



**Irish  
National  
Opera**



**STRATEGY 2025-2028**

**Our Time is Now**

A VISION FOR OPERA IN IRELAND

**Cover Image:** INO's production  
of Strauss' *Salome*  
Bord Gáis Energy Theatre  
March 2024  
**Photography:** Pato Cassinoni

# Our Time is Now

A VISION FOR OPERA IN IRELAND

STRATEGY

2025-2028



**Image:** Jade Phoenix as Rosalinde, and ensemble in INO's production of J. Strauss II *Die Fledermaus* 2025.  
**Photography:** Ros Kavanagh

# Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
<b>Section one OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>	11
1.1 High Artistic Quality	13
1.2 Opera is for Everybody	15
1.3 Commitment to a Sustainable Opera Infrastructure and Ecology	17
1.4 Investment in Creativity and Innovation	19
<b>Section two OUR WORK</b>	21
2.1 Opera Productions	23
2.2 Audiences	27
2.3 Opera Infrastructure and Ecology	31
2.4 New Opera and Innovation	37
2.5 International	41
<b>Section three OUR ORGANISATION</b>	45
3.1 Corporate Governance	49
3.2 Executive Team	51
3.3 Finance	53
3.4 Resources	55
BEYOND 2028	57

## Salome

INO's production of Strauss' *Salome* at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre in March 2024, which was subsequently rented to Teatro Massimo in Palermo. INO's first production ever presented at a major Italian opera house.

**Photography:** Pato Cassinoni



## Introduction

**Opera** is a unique art form that challenges, entertains, provokes and captivates audiences. It is a celebration of the relationship and synthesis of all art forms: music, theatre, literature, dance, visual and digital arts. It is the place where the greatest range of artists engage with each other, creating revelatory experiences and leaving profound and lasting impressions.

Since beginning life in 2018 as an initiative of the Arts Council, **Irish National Opera** has delivered world-class productions throughout Ireland as well as making high-profile international appearances. The aim of the company is to harness and unleash Ireland's extraordinary operatic potential. INO delivers inspirational performances of exceptional quality accessible to everyone. INO champions innovation, creates new opportunities for artists and strives to build a strong and sustainable opera ecology.

To put it into a wider **context**, at a time when Irish artists from all disciplines – writers, musicians, actors, visual artists, architects, theatre and film makers – are attaining global recognition at unprecedented levels, Irish opera stars are also achieving extraordinary success on the international stage. Our composers, writers and creative artists are turning to opera in remarkable numbers with outstanding results. In the space of a few years, Irish National Opera has established Ireland as a centre of operatic excellence and provided an international platform for many Irish opera artists.

This **strategy** takes stock of the achievements of the company in its first seven years and charts a path for 2025-2028 leading to the 10th anniversary of Irish National Opera in 2028. It is an affirmation of our principles, our work and our organisation.

**Rarely, if ever, does every element — score, text, singer, instrumentalists, conductor, director, sets, costumes, lighting, sound design — all come together. This is that rarity.**

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES



**Image:** INO's production of Emma O'Halloran and Mark O'Halloran's *Trade*, with bass-baritone John Molloy and tenor Oisín Ó Dálaigh 2024. Co-production with Beth Morrison Projects.  
**Photography:** Ros Kavanagh

**Visceral, unforgettable performances**  
★★★★★ **Music**  
★★★★★ **Staging.**

OPERA NOW



**Image:** INO's production of Vivaldi's *Bajazet*, 2022 featuring Claire Booth as Irene and Eric Jurenas as Andronico. A co-production with the Royal Opera House, London — it was nominated for two Olivier Awards, winning one.  
**Photography:** Kip Carroll

## The Big Bang

INO's inaugural concert *The Big Bang* held at the National Concert Hall in January 2018. Soprano Miriam Murphy singing 'La mamma morta' from *Andrea Chénier* by Giordano.

Photography: Ste Murray



# Section one

Our  
Guiding  
Principles

## Der Rosenkavalier

INO's production of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* presented at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, March 2023. A co-production with Garsington Opera and Santa Fe Opera.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## 1.1 High Artistic Quality

Every INO performance is a collaborative experience. Audiences invest time and money. The state gives its support. Artists have devoted years of training and have rehearsed extensively. Our obligation is to make the experience unforgettable, deeply meaningful and transformational.

Irish National Opera has made artistic excellence a hallmark of all its work. Irish audiences expect and appreciate opera productions of top international quality.

- We present outstanding, critically acclaimed productions delivered by first-rate artists.
- We collaborate with leading international opera companies.
- We appear on major international stages.
- We have won many prestigious awards.

