

## AGM & Concert, 22 April 2018

2.00pm: Annual General Meeting - members only

2.30pm: Concert of young singers supported by the Wagner Society

### Concert of young singers supported by the Wagner Society

Following the AGM an enthusiastic audience of 40 members and guests were treated to a beautiful recital by three up and coming young Australian singers whom we have supported over our many years of philanthropy. We welcome your donations to enable them to grow professionally and to provide performance opportunities for them.

**Eugene Raggio**, young bass baritone, who has been singing and touring recently in Germany with Das Phantom der Oper (not the Lloyd Webber one), had to rush away from our concert to conduct The Messiah in Surry Hills. Eugene was kind enough to sing, at very short notice, Wagner's Die Frist ist um, which he sang for our Flying Dutchman seminar some years ago. <https://www.eugene-f-raggio-bassbaritone.com/>



Eugene Raggio

**Laura Scandizzo**, dramatic soprano, and a Pacific Opera Adjunct Artist whom we have heard at our Christmas concerts, and whose attendance we sponsored at a summer school in Varna, Bulgaria. Laura delighted us with Abscheulicher (Fidelio - Beethoven), Dich teure Halle (Tannhäuser-Wagner) and Es gibt ein Reich, (Ariadne auf Naxos - Strauss).

**Chris Curcuruto**, bass baritone, who also sang at one of our Wagner seminars some years ago. Chris has been involved with Pacific Opera since 2015, from Young Artist to currently a Young Artist Representative on its Advisory Council. Chris gave us wonderful performances of Si la rigueur (La Juive - Halévy), Come dal ciel precipita (Macbeth - Verdi) and Wie schön ist doch die Musik (Die Schweigsame Frau - Strauss). <http://www.christophercurcuruto.com/>

They were accompanied beautifully by **Claire Howard Race**, a young, much-awarded artist, making her first appearance with the Wagner Society. She is resident pianist with the Sydney-based Sirius Chamber Ensemble and is currently Assistant Chorus Master and Principal Rehearsal Pianist for the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.

By Leona Geeves



Claire Howard Race, Laura Scandizzo and Chris Curcuruto

## About the singers

**Eugene Raggio, bass-baritone:** Eugene is an Honours graduate of the Elder Conservatorium (Adelaide), a graduate actor of the Adelaide Centre for the Arts and a graduate screenwriter/director/producer of the International Film School Sydney. This year, Eugene has toured the German-speaking world in the coveted title role of *Das Phantom der Oper*. In 2014, Eugene undertook the young artist program with Gertrude Opera, making his Melbourne debut as John Sorel in *The Consul*. Eugene performed the rôle of Hidraot in Glück's *Armide* for the Yorke Trust Summer Opera UK. In July the same year, he was a finalist for the Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship. In 2015, Eugene sang in three new productions for the Inaugural Nagambie Lakes Opera Festival. The same year, he received the Sheila Prior Memorial Scholarship from the AOAC to attend the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Summer School. Eugene toured *The father in Hänsel and Gretel* for OA schools company in successive years in Victoria and NSW. Eugene's most recent Australian engagement was a national tour in the title role of Eugene Onegin with Co-Opera. He performed in Berlin Opera Academy's *Gianni Schicchi* last summer. Eugene has been a soloist with the Voiceworks, the Adelaide Harmony Choir, The Wagner Society of NSW, La Fraternalita di Solisti and Opera by Candlelight. His operatic credits also include: *Papageno/The Magic Flute*, *Frank- Falke/Die Fledermaus*, *Angelotti – Jailor/Tosca*, *Oberon –Snug/ A Midsummer Nights Dream*, *Douphol- Germont/La Traviata*, *Schaunard- Colline/La Boheme*, *Figaro/ The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Plutone/L'Orfeo*.

