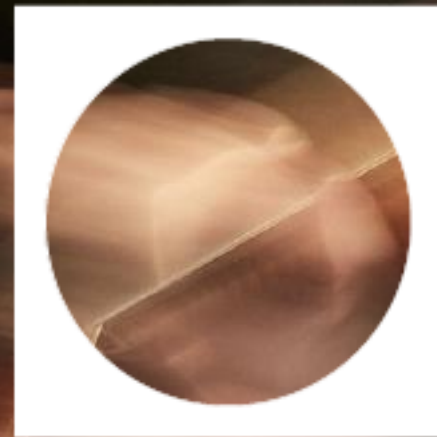


ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

STRATEGIC PLAN
2025 - 2028



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ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

WE BRING THE MUSIC

Orchestra Victoria is an expert pit orchestra specialising in the opera and ballet artforms. With a rich history of artistic excellence, the orchestra performs music that adds life and emotion to the stories told by our partners and collaborators on the stage. Requiring exceptional teamwork and communication skills, each performance is a unique expression of art and brings depth and emotion beyond words for our partners and audiences.

An exceptional collaborator, Orchestra Victoria partners with our state, national and international opera, and ballet companies. The Company's drive to achieve incredible artistry supports the success of its core partnerships with The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, and Victorian Opera.

Orchestra Victoria works alongside some of the world's most renowned conductors and artists and has developed the ability to respond with agility and adaptability across all styles of repertoire from contemporary to classical.

A wholly owned subsidiary of The Australian Ballet since 2014, Orchestra Victoria's 54-year history of storytelling provides a solid foundation to perform with exquisite artistry, under the guidance of one of Australia's most dynamic major performing arts companies. The Company is committed to continuing its responsibility as custodians of the music of opera and ballet, expanding depth of experience with a desire to lean into new works, and learning from the artists who work alongside us.

Committed to telling stories through music, Orchestra Victoria is also proud to work with our state's leading venues, festivals, and artists to curate and develop unique concert and outreach experiences for all Victorians.



ORCHESTRA VICTORIA – A BALANCING ACT

Orchestra Victoria is a cornerstone of the Victorian arts community, renowned for its role as a partner to three of the nation's leading performing arts companies: The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, and Victorian Opera.

These partnerships account for up to 40 weeks of the year, during which Orchestra Victoria provides the musical backbone for some of the most prestigious and beloved performances in Australian culture.

Whilst these partnerships are a source of pride and artistic fulfillment, they come with certain limitations. Orchestra Victoria has no influence over the repertoire choices, season lengths, or guest artist selections of these organisations.

Despite this, the orchestra values its collaborations with these companies, embracing the opportunities to bring world-class music to the stage while supporting the artistic vision of our partners.

Outside of the core seasons, Orchestra Victoria uses the remaining 12 weeks of the year to develop and present its own season.

This period is vital for the orchestra, as it represents a time to showcase its independent artistic voice and engage directly with the broader community.

During these 12 weeks, Orchestra Victoria presents a diverse range of performances, including on-stage concerts, regional tours, family concerts, as well as education and community engagement programs.

Additionally, the orchestra partners with Victorian arts organisations and festivals, further enhancing its reach and impact across the state.

It is during this 12-week window that Orchestra Victoria is particularly focused on building its audience base and broadening its impact.

Whether through innovative programming, outreach initiatives, or collaborations with other organisations, the orchestra is committed to reaching diverse audiences, fostering a deeper connection with Victoria's communities, and making classical music accessible to all.

Orchestra Victoria's unique position in the Australian arts ecosystem allows it to intersect with a variety of cultural sectors. This requires the orchestra to be highly adaptable and responsive to the needs of its partners and audiences.

The commitment to collaboration, partnership, and flexibility represents the core values of Orchestra Victoria, and the company embraces the challenges and rewards that come with navigating such a multifaceted role in the arts industry.