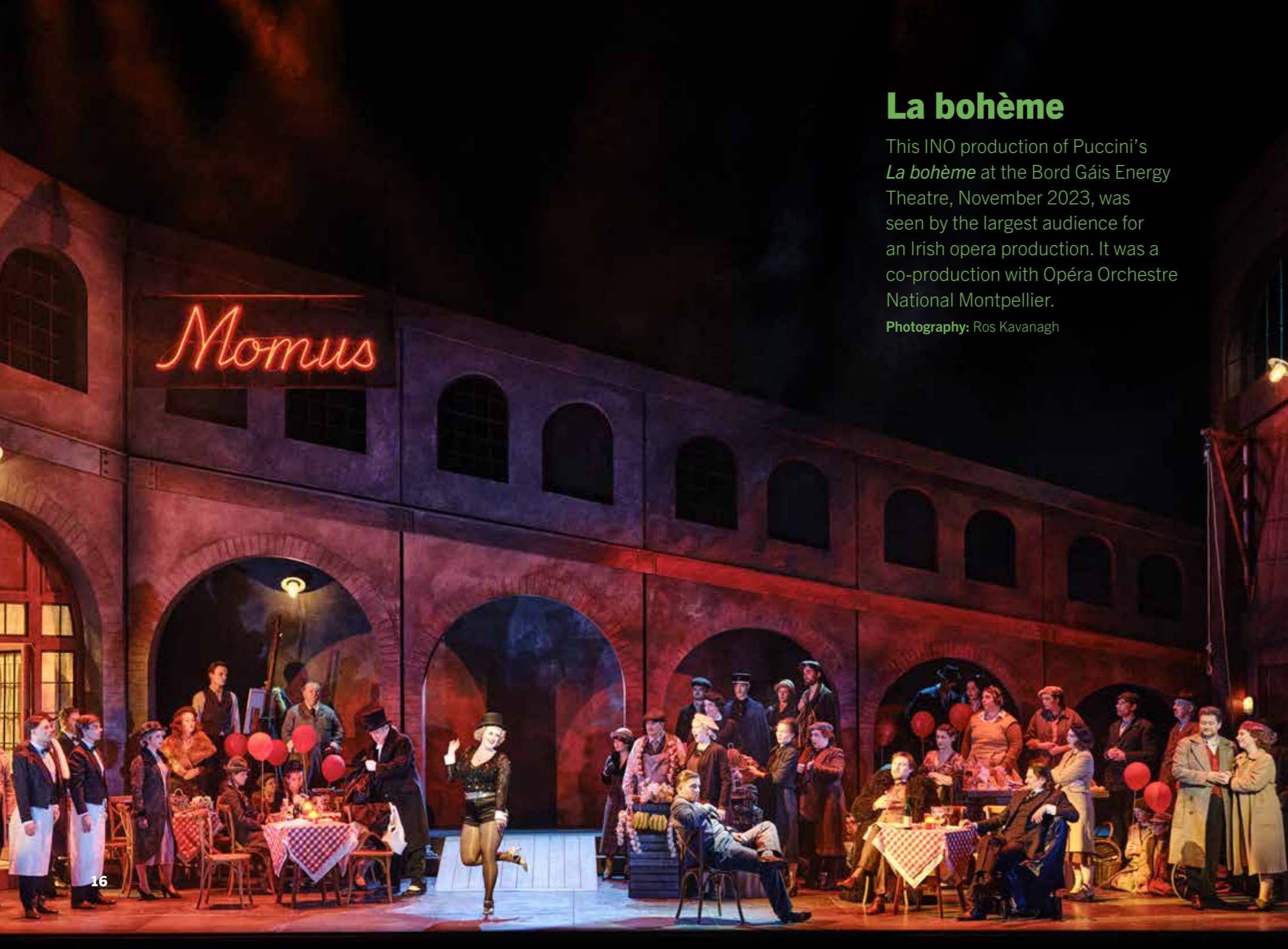


**Image:** Audience at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre for INO's production of Puccini's *La bohème*, November 2023.  
**Photography:** Lea Försterling

## 1.2 Opera is for Everybody

INO is constantly seeking to expand access to opera. This means programming and producing excellent opera and making it available and accessible in a wide range of venues and contexts.

- We believe opera is for people of all ages and all backgrounds.
- We programme highly popular operas to drive audience growth, but we also perform less familiar titles that broaden and enrich the voyage of discovery.
- We have performed opera in 30 venues in Ireland – large and small. Our ambition is to tour to every county every year.
- Our comprehensive outreach programme provides avenues into opera for those new to the artform.
- INO keeps ticket prices accessible.



## La bohème

This INO production of Puccini's *La bohème* at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, November 2023, was seen by the largest audience for an Irish opera production. It was a co-production with Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier.

