

The Cooperative

presents

SĀVITRĪ

A chamber opera in one act by

Gustav Holst

We perform today on the land of the Gadigal people of the
Eora Nation.

We offer our utmost respect to the custodians of this land,
their Elders past and present, and acknowledge that this
always is, always was, and always will be Aboriginal Land.

Sovereignty was never ceded.

About The Cooperative

The Cooperative is a young Sydney opera company with a passion for social justice.

Our mission is four-fold:

To provide performance opportunities for young and emerging artists

To perform politically and/or socially relevant productions

To increase opera's accessibility; and,

To use opera to benefit the world around us.

Our auditions are open to all, and our cast comprised of experienced and young artists, those well versed in opera, and those making their operatic debut here. All our performances aim to remove the financial barriers of opera, with entry on a pay-as-you-feel scale, and all our profits taken at the door go to a charity or charities connected to the ideas we've explored onstage.

We believe that theatre has a unique power to illumine, explore, and challenge injustices within our society in a public dreaming. We have the privilege of performing an incredibly beautiful art form, and it is our duty to use that privilege for the benefit of our global society.

We passionately believe that art can, and *should*, change the world.

To learn more about us, please visit <https://www.thecooperativeopera.org> , email thecooperativesydney@gmail.com, or find us on Facebook (The Cooperative) or Instagram @theco.operative

To help fund this, and future, productions, please visit <https://australianculturalfund.org.au/projects/the-cooperative-season-2021/>

In 2021, The Cooperative presents

February

Sāvitṛī

Gustav Holst

March

Orfeo ed Euridice

Christoph Willibald Gluck

Ranieri de' Calzabigi

April

Iphigénie en Tauride

Christoph Willibald Gluck

Nicolas-François Guillard

June

Tosca

Giacomo Puccini

Giuseppe Giacosa & Luigi Illica

July

Le nozze di Figaro

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Lorenzo da Ponte

August

Její pastorkyňa (Jenůfa)

Leoš Janáček

Please visit www.thecooperativeopera.org for all details and bookings

Sāvitṛī

A chamber opera in one act by
Gustav Holst

First performed on 5 December 1916, at Wellington
Hall, London.

This performance is on 11, 12, 14 February 2021 at
Observatory Hill Park, Sydney.

Music Director

Edwin Spark

Director

Menila Moineaux

CAST

Sāvitṛī

Joanna Dionis Ross

Satyavān

Elias Wilson

Death

Jeremy Boulton

Spirits

Samanta Lestavel

Rachel Mink

Cassandra Doyle

Laura Wachsmann

ORCHESTRA

Violin

Stephanie Hill

Tania Ma

Viola

Kathryn Ramsay

Angel Wong-Stanislavska

Cello

Sophie Funston

Vicky Zhang

Double Bass

Will Hansen (11, 12 Feb.)

Julia Magri (14 Feb.)

Répétiteur

Priscilla Yuen

"For even Death is Māyā" ...

Holst's chamber opera *Sāvitrī* premiered in 1916, into a world devastated by war and destruction. Drawn from an episode in the Mahābhārata, this beautiful piece recentres a parable of devotion to instead explore our relationship with renewal and the world around us, and to celebrate a literal triumph of life over death.

Since time immemorial, people have tried to understand mortality, why we live, why we die, and what our relationship is to the world around us. The story of this opera is drawn from an ancient Sanskrit epic, but one can find equivalents from any time or place. *Sāvitrī*'s questioning of what is 'real' invites us into a fantasy built upon the theme of our very existence, an existential reckoning to which there are no answers.

Our production, then, is deliberately devoid of a particular time and place - for the ideas Holst explores are universal. The composer-librettist has already replaced the name of the god concerned (Yama) with simply 'Death', who is in our production attended by four spirits, the wordless chorus. Amongst the beautiful backdrop of nature in Observatory Hill Park, we invite our audience to connect with the ever-evolving renewal and cycles of life in the world around us.

While the original story of *Sāvitrī* and Satyavān is one which glorifies devotion, Holst instead focuses our attention on the triumph of life over death. But whilst celebratory, even this triumph is not definite or final. *Māyā*, the idea that everything is in some way an illusion, with multiple sides and facets, comes into play here; 'for even death is *māyā*', not a terrifying unknown realm, but merely the other side of life, and part of an unending cycle of renewal.