It is this collaborative spirit and dedication to community impact that defines the orchestra's place in the cultural landscape and shapes its strategic vision for the future.

THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

After emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company is again impacted by a time of uncertainty and major change.

The Company has moved out of the Melbourne Arts Precinct (MAP) and into the Meat Market in North Melbourne. This presents the Company with both challenges (maintaining a presence in the MAP, as well as staying connected with core partners and collaborators) and opportunities (developing new audiences, collaborations, and performances). The State Government is in the process of building a new rehearsal venue within the Meat Market for Orchestra Victoria's use, however the venue will need to be shared with the Meat Market's existing hirers which will require a flexible and adaptable way of working.

In addition to moving into a new administration and rehearsal home, the State Theatre closure will impact us for at least the first two years of this Strategic Plan. This significantly impacts our partner companies – in terms of the number of performances they can stage, venues, and where these performances can sit within the calendar year.

This will require Orchestra Victoria to maintain versatility to be the best possible performance partner for The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, and Victorian Opera, as well as in our planning for our self-presented, community outreach and education projects.

Lastly, like all organisations, the Company is facing financial pressures with the high level of inflation. This drives our commitment to stringent financial management, and the need to diversify our income streams to help offset some of these costs, and to keep our organisation financially sustainable.

Orchestra Victoria continues to explore opportunities to increase revenue that allow us to plan in a flexible and collaborative way with our partner companies. This includes exploring commercial revenue opportunities, finding new ways to build further performance opportunities with our core partners, and curating our self-presented programs to hone our artistic excellence and expand our audiences.

As a multi-disciplinary collaborator, Orchestra Victoria remains committed to providing the best possible service to our core partner companies and to grow as a world-class orchestra in the opera and ballet artforms. We will continue to adapt around our partner's footprints, and work with them to find new performance opportunities outside of the theatre pit, as well as improving our processes to continue our collegiate and supportive relationships with these organisations.

We will develop relationships with key Victorian festivals, events, venues, universities and arts companies to build our profile as a collaborative and creative partner. We remain committed to artistic diversity, providing equitable opportunities for our artists and our audiences. We will continue to build our presence in the regions to increase access to music for all Victorians.

Orchestra Victoria's positive and respectful workplace culture will continue to be nurtured and supported through key training and professional development opportunities. The Company acknowledges that this period of change will require an empathic approach and is committed to building the strength of its people, noting that this strength and resilience will benefit not only the individual employees but also the Company.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

PERFORMANCES

RECENT PERFORMANCES WITH OUR PARTNERS

2022 and 2023 saw our partner companies restart their regular performance seasons once more, and Orchestra Victoria was proud to be their performance partner in Melbourne. Particular highlights included the staging of *Anna Karenina* (TAB - 2022), after many delays caused by the pandemic, the premiere of works by Australian composers Deborah Cheetham-Fraillon and Christopher Gordon as part of *Identity* (TAB - 2023), and working alongside Jonas Kaufmann in the epic performance of *Lohengrin* (OA - 2022). We were also proud to take part in *Elektra* (2022) a side-by-side project with ANAM students and Victorian Opera.

OTHER KEY PERFORMANCES

In addition to our core performances with The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and Victorian Opera, Orchestra Victoria has curated and collaborated a number of exciting performances even with the disruption of the COVID Pandemic.

These included our collaboration with Australian Centre of the Moving Image and House House to develop *Untitled Goose Game: Live* which featured as a case study in *Revive*. We worked with Australian artists Mo'Ju and The Teskey Brothers, creating live arrangements of their works with orchestra. Through our partnership with The Australian Ballet, we were able to perform as the orchestra for Tokyo Ballet, Ballets de Monte Carlo and as part of GWB's production of *An American in Paris*.