**Photography:** Ros Kavanagh

## 1.3 Commitment to a Sustainable Opera Infrastructure and Ecology

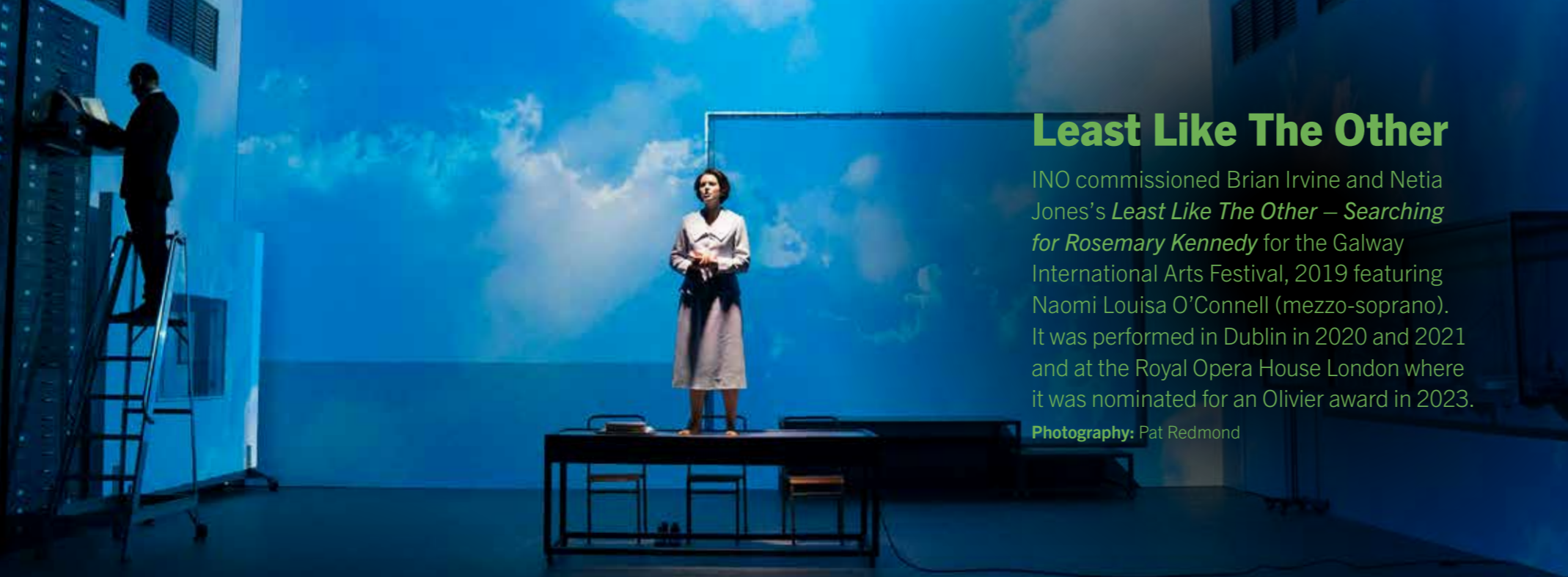
Ireland has a critical lack of infrastructure for opera. Unlike almost all European countries, the capital city has no opera house.

Irish National Opera owns no physical infrastructure. All rehearsals take place in different rented spaces, none of which are fully suitable for our purposes. Our infrastructure is fragile, insecure and unable to meet professional standards.

INO's focus to date has been on building an ecology of people. Our work depends on the extraordinary vision and talent of a large network of opera professionals. The company strives towards creating conditions where excellence may flourish.

INO showcases leading Irish artists as well as top international professionals. We work towards sustainable career structures for singers, musicians, creative artists and opera technicians in Ireland.

Through the INO studio we nurture the careers of emerging artists of all disciplines.



## Least Like The Other

INO commissioned Brian Irvine and Netia Jones's *Least Like The Other – Searching for Rosemary Kennedy* for the Galway International Arts Festival, 2019 featuring Naomi Louisa O'Connell (mezzo-soprano). It was performed in Dublin in 2020 and 2021 and at the Royal Opera House London where it was nominated for an Olivier award in 2023.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## The Lighthouse

INO found new ways of connecting with audiences throughout Ireland during 2020-2022. Our specially filmed production of *The Lighthouse* by Peter Maxwell Davies was shown outdoors in numerous settings – including at actual lighthouses. Pictured is a screening at Hook Head, Co. Wexford.

Photography: Pádraig Grant

## 1.4 Investment in Creativity and Innovation

INO is passionate about new work and innovation. We bring together creative artists from many backgrounds and we champion new opera as part of each season. Our contemporary productions are groundbreaking, using new approaches and new technology to connect to audiences in innovative ways.

Irish National Opera has produced 35 contemporary works of opera including staged productions, VR opera, street art operas and short operas for film.

We have developed new software to enable people to experience opera in innovative ways and we have undertaken EU-funded research collaborations exploring technology in opera productions in partnership with opera companies, universities and technology companies in Ireland and throughout Europe.

## William Tell

Rossini's *William Tell*, Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, November 2024. This was a major co-production with Nouvel Opéra Fribourg. It was subsequently presented in Fribourg and St. Gallen, Switzerland.

Photography: Pat Redmond



# Section two

Our  
Work

## La Cenerentola

INO's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella), Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, November 2019. A critically-acclaimed major new production featuring star Irish mezzo-soprano Tara Erraught.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## 2.1 Opera Productions

Our opera productions are the keystone of our activity. Without a dedicated opera house, Irish National Opera responds to the potential and limitations of available venues and has developed a flexible approach producing work of different scales. Our unwavering focus on artistic excellence in all types of productions has won a strong audience following throughout Ireland in the 30 venues in which we have produced operas to date. We have also forged high-level international partnerships, attracted some of the world's greatest artists, showcased Irish talent and won a range of national and international awards and accolades.

### INO Productions

**Full-scale** productions of major operas – currently three operas per year. Performances in Dublin, with some touring to Cork and Wexford. Concert performances of these larger operas have also been given in Limerick and Galway.

**Medium-scale** productions designed to tour to 10-12 regional venues – currently one or two operas per year. These include baroque repertoire as well as reduced-scale productions of larger works.

**New Work.** Often produced at medium scale, newly commissioned work featuring leading Irish composers and writers – usually one per year. Often presented in collaboration with festivals and designed to tour nationally and internationally.

**Smaller-scale** productions designed with more flexibility to tour to a wider network of venues regionally. New initiative in 2025.



## Rigoletto

INO's production of *Rigoletto* by Verdi at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, December 2024. A co-production with Santa Fe Opera, USA and Opera Zuid, The Netherlands. Mezzo-soprano Niamh O'Sullivan and bass Julian Close.