In the world of its premiere, one can imagine these ideas would have been omnipresent, as in times of crisis, our eternal quest to understand the nature of life and death is heightened. As such, *Sāvitrī* seems the perfect opera for a world one hundred years later, in the midst of a different crisis, but gripped with the same need to make sense of ourselves, and the same need for comfort as we are again forced to confront the nature of our existence. Perhaps we might embrace *Sāvitrī*'s vision of an eternal cycle where life and death exist in a symbiosis of illusion, *māyā*.

Synopsis

Many years before the opera begins, there lived a great, wise king and queen. Their kingdom was prosperous, their subjects happy, but their life was incomplete, for they desperately wanted a child. The king prayed for years to the sun deity, Sāvitr, until, impressed by this piety and devotion, the god granted them a daughter. She was to be as bright, as wise, as beautiful, and as radiant as the sun itself, and in gratitude, the king and queen named her Sāvitrī.

Sāvitrī was so intelligent, so wise, and so beautiful that, when she came of age, no suitors sought her hand, for they were intimidated by her. But the princess was delighted, for this left her free to choose her own partner, and she set off, travelling across the land, until, one day, she met a young man at the edge of a forest. Like her, his father was a king – or was once a king, but had been overthrown and forced to flee with his family into exile. Sāvitrī was not deterred; they fell in love, and she returned to her parents' court with the news that she had found her beloved Satyavān.

When she returned, her father was overjoyed, and called the court astrologer (as was custom to do). But that joy turned to foreboding when the astrologer warned them that Satyavān was fated to die one year from that very day. Again, Sāvitrī was undeterred. She moved with her new husband to his home in the forest, and they passed a year there together.

Three days before the fateful hour, Sāvitrī became withdrawn; she immersed herself in prayer and fasting, while Satyavān, unaware of the prediction, went about his daily work, cutting wood. Our opera begins at the moment of reckoning, with Sāvitrī haunted by the god Yama, or in Holst's text, simply Death. As Satyavān returns from the forest, her fear and dread heightens, and with reason, as he greets her before weakening, about to pass into the realm of death.

As Death arrives to collect Satyavān's soul, Sāvitrī greets him with warmth and hospitality, unafraid. He is touched by her kindness and piety, and offers to grant her a boon – anything but the life of Satyavān. Sāvitrī asks for "life in all its fullness", for sons and daughters continuing the eternal cycle of life on through the ages. Death willingly grants her this wish, and she reminds him that, as she will marry no one else, if Satyavān should die, Death will be unable to fulfill his promise.

Vanquished, Death must honour his vow, and Satyavān is restored to life, to be united with Sāvitrī for four hundred years on earth. As Death retreats to his realm, Sāvitrī and Satyavān reflect on the transient nature of all that surrounds them, and on the enduring power of life.

Libretto

DEATH

Sāvitrī! Sāvitrī! I am Death.

I am the law that no man breaketh, I am he who leadeth men onward,
I am the road that each must travel, I am the gate that opens for all.
I, the Summoner, whom all obey, whose word may not be moved,
whose path may not be turned,
I draw nigh to fulfil my work, I come for thy husband.
For him the gate doth open.

SĀVITRĪ

Again, again those words of dread, Day or night, they never leave me
.Once in dreams I heard them, but now they rob me of sleep and give instead the gloom of ghostly
fears and dread forebodings.

Within the house that voice of warning lurks in every corner, within the temple it enshrouds me
until the song of thousands is to me a thing of naught.

And here the earth itself doth fade, nought remains but that dread cry:
“I come for thy husband!”

For Satyavān, Satyavān, he the strong and fearless one, in whose hands an axe is but a feather?
He in whom I live, whose soul dwells in mine – “For him the gate doth open!”

SATYAVĀN

Greeting to thee, my loving Sāvitrī! What wife in all the world is like to Sāvitrī –

SĀVITRĪ

Satyavān! Here I await thy coming. Haste to me –

SATYAVĀN

Like a spectre of the forest, night’s gloomy pall is drawing nigh,
Every beast is wending homeward, home to his nest each bird doth fly.
So to thee I am returning, through the wood I homeward hie,
Home unto thee, my loving Sāvitrī: what wife in all the world is like to Sāvitrī?

