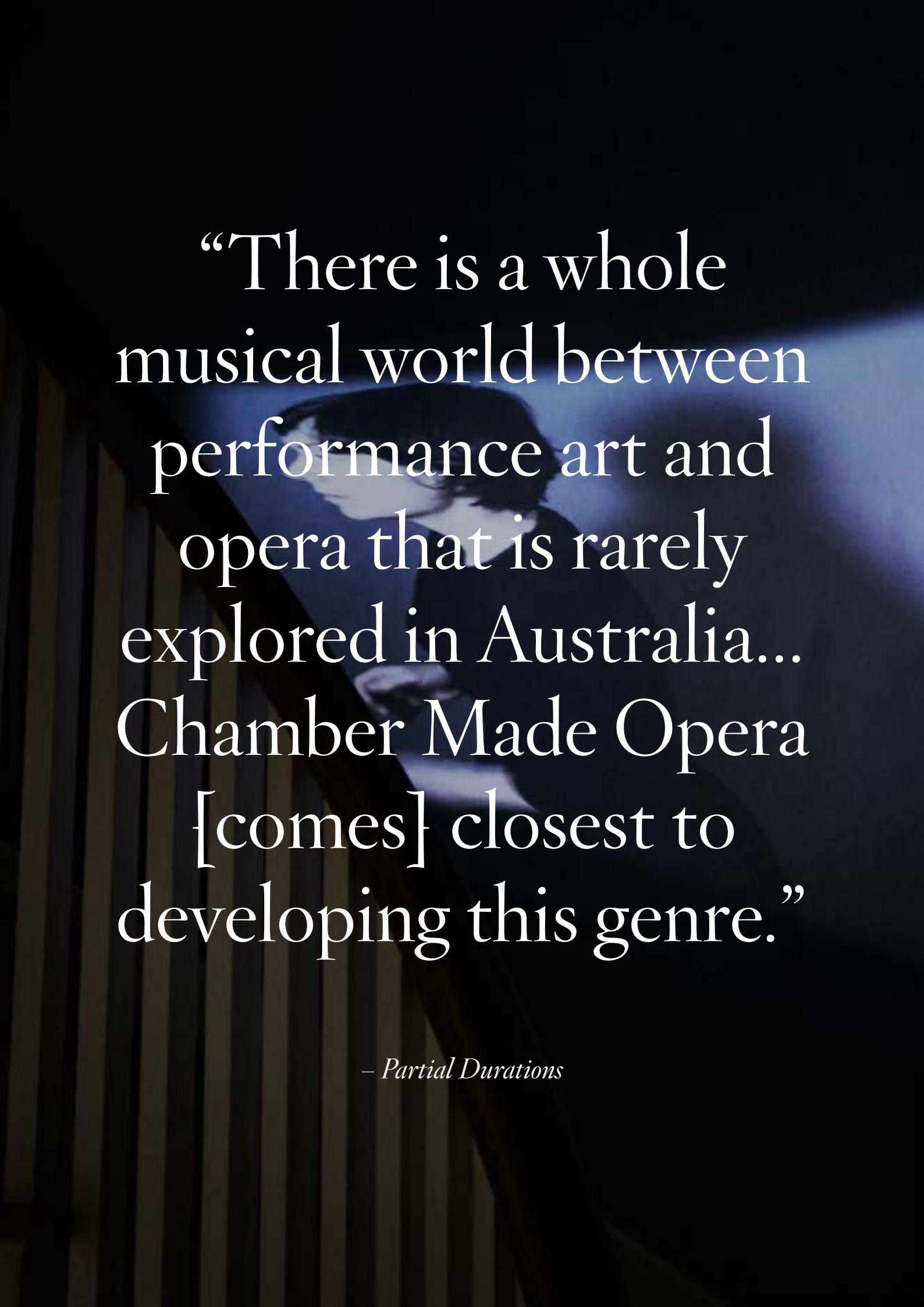


CHAMBER
MADE
OPERA

Annual Report 2014



A person is shown in profile, looking down, in a dark setting. A blue light source is visible in the background, creating a soft glow. The person appears to be wearing a dark jacket or coat.

“There is a whole musical world between performance art and opera that is rarely explored in Australia... Chamber Made Opera [comes] closest to developing this genre.”

– *Partial Durations*

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Message from the Creative Director

Tim Stitz



2014 was a year of new beginnings. A new artistic team, a new organisational structure. The year revealed numerous opportunities for the creation, development and presentation of truly artform-challenging chamber opera across multiple contexts. Internationally, regionally, nationally and virtually.

The year began with a search for Irish collaborators to work on our Limerick City of Culture commission, a prestigious and exciting international collaboration. Talented young Irish theatre-maker/director Maeve Stone was selected to work with one of Australia's most lauded musical collaborators composer/musician John Rodgers. The resulting work, *Wake*, was a tremendously rewarding and successful project in every aspect. The piece was effecting and intricate, nuanced and visceral, and fits elegantly within the company's repertoire of Living Room Operas. Unfortunately, due to illness John was unable to travel to Ireland, yet he was integral to the project's development whilst Maeve was in Melbourne for a three-week residency in May. Artistic Associates Sarah Kriegler, Christie Stott, Tamara Saulwick and I travelled to Limerick to realise the production. The creative team was very much a 50-50 Irish-Australian affair and the piece rendered positive outcomes for local Irish audiences and artists, and provided significant professional development for the Australian team (it was a "CMO Summer Camp"; with members of the new artistic team

really getting to know each other and developing an active working framework). Christie filmed and edited a 9-minute digital artwork arising out of the live performance to share with our audiences in Melbourne and virtually. It is our first such artwork in the new Digital Program.

The year was replete with new works in development. Sarah Kriegler's *Captives of the City*, a co-production with Lemony S Puppet Theatre to premiere in early 2015, had creative developments in March and May. Erkki Veltheim's *Another Other*, made with collaborators Sabina Maselli, Natasha Anderson & Anthony Pateras, received its first creative development in Europe in July. Tamara Saulwick's new work for the company *Permission to Speak*, made with composer Kate Neal, sound designer Jethro Woodward and vocalist Gian Slater, had its first creative laboratory in October.

After a final period of development in November, *Another Other* received a successful 'out-of-town' regional premiere in Castlemaine in December. Presented in collaboration with Punctum and the New Music Network, this preview season was a wonderful opportunity test this work in front a highly receptive local audience. It featured a penetrating score which was complimented by a highly textured visual component.

In the third year of our ongoing collaboration with The Venny Adventure Playground in Kensington, our artists, led by Sarah Kriegler and Danni von der Borch, developed short form performances that were recorded as digital stories (short films). The children of The Venny then devised the musical compositions and live Foley soundtracks for these films. In November over 150 local community members gathered in a special marquee set up in the grounds of The Venny, for a screening of these films accompanied by live performance of the music and soundtracks by the kids. It was a very memorable evening. The Venny Project is made possible thanks to ongoing support from the Hugh Williamson Foundation, and in 2014, specific project funding from the Australia Council for the Arts. The venture was also formally evaluated for the first time by arts researcher Dr Ricci-Jane Adams.

The company's development arm, Little Operations, launched in 2014, offers seed funds, support, time and space for emerging and established artists to enter into a conversation with the company and our audience by sharing new 'work-in-process'. Little Operations works are not yet formally Chamber Made Opera works, instead an opportunity to spotlight fresh ideas and the work of amazing local artists. The inaugural event, co-presented with Fed Square's Creative Program, was Sydney-artist Ivan Cheng's *EVEN!* This work was striking, cryptic and involved a very focused cast of children. Our second Little Operations event was with Melbourne-theatre collective THE RABBLE, co-presented with The Substation. THE RABBLE's adaptation of Hades, a chapter from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, ratcheted up the sonic potential of their oeuvre, working with Sydney-based composer Max Lyandvert. This program is an immensely rewarding way to support local artists, their works and ideas.