Photography: Pat Redmond

# Goals 2025-2028

- 1** An annual season of four **full-scale** productions. In Dublin two will be presented at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and two at the Gaiety Theatre. They will include an artistic balance of well-known operas as well as those less familiar to audiences in Ireland. Two opera productions tour to Cork, one to Wexford. Two are given in concert in Limerick, Galway and/or other locations.
- 2** Two **medium-scale** productions each year visiting an established roster of 10-12 venues nationwide with a view to building audiences in these areas. Operas to include baroque titles as well as reduced-scale productions of larger works.
- 3** One major **new work** each year at medium scale. Often a festival production, also capable of touring to the network of venues above. Where possible in international co-productions with presentations abroad and featuring major Irish artists.
- 4** One **smaller-scale** production touring smaller venues across Ireland.

## Don Pasquale

Medium-scale touring production performed in 13 venues nationwide (Nov 2022 – Feb 2023). INO's touring productions have reached 30 venues since the company's formation in 2018. Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* involved a touring company of up to 40 people including cast, chorus, orchestra and technical staff.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## 2.2 Audiences

High quality, artistically excellent **programming** has been key to growing audiences. INO has brokered strong **partnerships** and relationships with venues and festivals to maximise audience reach. Our **touring** activities bring opera to every corner of Ireland.

Consistency of presence is a key factor for the success of audience development. In venues where INO has been regularly present, and has invested in audience development over the years, audience reaction has been strong and loyal. It is more challenging to build audiences in places where our presence is sporadic.

In addition to live audiences, we reach audiences through **broadcasts** on RTÉ lyric fm and international radio stations. Several of our opera productions have been **recorded** for commercial release. At least one production annually is captured for **streaming** on our partner platform Operavision.

INO has built a busy and varied **outreach** programme designed to engage those who otherwise might not have access to opera. We have a year-round schools' workshop programme, as well as an acclaimed "open foyer" initiative whereby local music and arts groups perform in the foyer of our touring performances. INO has also delivered many community projects including a full production of a youth opera *Horse, Ape Bird* with Music Generation and a creative collaboration with Cork's youth hip-hop collective Kabin Crew.



## INO Outreach

Our 2024 collaboration with Cork's youth hip-hop collective *Kabin Crew* in a fully staged performance at the Everyman Theatre, Cork.

Photography: Trevor McGrath

# Goals 2025-2028

- 1** Reinstating four **full-scale** productions in Dublin so that we can offer a greater depth of experience and bring audiences from one production to the next throughout the year.
- 2** More consistency of **touring** full-scale and medium-scale productions. The establishment of a reliable annual season of operas in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway as well as other regional centres.
- 3** Introduction of **smaller-scale** touring that will access a wider range of venues.
- 4** Higher level of **live audiences** across the full range of INO productions.
- 5** Expanding the range of operas **broadcast** and **streamed**, particularly on international radio stations and platforms.
- 6** Expansion of **outreach** work opportunities, particularly outside Dublin. Development of an ongoing youth opera programme.

## Madama Butterfly

INO's production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and Cork Opera House, 2019 featuring Celine Byrne (Cio-Cio-San) and Julian Hubbard (Pinkerton). One of the largest productions that INO has toured to Cork Opera House where it enjoyed 2 sold-out evenings following 4 performances in Dublin.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## 2.3 Opera Infrastructure and Ecology

For the last seven years, Irish National Opera's focus has been primarily about building a community of people while using the physical infrastructure that already exists throughout Ireland. This community includes our artists on stage, in the pit, our technical teams behind the scenes as well as those that make our work possible – staff, the board of directors, donors, funders and stakeholders as well as audiences.

The growth of INO's capacity, the development of its artistic offerings and increased support from audiences, donors and funders will lead in time to Irish National Opera developing a dedicated **opera house** in Dublin – this is a long-term goal.

In the shorter term, INO will address the critical lack of suitable **rehearsal space** in Dublin so that opera productions can be prepared in a professional environment that allows artistic excellence to flourish.

Irish National Opera's high-quality productions are built on the dedication and expertise of its **artists** and other **opera professionals**: soloists, creative teams, chorus singers, orchestral musicians and a wide range of technical professionals in areas such as stage management, sets, costume, lighting, wigs and make-up. In most European opera companies, these skilled personnel are all engaged on full-time contracts. This is not yet possible in Ireland, and so INO can only engage professionals on a part-time or project-by-project basis. In 2025, INO's total spend on people will be over €3.5 million, representing the equivalent of almost 100 full-time jobs. This approach represents good value for money, but it gives rise to unstable



## **Triumphant production of *Salome*.**

IRISH EXAMINER

## **Salome**

Irish National Opera's 2024 production of Richard Strauss' *Salome* featuring Vincent Wolfsteiner, Sinéad Campbell Wallace and Imelda Drumm.

**Photography:** Pato Cassinoni

and irregular working environments for artists and opera workers. Because of this, many highly skilled individuals opt to emigrate or leave the profession entirely.

Since the company's inception in 2018, INO has enhanced **conditions for artists** as far as possible. It has built ongoing relationships with a range of high-profile guest artists, while also providing new career opportunities for artists in the chorus and orchestra. The company has sought to offer competitive pay and conditions, as well as offering more regular working patterns.