Ah, the trees that stand so proudly know not I bring their deadly foe,
‘Tis mine axe that, stealing near them, with but one stroke could lay them low.
Farewell, friend, until the morn; to a fairer love I go.
Greeting to thee, my loving Sāvitrī: what wife in all the world is like to Sāvitrī?

But thou art pale and trembling – what ails thee?

SĀVITRĪ

The forest is to me a mirror wherein I see another world,
A world where all is nameless, unknown, all sick with fear.

SATYAVĀN

It is Māyā: dost thou not know her?

Illusion, dreams, phantoms.

But to the wise, Māyā is more,

Look around – all that thou see'st,

Trees and shrubs, the grass at thy feet, all that walks or creeps, all that flies from tree to tree,

All is unreal,

All is Māyā.

Our bodies, our limbs, our very thoughts, we ourselves are slaves to Māyā.

What remaineth? Who can say?

Love to the lover,

The child to the mother,

The song to the singer,

God to the worshipper,

These, wandering through the world of Māyā, are perchance shadows of that which is.

SĀVITRĪ

Once I knew Māyā; now she is forgot.

Mine eyes are open – would they were shut!

I see the heart of every tree, pale with terror,

The elves that dance upon the grass blades crouching earthward –

Dost thou not feel? Ah! Canst thou not see?

SATYAVĀN

I see nought. What ails thee?

SĀVITRĪ

He doth come.

SATYAVĀN

He? Whom dost thou mean? A foe?

Who is lurking in the forest, say: dost thou come as friend or foe?

Show thy face, O cringing coward, then will I deal thee many a blow.

Mine axe that leaps in wrath hungers for thy overthrow.

It thirsteth for thy lifeblood –

Sāvitrī, Sāvitrī, mine arm is powerless –

SĀVITRĪ
Satyavān!

SATYAVĀN
Sāvitrī, where art thou? Mine eyes are dim. I see thee not –

SĀVITRĪ
I am with thee, my arms are round thee.

SATYAVĀN
Sāvitrī – where art thou?

SĀVITRĪ
I am with thee, my arms are round thee
,Thy thoughts are mine, my spirit dwells with thee.
When thou art weary, I am watching,
When thou sleepest, I am waking,
When in sorrow, I am near, making it a thing of joy
Beyond all other joys –

Through the forest creeps the darkness –
All is dark, and cold, and still.
The world has now become a grave
.I alone am living, and over me, the gloom is pressing.

Like to a babe in his mother's robe,
Thou art enshrouded in my love.
With my song I weave a spell.
Evil powers may not approach within the hearing of my voice.
Only the gods may enter here, in holiness and love!

Ah! All fades – Death is at my heart –

DEATH
Sāvitrī! Sāvitrī! I am Death.
I am the law that no man breaketh,
I am he who leadeth men onward,
I am the road that each must travel,
I am the gate that opens for all.

SĀVITRĪ

Welcome, Lord.

Thou art called the Just One,
Thou rulest all by thy decree,
Thou callest men together,
Thou showest them the path that leads to thine abode,
Our only sure possession.

Methinks even now, thou hast led me thither.
Round me I see gentle faces, I hear voices,
The air is holy –

DEATH

Thine is the holiness.
Thou art enshrouded in thyself,
The faces are the sufferers thou hast comforted,
The voices are the sweet words thou hast spoken,
The air is made holy by thy love,
Being with thee is being in Paradise.
With thee, the gods themselves may dwell.

SĀVITRĪ

Then enter, Lord, dwell with me.
What better fate befalleth than being with the holy ones?

DEATH

That may not be.
I am he who leadeth men onward.
Yet ere I go, to thee who dost not shrink from me, who badest me welcome, I will grant a boon.
A boon for thyself – ask naught for Satyavān. My breath hath chilled his heart.

SĀVITRĪ

Oh! Great one, dost thou mock?
What boon hath value if I have not him, who maketh all a boon?

DEATH

Then I tarry no longer. Through the gate a mortal enters.
Bid thy farewell.

SĀVITRĪ

Stay!

Grant me this boon. 'Tis but slight, yet all it holdeth.

Give me life,

Life is all I ask of thee.

