

Anna Sandström

Soprano

Anna Sandström holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Newcastle where she studied voice with Dr Christopher Allan and Jane Edwards. She sang regularly with Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle and the University Chamber Choir and also further afield as a soloist with the Gosford Philharmonia. Moving to Sydney in 2002, Anna gained a Graduate Diploma of Teaching from New England University. She has performed as a soloist and ensemble singer with The Song Company, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Cantillation, Pinchgut Opera, Salut! Baroque, Australian Chamber Choir, and as a regular featured artist with Australian Baroque Brass. Living in the UK from 2008-12, Anna was a member of the Choir of Royal Hospital Chelsea, London. She was featured as a soloist in recordings and festivals with The Armonico Consort, including the Early Music Festival Brugge, Henley, Poole Lighthouse & Petworth festivals and in major venues throughout the UK and Europe including Cadogan Hall with Dame Emma Kirkby and Westminster Abbey. Alongside her performance career, Anna is a passionate educator. Now living back in Australia, she conducts the choirs at Chatswood High School and St Catherines Waverly, and teaches singing and musicianship at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, and Fort Street High School. Recent performance highlights include the online visual spectacular for Australian Brandenburg Orchestra's Noel Noel 2020, performing as a soloist and in ensemble with the Pinchgut Phoenix series, Australian Bach Akademie, the Choir of St James King St, and St Mary's Cathedral, concerts with the Marais project, and a tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and The Presets. Anna also regularly tours Victoria, and NSW performing C16th and C17th chamber music with Camerata Antica, an ensemble she co-founded in 2010 with cornettist, Matthew Manchester. www.camerataantica.com



Nicole Smeulders

Alto

Nicole Smeulders is a graduate of the NSW Conservatorium of music. She has twice been recipient of the Lauris Elms' Contralto Award and has had an extensive career as an alto soloist. Her most recent performances include lunchtime recitals at St James King Street and St Paul's Church Burwood and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* for the Willoughby Symphony Choir and Orchestra. Nicole has performed as soloist for companies including the Choir of St James King Street, the Sydney Consort, Australian Haydn Ensemble, Manly-Warringah Choir, Penrith Symphony Orchestra, Orange Conservatorium, Sydney University Graduates Choir and Musicum Collegium. Nicole is delighted to be performing again with the Newcastle University Choir.

Nicole is currently working as a full time chorister with Opera Australia and has performed in their most recent productions of *La Boheme*, *Turandot*, *Otello* and *La Juive*. With Cantillation, she has performed on numerous CDs and films, (including the *Lego* and *Peter Rabbit* movies) and has been engaged in concert performances with the SSO and the ACO. As part of Pinchgut Opera, she has sung in operas by Handel, Gluck, Rameau and Haydn. Nicole has worked and toured with the ACO Voices, the Song Company and Hallelujah Junction. She performs regularly as cantor at St Francis Church Paddington.



Brad Cooper

Tenor

In 2022 Brad appears in Germany as Agamemnon in Ernst Krenek's *Leben des Orest* for Theatre Münster and returns to Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg as Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* after a critically acclaimed role debut as Florestan in Beethoven's *Fidelio* in 2021. In concert he performs *Messiah* with Newcastle University and continues to present his groundbreaking new Weimar Republic Kabarett, BERLIN ELECTRIC in Austria, The Netherlands and Cyprus. Brad's operatic career has seen him tour throughout China as Radamès in *Aida*, perform Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* for Opera Australia, Oper Köln & English Touring Opera, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Oper Köln, Albert in *Albert Herring*, Raoul de St. Brioche in *Merry Widow* for Opera Australia, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera Holland Park in London, Don Alonso in Grétry's *L'amant jaloux* for Opera Comique in Paris, Davey in Jonathan Dove's *Siren Song* & Aubry in Marschner's *Der Vampyr* for Grachtenfestival in Amsterdam, Emilio in *Tutti in Maschera* at Wexford Festival and create the role of Clem in Misha Hamel's *Snow White* for Nederlandse Reisopera. In concert Brad has performed Jonathan in Handel's *Saul* & Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' for Philharmonia Choirs at Sydney Opera House,



Britten's St Nicolas at Newcastle Music Festival, Messiah and Mozart Requiem with St Andrew Cathedral Choir, Sydney, the title role in Haydn's L'orfeo under the baton of Richard Bonyngé. Brad studied with Maree Ryan at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the National Opera Studio in London and with Marilyn Horne at Music Academy of the West, California. He is thankful for the support of Nance Atkinson Trust, Wagner Society in NSW, Tait Memorial Trust, Australian Singing Competition and the Dame Joan Sutherland & Richard Bonyngé Scholarship.

