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## Bridgetown's Battistini to take centre stage at His Majesty's Theatre for La Traviata



**Will Corbett** | Manjimup-Bridgetown Times  
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Will Corbett



James Clayton in Il Trovatore. Credit: Supplied



Bridgetown's own Battistini, James Clayton, is readying himself for the bright lights of His Majesty's Theatre, starring in the classic operatic tragedy La Traviata. The Bridgetown local is set to take on the role of Giorgio 'Papa' Germont, the father of Alfredo who will go to great lengths to end his son's relationship with courtesan Violetta in order to keep his family's honour intact.

This won't be the first time Clayton steps on to stage, previously starring as Count di Luna in Il Trovatore, Macbeth in Macbeth and Judge Turpin in Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

While the golden age of opera existed over a century ago, Clayton said it still finds a way to penetrate an ever-evolving market.

"With the emergence of artificial intelligence, people can longer trust their eyes," he said.

"I had a few young people last year come to one of my shows and they were raving about it. Their minds were blown, they couldn't believe they can actually sit there and look at it with their own eyes and go, 'this is real'."

While Clayton has starred in household-name performances like Macbeth and Sweeney Todd, he said Rigoletto will always be his favourite.

Rigoletto features a court jester by the same name who plots revenge on a womanising Duke who seduced the jester's daughter. The plot backfires, leading to the death of the daughter.

Clayton said his audience should expect a glamorous affair for the performance of La Traviata.

"It's a feast for the eyes," he said.

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“Opening scenes with the courtesan who holds these parties in Paris, everyone is dressed to the nines with champagne flowing, it’s great.”

Despite Mr Clayton’s Papa Germont only featuring in the second act, he said the workload doesn’t get easier.

“It changes up and down. Sometimes they will book everyone in for a whole day of two to three-hour calls, though by the first call, we might have it down pat, so we’ll move straight on to another scene,” he said.

“It’s usually six hours a day, six days a week if you’re doing a main role, though mine is not, though its still meaty, so I get some days off.

“Though to say that I have the day off is kind of a misnomer because I’ll still sit down and run memory because I’ve still got 60 or 70 pages of Italian to hold in my memory – probably to the dismay of my neighbours in the hotel though.”

The local baritone will take to the stage from March 14, where La Traviata will run until the 28th, with tickets available online.

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