

MEDIA RELEASE

**BRINGING BARITONE TO THE BUSH: TEDDY TAHU RHODES
TO HEADLINE INAUGURAL FESTIVAL OF OUTBACK OPERA**

Internationally acclaimed singer **Teddy Tahu Rhodes** will headline the inaugural **Festival of Outback Opera**, presented by **Opera Queensland** in association with **Camerata – Queensland’s Chamber Orchestra**. The festival will take place in Longreach, Winton, Barcaldine, Blackall and Windorah from **19 – 27 May 2021**.

The eight-day celebration kicks off with a special edition of Opera Queensland’s popular participatory event **Sing Sing Sing** at Winton’s iconic North Gregory Hotel on **19 May**, a performance of **Are You Lonesome Tonight** on the main street of Winton, outside the Waltzing Matilda Centre on **20 May** followed by two spectacular outdoor concerts, **Dark Sky Serenade** at the Australian Age of Dinosaurs parklands in Winton on **21 May** and **Singing in the Night** at Qantas Founders Museum in Longreach on **22 May**.

At **Dark Sky Serenade** audiences have the chance to watch the sun set and the Milky Way emerge while listening to the songs of **Mozart, Bizet, Rossini** and **Rodgers and Hammerstein**.

For **Singing in the Night** in Longreach, be immersed in beautiful music making as the sun sets behind the Qantas Founders Museum. Music by composers from across the history of opera, including **Handel, Verdi**, and **Puccini** and some much-loved musical numbers from shows such as **South Pacific, Fiddler on the Roof** and **My Fair Lady**,

The performances will be led by acclaimed Australian conductor **Vanessa Scammell** who has curated the program with Camerata’s Artistic Director **Brendan Joyce**.

Another key offering of the festival is Opera Queensland’s genre-defying new production, *Are You Lonesome Tonight* which plays Winton, Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall and Windorah.

Opera Queensland Artistic Director & CEO **Patrick Nolan** said it was a coup to have secured New Zealand-born bass-baritone Teddy Tahu Rhodes for the special celebration, which coincides with Opera Queensland’s 40th anniversary.

“The stars – and Trans-Tasman bubble – have aligned and we are thrilled that Teddy is able to join us for what is sure to be one of the highlights of 2021,” Nolan said.

“Teddy is one of the great voices of contemporary opera and has amassed a legion of fans for his iconic leading performances in productions of **Don Giovanni** and **Tosca**, as well as a dazzling career in the musicals. Anyone who can make it to the outback for the festival is in for the experience of a lifetime.”

Sharing the open-air stages with the ARIA and Helpmann Award-winning performer will be an ensemble of Opera Queensland artists including **Eva Kong** (*The Marriage of Figaro; A Flowering Tree*), **Kang Wang** (Opera Queensland Under the Stars), **Xenia Puskarz Thomas** (Opera Queensland Under the Stars) and **Jason Barry-Smith**.

“The Festival of Outback Opera is a wonderful opportunity to show Queensland that opera as an art form is not confined to theatre stages in capital cities,” said Mr Nolan.

“The beauty of opera is its ability to connect with anyone who is excited by great stories and powerful music.

“Our vision is to grow a community that is connected by the transformative power of opera, and we look forward to doing this during the festival when we run community workshops, perform pop-up performances and debut new work developed in collaboration with emerging artists.”

The Festival of Outback Opera is funded under the Year of Outback Tourism Events Program.

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk encouraged Queenslanders to back the bush and visit the region for this unique Outback experience.

“The Queensland Government is delighted to support Opera Queensland to deliver the Festival of Outback Opera and help bring more visitors to western Queensland to enjoy everything that the region has to offer,” the Premier said.

The Festival of Outback Opera will visit Winton, Longreach, Barcaldine, Blackall and Windorah from 19 – 27 May 2021. Tickets for Dark Sky Serenade and Singing in the Night from \$49 + booking fee.

For full program details and to book your tickets visit oq.com.au.

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Festival of Outback Opera

Sing Sing Sing - North Gregory Hotel, Winton
Wednesday 19 May | FREE EVENT

Are You Lonesome Tonight - Waltzing Matilda Centre, Winton
Thursday 20 May | FREE EVENT

Dark Sky Serenade - Australian Age of Dinosaurs, Winton
Friday 21 May | TICKETS FROM \$49

Singing in the Night - Qantas Founders Museum, Longreach
Saturday 22 May | TICKETS FROM \$49

Are You Lonesome Tonight - Stockman's Hall of Fame, Longreach
Sunday 23 May

Are You Lonesome Tonight - Barcaldine Showgrounds, Barcaldine
Monday 24 May

Are You Lonesome Tonight - Blackall Woolscour, Blackall
Tuesday 25 May

Are You Lonesome Tonight - Windorah Rodeo Grounds, Windorah
Thursday 27 May