



Opera Scenes *ossia Viaggio nel Tempo con Lisa*

by Wis Jablonski, President

On 14th December, my wife Christina and I have witnessed two small miracles. In the morning heavens opened, and until afternoon the torrential rain interrupted all activity in Brisbane turning cricket ground in Gabba into a swimming pool. But by the early evening, the time for the Opera Scenes presentation, the weather turned beautiful allowing people to come to Conservatorium in their evening dresses without fear of getting wet.

And what an evening it was; in the space of two hours the young artists of the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Program took us on a trip across two centuries from 1725 Händel's *Rodelina* to 1949 Benjamin's *Prima Donna*. Featuring in Italian, French, German and English with Mr Massingham of "Primo le Parole e poi la Musica" it was the evening to remember. To complete the picture, Ensemble Q's team of the finest musicians in the country provided accompaniment and were conducted by Maestro Venanzoni.

For our cognoscenti and definitely for non-cognoscenti the evening was really great (with Italian prosecco during the interval ha, ha). Georg Friedrich Händel, Gaetano Donizetti, Saverio Mercadante, Gioachino Rossini, Jacques Offenbach (we got him at our XMAS Party), Daniel Francois Esprit Auber, Herman Goetz, Arthur Benjamin and forever popular G & S; the names made my head spin and my heart asking for more but there was no encore.

The thirteenth graduated young and talented singers (with two trousers roles) entertained us with a quality of performance equal the best of Opera Houses. Dear Lisa Gasteen AO is doing a fantastic job on those singers. How good? Some of her students described the severity and demands of course as "A Meat Grinder"! Still, the results were FABULOUS!

With an Act II Finale of Gilbert & Sullivan' *The Gondoliers* (with bouquets of flowers) and participation of ALL singers (excellent actors at THAT), crowned this elegant and memorable evening.

And the weather graced us by staying good.