The company's commitment to R&D is epitomized by our involvement in Agile Opera, an Australian Research Council Linkage Project. This three-year project, in partnership with RMIT and Victoria universities, Fed Square and the Australia Council, formally commenced in 2014. It will allow the company to reflect on our

art making, our operations and how we might construct a digital platform for interaction with local and virtual audiences. The central question of this project is: how can the distinctive forms of intimacy found in chamber opera can be transferred to 21st century digital formats and platforms?

There was fantastic attendance across all productions and events in 2014, including sell-out crowds for *Wake*, *Another Other* and both Little Operations events. Our audience also enjoyed two intimate and very engaged Salons, meeting the new artistic team for 'Into the Chamber' in April and hearing about our Irish adventures at 'After the Wake' in September. We also received very favorable editorial coverage and critical appraisal from media online, in print and on radio, and increases in social media followers, eNews subscribers and website traffic.

For the 2014 calendar year Chamber Made Opera posted a surplus of \$4,167.

Overall revenue was \$422,613. This represents a significant increase in turnover from 2013 to 2014 (over one hundred thousand dollars). This was mainly due to increased grant project funding, in particular from the Australia Council, which was a key strategy, and also earned income from the Limerick project. Philanthropic support remained steady in 2014 and the company successfully re-joined the City of Melbourne Triennial Program for 2015-2017, with a significant increase. Total company equity is currently \$44,086.

Continuing our commitment to supporting emerging artists, writer/director Patrick McCarthy was in residence with the company throughout 2014, as a VCA Professional Pathways Scholarship. Patrick significantly contributed to the day-to-day life of the organization and whilst in residence also penned the first draft of a new work, *The Sky is Well Designed*. He was also able to join us in Ireland in July for the rehearsals and opening of *Wake* (and was called upon at the eleventh hour to write a eulogy for performer Katherine O'Malley). In October clarinetist, composer and performance-maker Aviva Endean also joined the company as a VCA Professional Pathways

Resident. She had been previously working with the ASTRA Chamber Music Society but due to a long international tour and a hiatus in their local activity I accepted a proposal that she complete the remainder of her residency with us. She will be with us until mid-2015.

I'd like to officially welcome Program Coordinator Imbi Neeme who started with us in April. She has rapidly become an indispensable member of the team, working part-time. Together with Finance Officer Sally Goldner, Imbi and I work to support the key operational activities of the company.

Thank you to the entire staff team as well as our Committee of Management: Michael Bink (Chair), Greer Evans (Treasurer), Kylie Trounson (Secretary), Fiona Sweet, David Maney, Erin Milne and Michael Roper. All are engaged, strategic, supportive and dedicated to reimagining new futures for Chamber Made Opera.

Thank you too to our inspirational donors, our Keyholders, our core government funders, our project partners and supporters and our sponsors. Finally, I thank our audiences for continuing to give us their trust to journey with us to the very edge of opera.

Vale Margaret Cameron

The Chamber Made Opera family lost a dear friend and fiercely talented artist in 2014. Margaret Cameron, who was Resident Director 2010-2013 passed away at Indented Head on Monday 20 October 2014. Her death deeply affected the company and our wider family. A memorial was held a week after her death, at which we presented an excerpt from *Opera for a small mammal* (the digital artifact that Christie had been working on with Margaret until shortly before her death) as well as a series of images and a speech by Sarah Kriegler. Former Artistic Director, dear friend and regular collaborator David Young paid tribute to M in an obituary that was printed in *The Age* and it is included at the conclusion of this Annual Report, adding it to formal record.

Vision

To create, develop and present contemporary chamber opera that challenges and inspires audiences, nationally and internationally.



Artistic Statement

Interrogating and re-imagining what opera can be

Chamber Made Opera develops new ways of encountering the world with audiences. Our approach recognises that contemporary society is largely defined by its increasing reliance on digital, mediated communication. Each of the company's works interrogate the relationship between live and mediated performance, and the way this relationship shapes our experience of the space and people around us.

Chamber Made Opera's work is a confluence of musical composition, sound, the voice, the body, text, design, digital and audio-visual investigation, and space and architecture.

A pivotal question with each new work created is, what is the 'chamber' – both literal and conceptual, real or virtual – within which a work exists? How does the chamber shape

a work, and the audience experience of it?

*Epic experiences in intimate spaces
Intimate encounters in epic spaces*

Chamber Made Opera's artistic team is committed to creating a stand-alone digital artwork in conjunction with every new live work created. Our goal with these digital companion pieces is to find an original and meaningful virtual resonance of each live performance work in the artistic program.

Chamber Made Opera is an organisation shaped by art.

Our works are immediate, intimate, collaborative, interdisciplinary and experimental.

We provoke audiences.

We provoke artists from a myriad of art forms, places and backgrounds.

We provoke art of our time and place.

Interrogating and re-imagining what opera can be

Message from the Chair

Michael Bink



In 2014 it was clear that Chamber Made Opera had successfully transitioned from the artistic guidance of David Young to that of Tim Stitz. Changes to the artistic team pose many risks for small arts companies, but Chamber Made Opera has come through that change as strong as ever.

At the heart of the change is Tim's innovative collaborative artistic model, where he works alongside our team of artistic associates: Sarah Kriegler, Tamara Saulwick, Christie Stott and Erkki Veltheim. This challenges the old notion of the individual "genius" driving the art, replacing it with the very contemporary concept of a network of connected artists. The art emerges from the creative space where their individual practices and talents meet. The possibilities that open up from this approach are endless.

Seeing the art emerging from this new collaborative model has given us a good look at our future: work that engages with and challenges what we mean by "opera", that continues to challenge and excite, that pulls together diverse forms and practices, and that continues to ask questions about the role that "place" plays in the expression of a work. *Another Other* took us deep into the realm of identity and art through its interrogation of Bergman's cinema masterwork *Persona*. The development of *Captives of the City* (which has a 2015 season at Arts Centre Melbourne) excited with its ground-breaking use of digital puppetry.

And far away in Ireland, *Wake*, our collaboration with Irish artists Maeve Stone and Tom Lane for the 2014 Limerick City of Culture, brought our Living Room Opera model to an international audience ... to rave reviews.

Our growing confidence in this latest artistic iteration of the company is reflected in the renewal of our funding agreements with Creative Victoria and the City of Melbourne as well as a growing number of grants for the company and its artistic team from the Australia Council. The Board thanks these organisations for providing solid financial foundations for our art. We also, as always, thank the growing group of individuals and organisations that, through giving their money and time, allow us to build on those foundations. You make the art possible, allowing us to take the risks that are required to make new and compelling work.

Our Board continues to support the art by taking the long view of the organisation, by providing a space to develop and test strategy and manage risk, and by engaging with our supporters. This year we took a deeper look at our performance to ensure we are appropriately equipped to meet the challenges faced by a small arts company. Our thanks to QUT for their support in this process. It has helped us to improve our governance and provided a template for ongoing review.

