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Phillipa Safety

in co-operation with:



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GERMAN-AUSTRALIAN OPERA GRANT

More Than Opera Ltd in cooperation with the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden

proudly announces the 22nd German-Australian Opera Grant –
the gateway to an international career.

2026 MTO – German-Australian Opera Grant

for the Wiesbaden Theatre season August 2026- July 2027
(The Grant commences in June 2026 with a preparation period)

The aim of the German-Australian Opera Grant is to promote emerging Australian opera singers in the early stage of their professional career, i.e. the singers have finished their education and have gained some experience for a short period of time (up to a few years). Artists who have established careers for longer will not be considered as emerging artists for the purpose of the grant.

The German-Australian Opera Grant offers a one-year employment contract as junior solo singer in the opera company of the Hessisches Staatstheater (State Theatre of Hessen), Wiesbaden, Germany; a one-month language course at the Goethe-Institut in Germany and one month's work experience at the opera house at the end of the previous opera season (June 2026) to gain an insight into the company and its procedures prior to the next season beginning in August 2026.

The recipient of the German-Australian Opera Grant also receives a cheque for \$5000 to assist the preparation stage for overseas prior to departure in June 2026.

The recipient will become part of the professional ensemble in Wiesbaden from August 2026 until July 2027, therefore a well-considered choice of applicant has to be made. The German-Australian Opera Grant recipient has to be in a position to leave Australia for Germany in June 2026 to participate in the one month's work experience at the Hessisches Staatstheater prior to attending a one month German language course at the Goethe-Institut. The grantee remains in Germany until July 2027.

In addition to the German-Australian Opera Grant (GAOG), singers have the opportunity to be considered for:

- **MTO Grant - Developing Artist: \$4000**
- **Audience Award: \$3000**
- **Encouragement Grant(s): \$2000**

Entry Form and Regulations

1. **Applications: Applications close 31 August 2025.** Late or incomplete entries may be accepted but only at the adjudicators' discretion.

2. **The stages of the grant process:**

At first a written **personal application** (personal introduction), a **curriculum vitae including a list with all studied, covered and performed roles** (please list in separate columns) together with the **registration form (application form)** submitted by the singer will be considered. Please also upload your electronic audio-visual recordings (see details below). Your recordings will then be analysed by a preliminary adjudicating panel.

As the applicants will not have direct contact with the adjudicating panel for the preselection it is essential that the information in the submitted application is complete in all requirements and the applicant pays attention to the presentation.

The process of selection for this grant is multifaceted. It therefore differentiates itself from a standard vocal competition. It may involve adjudicators requiring to see an applicant personally in the preliminary selection stage. In that case you could be asked to come to Melbourne.

Singers will be notified, by no later than late September 2025, as to whether or not they qualify for entry into the Semi-Finals.

Semi-Finals: up to 12 selected Semi-Finalists (6 male / 6 female voices) will be auditioned on FRI 14 November 2025 in Melbourne, for approx. 25 minutes by an adjudication panel.

In the morning at 8.30am, prior to the individual auditions, there will be a ninety-minute stage workshop led by an opera director. This includes a vocal improvisation and drama class for all Semi-Finalists. A small part of an opera excerpt has to be prepared for this workshop. Semi-Finalists will be advised approx. 4 weeks prior to the workshop.

The audition not only includes singing but also presentation, acting, working with a conductor and a personal interview.

At the end of the day the four Finalists for the Opera Finale (held the following day) will be chosen.

The Opera Finale: four selected Finalists (2 male / 2 female voices) present two arias/excerpts of not more than twenty minutes each before an audience of over 400 guests. The adjudicators then make their decision.

The Finals Concert will be held at The Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne on SAT, 15 November 2025, 2-5pm.

The Winner will present a program at an operatic concert for sponsors of the Grant before departing to Germany, and also another reception or masterclass upon returning from Germany, to give feedback on the overseas experience.

The requirements for each stage of participation in the selection process are set out below.

3. **Age:** An age limit applies for male and female voices of a maximum of 30 years of age as at close of application 31.8.2025.

How often can Singers apply: Applicants can apply for the Grant program multiple times during their singing career. Applicants from previous years should ensure that they have taken enough time to make improvements and develop their skills further before applying again.

