves a permanent place in the repertory.'

In 2018 Finsterer was the composer-in-residence at the Canberra International Music Festival where her new work for viola d'amore and cello entitled *Ignis* was premiered. Finsterer received two Australian Apra|Amcos Art Music Awards in as many years: Art Music Award 2018 – Vocal Work of the Year for her opera, *Biographica*, and Art Music Award 2019 – Instrumental Work of the Year for *Ignis*.

Finsterer's latest chamber opera, *Antarctica*, was premiered by Sydney Chamber Opera and Asko|Schönberg Ensemble at the Holland Festival in 2022 and Sydney Festival in 2023 to critical acclaim and a sold-out season. It was enthusiastically described as 'ambitious and exquisite,' 'an achievement of extraordinary beauty' and 'an astonishing new vision of what contemporary Australian opera can achieve.' As with *Biographica*, the libretto was written by Tom Wright.

Finsterer was the composer-in-residence for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2023. Her final work, *Stabat Mater*, was performed in a sold-out concert and described as 'the heart of the programme.'

Finsterer is published by the esteemed publishing house, Schott Music, and holds the position of CALE Creative Fellow at the College of Arts, Law and Education at the University of Tasmania.



### TOM WRIGHT LIBRETTO

Tom Wright is one of Australia's most respected performance makers and writers for the stage. He has served as an Artistic Associate at Belvoir since 2016 and previously held the roles of Artistic Associate (2004–2008) and Associate Director (2008–2012) at Sydney Theatre Company.

As an opera librettist, Tom and his creative collaborator composer Mary Finsterer have been described by Australian Book Review as "two of the most important creative voices working in Australian opera today". Their first opera, *Biographica*, premiered at the Sydney Festival in 2017 and won the 2018 APRA AMCOS Art Music Award for Best Vocal Work. Their follow-up production, *Antarctica*, a co-production between Asko Schönberg and Sydney Chamber Opera, premiered at the 2022 Holland Festival.

As an actor and director, Tom has worked at Melbourne Theatre Company, STCSA, Sydney Theatre Company, Playbox, La Mama, Company B, Anthill, Gilgul, Mene Mene, Bell Shakespeare Company, Chunky Move, Black Swan Theatre, Chamber Made Opera and the Adelaide, Sydney, Edinburgh, Vienna, Perth and Melbourne Festivals.

He has written extensively for the theatre, with titles including *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Castle*, *Ubu*, *This Is a True Story*, *Lorilei*, *Medea*, *Babes in the Wood*, *Puntilla and His Man Matti*, *Tense Dave*, *The Odyssey*, *The Lost Echo*, *Criminology* (with Lally Katz), *Tales From the Vienna Woods*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Women of Troy*, *The War of the Roses*, *The Duel*, *Baal*, *Optimism*, *Oresteia*, *On the Misconception of Oedipus*, *The Histrionic*, *Black Diggers*, *The Good Person of Szechuan*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Picnic At Hanging Rock* and *The Real & Imagined History of the Elephant Man*. Productions of his work have been mounted in the Netherlands, Pakistan, Belgium, China, New Zealand, Canada, the US and the UK.

Tom's adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *The Lost Echo*, won five Helpmann awards in 2007, including Best Play. His adaptation of Shakespeare's *History Plays*, *The War of the Roses*, won six Helpmanns in 2009, including Best Production. *Black Diggers* won the 2015 NSW Premier's Literary Award for Best Play.



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## JACK SYMONDS

### CONDUCTOR

Jack Symonds is a composer, conductor and pianist, and Artistic Director of Sydney Chamber Opera. He studied composition at the Royal College of Music, London under Kenneth Hesketh and at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music where he received the University Medal. His stage works represent “*a striking and impressive new operatic voice*” (Sydney Morning Herald) and he is “one of those performers who seemingly can play anything” (Australian Book Review).

Jack Symonds specialises in the performance of new music, including conducting and playing major stage works by Britten, Benjamin, Janáček, Dusapin, Kurtág, Saariaho, Maxwell Davies, Kancheli, Rihm & Styles, often in their Australian premieres. He has also given the world premieres of Gyger's *Fly Away Peter & Oscar* and *Lucinda*, Finsterer's *Antarctica* (with Asko|Schönberg Ensemble) & *Biographica*, Ricketson's *The Howling Girls* and Smetanin's *Mayakovsky*.

His recent performances have shown “masterly musicianship, projecting an engrossingly cogent understanding of complexities and expressive purpose” (SMH), the ability to “draw an emotional throughline so clear that every unexpected melodic or dynamic turn feels comfortable and logical” (Timeout), and is “impressive as ever at the piano, creating a vital palette of carefully graduated tone colours.” (Backtrack).

He has performed in and made work for the Holland, Tokyo, Sydney, Melbourne & Adelaide Festivals, Dark MOFO, Sydney Opera House, Biennale of Sydney, Carriageworks, Melbourne Recital Centre, National Gallery of Australia, among others.

