



Greg Eldridge - Director

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My approach

My theatrical storytelling focuses on the relationships between people, and the evolution of their interactions together.

This is the most immediate and human connection that the audience has to those performing, and is the foundation of every decision I make with the design team.

Once relationships between characters have been explored, I work with designers to build costumes that contain representative elements of each character and their place in the narrative.

The set, then, becomes the lens through which the audience and I will experience the interactions between performers, and serves as a device to frame the personal struggles of the characters within a broader social and philosophical context.



Costume aesthetics

The main function of costume is, for me, to communicate the fundamental essence of a character.

As we spend time interrogating pieces to explore the deeper psychological truths they contain, I see costume as our way to communicate these explorations to the audience visually.

By using elements of contemporary fashion alongside costume pieces that provide a reference to the original setting of a piece, I try to create a bridge from the opera's time of composition to the contemporary audience that is watching – and analysing – it today.



Christina Hazen as Rosmira
Partenope
Cohen Studio Theatre
College-Conservatory of Music
Costume: Maddie Kevelson

Maria Stuarda



Elisabetta is in a contemporary gown, representing her more modern psychological approach, but is hemmed in by the ruff that symbolises the repressive rules of the society in which she lives.

Chelsea Lehnea as Elisabetta
Maria Stuarda
War Memorial Opera House
Merola Opera Program
Costume: Galen Till

The Ghost Sonata



The Ancient Fiancée wears an eyepatch to indicate her skewed view of the world and single-minded pursuit of revenge against *The Old Man* who has wronged her.

Anna Louise Cole as The Ancient Fiancée
The Ghost Sonata
The Malthouse Theatre
Opera Australia
Costume: Emma Kingsbury

Giulio Cesare



Cleopatra seduces *Cesare* in a modern version of historical Egyptian costume, reinforcing a visual connection to her country. This costume indicated a shift away from the more domestic look of her other scenes, reinforcing the special nature of this moment.

Les pêcheurs de perles



Embracing an extremely modern cut of costume dyed in traditional Sri Lankan colours, the “exotic” element of the opera is maintained while making a clear connection to contemporary fashion.

Marie Lys as Cleopatra
Giulio Cesare in Egitto
The Barn at Bury Court
Bury Court Festival Opera
Costume: Elliott Squire

Lauren Fagan as Leïla
Samuel Dale Johnson as Zurga
Les pêcheurs de perles

Così fan tutte



Dorabella's Act 1 costume references the Italian neoclassical style with its simplicity and clean lines, a clear distinction from *Alfonso's* older style of dress which, reflecting his role in the opera's intrigue, is based on its stylistic predecessor - the more complex rococo style.

Ashley Riches as Don Alfonso
Rachel Kelly as Dorabella
Così fan tutte

The Royal Opera House
Royal Opera, Covent Garden
Costume: Natalya Stewart

Roméo et Juliette



Roméo's dress combines elements of the original 13th-century setting with aspects of the 19th-century French Romantic period. This look was designed to encourage our contemporary audience to focus on the "fairy tale" aspect of the story, which we further enhanced with a modern hair styling, referencing a contemporary expectation of the image of The Lover.

Luis Gomes as Roméo
Roméo et Juliette

Set aesthetics

The visual world of the piece is informed largely by the set, and with this aspect of design I try to provide a clear framework for the audience to understand the kind of meta-narrative that will be explored.

My set aesthetics try to incorporate a bit of “magic”, whether that be by using the actual mechanics of the theatre itself – parts of the stage that the audience ordinarily don’t see – or symbolic elements that change over the course of the piece to show the growth or development of characters and themes.



The Lighthouse
The Royal Opera House
Set: Alyson Cummins
Lights: Warren Letton
Costume: Natalya Stewart

La scala di seta



The lovers plant a seedling in *Giulia's* bed that then grows over the course of the first act, until in the second act it has become a giant blossoming tree.

This shows not just the growth of their relationship, but also their increased difficulty in being able to hide it.

The tree also serves a useful practical function in allowing people to climb down its trunk and enter the main playing space from above.

Lauren Fagan as Giulia
La scala di seta
Linbury Studio Theatre
Royal Opera, Covent Garden
Set: Holly Piggot

Fellow Travelers

A gay love story set in the 1950s, our set reflected the omnipresent societal pressure felt by the main characters as they veered between moments of fantasy with each other and moments of claustrophobia caused by the news headlines of the time. With 27 locations throughout the show, we also used these headlines to help help the audience know where and when we were.