In the Education and Community Outreach space, Orchestra Victoria reinvigorated our regional footprint after two years of forced cancellations, including a collaboration with Short Black Opera and the Dhungala Children's Choir in Shepparton. Two new story time performances were commissioned, *Little Puggles Song* by Vikki Conley, music adaption by Maria Grenfell and *Introducing Teddy* by Jessica Walton, music adaption by Christine Pan, which toured across metropolitan and regional Victoria. We have also begun to build relationships with the outer South-East metropolitan regions through both our education and outreach programs.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

STRATEGIC CHANGE

Alongside our core work supporting our partner companies, Orchestra Victoria has achieved many significant milestones over the past four years. A notable accomplishment included the introduction of the Richard Bonyngé Fellowship program which, through generous philanthropic support, has successfully supported five musicians in learning the skills of working as professional pit musicians. Participants are trained in the musical skills of adaptability, quality, and custodianship and receive practical performance opportunities and mentoring. We have also made substantial progress with the introduction of a Chair Sponsorship program, with a total of 12 chairs sponsored by the end of 2022, including the prestigious Concertmaster position.

Furthermore, in addition to our key partners, Orchestra Victoria has fostered strong partnerships with esteemed institutions and cultural organisations including but not limited to the Now or Never Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Short Black Opera, Arts Centre Melbourne and Midsumma. These collaborations have enabled the orchestra to expand its reach, engage diverse audiences and explore innovative artistic endeavours.

To cultivate a positive and respectful workplace culture, Orchestra Victoria has actively pursued various training opportunities. Through these initiatives, the organisation has reinforced our commitment to nurturing a harmonious environment for our musicians, staff and collaborators. Orchestra Victoria has also dedicated efforts to review and enhance our educational output. By engaging with regional students in innovative ways, the orchestra aims to showcase the exceptional skill set of our musicians and inspire the next generation of artists and music enthusiasts.

With these accomplishments and so much more, Orchestra Victoria is well-positioned to continue its trajectory of artistic excellence, collegial partnerships, community engagement and educational impact.



OUR PURPOSE, MISSION & VALUES

Our Purpose

To provide excellent orchestral performances for opera and ballet companies

Our Mission

To collaborate with and inspire our partners to sing and dance and enthrall audiences with world-class performances

Our Values

Artistry

Enabling transformative music, collaboration and creative excellence is at the heart of everything we do.

We share our knowledge & value each other's expertise.

Impact

Our collaborations enrich our community, leaving a lasting legacy.

We act with generosity & positive intent

Openness

We create a unified company through shared understanding.

We listen to learn & find solutions together. We do what we say we will.

OUR STRATEGY

2025-2028

First and foremost, we remain committed to being a strong, artistically vibrant partner company for The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, and Victorian Opera. This is our core business and is at the heart of what we do.

We will also work with our core partners on new collaborations and ways of engaging audiences – to build our profiles and increase access to performances. This will include finding innovative ways to maintain our engagement with patrons and audiences during a period of disruption associated with the transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct.

We also recognise the need to use our skills and capacity outside of our core performance seasons to perform and engage audiences in our own right. This will include exploring new commercial opportunities for collaboration and performances – this will be important for our longer-term sustainability.

Importantly, we are committed to creating a workplace and culture that enables Orchestra Victoria to flourish and deliver on our mission – while supporting the welfare, professional and creative development of our staff and musicians.

OUR KEY OBJECTIVES OVER THE 2025-28 PERIOD ARE:

1. Collaborate with our core partners to develop as a world-class opera and ballet orchestra
2. Pursue opportunities to grow sustainably and build our profile as a collaborative and creative performance partner
3. Provide a positive and productive work environment for the ongoing success of Orchestra Victoria and our people
4. Increase access to orchestral music for all Victorians while maintaining our presence in the Arts Precinct

Those objectives, along with supporting goals, strategies and measures of success are presented below.



Collaborate with our core partners to develop as a world-class opera and ballet orchestra

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

First and foremost, we are committed to our partnership with The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia and Victorian Opera to plan and support programmes that deliver excellence in musical and creative expression. We will work with them to find performance opportunities that will build our skills and profile as a leading pit orchestra.