Significant composition premieres include *The Shape of the Earth* after Patrick White's *Voss*, *Climbing Toward Midnight*, a chamber opera re-imagining the second act of Wagner's *Parsifal*, the John Bishop commission for the 2021 Adelaide Festival, a piece for New York's JACK Quartet, the Dostoevsky opera *Notes from Underground*, works for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian String Quartet, Ensemble Offspring, Australia Piano Quartet, cellists Patrick Murphy & Timo-Veikko Valve, vocalists Jane Sheldon, Jessica Aszodi, Mitchell Riley, Emily Edmonds & Anna Fraser, the Streeton Trio, ANAM, Phoenix Central Park, a viola d'amore concerto for BIFEM, the Composers Ensemble at Dartington where he studied with Detlev Glanert and a 2015 concert series curated around his music by Affinity Collective which included three premieres.



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## CHLOE LANKSHEAR

### THE DAUGHTER

Chloe Lankshear is a versatile coloratura soprano who made her professional operatic debut in 2018 with South Australia State Opera in their production of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*. She has since been a featured soloist with some of the country's finest organisations including The Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Haydn Ensemble, Pinchgut Opera, The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra and most recently her debut with Sydney Symphony Orchestra under Maestro Stephen Layton at the Sydney Opera House (2023).

Her voice has been described by reviewers as “... evenly polished with glowing brilliance...”. In 2021 Chloe was named the inaugural Taryn Fiebig Scholar with Pinchgut Opera and was featured in their film ‘A delicate fire’ as well as their productions of *Medee* (2022), *Platee* (2021) and this year as Fortuna in Lengrizi's *Giustino*. At Bermagui Four Winds Festival and Adelaide Festival she also sang the title role of ‘Acis and Galatea’ alongside co-recipient of the Scholar program, Louis Hurley. In 2022 Chloe was a finalist at the Bel Canto singing competition and was awarded the Decca prize by Maestro Richard Bonyngne and in 2023 she was the First Prize winner and

People's Choice Award recipient of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Oratorio Competition. Chloe made her international oratorio debut in Lübeck, Germany in 2023 and has since gained a reputation as an upcoming soloist in North Germany across baroque and modern programs. Chloe will return in 2024 to Adelaide Festival, and for programs with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and Sydney Chamber Opera.



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## JESSICA O'DONOGHUE

### THE THEOLOGIAN

Jessica studied her BMus at Sydney University, Diploma of Opera at VCA & has over 25 years professional performing experience. She was a Young Artist with Opera Queensland and spent four months as a guest Young Artist at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden (London) where she worked with some of the world's best singers and conductors. She was recipient of the 2021 APRA/AMCOS Art Music awards for 'Performance of the Year – Notated Composition' for her role in 'Commute' for Sydney Chamber Opera, a Fellowship from AIM for 'Outstanding Achievements & Services to the Australian Music & Performing Arts Industry' as well as a 2021 Women In Music Mentorship from Australian Independent Records Association.

Jessica appears frequently with Sydney Chamber Opera Company and is a Principal Artist and Co-Artistic Director of The Song Company. She works extensively with leading composers on new compositions and most recently premiered *Three Marys* (Andree Greenwell) at the Sydney Opera House in 2023 and will premier Jack Symonds' new opera *Gilgamesh* with Sydney Chamber Opera in collaboration with Opera Australia in September 2024.

Jessica freelances regularly for various events, projects and festivals including guest performances at Carols in the Domain and singing the UK National Anthem at the SCG for the Ashes Cricket Series. She has featured at all the major Australian festivals including Sydney Festival, Vivid Sydney and Dark MOFO as well as multiple international festivals in Europe and Asia. She has featured as a soloist at Phoenix Central Park's Behind Doors Series and HALO series as well as The Sydney Opera House's digital season.

Jessica has released two solo albums to critical acclaim. *Emerge* released in 2017 'A mercurial talent, Jessica has created songs with real depth. Listening to the album is a full-bodied experience: theatrical and intimate, operatic and haunting, raw and urgent, at once dark and contemplative and inspiring.' – Ashleigh Wilson (The Australian) and 'Rise Up' released by record label Art As Catharsis in 2022, "One of the most enrapturing vocal albums of the year. Absolutely breathtaking" - Dario (The Progspace). 'Rise Up' was a finalist for 'Album of the Year' in the 2022 ProgSpace Awards (International).

Jessica is currently completing her PhD in Composition at Sydney Conservatorium of Music under supervisors Liza Lim and Paul Stanhope where she will compose a chamber opera titled 'Menarche' which will be fully staged at the Parade Theatre in October 2024.



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## ANNA FRASER

### THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHER

Anna Fraser has gained a reputation as a versatile Sydney based soprano. Specialising in the colourful and expressive interpretation of early and contemporary repertoire, Anna performs in a myriad of traditional and exploratory programming in Australia and abroad. Equally at home as a dramatist on stage, Anna is a strong exponent of music education, expertly demonstrating the versatility and virtuosity of a cappella singing to inspire and guide the next generation of young vocal artists and composers. Anna was a core ensemble member of the Song Company for over a decade and regularly performs with a number of Australia's professional ensembles: Pinchgut Opera, Sydney Chamber Opera, Bach Akademie Australia, Cantillation, Australian Haydn Ensemble, Australian Classical and Romantic Orchestra, Salut! Baroque, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Ensemble Offspring, to name a few. Anna has collaborated with international ensembles such as The Wallfisch Band, AskolSchönberg Ensemble and the New Zealand String Quartet.

