



Wesfarmers Arts

SYNOPSIS & CASTLIST

WEST AUSTRALIAN
OPERA PRESENTS

Eugene Onegin

6 -15 August 2026
His Majesty's Theatre

*A Northern Ireland Opera production that
premiered in Belfast 14 September 2024.*

Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Librettists Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Modest Ilyich
Tchaikovsky, Konstantin Shilovsky

Conductor Christopher van Tuinen
Director Cameron Menzies
Set Designer & Video Director Niall McKeever
Costume Designer Gillian Lennox
Lighting Designer Kevin Treacy
Video Designer Neil O'Driscoll
Movement Director Jennifer Rooney

Tatyana Samantha Clarke
Eugene Onegin Samuel Dundas
Lensky Paul O'Neill
Olga Ashlyn Tymms
Prince Gremin Teddy Tahu Rhodes
Madame Larina Brigitte Heuser
Filipevna Nicole Youl

West Australian Opera Chorus
West Australian Symphony Orchestra

ACT ONE

Tableau 1: We open in the garden of Madame Larina's country estate. They are making preserves and she is being assisted by the family's nursemaid Filipevna. In the distance Madame's daughters Tatyana and Olga can be heard singing. The two older women listen and reminisce of their younger days and of younger loves. The serfs come in from the fields after a long day and they have been reaping the wheat, they come to present Madame Larina with a decorated sheaf, and they sing and dance for her. Tatyana hears their singing, and it reminds her of faraway places and her sister Olga only wants to dance around.

Tableau 2: In Tatyana's bedroom we find her restless and unable to sleep. The nurse worries that the young lady is ill. She professes to the nurse that she is in fact totally in love with the young Onegin. The nurse promises to keep her secret and when she leaves, Tatyana starts to write how she feels into a letter for Onegin. Can she love anyone ever, other than Onegin... No! Her letter is complete, in the morning Filipevna comes in and she is given the letter to have delivered to Onegin.

Tableau 3: In another part of the Larina Garden, the girls gather berries as they sing. Tatyana eagerly awaits a reply from Onegin. He arrives and coldly delivers a serious blow... Onegin does not see Tatyana in any romantic way but loves her as a brother would. He has humiliated Tatyana, and they leave. The girls continue to sing as they make the jam.

ACT TWO

Tableau 4: We are inside the Larina house at Tatyana's Birthday Ball. Everyone is dancing and Onegin and Tatyana are waltzing all through the party as the older guests watch on and gossip. Onegin who is not popular with the guests makes no attempt to hide his boredom at such an event. He takes his boredom out on his best friend Lensky who had made Onegin attend the ball. Out of spite and Onegin flirtatiously steals Olga away at the party and they dance. Onegin goads Lensky about why he is not dancing which turns the situation into a nasty exchange where the two men threaten each other with a duel. Onegin regrets this foolish challenge, but it is too late, it is impossible to turn back and the two men are separated by the guests at the party.

Tableau 5: At the side of a riverbank, Lensky discusses the duel with his second Zaretsky. He then takes a private moment to remember his youth and the present horror in front of him. Onegin arrives at the duel and both men regret arriving at this moment. Lensky is shot and killed.

ACT THREE

Tableau 6: St Petersburg, six years have passed. Onegin is present at a ball, he has spent his time travelling and trying to get over Lensky's death. Prince Gremin and his wife Tatyana enter the ball. Her beauty enthralled everyone. Tatyana sees her husband talking with a man and asks who he is speaking with and Onegin is asking the prince who the enchanting lady is, he explains it is his wife of two years. Once Tatyana and Onegin are introduced to each other at the ball Tatyana excuses herself from the event which agitates Onegin greatly.

Tableau 7: In another room, Onegin has written a letter telling Tatyana of his great passion for her. He throws himself literally at Tatyana's feet. She remembers the time he so cruelly rejected her and wonders if her new position in the world has made her more attractive to him. Onegin protests this and finally realises in his pleas that she cannot restrain her true love for him. They imagine what their lives might have been like and Onegin urges her to run away with him and find true happiness and true love. Tatyana refuses, she will be true to her marriage vows and heartbroken she leaves. Onegin is left alone with his grief and despair.

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