Credits

STAFF

Tim Stitz
Creative Director / CEO

Sarah Kriegler
Artistic Associate

Tamara Saulwick
Artistic Associate

Christie Stott
Artistic Associate

Erkki Veltheim
Artistic Associate

Imbi Neeme
Program Coordinator

Sally Goldner
Finance Officer

Patrick McCarthy
Emerging Writer in Residence
January – December 2014
(VCA Professional Pathways
Scholarship)

Aviva Endean
Emerging Artist in Residence
October 2014 – present
(VCA Professional Pathways
Scholarship)

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Michael Bink
Chair

Greer Evans
Treasurer

Kylie Trounson
Secretary

David Maney

Erin Milne

Michael Roper

Fiona Sweet

ARTISTS

Jude Anderson
dramaturg

Natasha Anderson
musician/composer

Tom Barton
singer

Danni von der Borch
community artist

Mario Burke
technical assistant

Mark Cauvin
bassist

Paul Carter
live artist

Ivan Cheng
composer/performer

Nicholas Coghlan
filmmaker

Georgie Darvidis
singer

Kate Davis
theatre maker

Rachael Dyson-McGregor
actor

Aviva Endean
musician & composer

Ben Grant
performer/dramaturg

Lloyd Greenland
community artist

Rory Grubb
musician & sound designer

Fionnuala Gyax
assistant director

Ming-Zhu Hii
filmmaker

David Harrison
actor

Dave Jones
animator

Sarah Kriegler
writer/director

Joshua Kyle
singer

Tom Lane
musician, composer
and sound designer

Max Lyandvert
composer

Chloe McBain
community artist

Patrick McCarthy
writer

Pius McGrath
technician

Sabina Maselli
video artist

Dana Miltins
actor

Kate Neal
composer

Daisy Noyes
photographer

Saileóg O'Halloran
costume designer

Steph O'Hara
sound artist

Brennan Olver
performer

Katherine O'Malley
performer & choreographer

Dale Packard
sound operator

Anthony Pateras
musician/composer

Enio Pozzenbon
composer

John Rodgers
composer

Mary Helen Sassman
actor

Tamara Saulwick
performance maker
& dramaturg

Matthias Schack-Arnott
percussionist

Byron Scullin
sound & production

Gian Slater,
singer

Elise Smith
child performer

Maeve Stone
director

Christie Stott
digital artist

Kate Sulan
outside eye

Rainbow Sweeny
production manager

Emma Valente
theatre maker

Erkki Velthiem
musician/composer

Jacob Williams
puppeteer

Jethro Woodward
sound designer

David Young
composer

Alexandra Zierle
live artist

The children
of The Venny
devisors, filmmakers,
performers

The children in Ivan
Cheng's EVEN!
performers

The Year at a Glance

FEBRUARY

Limerick City of Culture artist call out & selection

Tim attends APAM

MARCH

Captives of the City, second creative development, Arts Centre Melbourne

APRIL

Between Lands and Longings, series of film showings and artist talks, Globe Gallery, Live Art Development Agency and Newlyn Art Gallery, United Kingdom

Into The Chamber, Salon Event, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

MAY

Between Lands and Longings film showing, Federation Square, Melbourne

Wake, creative development, Melbourne & pre-production, Ireland

Captives of the City, third creative development, Arts Centre Melbourne

Weekly workshops at The Venny Adventure Playground

Tim attends Operadagen in Rotterdam, The Netherlands

JUNE

Weekly workshops at The Venny Adventure Playground

JULY

Wake, performance season, a private residence in Limerick, Ireland

Another Other, creative development, Germany/Italy

Between Lands and Longings, film showing and artist talk, Plymouth Arts Centre, United Kingdom

The commencement of Agile Opera, ARC Linkage Project

SEPTEMBER

Little Operations with Ivan Cheng (EVEN!), Deakin Edge at Federation Square, Melbourne

Weekly workshops at The Venny Adventure Playground

OCTOBER

Permission to Speak, creative development, Melbourne

After The Wake, Salon Event, SIAL Studio, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

Weekly workshops at The Venny Adventure Playground

NOVEMBER

Weekly workshops at The Venny Adventure Playground

Stories from the Suitcase, The Venny Adventure Playground


DECEMBER

Another Other, preview season, Punctum's ICU, Castlemaine

Little Operations with THE RABBLE (Ulysses: Episode Six – Hades), The Substation, Newport

Works



A woman with dark, wavy hair is laughing heartily while sitting on a wooden chair on a balcony. She is wearing a black long-sleeved top. The balcony has a glass railing, and a large glass door is visible in the background, leading to an outdoor area with greenery. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

“So authentic,
so stylish ...
[Wake] is an
astonishing
triumph”

– *Irish Independent*

Wake

An international living room opera in Ireland



World Premiere

15 – 20 July 2014

Commissioned and funded by

the Limerick City of Culture

Concept by

Maeve Stone (AUS) & John Rodgers (AUS)

Artistic Credits

Maeve Stone (IRE)
Director

Tom Lane (IRE)
Composer & Sound Designer

Tamara Saulwick (AUS)
Dramaturg

Christie Stott (AUS)
Video Designer

Saileóg O'Halloran (AUS)
Costume Designer

Pius McGrath (IRE)
Technician

Mario Burke (IRE)
Technical Assistant

Fionnuala Gyax (IRE)
Assistant Director

Patrick McCarthy (AUS)
Contributing Writer

Performed by

Katherine O'Malley (IRE)
Performer & Choreographer

Rory Grubb (IRE)
Musician & Sound Design

with Tom Lane
and Fionnuala Gyax

Jo Mangan (IRE)
Commissioning Programmer

Pan Pan Theatre (IRE)
Administration/Local Auspice

Chamber Made Opera (AUS)
Producer

The Carr Family (IRE)
Hosts

Wake was a journey into the eye of the storm. The heart of a home was revealed in this living room opera, created for a private home in Limerick.

Memories of the past haunted the corridors, old love and fresh wounds sang through walls, as a woman struggled to take control of her future.

Performed by acclaimed dancer and choreographer Katherine O'Malley with a sound-score performed by composer Tom Lane and musician Rory Grubb, and directed by Maeve Stone, Wake was a collaboration between some Ireland's brightest talent and Chamber Made Opera.

"So authentic, so stylish and accomplished, it beggars a fitting description... Bravo to all concerned.

'Wake' is an astonishing triumph."
– IRISH INDEPENDENT, August 2014

"The Australian Company, imported by Limerick City of Culture to collaborate with an array of talented Irish artists, manifests its mission statement of re-inventing our bellowing, big-lunged impressions of what "opera" can be." – VULGO / REALTIME, August 2014

"The real achievement of wake is the experience that it delivers for audiences" – CRITICAL THESP, July 2014

"Wake is both stark and gentle, a rough-cut gem of a piece that thrums with depth."

– TOTALLY DUBLIN, October 2014

Another Other

*An audiovisual performance fusing experimental opera,
electroacoustic sound installation and expanded cinema*

World Premiere

5 & 7 December 2014

Punctum's ICU, Castlemaine

Presented by Chamber Made Opera in
collaboration with Punctum and the
New Music Network

Commissioned by Chamber Made Opera with the
support of the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts
Victoria, Sue Kirkham and Charles Davidson.

*This project was assisted by the Australian
Government through the Australia Council, its arts
funding and advisory body, and was supported by
the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria.*

Artistic Credits

Created and performed by
*Erkki Veltheim, Sabina Maselli,
Natasha Anderson and Anthony Pateras*

with dramaturgical assistance by
Jude Anderson.