Anna has been performing with Pinchgut Opera since 2004 with notable roles in productions of *L'Orfeo*, *Dardanus*, *L'Ormino*, *Castor et Pollux* and *Médée*. With Sydney Chamber Opera, performing with the Company since 2017 in staged works and recital programs, Anna most recently premiered Mary Finsterer's acclaimed opera *Antarctica*, an international collaboration with AskolSchönberg for the Holland Festival (2022), and Sydney Festival (2023).

Anna is currently a Sydney Conservatorium of Music Doctorate of Musical Arts candidate with the Historical Performance unit and is a research assistant with the Australian Research Council project *Shock of the Old: Rediscovering the Sounds of Bel Canto 1700-1900*. The collaborative research work aims to tap into emulative and cyclical investigative processes of historical vocal practices with the aim to ascertain how historical sound effects and colours were achieved in practical terms and how we can actively utilise them in modern creative practices.

Photography: Aleksandra Walker





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## **MICHAEL PETRUCCELLI**

### **THE CARTOGRAPHER**

Recognised as having a “beautifully elegant” and “golden-toned voice”, Michael Petrucelli is one of Australia’s most versatile operatic tenors.

A graduate of The University of Melbourne, Michael began his career as a Developing Artist with Victorian Opera and the Melba Opera Trust as recipient of RJ and AF Hamer Opera Scholarship.

Following his studies, Michael has performed principal operatic roles with Australia’s leading opera companies and for German opera companies. Highlights include - For Opera Australia: Stephen Goldring in *Sydney Opera House, The Opera (The Eighth Wonder)*; Pedro in *Two Weddings, One Bride*; and Goro in the touring production of *Madama Butterfly*. For Pinchgut Opera: Jason in Charpentier’s *Médée* and Aquilio in Vivaldi’s *Farnace*. For Sydney chamber Opera: The Cartographer in *Antarctica*. For Victorian Opera: Arturo Ravenclaw in *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Beppe in *I Pagliacci*; and Koki in Deborah Cheetham’s opera *Parrwang Lifts the Sky*. For West Australian Opera: Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*. For Opera Frankfurt: The Young Seaman in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and Remendado in Barrie Kosky’s famous production of *Carmen*. For The Hessisches Staatstheater: Tamino in *The Magic Flute*.

Earlier this year, Michael made two important role debuts to critical acclaim: Septimius in Handel’s *Theodora* at the Sydney Opera House, the first co-production between Opera Australia and Pinchgut Opera; and The Stranger in the world premiere of Sir Jonathan Mills’ *Eucalyptus*, a collaboration between Opera Australia, Victorian Opera and the Perth Festival. Later in the year he will reprise the role of The Stranger (*Eucalyptus*) with seasons in Melbourne and Brisbane, he will cover the leading tenor role, Tamino in Opera Australia’s Melbourne season of *The Magic Flute* and he will perform as tenor soloist for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s *Messiah* which will be held at Hamer Hall and toured to regional Victoria.



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## **DR. SIMON LOBELSON**

### **THE CAPTAIN**

With a distinguished career that has spanned 4 continents and 90 operatic roles from the baroque to the newly composed, high respect as a pedagogue and superlative press reviews, Dr. Simon Lobelson has established himself as one of the most versatile baritones of his generation. Since graduating with first-class honours from Sydney University and the Royal College of Music with distinction, Simon has worked extensively as a soloist in Australia, the Middle East, Asia, the UK and Europe, with companies such as The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English National Opera, Garsington Opera, Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, Pinchgut Opera, Sydney Chamber Opera, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Australian Haydn Ensemble, English Chamber Orchestra, Israel Camerata, ASKO-Schönberg Ensemble and the Lucerne Festival, under such conductors as Pierre Boulez, Simon Halsey, Charles Dutoit, Paul McCreesh, Reinbert De Leeuw and Richard Bonyngé, and recorded for Chandos, Toccata and ABC Classics. Roles have included Amfortas, Escamillo, Rigoletto, Alberich, Nick Shadow, Marcello, Ford, Germont, Figaro, Michele and Don Alfonso. A champion of contemporary music, and creator of copious world premiere operatic roles, his performances in *Metamorphosis* for Opera Australia attracted outstanding press reviews and a Helpmann Award nomination.

His research specialises in contemporary opera and its associated vocalism, and he was invited to present his research at the 10th International Congress of Vocal Teachers in Vienna, as well as for the Musicological Society of Australia. Simon is also a full-time lecturer in voice and opera at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, adjudicator for the 2024 IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition, the Australian Concerto and Vocal Competition and the Sydney Eisteddfod and has given numerous masterclasses in both Australia and China.





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