'Tis a song I fain would be singing.

Thy song, O Death, is a murmur of rest,

Mine should be of the joy of striving.

Where disease hath spread her mantle,

Where defeat and despair are reigning,

There shall my song, like a trumpet in battle, resound in triumph.

Grant me this boon: I ask for life.

DEATH

Why dost thou ask for life? Thou hast it now.

SĀVITRĪ

Art thou the just one? Art thou Death?

Or art thou but a blind spirit, knowing naught of what is round thee?

Give me Life.

Life is all I ask of thee, and life is a path I would travel.

Wherein flowers should spring up around me, S

talwart sons whom I would send where fighting is fiercest,

Bright-eyed daughters following my path, carrying life on through the ages –

Thou, O Death, workest alone.

Through thy gate, lonely and desolate, man must go.

But Life is communion.

Each one that liveth, liveth for all.

Thou art for the moment, a portal soon passed.

But life is eternal, greater than thou,

Like bounteous rain he showers his gifts on us,

Like an overwhelming wind he urges us on,

Till time and space are forgot

,And joy and sorrow are one!

DEATH

Sāvitrī, glorious woman, take the gift thou hast asked:

Life is thine, in all its fulness.

Thine the song, the path of flowers –

SĀVITRĪ

Ah! Death the just one, whose word ruleth all,

Grants me a boon,

He giveth me life,

The life of woman, of wife, of mother –

So hath he granted that which alone fulfils his word.

If Satyavān die, my voice is mute, my feet may never travel the path,

Then I were but a dream, an image, floating on the waters of memory.

Satyavān only can teach me the song, can open the gate to my path of flowers,

The path of a woman's life.

Away, Death, back to thy kingdom!

Alone must thou travel,

True to thy word.

Loneliness and pain are ended,

Waken once more to home and wife.

Far thou journeyed in the darkness,

Fiercely around thee raged the strife.

Linger not upon the road.

Thou art bringing me my life.

SATYAVĀN

Sāvitrī, is it thou?

I thought there was a stranger here, who threatened –

SĀVITRĪ

One hath been here, a Holy One, who blessed me.

SATYAVĀN

Then it was but a dream! Yea, so too was my weariness,

Māyā had seized me. I was her slave.

Now hath she fled.

Nought remains but thou, and thy love,

Thou alone art free from Māyā,

Thou alone art real.

SĀVITRĪ

Without thee I am as the dead,
A word without meaning, fire without warmth, a starless night.
Thou makest me real.
Thou givest me life.

When thou art weary, I am watching,
When thou sleepest, I am waking,
When in sorrow, I am near, making it a thing of joy,
Beyond all other joys.

DEATH

Unto his kingdom, Death wendeth alone
One hath conquered him,
One knowing life,
One free from Māyā.
Māyā who reigns where men dream they are living,
Whose power extends to that other world, where men dream that they are dead.
For even Death is Māyā ...

SĀVITRĪ

I am with thee, my arms around thee.
Thy thoughts are mine, my spirit dwells with thee.
When thou art weary, I am watching,
When thou sleepest, I am waking
,When in sorrow, I am near, making it a thing of joy,
Beyond all other joys.

The End.

Director - Menila Moineaux

Originally from the Adelaide Hills, Menila completed a Bachelor of Music Studies with First Class Honours at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2017, on full scholarship.

At the Conservatorium, Menila's performance highlights included Bernstein's *MASS* at the Sydney Opera House, Haydn's *Orfeo ed Euridice* under the baton of Richard Bonyngue, several regional outreach tours, and four years with the Conservatorium Chamber Choir under the directorship of Dr Neil McEwan. Whilst a student, she also performed in the ensemble of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the NSW Art Gallery for the inaugural Spectrum Now Festival, attended the Bel Canto voice program in Munich as a grant recipient, and held a choral scholarship at St Stephens Uniting Church.

In 2018, Menila made her professional operatic debut touring China with the Australian International Opera Company in the ensemble of Verdi's *Aida*. Founding The Cooperative in 2019, Menila made her directorial debut with *The Consul* in 2020. In 2021, she is the assistant director for the Australian premiere of *Percy* at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and will direct *Sāvitrī*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Tosca*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Její pastorkyňa (Jenůfa)* at The Cooperative.