4. Audition audio-visual recording for the pre-selection stage to be uploaded on Youtube (private):

You are obliged to upload 3 audio-visual recording files of three (3) arias with your application. Please do **not** include art songs on your recording. Your electronic video recording files are a very important part of the pre-selection process:

- For the pre-selection the adjudication panel requires three (3) contrasting opera or classical operetta arias in total, one (1) sung in German and two (2) in other languages. One of the three arias must be a Mozart aria.
- Voice and piano, well-balanced with minimal echo. Ensure that the diction accurately reflects your singing style.
- The arias submitted can differ from repertoire stated for the Semi-Final and Final Auditions.
- The video recording should have been made no earlier than 1.1.2025.
- The files must be clearly labelled with name, title(s) of the arias and date of recording.

When presenting yourself via electronic media recording:

A simple and effective way to prepare your recordings is to take your smartphone into a coaching room with piano when you have a coaching session or a lesson. Prop it up on a music stand or put it on a tripod. Wear smart casual clothing. Ensure your face is 'in frame'. You do not have to video a full-length shot. Make a few practice shots to get the balance right and ensure you do not overload the system. It is a good idea to announce your name and the name of the aria at the beginning of each clip.

- Present yourself at your best on your audition recording. Recording quality should reflect as accurate a sound image of the actual voice as feasible. For example, there should be no artificial reverberation or other electronic effects. Choose your recording space carefully, as the recording cannot be edited.
- Choose works suited to your voice type, which demonstrate your range, diversity and versatility as a performer. Remember, one should be a Mozart aria.
- Research in detail the context of the works you choose so that you can perform them in an appropriate style.
- Pay attention to usage and correct pronunciation in all languages. A high standard is expected.
- Make sure your repertoire can also form the basis of opera and concert programs of professional standard if you are the recipient of the grant.

5. **Arias to be listed for the Semi-Finals and Opera Finale:**

Applicants must be prepared to sing five (5) arias/excerpts from the opera / operetta repertoire in the original languages and keys in contrasting styles at the Semi-Finals / Opera Finale.

Two (2) arias/excerpts in German and three (3) arias in other languages. One of the five arias must be a Mozart aria. No aria should exceed 6 minutes in length; cuts are permissible.

Arias/excerpts are to be listed on the application form (including name of aria, opera, composer and length). In total you state 5 arias (2 German and 3 in other languages).

6. Repertoire to be performed in the Semi-Finals/Opera Finale (giving the list of arias/excerpts, opera, composer, their length and the key in which they will be sung) must be submitted with entry for consideration by the judges, who will notify contestants if any change is required. One aria must be a Mozart aria.
7. **What repertoire to choose:** As the grant aims at emerging artists, the applicant is not expected to choose and perform huge and difficult roles. The Grant panel advises to carefully choose the right repertoire for the applicant's voice. However, the adjudicators expect applicants to sing their chosen arias at the highest level of performance.
8. **Artistic Qualification:** Applicants must have a voice with outstanding operatic potential, artistic aptitude as well as a musical/acting/movement/language background. Some operatic stage experience is essential.
9. **Language:** The grant recipient will need to gain a sound knowledge of German and must undertake intensive German language study (one month of intensive German language course at a Goethe Institut in Germany). However, the Grantee already needs to start their intensive studies immediately after receiving the grant on 14 November 2025, especially if they are not fluent in the German language, to enable them to work in a German opera house environment.
10. **Judging Criteria:** Ability of the candidate to perform at a high level on a day-to-day basis in Wiesbaden as part of the professional ensemble. Acting capacities may be examined during the auditioning process.
11. **Citizenship Requirements:** Applicants must be Australian citizens. Proof of citizenship will be required with the application. Applicants residing in Australia with no former overseas posting are preferred over applicants who have had an opportunity to sing with an overseas opera house.
12. **Accompanist:** The Official Accompanist will be available for the Semi-Finals and Opera Finale, if required. Applicants must have the music available for all their listed arias/excerpts.
Music submitted for the official accompanist must be neat, clear and legible with all cuts (where appropriate) clearly marked. Music must be bound or put in a scrapbook or can be sent as electronic file.
No plastic sleeves/ pages are to be used. Music must not infringe the laws of copyright.

The administration of "MTO German-Australian Opera Grant" is to be informed by the Semi-Finalists at least four (4) weeks prior to the finals in case they would like to perform with the official accompanist. Finalists must contact the Official Accompanist at least four (4) weeks prior to the finals to arrange their rehearsal

time and the music is to be sent to the Official Accompanist.