Andrew O'Connor

Bass

As a performer and educator Perth-born Andrew O'Connor is versed in a wide variety of styles and genres. Andrew is a Lay Clerk with St Mary's Cathedral Choir, Sydney, was an Associate Artist with Pacific Opera in 2019, was the winner of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Competition 2020, and from mid-2021 joined the newly formed Australian Vocal Ensemble (AVÉ) who recently released their debut recording and will be undertaking a range of national touring, festival, composer development and recording projects in 2022. From 2015 – 2019 he was a core member of The Song Company, and has since developed a busy freelance career encompassing opera, the concert platform, vocal chamber music, and the classroom. Praised for his 'remarkable musicianship' (Limelight Magazine) and 'textured, fine-wine bass baritone' (Arts Hub) he appears regularly in both a solo and ensemble context with virtually all of Sydney's leading music organisations.



Chief among his 2022 engagements are major projects for Pinchgut Opera - singing the role of Gelone in Cesti's *Oronota*, Polyphemus in Handel's *Acis & Galatea* touring for both the Adelaide Festival and Four Winds Festival, performances of Monteverdi's *Selva Morale e Spirituale* in Sydney and Melbourne, a Regional NSW Tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers*, and joining Cantillation for Charpentier's *Médée*. Other engagements a Musica Viva Morning Master's program with Vocal Detour in Sydney, an educational residency for Music Viva at the Orange Regional Conservatorium, projects at the Festival of Voices (Tasmania), and both performance and education projects for Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Bach Akademie Australia, Moorambilla Voices and more.

Christopher Allan

Conductor

Chris has recently retired as senior lecturer in Voice at the University of Newcastle, NSW where he worked with singers and lectured in academic music courses. He is well known as a baritone soloist with many choral institutions such as Sydney Philharmonia Choir, Newcastle University Choir, Willoughby Choir and Coro Innominata. Chris appeared as guest artist with The Song Company for many years in concert and radio broadcasts and appeared with Opera Australia as understudy and chorus member. He also toured extensively for Musica Viva with the Song Company and the early music ensemble Sounds Baroque.



Chris held the post of Artistic and Musical Director of the Newcastle University Choir from 1999-2004 and was reappointed to the position of Musical Director from 2011. With the University Choir he directed performances of major works of the choral literature including the JS Bach Magnificat, John Rutter's Magnificat, Vittoria's Requiem and Haydn's Mass in Time of War and Mozart's Requiem. In late 2013 the Choir's first commercial CD (Encore) was released. In 2016 the Choir, under Chris' direction, performed Bach's St Matthew Passion to an enthusiastic audience. The Choir continues to present a range of musical genres working with outstanding musicians and ensembles, including performances of Orff's Carmina Burana with University of Newcastle Chamber Choir (Echology), Faure's Requiem and Britten's St Nicholas for the Newcastle Music Festival and Haydn's masterpiece The Creation as a culmination of the choir's 40th anniversary year in December 2017.

Chris is also an accomplished pianist and accompanist and has appeared on many occasions with performers such as Sally Walker (Flute) and in recital with his daughter, soprano Miriam Allan.

In 2011 he successfully completed his doctoral thesis looking at the use of modal voice as a catalyst in encouraging a classical vocal sound in developing singers. He has presented papers on aspects of vocal technique and singing teaching at international and local conferences and enjoys facilitating workshop sessions with choral groups focusing on all aspects of performance. He has presented workshops on vocal technique as well as workshops with a combination of voice and somatic body work with Feldenkrais practitioner Georgi Laney.