Music Director - Edwin Spark

Edwin has two degrees from the University of Sydney, with Honours in both Musicology and Pure Mathematics. His studies, for which he was awarded the University Medal, also included oboe and conducting.

He has participated in Symphony Services' conducting programme, learning from Christopher Seaman and the Auckland Philharmonic and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, and participated in masterclasses with Sasha Mäkilä in Pärnu, Estonia and Mark Shiell in Newcastle. Keenly interested in the ways music contributes to theatre, Edwin has taken lessons in opera literature and conducting from Richard Gill AO.

In 2018, he was a vocal collaborative fellow at the Miami Music Festival, where he was Assistant Conductor on *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Teseo* and *The Medium* by Menotti. For Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Sydney, Edwin has been Assistant Musical Director since 2016. Elsewhere in Sydney, he has music directed *The Yeomen of the Guard* and conducted *Camelot* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Edwin's first experiences with conducting were with the Bendigo Youth Choir, of which he was a long-time member and sometimes accompanist. He founded and conducted a choir for 5 years while at university, and remains convinced of the importance of community music-making, continuing to participate as conductor, accompanist, vocal coach and continuo player.



Sāvitrī - Joanna Dionis Ross

Joanna Dionis Ross is quickly gaining recognition as a rising young dramatic mezzo-soprano.

Recent engagements include Baba the Turk cover (*The Rake's Progress*) at the Princeton Festival, Zia Principessa (*Suor Angelica*) and Medoro (*Orlando*) at the Siena Music Festival, Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at the Johanna Meier Opera Theater Institute, Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) with Bleecker Street Opera, Mrs. Nolan (*The Medium*) with Taconic Opera, and Mrs. Sedley (*Peter Grimes*) and Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*) with One World Symphony.

Recently, Joanna sang the role of Aunt Nicey in Stefan Weisman's new opera *The Scarlet Ibis*, co-produced by American Opera Projects and the Opera America New Works Forum. She has also been a young artist at the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice, singing Ortrud in excerpts from *Lohengrin* with acclaimed Wagnerian baritone Alfred Walker.

Joanna has a strong interest in new music, and has appeared with the Brooklyn New Music Ensemble, Opera on Tap New Brew, and New Music Mannes, singing the works of such contemporary composers as Christopher Berg, Toshio Hosokawa, and Mike Rose. She is an American Prize Chicago Oratorio Award Finalist, and the recipient of a Wagner Society of New York grant.

Joanna earned a professional studies diploma in voice performance from Mannes College the New School for Music and a bachelor's degree in English from Stanford University. She made her Australian operatic debut as the Secretary in Menotti's *The Consul* with The Cooperative in 2020, and will return to sing the title role in *Sāvitrī* in 2021.



Satyavān - Elias Wilson

Elias Wilson is an emerging tenor, with experience around Australia as a performer of opera, chamber music and musical theatre.

Elias graduated with a BMusSt in Classical Voice at the Sydney Conservatorium in 2019, and is currently completing a Masters in Opera Performance at the Con with Dr Rowena Cowley, for which he was the recipient of the Donald Lionel Edgerton Scholarship and Helpmann Family Fellowship in 2020.

Elias appears regularly as an associate artist with The Song Company, and as cantor and tenor scholar for the choir of Christ Church St Laurence, Railway Square. Elias has recorded for ABC Classic as part of Luminescence Chamber Singers, directed by Tamara Anna Cislowska, and in 2019 toured Australia with Luminescence and the Consort of Melbourne with conductor Roland Peelman.

During his studies he has performed as concert soloist for the Conservatorium Early Music Ensemble alongside Erin Helyard, the Con Wind Symphony under John Lynch, and with the Con Chamber Choir and Choir under the batons of Neil McEwan, Paul Stanhope and Elizabeth Scott. These engagements have included two international premieres, by Australian composers Jodie Blackshaw and Alice Chance.

Most recently Elias appeared as Madame de la Haltière in Sydney Con Opera School's filmed 2020 production of Massenet's *Cendrillon*, directed by Kate Gaul. Elias has previously appeared in the ensembles of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* for the Con Opera School, Verdi's *La Traviata* and Floyd's *Susannah* for Opera New England, and makes his live operatic principal role debut as Satyavān in Holst's *Sāvitrī* for The Cooperative in 2021.



