

Artes Christi presents a new Australian musical by Xavier Brouwer

MACKILLOP

MEDIA RELEASE

Rehearsals begin as Australian opera star cast as MacKillop

The nationwide search for Mary MacKillop is over with acclaimed Australian soprano Joanna Cole cast in the title role for the new musical **MACKILLOP** to be staged in Sydney and Melbourne as part of the Canonisation celebrations. Joanna will don the MacKillop habit for the first rehearsal with the 80 cast members to be held Sunday 1st August at 1.00pm at the Actors Centre, Surry Hills.

"I feel incredibly privileged to be cast as Mary MacKillop" said Joanna Cole. "Mary was a very special woman who faced some extraordinary opposition throughout her life. So the chance to tell her story and bring her charisma to the stage is one I feel very honoured to have been given."

Joanna Cole is no stranger to playing strong iconic Australian women having previously taken on the demanding role of Lindy Chamberlain in the 2002 Opera Australia production of *Lindy*.

Ms Cole has over 20 years experience as an opera singer both in Australia and internationally with her main roles including Lucia in Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor (Opera Australia) Gilda in Verdi's Rigoletto (OA) and Mimi in Puccini's La Boheme (Canterbury Opera, NZ). Now based in Melbourne, Ms Cole grew up in Sydney and was a student at two schools established by Mary MacKillop's sisters - St Luke's Revesby and Mount St Joseph College, Milperra.

"Having such a seasoned performer as Joanna is a wonderful addition to the production," said Anthony McCarthy the Artistic Director of **MACKILLOP**. "That Joanna has personal experience playing and understanding the struggles of an iconic Australian woman as Lindy is also invaluable. And that she studied at Sisters of St Joseph schools for over 15 years makes her simply perfect for the role."

The national search continues for the supporting roles which include Mary's parents, the convict Fagan and three priests, two bishops and a pope.

Tickets go on sale from 1st August via www.mackillop.info and 100% of the profits from the production will go to the Mary MacKillop Canonisation Appeal. **MACKILLOP** will play at The Seymour Centre, Sydney from October 1-9 and at The Besen Centre, Melbourne from October 23-24.

MACKILLOP LAUNCH with Joanna Cole

When: Sunday 1st August, 1.00pm

Where: Actors Centre, 243 Devonshire St, Surry Hills

Picture opportunities including of Joanna Cole in the MacKillop habit

For further information / comment contact the Producer,

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