Production manager/audio
Byron Scullin

In his 1965 essay *Snakeskin*, Swedish director Ingmar Bergman compared art to a snakeskin full of ants; long dead, devoid of poison, yet feverishly animated by scavengers. Out of this pessimistic view was born his 1966 film *Persona*, which addressed the vampyric relationship between art and reality, and questioned the idea of an authentic self by suggesting that our identities are interchangeable and contingent, like masks to be worn and discarded. Fifty years on, **Another Other** presented audiences with a radical, layered re-reading of these themes, all the more relevant in today's age of online avatars and multiple, fragmented screen selves, ultimately lying somewhere between utopia, dystopia, tribute and critique.

"For people who visit the basement of that old country hospital to experience Another Other, the imagined snakeskin of the performance arena might rattle – but it might also be full of life, wonderful and possibly transformative."

– THE SATURDAY AGE'S SPECTRUM, December 2014

"Another Other is a riveting and fragmented series of micro movements, collectively composed to merge filmic and musical elements just as characters' identities merge in Bergman's film. This hyper-expanded cinematic experience shows our mental life to be a complicated mesh of meaning, open to interpretation. Like the ego, Another Other is impossible to unpack methodically; there's no narrative thread. This courageous and bold artwork feasts on the art of Persona before the clocks stop and finally there is silence inside the self."

– REALTIME FEB/MARCH 2015 (RT125)



“A contemporary
exploration of our
digital age... Another
Other is a riveting
and fragmented series
of micro movements”

– *Realtime*

The Venny Project





Stories from the Suitcase

A series of short films with a live soundtrack created and performed by the children of The Venny with Chamber Made Opera

Season Details

Weekly workshops

28 May - 16 June and 13 Sept - 20 Nov 2014

Public performance 21 November 2014

Produced by Chamber Made Opera in partnership with the Kensington Adventure Playground

Supported by The Hugh Williamson Foundation and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Artistic Credits

Sarah Kriegler
Co-Director

Danielle von der Borch
Co-Director & Community Liaison

Enio Pozzebon
Composer & Musician

Christie Stott
Digital Artist & Editor

Aviva Endean
Musician & Assistant Composer

Lloyd Greenland,
Assistant Community Liaison

Chloe McBain
Assistant Community Liaison (performance)

Rainbow Sweeny
Production Manager

Dale Packard
Sound Operator

Daisy Noyes
Photographer

FILMS

Abdiraman, Anas, Anwar, Ariana, Ava, Ermias, Fatma, Hanan, Hayu, Jack T, Jafir, Joseph, Kayla, LaToya, Muzzammil, Ruben, Samuel, Skye, Tony, Tyrone.

PERFORMANCE

Abdi, Abigail, Anas, Anwar, Ariana, Ava, Dakota, Desmond, Ermias, Fatma, Hanan, Hayu, Hussien, Imad, Jack, M, Jack, T, Jafir, Kayla, LaToya, Muzzammil, Nabat, Qaali, Ruben, Skye, Tony, Tyrone.

In 2014, Artistic Associates Sarah Kriegler and Christie Stott, along with Danni von der Borch, Enio Pozzebon, and Aviva Endean, worked with the children of 'The Venny' Adventure Playground in Kensington on a weekly basis for two terms. Together, they devised and created a series of short silent films, and developed a live performance of the film's score and foley soundtrack, which they presented at a public performance on Friday 21 November.

The children were divided into groups and were presented with a suitcase containing surprising objects to inspire a story. Each group wrote a story that was then filmed on site at The Venny with the children performing. They then worked together to devise the accompanying score and Foley soundtrack. The result was an eclectic mix with everything from animated puppets, shadow stories, film noir through to a zombie flick.

This was the third year that Chamber Made Opera have collaborated with the staff and children of The Venny.

"A notable artistic project, given that children work with one of the most experimental arts organisations in the country" – THE AGE, November 2014

"Fun in the bag: Unbridled enthusiasm filled the air at The Venny adventure playground, where Abigail, Jafar, Nabat and friends transformed the simple contents of a suitcase into a visual and audio feast."

– Front page of the MOONEY VALLEY LEADER, November 2014

Events



Little Operations

The Little Operations series are one-night-only public showings of new works in development which aim to spotlight fresh ideas. They may form part of a formalised creative development but might also be guerrilla-style micro-operas created, rehearsed and performed in one day. Little Operations events are an opportunity for artists and groups, emerging and established, to enter into a conversation with Chamber Made Opera and our audience.

Each Little Operations project is supported through a small amount of seed funding, as well as having access to space, Chamber Made Opera staff and appropriate resources.



Ivan Cheng
EVEN!

25 September 2014

Deakin Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne

Co-presented by Chamber Made Opera
and Fed Square Creative Program

Performers

Brennan Olver	Henry Williams	Charlie Thompson
Taiga Blake	Kriegler	Xuan Valmorbidia
Kokomi Blake	Sarah Kriegler	Ivan Cheng
Ada Williams	Matali Riley	
Kriegler	Elise Smith	

EVEN! was a restaging of a site-specific in-ear score for 100 interpreters with unknown guests and 6 year old performers. Postured as choreographic, conversational, academic, critical, historical, musical, it represented the careers of Sydney-based composers James Brown, Austin Buckett, Lachlan Hughes, and Marcus Whale in a dense aggregation of dialogues. It was part of a gesamtkunstwerk about suspension originally commissioned by Sydney's Carriageworks, a total artwork on the culture of genius, on gender, potential, and economy. Presented as the first of the Little Operations series of Chamber Made Opera, **EVEN!** entered Deakin Edge wary of power systems, as a work that isolates the idea of collaboration or dependence.

"The work's current incarnation will see Cheng working with children aged four to nine along with adult collaborators to reinterpret material representing a range of Sydney-based composers, though in keeping with Chamber Made's longstanding support of radical experimentation, it's difficult to predict exactly what shape the outcome will take." – THE AGE, September 2014



THE RABBLE
Ulysses:
Episode 6: Hades

10 December 2014

The Substation, Newport

Presented by Chamber Made Opera and the Substation,
as part of The Substation's Independent Performance Program
and supported by the Victorian Government through
Arts Victoria.

Artistic Credits

Emma Valente and
Kate Davis *creators*

Dana Miltins, David Harrison
and Mary Helen Sassman
performers

Max Lyandvert *composer*

Are modern death rituals such as the funeral ineffective?
Is there a relationship between the heroic, gender and death?
Is the corpse taboo in contemporary society – how does this
relate to the abject body? What is the sound of grief?

These were some of the provocations behind this presentation of **THE RABBLE's** latest work-in-progress: a new contemporary opera inspired by James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The final product (the full 18 episodes) will be a 10 hour long ambitious and durational theatrical experience. For this Little Operations event, **THE RABBLE** developed **Episode 6: Hades** in collaboration with composer Max Lyandvert.

"... it takes a special kind of daring to attempt a performance adapted from James Joyce's Ulysses, yet that's the challenge the Rabble team has set itself... as part of Chamber Made Opera's Little Operations series." – THE AGE, December 2014

Salons

Chamber Made Opera’s Salon series continued in 2014 with a mixture of Meet-the-Artist Q&A evenings, discussions about the arts and its nexus points, digital artwork releases and exclusive behind-the-scenes events for Keyholders.