INO has also invested heavily in emerging artists. Since 2018 the company has operated an **opera studio** training programme for young artists. This has ignited the careers of singers, conductors, directors, répétiteurs and composers. Many alumni of INO's studio are now forging successful careers at home and internationally.

At INO we also engage strongly in **education**. This includes schools' workshops and Transition Year programmes at second level as well as bespoke projects with universities and third-level opera, music, theatre and design programmes.

## INO Studio

Amy Ní Fhearraigh (soprano) was a member of Irish National Opera Studio in its first year of operation (2018-2019). Amy began singing in INO's chorus, graduating to larger roles such as Jemmy in *William Tell* and the sole singing role in the Olivier-nominated *Least Like The Other* at the Royal Opera House, London. In the 2024-25 season she was company principal at Theater Magdeburg, Germany, singing leading roles in Bizet's *Carmen* and Puccini's *Turandot*.

Photography: Pat Redmond



## Goals 2025-2028

- 1** Securing a **dedicated** rehearsal space for production, chorus and orchestra rehearsals together with facilities for costume fittings, planning meetings, auditions and coaching.
- 2** Building the **capacity** of the company with increased productions and performances, greater audience growth and higher income from funders, donors and box office.
- 3** Beginning advocacy and planning towards the development of an **opera house** in Dublin.
- 4** Developing contracts for **chorus** and **orchestra** to increase quantity and regularity of working patterns. Examine new contractual conditions for other opera professionals.
- 5** Enhancing the impact and range of opportunities available through the **INO Studio** and work with third-level institutions to enhance all aspects of operatic training in Ireland.

**Image:** *The Scorched Earth Trilogy* by Brian Irvine and John McIluff, a co-production with Dumbworld. Screened at Trinity College, Dublin, March 2022.

**Photography:** Conan McIvor



## 2.4 New Opera & Innovation

At INO we have prioritised **new opera** as a core part of our artistic offering. We believe in opera's ability to stimulate audiences in unexpected and innovative ways. We also champion new work to give a platform to the astonishing range of Irish creative talent currently writing operas. INO has a unique opportunity to add to a compelling and unprecedented repertoire of operas that are already making a significant international impact.

In the company's first seven years, INO has produced 35 contemporary works (mostly world premieres) by 25 different Irish composers and 19 Irish writers. These have included staged productions, tours, web streams, films, recordings, virtual reality and site-specific works. Several of these projects have been presented internationally, either directly by INO or through co-producing partners.

As well as forging new operatic repertoire, through our commitment to **innovation** we have presented opera in new ways – outdoor projection on buildings, in virtual reality, on outdoor mobile screens and in site-specific contexts. We have harnessed technology in new ways and developed a new software app – Isolde – that syncs projected video with audio on audiences' own personal devices.



## Hold your Breath

Éna Brennan and David Pountney's *Hold Your Breath*, Bregenz Festival Austria, 2024. A major commission by a leading European opera festival awarded to INO Studio Composer Éna Brennan, as a result of her composition as part of INO's project *20 Shots of Opera*. In 2023 INO also presented *Breathwork* at Dublin Theatre Festival – this was a precursor to the larger work in Bregenz.