Strengthen relationships through programme planning and delivery

- Conduct our own planning earlier so that we are well prepared to communicate collaboratively to support our partners' programmes
- Work with our partners to strengthen and bring forward planning and scheduling processes - recognising the challenges we all face over the next few years with the transformation of the Melbourne Arts Precinct and where practicable align with their strategic projects
- Facilitate regular engagement with our partners to debrief and share knowledge that will help us improve our program planning and operational processes
- Review reporting processes to improve budgeting, quoting and trust.

Perform with our partners at renowned festivals and events to build our profiles and expand audiences

- Identify high profile local festivals and events that can support long term collaborations and will engage large or new audiences. These could include:
 - Art exhibitions
 - Food and Wine festivals
 - Iconic Melbourne events (cross-artform)
 - Key sporting events

Seek performance opportunities in core seasons that will build our skills and reputation

- Pursue grants and support touring opportunities that can bring music, song and dance to the regions. As Victoria's orchestra, we are well positioned to do this with our core partners
- Identify and pursue "outside the box" performance opportunities that can engage our musicians, partners and audiences in new forms of artistic expression.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target 2025	Target beyond 2025
Improve partner company satisfaction through project debriefing process	Build and implement debriefing process	Increase partner company satisfaction each year
Engage with our partners outside of the core pit seasons	At least 1 new performance outcome annually	At least 1 new performance outcome annually

Pursue opportunities to grow sustainably and build our profile as a collaborative & creative performance partner

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

We understand the need to find new commercial opportunities outside of our partners' core seasons for collaboration and performances that will help us to build our profile and be more sustainable into the future. We are also committed to working on collaborations and projects that provide opportunities for creative expression and will engage new and diverse audiences. These opportunities need to be strategically targeted and supported to maximise impact, within the capacity we have outside of commitments to our core partners.

Explore new partnerships to grow our reputation as a leading theatre orchestra

- Develop and deliver a Partner Engagement Strategy that presents our capability and value as a partner of choice and identifies priorities for long-term relationships that will support sustainable opportunities for artistic expression and audience engagement. We will apply a strategic lens to these partnerships – to assess opportunities and maximise impact, given the capacity we have outside of our core seasons.

Partners could include:

- Important artistic venues
- High profile festivals that engage large and/or diverse audiences
- Theatre and performance companies
- Government agencies at federal, state and local levels
- Corporate partners and sponsors
- Producers and touring companies

Identify commercial performance opportunities and collaborations that will help us grow sustainability

- Develop a Commercial Performance Strategy that will identify criteria and priorities for collaborations and commercial arrangements. The aim here will be to establish relationships that offer long-term and sustainable performance opportunities with existing and new partners that understand and value OV's capabilities.

This could include;

- Working with studios and producers to support commercials, music recordings, films or video games
- Supporting one-off performances with partners, such as Arts Centre Melbourne
- Working with educators, writers and producers to collaborate on audio visual projects
- Supporting co-creation of immersive experiences at key Victorian artistic events and venues

Pursue opportunities to grow sustainably and build our profile as a collaborative & creative performance partner

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Strengthen our engagement with sponsors and philanthropists

- Develop a plan for increased and sustained engagement with our philanthropists and sponsors. This will include:
 - Working with our philanthropists (existing and targeted) to understand their interests and tailor opportunities for musician and orchestra engagement that align with those interests
 - Working with our corporate partners and sponsors to develop a longer-term program of activities and engagement that will increase their appreciation of the value of this partnership. This could include fundraising dinners, events in the pit or support for community outreach and engagement activities that are aligned with sponsors' activities and interests.