Death - Jeremy Boulton

A former recipient of the Opera Australia Student Scholarship and graduate of the Talent Development Project, Jeremy has featured as a concert soloist for the Opera Australia Benevolent Fund, Sydney Conservatorium of Music (Early Music Ensemble), Argyle Orchestra (Hobart, Australia), Opera Projects Sydney, con voci Chamber Choir (Wollongong, Australia) and Fiori Musicali (Armidale, Australia).

Jeremy has also been engaged professionally by the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs as well as the Gondwana Choirs with The Muffat Collective as Aeneas in *Dido & Aeneas* (Purcell) and The Cooperative as the Secret Police Agent in *The Consul* (Menotti). Additionally, Jeremy has featured in the ensembles of *Don Giovanni* (Mozart) and *I Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo) for the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Winner of both the Margaret Olive Stewart Bequest Scholarship and the PATIM Fund Scholarship, Jeremy studies with Maree Ryan AM. In the 2018 Sydney Eisteddfod, Jeremy was the Runner Up in the Intermediate Vocal Scholarship (Dame Joan Sutherland Memorial Award). In 2020, Jeremy was awarded the Demant Dreikurs scholarship at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and gratefully received artist assistance from the Sidney Myer Fund & The Myer Foundation's National Assistance Program. He also received an Italian language merit scholarship to L'Università Per Stranieri di Perugia (The University for Foreigners Perugia, Italy) through L'Istituto di Cultura (Italian Cultural Institute, Sydney).

Jeremy is currently reading for a Masters of Opera Performance at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing his Bachelor of Music (Performance) in 2020 at the same institution. Masterclasses include that by Jessica Pratt and Dr. Graham Johnson OBE.

Jeremy's other work includes scoring for short films (Absence - Best Film, Martini Awards 2017) and stage productions of *The Tempest* (Shakespeare, Phoenix Theatre Company), *Blood Wedding* (Lorca) and *Ash Girl* (Wertebaker). He is a Full Member (Arranger & Copyist) of the Music Arrangers' Guild of Australia (M.A.G.A.) and an Ambassador for ClassikON. Jeremy is also the Manager of APRA Art Music Award Winning ensemble, Steel City Strings Chamber Orchestra. Orchestral commissions include *The Curious Story of the Bushy-Tailed Drop Bear* (tone poem for orchestra) and a re-worked production of *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell).

In his spare time, Jeremy enjoys attending the symphony, opera, chamber music recitals, jazz and straight theatre. Of a summer, Jeremy turns into a cricket tragic. He also takes a keen interest in Australian politics and Michael Leunig.



Spirit - Samanta Lestavel

Samanta graduated in November 2017 with a Graduate Diploma in Music (Opera Performance) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she was the recipient of the Patricia Lucas Music Achievement Scholarship and the Helpmann Family Fellowship. She studied German extensively in university, adding to her native proficiency in French, Italian and English.

Samanta gained extensive operatic stage experience while completing her studies, performing the following principal roles between 2016-2018: Adele (J. Strauss, *Die Fledermaus*), Belinda (Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*), Pamina (Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte*), Blondchen (Mozart: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Calisto (Cavalli: *La Calisto*), Zerlina (Mozart: *Don Giovanni*), Patience (Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*), Despina (Mozart: *Così fan tutte*), Lucy (Menotti: *The Telephone*), Mary Crawford (Jonathan Dove: *Mansfield Park*, Australian premiere) Anna Gomez (Menotti: *The Consul*) and Angelina (Gilbert and Sullivan, *Trial by Jury*). Samanta has been privileged to work with companies including Operantics, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Sydney, Rockdale Opera, The Macquarie Singers, Opera Hunter, Opera Bites, Phoenix Choir, and the Penrith Symphony Orchestra.

She has also gained much concert experience (Bach, *St Matthew Passion*, Handel *Messiah*, Handel, *Alexander's Feast*), and has participated in a number of experimental projects such as The Millennial Opera Project (recording project), Long Walk Diva (BEAMS Arts Festival), and The Cleopatra Project (The Independent Theatre).