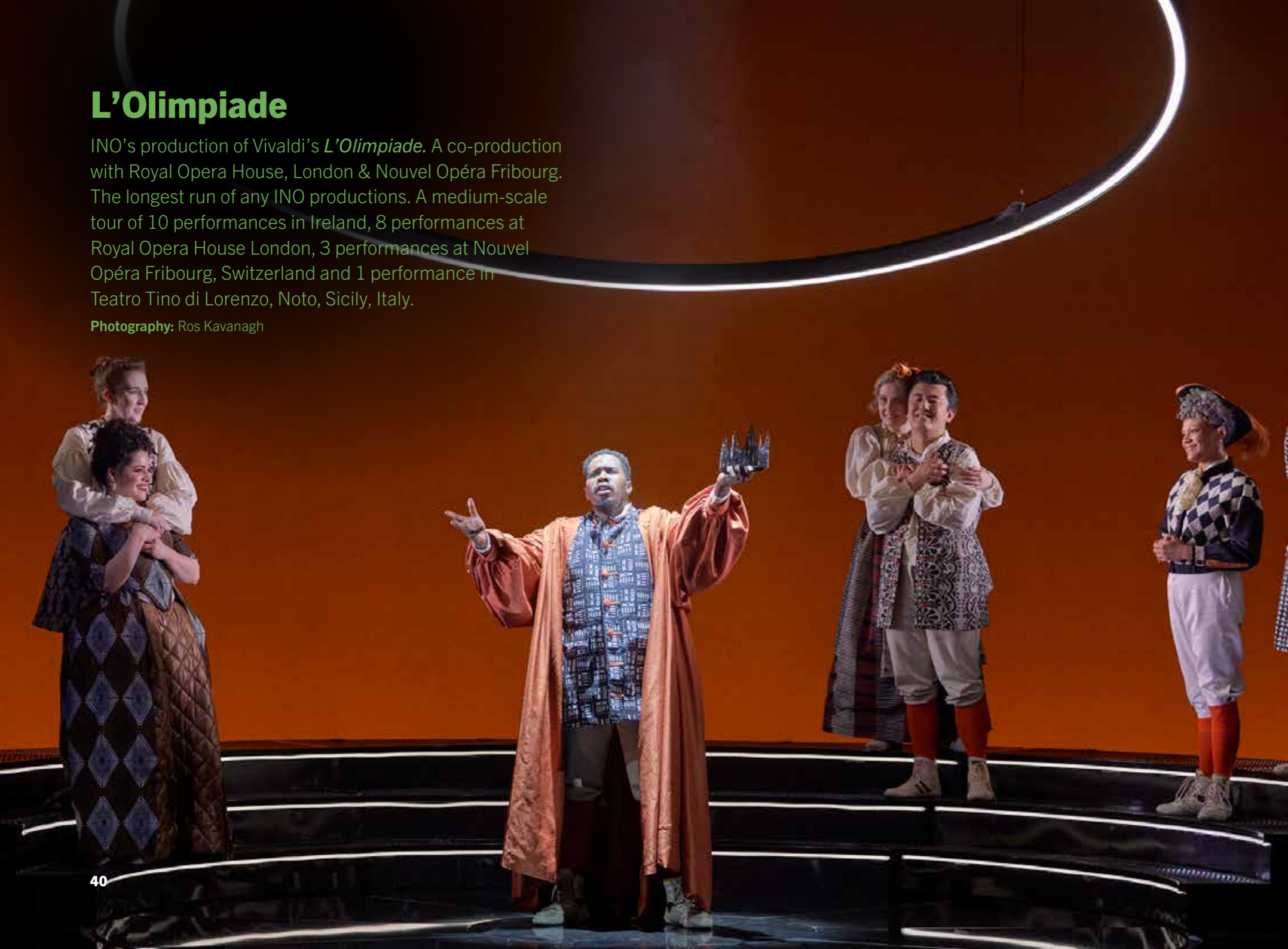
# Goals 2025-2028

- 1** One major **new opera** commissioned and produced each year.
- 2** Provision of **support** to the development of other new work by Irish artists.
- 3** Extending the **international** presence of contemporary Irish opera through touring, broadcasts, streaming and recordings. This involves touring of existing productions as well as forging creative partnerships on future new work with international partners.
- 4** Collaboration on the EU-funded **HEAT** project exploring the use of holograms in opera productions.
- 5** Further development and commercial exploitation of INO's **Isolde app** for audio syncing with projected operas.

## L'Olimpiade

INO's production of Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiade*. A co-production with Royal Opera House, London & Nouvel Opéra Fribourg. The longest run of any INO productions. A medium-scale tour of 10 performances in Ireland, 8 performances at Royal Opera House London, 3 performances at Nouvel Opéra Fribourg, Switzerland and 1 performance in Teatro Tino di Lorenzo, Noto, Sicily, Italy.

**Photography:** Ros Kavanagh



## 2.5 International

INO's primary focus is on audiences in Ireland. Opera, however, is a highly international art form. Our developing international reputation allows the company to attract major talent to the INO stage and allows the company to function as an international platform for Irish talent. It also brings commercial benefits in the form of investment through co-productions, rentals and touring.

To date, INO has toured four productions to London (three at the Royal Opera House and one at the Barbican Theatre), as well as individual productions touring to The Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy. Our co-production of Scorched Earth Trilogy has been seen in the UK, Germany, Italy, Costa Rica and Chile. Our work also reaches a wide international audience through broadcasts, web streams and recordings.

To date, co-productions have been established with many major international opera companies including the Royal Opera House, Garsington Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Opéra Orchestra National Montpellier, Royal Swedish Opera, Nouvel Opéra Fribourg and Beth Morrison Projects. Two INO productions have been rented to opera houses in Switzerland and Italy.

## Carmen

INO's production of Bizet's *Carmen* at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, 2022. This was one of INO's largest and most lavish physical productions. A production of this scale is only possible through co-production with others – in this case Opera Philadelphia and Seattle Opera.

Photography: Ruth Medjber



# Goals 2025-2028

1

New **co-production** partnerships for a broad range of operatic repertoire. New co-productions are planned with Scottish Opera, Royal Swedish Opera, Nouvel Opéra Fribourg, Queensland Opera, State Opera of South Australia and West Australian Opera. Other partnerships to be developed.

2

International collaborations on **new works** commissioned by INO. This includes co-commissioning and co-production as well as touring.

3

Increased international presence of existing INO productions through **touring** and **rentals**.

4

Greater presence on international **radio** and **streaming** channels.

## Faust

INO's production of Gounod's *Faust* at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, 2023, as part of Dublin Theatre Festival.

Photography: Pat Redmond

# Section three

Our  
Organisation

## La bohème Concert

INO's concert performance of Puccini's *La bohème* was live webstreamed from Bord Gáis Energy Theatre in March 2021.

Photography: Ros Kavanagh





**Least Like The Other  
demonstrates the versatility  
of Irish National Opera, who  
triumphed with Vivaldi's Bajazet  
at the Linbury last year and  
whose online project 20 Shots of  
Opera remains a highlight of that  
dismal pandemic year, 2020.**

THE OBSERVER

**Image:** Naomi Louisa O'Connell  
(mezzo-soprano) in Brian Irvine and  
Netia Jones's *Least Like The Other –  
Searching for Rosemary Kennedy* for the  
Galway International Arts Festival, 2019.  
**Photography:** Pat Redmond

## 3.1 Corporate Governance

As a publicly funded company and a registered charity, INO operates with a high degree of accountability, transparency and care.

INO is governed by a highly experienced and independent board of directors.

The company is strongly committed to the health, wellbeing, dignity and respect of all personnel.