Into the Chamber

28 April 2014
RMIT Design Hub

Co-presented with RMIT Design Hub and SIAL

Artistic Credits

Tim Stitz <i>Creative Director</i>	Sarah Kriegler <i>Artistic Associate</i>	Erkki Veltheim <i>Artistic Associate</i>
Tamara Saulwick <i>Artistic Associate</i>	Christie Stott <i>Artistic Associate</i>	

Into the Chamber was a chance for friends and supporters of Chamber Made Opera to meet the new Artistic Associate team. Held in the dramatic surrounds of the top level of the RMIT Design Hub, this event was the perfect way to kick off the year and reveal Chamber Made Opera’s exciting new collaborative model.



After the Wake

30 October 2014
SIAL Studio, RMIT Design Hub, Carlton

Co-presented with RMIT/SIAL and the Australian Research Council Agile Opera Linkage Project

Artistic Credits

Sophie Travers <i>International Development Manager (Europe), Australia Council for the Arts</i>	Launching a new digital artwork filmed and edited by Christie Stott <i>Artistic Associate Chamber Made Opera</i>
Maeve Stone <i>Creator of Wake & Associate Director, Pan Pan Theatre (IRE)</i>	With a performance by Rory Grubb <i>Musician & Sound Designer (IRE), beamed live from Dublin</i>
Professor David Forrest <i>School of Education & School of Art RMIT</i>	
Tim Stitz <i>Creative Director Chamber Made Opera</i>	

This Salon event invited participants to hear about the creative expedition to Ireland in July, where Chamber Made Opera presented *Wake* as part of the 2014 Limerick City of Culture. A digital artwork filmed and edited by Artistic Associate Christie Stott, arising out of the *Wake* performance, was revealed for the first time and was accompanied by a discussion on performance-making in the post-GFC world, art, the economy and collaboration between Australia and Europe.

International



International



The company's largest international engagement in 2014 was the creation of *Wake* for the Limerick of Culture, Ireland's first national 'City of Culture'. It was the company's second internationally premiered Living Room Opera. The work had a short but multi-layered gestation. The commission came in late 2013 from Irish programmer Jo Mangan and was followed in early 2014 with a call-out for interested Irish artists, with an expressed preference for local Limerick artists. Dublin-based, Limerick-native Maeve Stone was selected to take part in this unique international collaboration. Just a few weeks later, Maeve landed in a chilly Melbourne autumn (April/May) to spend three-weeks in residence with the company and to begin a collaboration with Australian composer/musician John Rodgers. This is where the groundwork was laid for *Wake*. Tim and Maeve then returned to Ireland to complete necessary

pre-production in Ireland; meeting artists Maeve was keen to recruit and also audition living rooms that might be used for the July season. Then there was a slight lull in June before everything sprang into action for a final period of creative development in Dublin, followed by rehearsals and presentation in Limerick. It was fantastic to be able to involve so many of the company's artistic team in this project and work with such a bunch of talented Irish performing artists.

The Limerick project repeated the method of having international artists visit Melbourne and the company to develop and inform their new work ahead of its international premiere. Whilst in Melbourne, Maeve was exposed to multiple aspects of company life, a Salon, a creative development and was able to also attend the Melbourne IETM Asian Satellite Meeting with Tim.

It was fantastic to be able to involve so many of the company's artistic team in this project and work with such a bunch of talented Irish performing artists.

In terms of other international market development, Tim was invited to attend Operadagen Rotterdam (the Opera Days Festival) in Holland in May. This was supported by the Market Development section of the Australia Council for the Arts. It allowed Tim to meet with a host of potential presenters and collaborators and seed new opportunities in a very focused and niche environment; a specialty opera and music theatre festival. This opportunity complimented Tim's attendance at the Melbourne IETM Asian Satellite Meeting earlier in May, which brought the European performing arts network to Melbourne with an express focus on deepening engagement with Asia. This meeting signaled a meaningful shift of perspective towards Asia for the network, and spurred the company to look towards new possibilities with the region. A new project in Chengdu China looks set to diversify the company's international profile in 2015.

The company's presence in Europe in 2014 also allowed Tamara and Tim to briefly visit Denmark to continue discussions with festivals, in particular Spor, a new music/sound art festival (which occurs annually in Aarhus), as well as staff from Aarhus 2017, the EU City of Culture team. Discussions have begun as to how CMO might be involved in this year-long festival as well as Spor.



Digital Works & Broadcast



Digital Works & Broadcast



We are committed to an ambitious Digital Program, which will generate a stand-alone digital artwork in conjunction with every new live work created. Our goal with these digital companion pieces is to find an original and meaningful virtual and/or digital resonance of each live performance work in the artistic program.

In 2013 our first internationally premiered Living Room Opera *Between Lands and Longings* was presented in Bristol in the UK and the Macedon Ranges in Victoria, along with a modified 'public' version at Federation Square in the heart of Melbourne. When Zierle & Carter presented the work in a country home and shearing shed in the Macedon Ranges, The Public Studio, a Melbourne outfit led by artists Ming-Zhu Hii and Nicholas Coghlan, offered to craft a series of art videos of the work for distribution online. They filmed aspects

of the live performance as well as original set-up sequences for the video works. Seven short art videos were released on Vimeo over seven-weeks across February and March 2014. A full, 30-minute long-version video was released in the eighth week. These videos were cross-promoted by The Public Studio, Zierle & Carter and Chamber Made Opera to a virtual audience of over two-thousand (i.e. 2,045 plays throughout 2014). The 30-minute long-version was screened at Fed Square in May and in multiple locations in the UK, accompanying Zierle & Carter as they completed a roadshow of artist talks to conclude their Arts Council England funding of this two-year project, co-commissioned by Chamber Made Opera and In Between Time.

Artistic Associate Christie Stott was the Video Designer for *Wake*. On top of devising a beautifully haunting set of site-specific video installations that accompanied the

Our goal with these digital companion pieces is to find an original and meaningful virtual and/or digital resonance...

beginning sequence of *Wake*, Christie filmed and took sound recordings of the entire performed work. The result is a 9-minute digital artwork that evokes the unique experience of the live performance. It is not a piece of documentation, nor an archive or a marketing devise (although it may serve these functions indirectly), but an expression of the live work that offers viewers a window into the sonic and performative landscape of this work. As a result, audiences across the world, and in particular our local audience, are given access to the work. This artwork was launched at our September Salon, 'After the Wake'. So far it has been seen by an audience of 1,400 online.

Christie also worked with Margaret Cameron, in what turned out to be a very precious time, to craft a video excerpt from her 2013 work *Opera for a small mammal*. This 20-minute online video will accompany an upcoming book publication of Margaret's, to be launched posthumously in 2015.

Radio broadcasts of Chamber Made Opera Records' recording of *Another Lament* occurred on numerous occasions on ABC Classic FM in 2014, to an audience of at least 60,000 nationally. There was also the creation of a very special New Waves podcast, for November's Australian Music Month on ABC Classic FM, of the complete Part Two of *The Minotaur Trilogy*, 'Minotaur The Labyrinth'. This was downloaded by in excess of one thousand listeners.

We are working to launch a re-fresh of the company website in early 2015 and will take further steps towards an online digital hub/platform for Chamber Made Opera's burgeoning Digital Program. This will be done in conjunction with the Agile Opera Australian Research Council Linkage Project.



THE SALT CLOCK - Between Lands & Longings
1 year ago



THE LAKE - Between Lands & Longings
1 year ago



THE WELCOME - Between Lands & Longings
1 year ago



THE FIELD - Between Lands & Longings
1 year ago

Research & Development





Agile Opera

Chamber Opera in a New Era

An Australia Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project
2014 – 2016

A partnership between Chamber Made Opera, RMIT University and Victoria University in collaboration with the Australia Council for the Arts and Federation Square.

