

The Pacific Islands inhabit the life and times of 18th Century Italy

There is a phenomena occurring in Auckland on July 24 at 5.30pm. The Auckland Opera Studio is presenting the Opera, La Sonnambula by Bellini at 24 St Benedict's St Newton.

At the moment an inordinately high percentage of the best classical vocal talent at Auckland University is represented by the mainly Samoan stars of the institution.

Three of the four main singers in our presentation of La Sonnambula are Samoan; Pene Pati, James Ioelu, and Marlena Devoe. The eight choristers are also 95% Pacific Island.

This Opera; La Sonnambula is one of the landmark, beautiful, masterpieces of 18th Century Opera, known as "bel Canto". (beautiful singing). And that is what this period of Opera is insistent on "beautiful singing".

Mature beyond their years, and yet with many more years of sophisticated training in Europe and New York to come, these young people really stand out in our city of Auckland, and our country of New Zealand. And beauty of singing and intense depth of acting is their priority.

La Sonnambula is the perfect vehicle for great singers, but especially for a great Tenor.

We have this voice type in Pene Pati who will astound you in this virtuoso role.

Pene is leaving these shores in September for study with the famous teacher and former singer, Dennis O'Neill at the Cardiff Academy of Music; a move instigated by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Sir Richard Bonyngé. Pene has had his first lesson with Dennis O'Neill, who is very enthusiastic about him. He informed Pene that this role was Pavarotti's first as well as his (Dennis's) first role.

James Ioelu is fresh from his first year at Manhattan School of Music and is developing into a most exciting young bass Baritone.

Marlena Devoe makes her second appearance in a role for Auckland Opera Studio, but this time in the much more significant part of Amelia; the female lead, two weeks before she also heads off to the Manhattan School of Music.

Three of the Chorus are from Pene's family; (one sister and 2 brothers) so we have a strong Family presence in this performance.

The format of the performance will be workshop/ soiree style.

The Director is Patrice Wilson who has been responsible for two of our previous AOS productions; Idomeneo by Mozart, and The Seven Deadly Sins, by Kurt Weil.

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