Fellow Travelers
Corbett Auditorium
College-Conservatory of Music
Cincinnati, USA

Set: Mark Halpin
Lights: Baron Leon
Costume: Brittannie McKenna Travis
Hair & Make Up: Tiara Jones

The Ghost Sonata



Shanul Sharma as *The Student*
Virgilio Marino as *Johansson*
Danita Weatherstone as *The Young Girl*

The Ghost Sonata
Opera Australia
Set: Emma Kingsbury

The world of *The Ghost Sonata* is built on deceit and deception, with nothing ever being what it seems. To highlight this, we used a giant angled mirror to force the audience to experience the stage action from a variety of different angles, leaving them never quite sure which of the simultaneous realities was the “right” one.

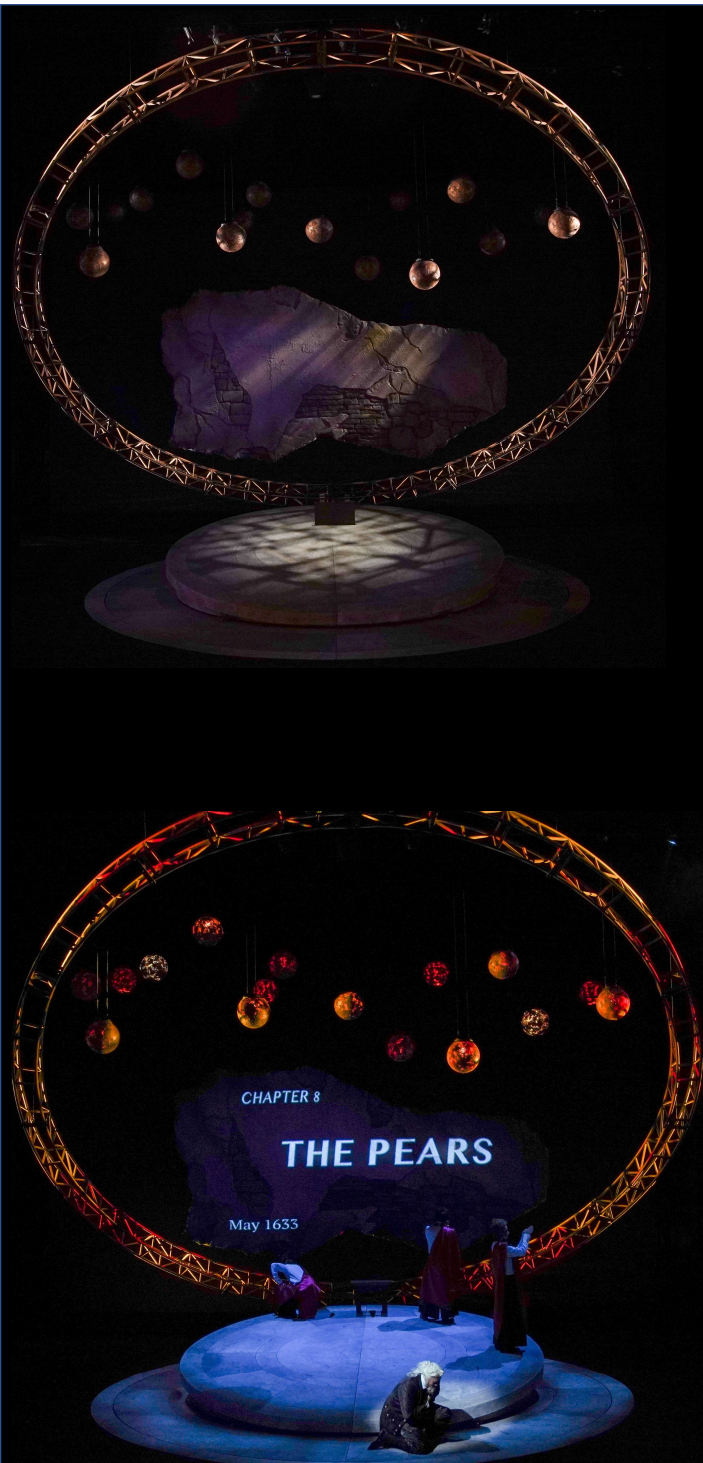
The Student’s love for *The Young Girl* is more fantasy than reality, and we showed this by having him use the mirror as his primary means of connecting with her.

Galileo Galilei

One of the major themes of Philip Glass' *Galileo Galilei* is the eventual blindness of the titular character, and so we made a vivid visual world to represent this inner consciousness and represent flashes of inspired genius. Our design involved three discrete surfaces for fully-mapped projection technology allowed us to highlight important places in dramaturgically-significant moments (the Platonic worlds of *Being* and *Becoming*) while allowing the audience to experience these revelations in the same surge of colour as Galileo himself.

Aaron McKone as Older Galileo
Galileo Galilei
Corbett Auditorium
College-Conservatory of Music
Cincinnati, USA

Set: Mark Halpin
Lights: Thomas Hase
Video: Ian Macintosh
Costume: Reba Senske





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