Explore collaborations and projects that will build our profile with new and diverse audiences

- Work with film producers or studios to create recordings for films that can be played at Victorian events and festivals, which can offer repeatable opportunities for audiences to immerse themselves in visual and musical experiences
- Work with venue partners, to identify and support performance opportunities that will grow engagement with new audiences
- Explore opportunities through agents, festivals and producers to engage new audiences and provide orchestral enhancement in performances with popular artists
- Explore new or expanded avenues to have performances reviewed by credible sources and media to get feedback and help build our profile

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target 2025	Target beyond 2025
Build a Commercial Performance Strategy to provide a framework for diversifying OV's income stream	Commercial Performance Strategy	10% increase in income brought in through commercial performances
Increase engagement with existing and new philanthropists and sponsors	10% increase in engagement opportunities	At least 10% increase in engagement opportunities annually
Foster cross-disciplinary collaborations by co-producing performances annually	2 cross-disciplinary performance outcomes	At least 2 cross-disciplinary performance outcomes annually
Establish partnerships with Victorian arts organisations outside of our core partners	1 new partnership/performance outcome	At least 1 new partnership/performance outcome annually

Provide a positive & productive work environment for the ongoing success of Orchestra Victoria & our people

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Like many organisations in our field, Orchestra Victoria has lived through a period of disruption and change during Covid. Looking ahead, we are committed to establishing a work environment and culture that enables us to deliver on our Mission and strategic objectives – to support our partners, grow sustainably and engage our audiences. We are equally committed to nurturing a work environment that supports the welfare, professional and creative development of our staff and musicians.

Identify and address priorities to strengthen and support our workforce into the future

- Develop a Workforce Plan that will outline the organisation we need to deliver on our Mission and strategic objectives. This will include confirming the skills and talent pipeline we need for the future – for musicians and staff – along with strategies to attract and retain the skills we need
- Strengthen engagement with our musicians and staff to understand what we are doing and what we could do better to attract, support and retain our musicians and staff, while exploring ways to further improve our productivity.
- Provide training in relation to effectively giving and receiving feedback to support the development of our people - recognising the unique work environment associated with a professional orchestra
- Establish and support mentoring and buddy relationships for musicians and staff to support their professional development and personal wellbeing. This would include assigning mentors during trial and probation periods to support new employee's transition into the work environment
- Explore opportunities for our people to acquire and share knowledge and experience within the sector
- Engage other companies to understand professional development priorities and, where possible, share the cost of activities to address those needs

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Invest in initiatives to improve culture, wellbeing and safety

- Reinvigorate informal networking events and spaces for our musicians and staff to build engagement and professional relationships
- Tailor and access training for musicians and staff regarding workplace culture, diversity, physical and mental wellbeing. This could include;
 - Workplace Health and Safety training and communications – recognising that a safe and healthy workplace culture starts from the top
 - Accessing training that promotes the value of diversity
 - Facilitating access to mindfulness and mental health programs and support

Support aspiring orchestral musicians and managers

- Subject to funding, explore the expansion of the Richard Bonyngé Fellowship for aspiring orchestral musicians;
 - Targeting musicians in the early, pre-professional, stage of their careers
 - Providing work and skills development opportunities for participants that could also help build OV's performance and administrative capacity
- Subject to funding, explore the possibility and feasibility of creating an accessible production fellowship, with a focus on participants from diverse backgrounds and without a tertiary education

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target 2025	Target beyond 2025
Build the organisation’s understanding of needs and opportunities, as well as employee satisfaction	Develop plan and undertake research on current employee satisfaction levels	Increase satisfaction in the workplace each year
Support the health and wellbeing of our employees through professional development and training opportunities	All employees undertake at least 1 professional development and training opportunity	Increase professional development and training opportunities for employees each year.
Build on existing mentorship programs to support emerging artists and arts managers	3 post-tertiary engagements in pit skills training	By 2027 offer 4 post-tertiary engagements annually in pit skills training

Increase access to orchestral music for all Victorians while maintaining our presence in the Arts Precinct

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

We are committed to diversity, inclusion and access – through our performances and collaborations. Subject to capacity and funding, we will explore avenues to improve access and inclusion for all Victorians to our performances – no matter who or where they are. We are committed to targeted and sustainable engagement with diverse artists and audiences. We also recognise the need to pursue new and innovative ways of engaging patrons, musicians and staff during a period of disruption over the next few years as the Melbourne Arts Precinct is transformed.