**Laura Scandizzo, dramatic soprano:** Laura has a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance from Texas Wesleyan University. She has participated in Young Artist programs with Pacific Opera in Sydney (2017 and 2016), Bulgaria, New Zealand, New Mexico and Orvieto Italy. She has been a finalist in a number of competitions and won the (2015) Sydney Eisteddfod Best German Song or Aria Award presented by the Wagner Society of NSW. She has performed for the Wagner Society in a number of well received recitals. Laura's solo roles include Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (Varna International Opera Academy), Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Nella in

Gianni Schicchi (Land of Enchantment Opera), the title role in Suor Angelica (TCC), Leonora in Fidelio (VSO). Other performances include being the soprano soloist in Poulenc's Gloria and Beethoven's 9th Symphony (Willoughby Symphony) and Opera Australia Chorus (2017-2018) for their productions of King Roger, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour's Carmen, Nixon in China, Verdi Requiem and the forthcoming Aida.

**Chris Curcuruto, bass-baritone:** Christopher graduated in Classical Voice from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and in Theatre Studies from the University of New England. In 2015, Christopher accepted an Associate Artist position with the Sydney-based Young Artist Program, Pacific Opera, performing the role of Harasta in their production of Janacek's "The Cunning Little Vixen" under Alexander Briger AO. Christopher was then invited to continue with Pacific Opera as a Young Artist in 2016 and 2017, and has made appearances as an alumnus in 2018. Also in 2017, Christopher made his international debut singing Leporello and Masetto with the Varna International Opera Academy at the Stara Zagora State Opera, Bulgaria, was a finalist in the Opera Foundation for Young Australians Lady Fairfax Scholarship, and was invited to join the Opera Australia Extra Chorus. Christopher's other role credits include: Father - Hansel and Gretel (WAAPA); Mr Dashwood/Gideon March - Little Women (WAAPA); Kecal - The Bartered Bride (Rockdale Opera Company); Mars - Orpheus in the Underworld (Rockdale Opera Company); Alessio - La Sonnambula (Operantics); Marquis D'Obigny - La Traviata (Opera New England); Zuniga - Carmen (Opera New England). Christopher's concert performances include: bass soloist - Beethoven Symphony 9, conducted by Dr Nicholas Milton (Willoughby Symphony Orchestra); bass soloist - Handel's Messiah (Artes Christi); ensemble - Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice (Spectrum Now Festival - Sydney).

Christopher has recently returned from an audition tour in America where he has accepted an offer of admission with full tuition to a Graduate Artist program in Opera at the University of North Texas and the studio of Dr Stephen Austin. Before moving to the United States later in 2018, Christopher looks forward to many upcoming concert engagements.

**Accompanist Claire Howard Race:** Claire obtained First Class Honours and the University Medal from Newcastle Conservatorium, NSW, before continuing her postgraduate piano accompaniment studies at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, where she was awarded the Broadwood Junior Piano Accompanist Fellowship. She subsequently earned a Master of Music in Performance and Research with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, London. Claire has been the recipient of Lieder and Accompaniment prizes at the RSAMD, the Russian Song Accompaniment Prize at the RAM and has been recognised with sponsorship from the Geoffrey Parsons Trust, Tait Memorial Trust, Hope Scott Trust and the Alex Menzies Memorial Fund, the latter being awarded "to an outstanding accompanist" at the RSAMD. Claire has accompanied for many vocal ensembles including the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, The Little Opera Company (London), the Esterhazy Singers (London), the Australian Girls Choir and Gondwana Choirs. Festival performances include the International Festival of the Interpretation of Spanish Song (Granada, Spain), the Ruhr Klassische Musik Festival (Marl, Germany), the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, the Paisley Festival (Glasgow), and the Amersham and Henley (London) Festivals. Recent song recitals have been with Deborah Humble (mezzo-soprano) and Hyeseoung Kwon (soprano) at the Newcastle Music Festival (NSW). She is resident pianist with the Sydney-based Sirius Chamber Ensemble and is currently Assistant Chorus Master and Principal Rehearsal Pianist for the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.