RMIT University
(Administering Organisation)
Associate Professor Lawrence Harvey (SIAL), Professor David Forrest, Mr Gregory More

Victoria University (VU)
Dr Margaret Trail

Australia Council for the Arts
(Emerging and Experimental Arts)
Andrew Donovan and Pip Wittenoom

Fed Square
Matt Jones and Renee Dudfield

Chamber Made Opera
Tim Stitz and Christie Stott

This new Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project will investigate methods of preserving the intimacy of performance in a digital age.

Titled **Agile Opera**, the project's aim is to develop new operational models for performing arts organisations in Australia, especially those exploring experimental and niche artwork.

The overarching question the project will address is how the distinctive forms of intimacy found in chamber opera can be transferred to 21st century digital formats and platforms.

It will interrogate the new spatial relationships with audiences that are being created by designers, performers, composers and librettists that will challenge dominant forms of contemporary communication.

The **Agile Opera** project team will develop innovative and sustainable models for arts organisations by researching new production and audience paradigms for a digitally enabled society. This research will support the creation of innovative performance works, enable the engagement of new audiences, and provide outcomes that promote the sustainability of arts organisations in the digital age.

The project is based at RMIT University's state-of-the-art Design Hub.



Captives of the City

Creative Developments

10 – 15 March 2014
Arts Centre Melbourne

5 – 7 May 2014
Arts Centre Melbourne

This creative development was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and the Arts Centre Melbourne.

Sarah Kriegler
Direction

David Young
Composition

Dave Jones
Animation & Digital Puppetry Design

Jethro Woodward
Sound Design & Musical Direction

Ben Grant
Dramaturg

Mark Cauvin
Double Bass

Matthias Schack-Arnott
Percussion

Jacob Williams
Puppetry

A collaboration between Chamber Made Opera and independent puppet company Lemony S Puppet Theatre.

Captives of the City is a multi-media exploration of social disengagement and social disorder through the marriage of three art forms: puppetry, animation, and contemporary opera.

Captives of the City will have its World Premiere season in 2015.



Wake

Creative Developments

2 – 15 May 2014
Melbourne

1 – 5 July 2014
Dublin

7 – 14 July 2014
Limerick (rehearsals)

*These creative developments
and rehearsals were assisted by
Limerick City of Culture*

After a tremendous response to our call for artists in February 2014, Irish theatre-maker Maeve Stone was selected to join composer John Rodgers here in Melbourne for an initial creative development of a new living room opera to be performed as part of the Limerick City of Culture programme.

The artists were initially asked to respond to the ancient 'Curse on Limerick' by St Munchin who grew so furious at the lack of help from locals in building his church that he prayed strangers would prosper in the town whilst locals would remain forever unfortunate and unsuccessful.

From their collaborations, the work grew to become **Wake**, which had its world premiere in Limerick in July 2014.



Another Other

Creative Developments

9 – 31 July 2014
Italy and Germany

14 – 21 November
SIAL Studios,
RMIT Design Hub Melbourne

23 November – 4 December
Punctum's ICU, Castlemaine
(rehearsals)

*This creative development
was assisted by the Australian
Government through the
Australia Council, its arts
funding and advisory body
and Arts Victoria*

Developed by Erkki Veltheim,
Sabina Maselli, Natasha
Anderson and Anthony Pateras

Another Other had a very fruitful first creative development in southern Italy, Castelpagano and then in Berlin, Germany, throughout July 2014.

Key artists Erkki Veltheim, Anthony Pateras, Sabina Maselli and Natasha Anderson came together from different corners of the globe to complete the design score and production specifications.

The success of this creative development led to a presentation of the work as part of a preview season later in the year at Punctum's ICU in Castlemaine.



Permission to Speak

Creative Development

23 – 25 July 2014
Melbourne

Commissioned by Chamber Made Opera with support from Helen and Peter Murdoch and the Australian government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Tamara Saulwick
Director & Creator

Kate Neal
Composer

Jethro Woodward
Sound Designer

Gian Slater, Joshua Kyle,
Tom Barton & Georgie Darvidas
Vocalists

Rachael Dyson-McGregor
Performer

Permission to Speak fuses pre-recorded interview fragments, speech, song, intricate choral counterpoint, notated gesture and choreographed movement under the powerful theme of voicing the unvoiced. Built from multiple interviews with participants from all walks of life, backgrounds and ages, the work embroiders an intimate portrait of the interior voices of those around us. In **Permission To Speak**, pre-recorded and live voices are interrelated and interdependent. The live presence of five performers is accompanied by a community of pre-recorded voices offering multiple/ contradictory/accumulated perspectives on contemporary experience. What do we want to say to those who are important to us? Thoughts, diatribes, longings, regrets and wishes find voice in **Permission to Speak**.

Permission to Speak will have its World Premiere in 2015 or 2016 in multiple spaces – rooms and passageways of varying size and acoustic quality - in the RMIT Design Hub building.



Emerging Writer-in-Residence

Chamber Made Opera is passionate about providing ongoing professional development opportunities for emerging artists to enter into a meaningful relationship with the company.

In 2014, thanks to a VCA Professional Pathways Scholarship, we were able to employ theatre-maker Patrick McCarthy as an Emerging Writer-in-Residence, in a part-time capacity. Patrick completed the new Masters in Playwriting course at VCA in 2013.

This residency was a great opportunity for Chamber Made Opera because, as a relatively small organisation, the company has limited capacity to employ artists in ongoing and substantial time periods. The chance to have such an in-depth period of collaboration and mentorship with Patrick was valuable to all involved.

In his time with us, Patrick made a huge contribution to the company, working in a wide variety of roles across the organisation. As well as writing a great number of successful grant applications for the company, he also observed and assisted in the creative developments of four different new works. He was even able to take time out from his own international travels and join the company in Ireland for the development and premier of *Wake*, where his skill as a writer shone through at the eleventh hour being called upon to pen a moving eulogy he wrote for the work.

One of our hopes with this residency was to help Patrick embrace the inherent inter-disciplinary nature of opera and extend his work beyond his previously theatre-dominated practice. We are looking forward to the future development of 'The Sky Is Well Designed', the new work Patrick wrote during his residency, which will feature as part of our Little Operations program in 2015.

The VCA & MCM Professional Pathway program is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

The Keyholder Program



The Keyholder Program

In 2014, Chamber Made Opera continued the Keyholder program, set up in 2011 as a type of subscription with benefits.

Keyholders support each and every activity the company undertakes and are granted exclusive access to all performances and events across the 2014 season, worldwide. This includes performance presentations, new creations, salons, creative developments, soirées, artist talks, workshops and international tours.

In 2014, there were 20 Keyholders. The revenue from their subscriptions was allocated directly to artistic commissions and programming and was considerably enhanced by the loyalty and engagement of the subscribers.

