

Festival Opera Ltd  
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Kia ora,

Due to the recent outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the government's announcement of new Alert Level 2 guidelines around gatherings, Festival Opera has made the difficult decision to withdraw *The Cunning Little Vixen* from this year's Hawke's Bay Arts Festival. Our partnership with the Festival is hugely positive and we have not taken this decision lightly. We urge you to continue to support the other Festival shows and make the most of the wonderful artistic experiences on offer as we emerge from lockdown.

The Festival Opera kaupapa is built on delivering excellence and creating positive performance experiences for the young singers that participate in the Project Prima Volta programmes, enabled by the Prima Volta Charitable Trust. Given the scale of this production, which involves over 100 performers, our ability to rehearse in Level 2 has been lost. The uncertainty of the Delta strain, and the potential for a prolonged lockdown period in Auckland also threatens the involvement of our participating Auckland artists. As we know, there are no guarantees with Covid-19 and it's important that we prioritise the collective wellbeing of our cast and staff at this time.

A production like *the Cunning Little Vixen* requires months of preparation to build the knowledge, skills and confidence the singers and musicians need to take the stage. It has been an exciting journey so far, and we are committed to presenting the work at another time when the risks have been mitigated and the appropriate rehearsal and production schedules can be met. Anna Pierard, Director of Festival Opera comments,

*"Although we're disappointed to have to reschedule this important production to 2022, we have been reflecting on the value of the journey in preparing and focusing on a goal like delivering an opera. In many ways, that journey is just like doing a jigsaw puzzle. For the puzzler and the performer, slotting each piece into place (or in this case preparing each element of an opera) is as satisfying as (if not more than) standing back and marvelling at the completed puzzle.*

*With the decision taken to stage the production next year, we're taking time to enjoy the journey and ensure every effort is acknowledged and every little win celebrated till it's time for curtain up and we can share finished artwork with our audiences."*

We look forward to presenting *The Cunning Little Vixen* once restrictions on gatherings have been lifted and the quality of delivery can be confidently managed. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity provided to us by the Arts Festival and look forward to working with their team in the future in the delivery of world class opera experiences in Hawke's Bay.

*"We appreciate the many considerations and complexities involved in producing large bodies of work during a global pandemic, and although it is disappointing that *The Cunning Little Vixen* is no longer on offer in this year's festival programme, we look forward to revisiting this opportunity with Festival Opera in 2022." – Pitsch Leiser, Hawke's Bay Arts Festival Director*

Tickets booked for *The Cunning Little Vixen* via Ticketek.co.nz or hbaf.co.nz will be automatically refunded. If your ticket was booked at the i-site then you must return to the isite for a refund. For further ticketing queries, please contact [info@hbaf.co.nz](mailto:info@hbaf.co.nz)