

Media Release

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Opera Australia Announces 60th Anniversary Auction of Costumes and Memorabilia



To celebrate its 60th Anniversary Opera Australia announced today that it has assembled a collection of more than 2,000 items, including a selection of costumes, accessories, artworks and memorabilia from its rich cultural history, to go under the hammer next June.

This is the first time Opera Australia has opened the vaults to give the public an opportunity to own a piece of Australia's artistic heritage.

Opera Australia CEO Craig Hassall explained the motivation behind the historic move.

"Over the past sixty years Opera Australia has amassed an incredible collection of costumes and props, many that are now well overdue for retirement but are far more deserving than remaining in storage boxes, never to see the light of day. "We know that collectors, not only from Australia but all around the world, would be thrilled to acquire some of these rare gems, so we thought it was time to share the collection with those who'll value it as much as we do," he said.

Meticulously hand-crafted by teams of artisans over the years, custom-designed pieces from OA's expansive wardrobe are expected to be the most sought after items. All individually designed for their specific productions, each piece will be labelled with its provenance, the name of the opera and the performer it was made for. Marquee items include the Armida dress worn by Yvonne Kenny in OA's 1999 production of Rinaldo. (see attached image)

Recognised as a collection of national significance, the thousands of costumes, accessories and artworks will be assessed, valued and catalogued by textile and memorabilia experts from renowned auction house Leonard Joel. For the week leading up to the auction the display will be open to the public, giving thousands of opera fans, who have adored the performances over the years, the opportunity to get up close to the costumes worn by their idols.

The display and auction will take place at Opera Australia's headquarters in Sydney's Surry Hills where most of the items were painstakingly created over the years. The auction will be held on Friday 30 June and Saturday 1 July 2017 with bidding also available via telephone and online. Public viewing from Saturday 24 June.

For further information please contact

Katarina Ljahovic | Communications & Marketing Manager
03 8825 5820 | katarina.ljahovic@leonardjoel.com.au