Keyholder	Double Keyholder	Gold Keyholder	Master Keyholder
<p>\$450 per year <i>Unlimited</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ticket to each performance in the 2014 season (worldwide) • 1 additional 'bring a friend' ticket to the performance of your choice • Invitations to special Keyholder events and artists talks • Advance notice and booking privileges for all performances and events • 1 limited edition Chamber Made Opera key 	<p>\$750 for two per year <i>Only 100 available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 tickets to each performance in the 2014 season (worldwide) • 2 additional 'bring-a-friend' tickets to a performance of your choice • Invitations to special Keyholder events and artists talks • Advance notice and booking privileges for all performances and events • 2 limited edition Chamber Made Opera keys 	<p>\$2,950 per year <i>Only 7 available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 VIP reserved seating tickets for all performances in the 2014 season (worldwide) • 2 additional complimentary tickets to a performance of your choice • Exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences • Invitations to special Keyholder events and artists talks • Advance notice and booking privileges for all performances and events • 1 limited edition Chamber Made Opera gold key 	<p>\$25,000 per year <i>Only 1 available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 brand new commissioned chamber opera • Life-long commissioning credits for the new work • 1 World Premiere performance for your guests • 1 limited edition, signed copy of the musical score • Limited edition visual & audio recording of the new chamber opera • 2 VIP reserved seating tickets for all performances in the 2014 season (worldwide) • 2 additional 'bring-a-friend' tickets to a performance of your choice • Exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences • Invitations to special Keyholder events and artists talks • Advance notice and booking privileges for all performances and events • 1 limited edition Chamber Made Opera master key

Audience & Marketing



Audience & Marketing

Chamber Made Opera's audience continued to expand and strengthen in 2014.

As well as deepening our relationships with the company's loyalists, we sought out new audience members via strategic partnerships with other companies, venues, festivals and key artists. In this way, we were able to leverage the marketing power of our partners as well increase our own.

Examples of the different ways that audiences and marketing are leveraged include:

- The new Artistic Associates and collaborative model brought in new audience members.
- **Wake** took the living room opera format to a whole new international audience in Limerick, Ireland.
- **Another Other** was presented in collaboration with Punctum in Castlemaine and exposed Punctum's core audience in regional Victoria to Chamber Made Opera's work.
- **Little Operations with Ivan Cheng** brought new audience with specific interest in sound art and visual arts and also was a chance to work with Fed Square's Creative Program.
- **Little Operations with THE RABBLE** performed to a wider audience, drawing in THE RABBLE's more "theatre-based"

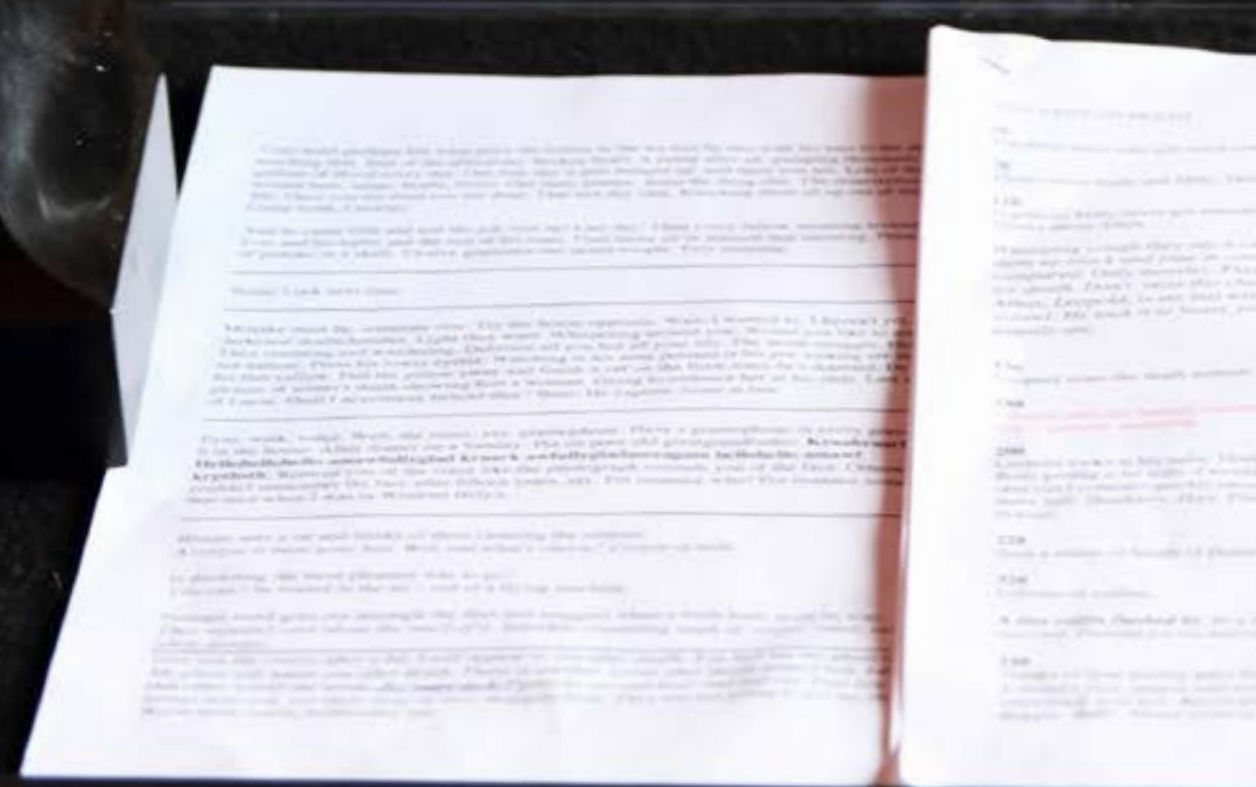
audience, The Substation's audience as well as Chamber Made Opera's keyholders and supporters.

- Our Salon events, co-presented with the RMIT Design Hub SIAL Studios, tapped into a rich academic vein - particularly academics with an interest in - or associated with - the Agile Opera ARC Linkage project.

All of these presenting partners' collective audience and marketing strength provided Chamber Made Opera with leverage reach far exceeding what we would have been capable of alone.



Communications



Design & Branding

We continued to work closely with Sweet Creative in 2014 on our brand and design with the 2013 Annual Report and an update of the 2014 – 2016 Business plan. They also provided a consistent touch to programs, invitations and flyers.

SWEET



Media & Publicity

Our other major sponsor, Zilla & Brook Publicity, continued to provide a consistent message and flavour to all of Chamber Made Opera's media releases and interactions with the press and online media.

zILLA & bROOK

In 2014, editorial coverage of Chamber Made Opera exceeded \$31,760 with a PR value of \$127,040 with a readership of 24,105,829 (circulation 687,770,750). The company received extremely solid exposure in both national and local print, radio and online.



Mooney Valley Leader



The Age

Real Time



The Age Online



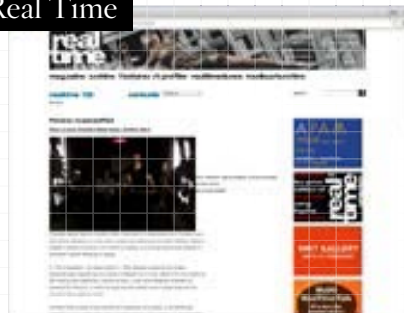
The Age



Arts Hub



Real Time



Social Media

We have continued to strengthen Chamber Made Opera's presence across a number of social media networks, adding Flickr and Vimeo as new channels. We continually strive to keep our online presence active and dynamic and to deepen the engagement of our audiences with our art.



"Intensity & emotion in Wake was stark. Music was poignant & choreographed so beautifully. Has to be experienced @ ChamberMadeOper @maevestone"

– Helen Creed @HelenCreed 16 Jul 2014

"@LimeTreeTheatre @maevestone @ChamberMadeOper Saw Wake tonight. Tense and fraught and beautiful. Lovely setting too. #limerickcityofculture"

– Aoife McCarthy @tiamcgolden 17 Jul 2014

"What a moving beautiful piece from @ChamberMadeOper subtle stunning uncanny upsetting silent loud perfection #wake"

– Deirdre Flynn @deirdre_flynn 19 Jul 2014

"On a sad day for Victorians my heart lifted postcard from @ChamberMadeOper making great work OS #artwillmakeadifference @heidivic"

– Virginia Lovett @virginia_lovett 19 Jul 2014

"Wake with @ChamberMadeOper and @maevestone is beautiful. Just beautiful. If you can get a ticket, go."

