

Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House
 Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 7:30pm

opera.org.au
 Chief Executive Craig Hassall AM
 Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini AM
 Chief Operating Officer Joe Martorana
 Associate Music Director Anthony Legge

The Barber of Seville

Opera in two acts by Gioachino Rossini
 Libretto by Cesare Sterbini
 Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Conductor **Andrea Molino**
 Director **Elijah Moshinsky**
 Revival Director **Hugh Halliday**
 Set Designer **Michael Yeargan**
 Costume Designer **Dona Granata**
 Lighting Designer **Howard Harrison**
 Assistant Conductor **Anthony Legge**
 Assistant Director **Johanna Puglisi**

Cast in order of appearance

Fiorello, *Almaviva's servant* **Samuel Dundas**
 Count Almaviva **Kenneth Tarver**
 Figaro, *a barber* **Paolo Bordogna**
 Rosina, *a ward of Dr Bartolo* **Anna Dowsley**
 Dr Bartolo **Warwick Fyfe**
 Ambrogio, *Bartolo's servant* **Samuel Dundas**
 Berta, *Bartolo's housekeeper* **Jane Ede**
 Don Basilio, *a music master* **David Parkin**
 Officer of the Watch **James Olds**
 Notary **Samuel Dundas**

Musical Preparation **Siro Battaglin,**
Stephen Walter
 Fortepiano **Anthony Legge, Siro Battaglin**
 Italian Language Coach **Nicole Dorigo**
 Surtitles **Gillian Maddern**
 Stage Manager **Phillip Serjeant**
 Production Manager **Di Misirdjoeff**
 Lighting realised by **Catherine Alexander**

Opera Australia Chorus

Chorus Master **Anthony Hunt**
 Assistant Chorus Master **Thomas Johnson**

Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra

Leader **Jun Yi Ma - Concertmaster**

The performance lasts approximately two hours and fifty minutes including one twenty-minute interval.
 Casting correct at time of publication but subject to amendment.

Don't forget to pick up one of our beautiful souvenir programs. It contains an article on the music of *The Barber of Seville*, an article on the writing of the opera as well as photos and biographies of the artists performing. All for only \$20 on sale right now in the foyer.

Synopsis

ACT I Scene i

Dr Bartolo, together with his ward, Rosina, were until recently resident in Madrid. While there, Rosina had attracted the attention of the adventurous young Count Almaviva, who, on their departure for Seville, has followed incognito, determined to woo and win her. Disguised as a student called Lindoro, he serenades her at night below her balcony, but is making very little progress when he meets Figaro, a former servant of his who had left his employ to set up independently as a barber. Apart from his shop, Figaro also has a contract of service in Bartolo's household, and the two men strike a deal whereby Figaro will get Almaviva into the house.

Scene ii

Rosina is very excited by the attentions being paid her by the handsome young stranger and dares write to him. She is so closely guarded by Bartolo, however, that the task of getting the letter delivered threatens to be difficult. Figaro would seem to be the answer. Bartolo is shrewdly aware that something is going on, but he can't quite pin it down. Basilio, who is Rosina's music teacher but also an intriguer in Bartolo's service, warns him that Almaviva is in town and that he has designs on Rosina. Since Bartolo wishes to marry her himself, he determines to make the necessary arrangements at once.

ACT II Scene i

A complete stranger called Don Alonso arrives that evening to give Rosina her music lesson instead of Basilio, who is sick. Bartolo accepts him only when he reveals that he has a plan to trap Rosina and discredit Almaviva. When the lesson is under way, Figaro arrives and insists on giving Bartolo his Tuesday shave. Suddenly, Basilio walks in, quite healthy, but such is Bartolo's confidence in Alonso that he collaborates in getting rid of Basilio. Unfortunately, Alonso, who is Almaviva in another disguise, overreaches himself and is caught out by Bartolo, but not before arranging to carry Rosina off at midnight. There is a storm. Basilio goes for the Notary to marry Rosina and Bartolo at once; Bartolo goes for the police; Almaviva and Figaro bring a ladder.

Scene ii

Rosina remonstrates with Almaviva, but the confusion is quickly cleared up and the elopement all but takes place. Then Basilio arrives with the Notary, and Bartolo removes the ladder to the balcony. In the intervening few minutes the Notary marries Almaviva and Rosina and Basilio witnesses the contract. The young lovers are happy, Bartolo is defeated, while Figaro and Basilio make a lot of money.

Principal Partner



Government Partners



Opera Australia is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the NSW Government through Arts NSW. Opera Australia acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government, through Creative Victoria.

Anna Dowsley is supported by Martin Dickson AM and Susie Dickson

Samuel Dundas is supported by Maureen Wheeler AO
 The Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra's Concertmaster is supported by John Frost AM

You are welcome to take photos of yourselves at the opera before the performance and at interval, but you may not photograph, film or record the performance.

Something to listen out for

Rossini was a master of his craft, and often took musical devices and used them in new ways. Listen out when Figaro introduces himself in the famous aria 'Largo al factotum' for a prime example of patter singing – where a comic character sings at a very, very fast tempo with just one syllable to each note. The rhythm patterns are difficult and the lyrics are often tongue-twisters.

As the action gets crazier and crazier on stage, Rossini can make it feel frenetic in the music – getting faster and louder as things get out of control. Don Basilio's 'La calunnia' is a good example.



This production is...

Elijah Moshinsky's take on the most popular comic opera in the world. It is set in the 1920s and draws on popular archetypes from silent films of the era.

Conversation starters

- Born in a leap year, Rossini enjoyed the idea that he only had a birthday every four years. On his 36th birthday, he invited friends around to celebrate his 18th!
- Rossini plagiarised from himself all the time, so if you're wondering if you've heard that melody before, it might have been from a different Rossini opera.
- He was arrogant of his talents, famously boasting: "Give me a laundry list and I'll set it to music!"
- Beethoven (who had no love for Rossini) famously praised the composer saying, "above all, make more barbers!"
- The original overture to *The Barber of Seville* was lost – and Rossini replaced it with one he'd written for an earlier opera. That's the famous work we know today – which contains none of the music from the actual opera.



A little history

Rossini was young, but immensely successful when he began work on *The Barber of Seville*, daringly choosing a libretto with an already famous setting by an older composer, Paisiello. It premiered to a very hostile audience.

Legends abound that disastrous opening night: from a singer tripping over a loose board, to a cat wandering onto the stage, to an awkward pause while the tenor tuned his guitar before beginning a serenade. It's possible that the audience was filled with Paisiello's supporters, and the loud whistling and cat calls obscured much of the music that night. Whatever did happen, we know it did not go well, and Rossini was convinced the opera was a failure.

The second performance was a very different story – the opera was a triumph, and soon enough, Paisiello's earlier effort was forgotten. The opera contains some of the most familiar opera music in the world today, and the work is the 7th most performed opera around the world.