INO has developed and implemented several policies relevant to its work, including policies on health and safety; gender, equality and diversity; dignity in the workplace and child protection. Our gender equality policy has resulted in an almost exactly 50:50 balance of male and female artists in our creative teams.

INO's constitution, policies and audited accounts are available on the company's website.

INO will continue to review its existing policies and operations. In 2025-28 we will extend Safe to Create training to freelance contractors and will develop a climate action policy.

## Alice's Adventures Under Ground

INO's production of Gerald Barry's *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, a co-production with Royal Opera House, London, 2021. Performed live in London by the Royal Opera in 2020. INO made an audio recording for Signum Classics and also filmed this opera for webstreaming. The INO film has been shown on the Royal Opera House's digital channel and has been screened at the Irish Film Institute.

**Photography:** Clive Barda



## 3.2 Executive Team

The design and delivery of INO's ambitious programme of work is delivered by the executive team.

Since 2018, INO has built a dedicated executive with a broad range of expertise. This team is responsible for ensuring the delivery of high-quality work, creating a professional working environment and further expanding the artistic and corporate success of the company.

INO provides a supportive environment that is conducive to delivering first-rate work and invests in the professional development of its staff.

As activities increase, INO will expand the executive team. This will include new team members in production, artistic planning and development.

## Elektra

INO's production of Strauss' *Elektra* featuring Imelda Drumm as Klytämnestra at the Kilkenny Arts Festival, 2021. This was a technically complex outdoor site-specific production given during the Covid pandemic restrictions. A 79-piece orchestra was pre-recorded at Bord Gáis Energy Theatre with cast singing live with an intense surround sound design.

Photography: Ste Murray



## 3.3 Finance

INO's **income** comes from these principal sources:

- Arts Council investment
- Other public support such as EU funding and through Culture Ireland
- Earned income (box office, fees, guarantees, co-productions, rentals)
- Philanthropic support (trusts, foundations, individual donors, corporate partners)

INO came into existence as a result of a policy decision of the Arts Council, whose support is and will continue to be the principal engine of all INO's activities. INO has grown its earned income and fundraised support and will continue to diversify the range of stakeholders that contribute to the company's work.

INO's **expenditure** focuses on these areas, with percentage of turnover in 2025 given:

- People (51%) – artists, opera professionals, executive staff
- Productions (34%) – venues, sets, costumes, transport, technical hires
- Travel and Subsistence – (8%) including visiting artists and INO touring within Ireland
- Overheads (7%) – office costs, storage, utilities

INO operates robust financial management processes and has accumulated a small financial reserve. This reserve will be built further in future years so that the company has the resilience to withstand unexpected events.



## William Tell

INO's Artistic Director Fergus Sheil conducts Rossini's *William Tell* at the Gaiety Theatre, 2022. This image captures some of the large number of individuals needed to perform opera. As well as those on stage and in the orchestra pit, a wide range of others responsible for set, costumes, lighting, staging, choreography, wigs, make-up are vital but remain hidden from public view.

**Photography:** Pat Redmond



## 3.4 Resources

Irish National Opera has set out an ambitious vision for opera in Ireland. Our objectives are very closely aligned with the Arts Council's published strategies and policies for opera. INO has become a strategically indispensable organisation for opera in Ireland; it is optimally positioned to deliver many of the Arts Council's policy objectives.

INO began in 2018 with Arts Council funding of €2.9 million. This grant has increased to €5.5 million in 2025. This is a significant investment, and it reflects the Arts Council's confidence in and support of INO. Detailed costings of the goals set out in section 2 of this strategy indicate that the investment needed to implement all aspects of INO's and the Arts Council's shared strategies is €9.825 million. This level of support is required by 2028 to complete the first phase of INO's development and to deliver this vision for opera in Ireland.