– Maeve McGrath @maevemcg 18 Jul 2014

"@ChamberMadeOper thanks for existing. So much whingeing about OA programming today, it's good to know the adventurers (i.e you) are there!"

– Sally Whitwell @sallywhitwell 12 Aug 2014

"Another Otheb: @ChamberMadeOper's newest work @PunctumInc in Castlemaine. Intense. Haunting. Brilliant."

– MichaelB @michaelb_au 5 Dec 2014



The performance tonight in Limerick was amazing. Great collaboration with Maeve Stone. Excellent experience."

– Audience member, Ireland.

Everything Chamber Made does is exciting, cutting edge, and incredibly creative. Never bored. Never disappointed."

– Ian Parsons, PBS 106.7FM

887

Facebook Likes

15% increase from 2013

1,650

Twitter Followers

20% increase from 1374 at end 2013

1,302

e-news subscribers

received 10 communications with an average open rate of 37.23% and an average click rate of 8.41%

8,155

Website Visits

5,542

Unique Visitors

5,056

Page Views

34.7%

New Visitors
(2,830 Visitors)

65.3%

Returning Visitors
(5,325 Visitors)

The background of the image shows two roasted kangaroo legs, likely from a wallaby or similar species, resting on a dark wooden surface. The legs are cooked to a golden-brown color, with the skin appearing slightly charred and the meat visible. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a rustic and hearty atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the center of the image in a white, serif font.

“The Australian
Company manifests
its mission statement
of re-inventing our
bellowing, big-lunged
impressions of what
‘opera’ can be.”

– *Vulgo/Realttime*

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& Eugene Schlusser, Fiona Sweet &
Paul Newcombe, Helen & Peter Murdoch
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Project Partners



Chamber Made Opera is a proud member of the New Music Network.

*Photographs by: Gavin D Andrews, Kate Davis, Ros Kavanagh, Daisy Noyes,
Sabina Maselli, Nina Gibson, Christie Stott and Josh Burns.*



Vale dear M

Margaret Cameron

20 Jan 1955 – 20 Oct 2014

Poet of Knowledge & Melancholy

*An obituary for our dear friend
and colleague by former Artistic
Director David Young as
published in The Age,
Thursday 20 November 2014*

Margaret Cameron, creator of ground breaking solo performance works including the acclaimed “Knowledge and Melancholy”, and one of Australia’s most respected theatre practitioners, died on October 20th at her home on the Bellarine. She was aged 59.

Margaret was also an influential teacher, dramaturg and director, best known for taking her perception of the everyday as inspiration for her theatrical solo works. Yet perhaps what best characterises her 35-year artistic output is her philosophically poetic writing which “does what it says and says what it does”.

Ever charismatic, Margaret insisted she was “not a very comfortable actress.” On stage this seemed not to matter, and her performances in the 1980s—directed by the likes of Jenny Kemp, Rex Cramphorn and Steven Berkoff—enamoured her to audiences and critics alike. She immersed herself in Grotowski-style theatre experiments, travelled to Bali and Berlin, and forged alliances with all manner of artists, notably Hellen Sky who became a lifelong friend.

A major influence was American choreographer Deborah Hay to whom she was introduced by dancer and Alexander Technique teacher, Jane Refshauge. To Hay’s proposition “The perception is the dance”, Margaret responded: “To audience is a verb”, thus beginning a perceptual practice which she applied to everything she did.

Margaret received prestigious awards and grants throughout her career, including Theatre and Literature Fellowships from the Australia Council for the Arts. Almost all her work was first “audienced” at La Mama Theatre under the care of its artistic director Liz Jones. She performed interstate, and abroad in Denmark’s Odin Theatre, Barcelona (where she performed “the proscenium” in Spanish) and Aberystwyth, Wales, with Jill Greenhalph.

She described herself as a “working artist”, and often remarked on the extraordinary privilege of “making a life in art”. Around her own work, she mentored scores of artists—such as actor Christopher Brown, singer Anna Liebrezeit and writer Willoh S. Weiland— dramaturged My Darling Patricia, directed Dawn Albinger’s solo “Heroin(e)”, conducted workshops at the Body Voice Centre with John Howard and the late Helen Sharp, and lectured at Victoria University for thirty years, profoundly influencing a generation of performers, theatre-makers, musicians and slam-poets.

Born in 1955 in suburban Burwood to Lorna and Thomas Cameron, she grew up opposite the local Catholic church under considerable economic hardship. Margaret was the youngest of eight, and in the busy household much of her nurturing was left to her sisters with whom she retained a special bond throughout her life. After attending school and private elocution lessons, Margaret initially enrolled in Art and Craft at the Melbourne Teachers’ College, but was saved by Lindy Davies who ran the Drama school. Upon graduating, she moved to Sydney to seek her fortune as an actress.

During this period she was directed in “Ulrike Meinhof Sings” by actor Nico Lathouris. They fell in love and had a child, Yani. After their relationship ended, with help from a single mother’s no-interest loan, Margaret purchased a house found by her brother Brian in Indented Head, a fishing town 90 minutes from Melbourne. Later renovated by sometime partner Michael Hutchison and painted a searing parakeet orange, the house became filled with memorable gatherings and treasures from virtuosic op-shop expeditions.

Margaret and I met during 2002 and in a dozen years we created some of the strangest and most particular works in our respective oeuvres. Highlights include “A Quarreling Pair” based on the Jane Bowles puppet play for the arts company Aphids which played in Melbourne, Sydney, New York (at the original La Mama) and Rome. One of our last and dearest creations was “The Minotaur Trilogy”, a three-hour epic for Chamber Made Opera.

Our many collaborations, and close friendship, played an important role in Margaret’s deeply creative associations with artists including writer Cynthia Troup (whose work “Care Instructions” Margaret also directed), actor Caroline Lee, puppeteer/director Sarah Kriegler, sound designer Jethro Woodward, soprano Deborah Kayser, artist Rosemary Joy, filmmaker Peter Humble and innumerable others.

In January 2013 Margaret was rushed to Emergency with what turned out to be cancer, but underwent a partial recovery that enabled her to premiere “Opera for a small mammal”. The Monthly described her final tour-de-force appearance as “the culmination of a life’s work by one of Australia’s most important theatre artists.” In the same year, she completed her PhD, “I Shudder To Think”, preparing it for publication by Ladyfinger Press.

In her last months, ravaged by complications arising from multiple surgery, Margaret wrote “Lay Me Out,” a 49-stanza poem that seemed intended as her adieu to family and friends, to her audience and to herself. Written between rounds of chemotherapy, with one stanza for each day of the Tibetan Bardo, it is filled with bursts of love, fear, beauty and a singular awareness that her death was near.

Margaret’s ashes are buried in Portarlington Cemetery, looking across the bay towards Melbourne. She is survived by her son Yani (aged 30), mother Lorna (aged 100), brothers Garth and Michael, and sisters Lian, Frances, Marie and Helen.

Lay Me Out

“For I choose innocence
As the first, second and third pages
To ride this bed to heaven
I choose to know the world through feeling
And its brilliance, light, and a sense of wit, of witness too
Releasing words that kill the dead and wake the living
Words with wings”

– *Margaret Cameron*

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