Improve access for all Victorians to participate in orchestral performances

- Engage key stakeholders to understand priorities for diversity in programming and performances for diverse artists and audiences. This could include;
 - Engaging CALD community groups to understand local artistic capabilities, audiences and preferences. This could present opportunities to partner with ensembles from those communities to help them develop musical skills and perform
 - Collaborating with important diversity organisations to build sustainable relationships and improve access to orchestral performances
- Targeting high profile, diverse musicians and vocal artists to collaborate with and engage audiences at popular events or festivals
- Partnering with research partners to develop works and improve accessibility by using technologies to create sensory concerts
- Review feedback and attendance numbers to monitor and improve the effectiveness of our strategies to engage diverse artists and audiences.
- Address barriers to access to our performances. This could include;
 - Establishing a policy to make tickets free or more affordable for diverse/new audiences, such as CALD communities, First Nations people, low SES communities or students. This can be done directly by OV or by its community partners to help them engage their stakeholders
 - Creative programming with diverse artists and communities to engage audiences unfamiliar with orchestral performance
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- Creating resources or communications, in multiple languages, that can be used to “demystify” the experience of orchestral, ballet or opera performances and encourage people to attend. This would include supporting multiple languages on our website and programmes
- Referring audiences to more accessible options to view or listen to our performances. This could include referring health or aged care providers to streamed performances for their patients and residents

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Increase engagement and access for people outside of Melbourne

- Work with our partners to develop programmes and performances that can be efficiently taken on tour to regional or smaller venues
- Engage stakeholders from key regional locations to develop a sustainable programme of performances in the regions;
 - Identify key locations with performance venues and where we have established relationships, such as Bendigo, Hamilton, Shepparton, and Warrnambool.
 - Confirm opportunities that will be viable and/or are aligned with priorities for funding partners and sponsors

- Work with our partners to leverage the opportunity created by reduced availability of key metropolitan venues to support regional performances

Find new ways to maintain our presence in the Melbourne Arts Precinct during a period of disruption

- Host events and performances that will engage our patrons and donors during this period of change. This could include;
 - Personalised engagement with donors, sponsors and patrons in our new premises at the Meat Market and update them on plans for the future

- Using available performance venues, to maintain a presence to the Arts Precinct
- Increasing our presence through images and signage to increase OV's profile as an important member of the Arts Precinct
- Delivering free events with our partners to maintain audience engagement during periods of disruption. This could include "pop up" events in public locations, such as Opera, Ballet or Symphony in a Day

Work alongside our stakeholders to find a long-term home for Orchestra Victoria within the Melbourne Arts Precinct

- Regularly engage with government stakeholders about options for funding to create a home for Orchestra Victoria within the Melbourne Arts Precinct
- Work with our colleagues and partner organisations to explore options for a long-term home

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure	Target 2025	Target beyond 2025
Supporting First Nation artists through performance opportunities	Increased number of performance opportunities for First Nations artists	Continued increase in performance opportunities each year
Supporting diverse artists and audiences through performance opportunities	Commission or program at least 3 works by diverse artists	Increase number of works by at least 1 annually
Ensure accessibility is at the heart of our self-presented projects	At least 2 sensory projects programmed, and enhance accessibility through implementation of assistive technologies at 5% of performances	Grow sensory project output and increase assistive technologies each year
Develop and deliver outreach programs in regional communities	Reach no less than 3 different communities	Reach at least 1 new community each year
Facilitate a long-term home for Orchestra Victoria	Confirm appropriate location and plan for a long-term home	By 2028 have a confirmed plan, location, and timeline