Spirit - Rachel Mink

Rachel Mink, soprano, is a 2021 Pacific Opera Young Artist and ensemble member of Luminescence, a virtuosic vocal consort.

Highlights of Rachel's operatic credits include Émilie in Kaija Saariaho's *Émilie*; Colin in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's opera *Le Devin du Village*, Belinda and the First Witch in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Zirphile (cover) in the American premiere of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Sympathy* with Victory Hall Opera.

Rachel was an active chorus member with Charlottesville Opera and performed in *La Traviata* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. In masterclasses, she has had the honor of working with Renée Fleming, Karita Mattila, Danielle Telemantes, and Rachelle Fleming.

Originally hailing from the USA, Rachel studied vocal performance and musicology at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland and earned her BA from the University of Virginia with a double major in music and arts administration. In her spare time, she works as a fundraising professional for the Boulanger Imitative, a non-profit committed to promoting music composed by womxn.



Spirit - Cassandra Doyle

Cassandra is a young mezzo-soprano, entering her second year at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing a BMus Performance (Classical Voice), studying under Dr. Rowena Cowley. In 2020, she was awarded the Patricia Bell Scholarship. Her roles covered include Leila in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* (2018), Prince Charming in Open Academy's *Cinderella* (2018) and a chorus member in the Conservatorium High School's *A Bernstein Story* (2017) and *Shrek* (2015).

During her studies at the Conservatorium High School, she was a featured artist in the NSW Schools Spectacular and a concert soloist at the Sydney Opera House, as a part of the NSW Arts Unit Festival of Music.

In 2019, Cassandra performed as a soloist with SUMS in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Cassandra has toured extensively with Gondwana Choirs and Sydney Children's Choir throughout Asia and the Baltics. She currently sings with the St James Choir, as a choral scholar.



Spirit - Laura Wachsmann

Laura is in her final year at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she is completing a BMus Performance (Classical Voice) under the tutelage of Narelle Yeo.

2019 marked Laura's operatic debut. She played 'Second Woman' in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (The Other Theatre Co.) and 'Coridon' in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (Ensemble Polyphème). She was also a chorus member for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's semi-staged production of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, as well as Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Sydney Conservatorium of Music).

Last year, Laura made her debut with The Cooperative, where she played 'John Sorel' in a re-imagined production of Menotti's *The Consul* (The Cooperative). Early in 2020 she was a part of Pacific Opera's 'Pocket Opera' production of *Die Zauberflöte* as 2nd Sprite.

Laura is extremely excited to be working with The Cooperative again this year and hopes to have a safe and flourishing year of performance.



This production supports

Freelance Artist Relief Australia

<https://www.freelanceartistrelief.com/>

FREELANCE ARTIST RELIEF AUSTRALIA was established to bring immediate financial help to Australian classical musicians affected by the Coronavirus crisis. Arts venues were among the first institutions to close due to the current pandemic.

As of today, nobody knows when it will be possible to perform again. Freelance artists engaged for single projects and performances have seen their contracts annulled and income disappear for the foreseeable future. With constantly changing laws and government interventions artists and arts companies have no way of planning forward, and no way of knowing where the next months will take them.

FARA works to alleviate the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the arts community, and we are delighted to support them through *Sāvitrī*, a work which celebrates renewal and recovery.

Sydney Community Forum

Oz International Students' Chapter

<https://www.facebook.com/Oz-International-Students-Chapter>

Oz International Students Chapter is a collective of International Students in Australia, organising students for their common good.

We focus on ongoing listening sessions, identify and prioritize student needs and advocate for the common good.

Throughout the pandemic, SCF has been working to provide assistance to international students, who have otherwise received no support. We are delighted to support them through *Sāvitrī*.

With gratitude, The Cooperative thanks

The City of Sydney

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Alicia, and Brian

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The Australian Cultural Fund

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Simon Ross and Antoine Veling

Minjayati Angelo

Alexandra Nixon

Ella Coddington

Freelance Artist Relief Australia and Sydney Community Forum, and their
delightful staff, especially Anna and Chaitra

You, for coming to *Sāvitrī*!

And last, but certainly not least, our incredible cast and orchestra, who have
given so generously of their time, energy, enthusiasm, and hard work over our
rehearsal and production period.

We are so proud and so grateful to have them with us.

Thank you.