

Opera call for young choir

Italian opera poses language challenge

BY MICHELLE SMITH

A YOUNG Ballarat choir faces a tongue-twisting challenge as they prepare for their opera debut in a regional tour of La Boheme.

Their roles will be sung in Italian.

Members of the BCMA Junior Vocal Ensemble will undertake a crash course in Italian during rehearsals over the next 15 weeks before appearing with a cast of professional and semi-professional adult singers during Opera Van Diemensland's production of La Boheme.

"We'll take it slowly," said BCMA director Paula Heenan.

"I've done classical training myself and as a classical singer you have to study Italian and French but it certainly will be a challenge for the children," she said.

"Luckily we've got a teacher with an Italian background and the children's chorus is a small part in the show and a lot of it is repetitive, but will need to work very hard to get their Italian and roll their Rs. It adds another dimension to singing, performing and acting on stage to present in a different language."

The young choir were invited to be part of the cast for performances in Ballarat, Ballan and Abbotsford in Melbourne during June and July.

Ms Heenan said the opera company had approached her to see if she had singers aged eight to 12 who could take on the roles.

"We happened to have a group all ready to go in the age bracket they wanted and when I put it to the children they were all very excited about doing something so different," she said.

"We have worked with Opera Australia and Victorian Opera previously and have found it very beneficial for kids to work with adults and professionals on stage and be involved in major productions."

Opera Van Diemensland was born in 2018 as a collaboration of community arts groups who joined together to create an opera-based performing arts program for regional Victoria.

The company is also auditioning for the principal artists and other adult roles.

"They are spreading a love of opera. Some people think opera is a bit hoity-toity but



SING: Members of the BCMA Junior Vocal Ensemble rehearse for their Italian-speaking roles in the Opera Van Diemensland's production of La Boheme, which will tour Ballarat, Ballan and Abbotsford. **Picture:** Kate Healy

the kids are really open to it and to the challenge of being involved in more classical techniques."

Ms Heenan said the young group were particularly ex-

cited about performing with a full orchestra. "They will get the chance to rehearse with the full orchestra before they perform. They usually sing to backing tracks so it will be a

very big thing to be part of a production with an orchestra and conductor.

Closer to the performance dates, Ms Heenan will "hand over" her young charges to

the company's creative team.

"I will hand them over to the professional team to polish them, explain what they want them to do on stage, the costumes and sets."

Steady sales week to wrap up summer

FULL REGIONAL SALES RESULTS;

ALFREDTON PS Elaine Av 4rm \$482,000 Ballarat Real Estate Pty Ltd

PS Sapphire Dr 515sqm \$600,000 Ray White Ballarat

PS Willoby Dr 177sqm \$325,000 PRD Nationwide

BALLARAT CENTRAL PS Kent St 4rm \$575,000 Bal-

arat Real Estate Pty Ltd **BALLARAT NORTH PS**

Armstrong St North 634sqm \$375,000 PRD Nationwide

BROWN HILL PS Melbourne Rd 2rm 865sqm \$272,000 Ray White Ballarat

DAYLESFORD S 3 Garibaldi Dr 1104sqm undisc

PI 1A Queensberry St 440sqm no bids res

\$950,000 Biggin & Scott Central Victoria

MINERS REST PS Orbest Dr \$560,000 Harcourts Ballarat

MOUNT CLEAR PS Harley Ct 389sqm \$365,000 Ray White Ballarat

PS Haymes Rd 979sqm \$430,000 PRD Nationwide

ROKEWOOD PS Gibb

St v/land 2016sqm \$92,500 PRD Nationwide

SEBASTOPOL PS Albion St 2rm \$245,000 Ballarat Real Estate Pty Ltd

PS Charlotte St 569sqm \$195,000 PRD Nationwide

PS Cromwell St 659sqm \$285,000 Ray White Ballarat

PS Rubicon St 655sqm \$305,000 Ray White Ballarat

PS Vickers St 763sqm \$435,000 Ray White Ballarat

PS Yarrowee St \$250,000 Harcourts Ballarat

PS Yarrowee St 2rm \$232,000 Ballarat Real Estate Pty Ltd

PS Yarrowee St 513sqm \$240,000 Ray White Ballarat

WENDOUREE PS

Hazel Rd \$175,000 Har-

courts Ballarat **PS McNulty Dr** \$285,000 Harcourts Ballarat

PS Park St 4rm \$354,000 Trevor Petrie RE

Source: Real Estate Institute Victoria

"We would like to thank our wonderful volunteer coaches and parent support group for the endless hours, commitment and enthusiasm they provide for our girls, to ensure they experience the best possible rowing experience."

- Gabi Howard, Rowing Coordinator