13. **Travel and Accommodation:** In some instances it may be necessary for Semi-Finalists / Finalists to travel to Melbourne. MTO-GAOG will try everything to keep costs for the singers as low as possible. MTO-GAOG offers support in form of a flat rate (different for each state) for flight cost for interstate Semi-Finalists (only), however this may not cover all your travel costs. Please enquire with our office if you have been selected a Semi-Finalist.
14. **Availability:** The recipient must agree to be available to depart for Wiesbaden in June 2026, and to remain there for fifteen (15) months (minus leave, which may occur at the end of the period). The departure is scheduled for early June 2026, as participation in the language course and the opportunity to gain insight into the Opera House, prior to the 12 month engagement, are mandatory. This opportunity could only be foregone if the singer is a fluent German speaker. Confirmation of availability to spend the allotted time in Germany will be required in writing from all applicants (by signature on the application form).
15. In the event of the recipient being approached during the term of the contract to fulfil any engagement other than that stipulated by the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, they must, in the first instance, submit this request and relevant details in writing to the German-Australian Opera Grant administration, prior to initiating any approach to the management of the Hessisches Staatstheater. MTO-GAOG will assess the request and inform the recipient of its decision.
16. **Entry Fee:** Applications must be accompanied by an entry fee of A\$50 which is non-refundable except in the event of cancellation of the Grant auditions.
 - Direct transfers can be made to the **ANZ account “More Than Opera No2 A/C”, BSB 013-006, Account No 1085-10862**. Please state your name as reference.
 - More than Opera Ltd will not take responsibility for cash sent through the mail.
17. **The Finals Concert will be held on 15th November 2025, 2-5pm at The Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne.** Four (4) Finalists will be chosen to perform in front of an audience and an expert panel of musicians and music administrators.
18. **The recipient of the grant** incurs the obligation to perform at two (2) events without remuneration: an operatic reception for Sponsors of the Grant before leaving for Germany and upon return an operatic reception or “Master Class” to give feedback about the overseas experience. They are also asked to submit bimonthly e-mail reports about their experiences working in Wiesbaden.
19. **The Adjudicators’ decision is final.** No correspondence will be entered into. Adjudicators may, at their discretion, withhold the grant without explanation and give the grant to any person they may determine. In the event a winner is unable or unwilling to fulfil their grant obligations, the adjudicators reserve the right to rescind and/or re-award the grant. The Adjudication Panel reserves the right to rescind, modify or add to any of the rules and conditions of the grant and the Adjudicators’ interpretation shall be final.

20. Checklist

Please submit the following files electronically via email:

- **Application Form** to be completed in full and verified. Please make sure the form has the two required signatures.
- **A personal application covering letter** elaborating why the Wiesbaden position would be an ideal match for both the Hessisches Staatstheater and the candidate
- **A written CV** of the singer, which should include dates and details of any future engagements. Please give as much information as possible, stating clearly which **roles** have been **studied** or **covered** and which have actually been **performed** and where. Please list your roles clearly in separate columns: 1. Performed roles, 2. Covered roles, 3. Studied roles.
- **A list of the repertoire** proposed for the Semi Finals/Opera Finale including the name of the five (5) arias/excerpts, the opera, the composer, their length and the key in which they will be sung
- **Proof of Australian citizenship** (copy of birth certificate or passport)
- **Email a professional photograph** with a high resolution of the singer as a jpg file.
- **Youtube links of your audio-visual audition recording**
Make your files available to us by sending us the private links. You can mark your uploaded videos private under visibility at the end of the upload, so they are not publicly listed.

Make sure you have named each of your files before uploading using the following format (your name, name of aria, name of opera, composer).
Example: Michelle Miller, Ach ich fühl's_Zauberflöte_Mozart.

Important: Please send us 3 separate links, one for each aria. We do not want all three arias in one link.

Please email all documents to: info@mto-gaog.com

- **Transfer the entry fee of \$50** payable to "More than Opera Ltd"
Direct transfers can be made to the ANZ account "More Than Opera No2 A/C", BSB 013-006, Account No 1085-10862. Please state your name as reference.

All items listed under Checklist have to be with our administration by 31st August 2025 by the end of the day (5pm). Only complete applications can be considered unless otherwise agreed.

For enquiries call Nicole Ritzdorf on: (03) 9417 4144 Email: info@mto-gaog.com

We appreciate your short expression of interest via e-mail before receiving your full application. This will enable efficient processing of all applications.