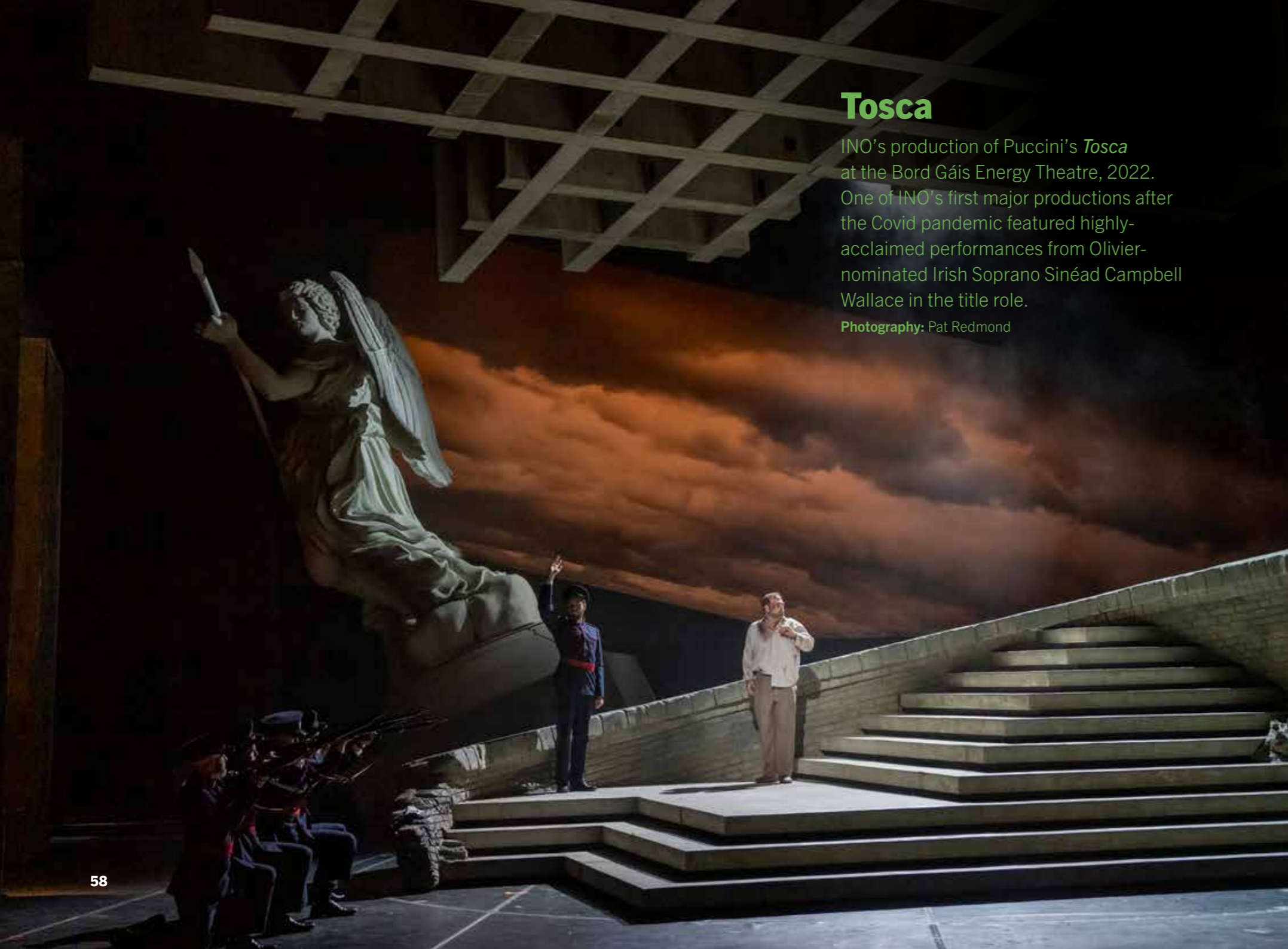
INO will also increase earned income and fundraised income in parallel with increased Arts Council funding.

Without affecting operational income, INO has begun separate capital fundraising for a new rehearsal facility. Funding for this is being sought from private donors, as well as from all possible public sources including government departments, state agencies and local authorities.



**Image:** INO's production of *Rigoletto* by Verdi at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, with soprano Soraya Mafi, December 2024. A co-production with Santa Fe Opera, USA and Opera Zuid, The Netherlands.  
**Photography:** Pat Redmond

# Looking Forward 2028 and Beyond



## Tosca

INO's production of Puccini's *Tosca* at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, 2022. One of INO's first major productions after the Covid pandemic featured highly-acclaimed performances from Olivier-nominated Irish Soprano Sinéad Campbell Wallace in the title role.

**Photography:** Pat Redmond

## Beyond 2028

Irish National Opera will enter its second decade in 2028. The company will retain its commitment to its core principles but will also face new challenges and opportunities. INO will seek to increase its number of opera productions and performances, expanding the audience for opera in all areas of Ireland, as well as increasing its profile nationally and internationally.

The increase in activity will require more investment and a scaling-up of all areas of the company. It will lead to more opportunities for creative artists and solo singers, as well as chorus, orchestra and technical staff, making engagement with INO the principal focus of a very large range of artists and arts workers.

In the period 2028-2038, there will be a strong need to develop physical opera infrastructure in Ireland. With multiple operas in rehearsal, the company will require a dedicated rehearsal space capable of accommodating music, production, chorus and orchestra rehearsals simultaneously in a professional environment. Work has begun to secure such a facility. With more opera productions, it will become economically advantageous to store and revive more productions. This will require new facilities for making and storing sets, props, costumes, lighting and technical equipment. It will also present INO with an increased possibility of earned income from international rental of productions.

The greater number of productions and performances planned in Dublin cannot be accommodated within existing theatres. A dedicated flagship opera house in the capital city will become a necessity. INO will take a leadership role in working towards the realisation of this goal.



## Don Pasquale

Tenor Patrick Kabongo and the INO chorus in our 2022-23 touring production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. This production was presented in 12 venues nationwide.

**Photography:** Pat Redmond

Irish National Opera's story so far has been one of success and delivery, significantly outperforming what was envisaged in 2018. INO's success presents the company and our stakeholders with a choice: to sit back and consider our job done, happy that opera in Ireland is in a better place than a decade ago, or to drive forward with renewed energy, to bring more opera to more people and to transform Ireland's operatic infrastructure and ecology, bringing it closer to the standards set in other European countries.

At INO there is no appetite for sitting still. We are proud of our achievements, and of the huge breadth of talent and dedication in Irish opera. But our ambition remains high, and the road ahead is long and exciting. Our 10th anniversary in 2028 will mark the start of a new chapter in the story of Irish National Opera.

★★★★★

***A delight from start  
to finish.***

THE IRISH TIMES



**Image:** The ensemble in INO's production  
of J. Strauss II *Die Fledermaus* 2025.

**Photography:** Ros Kavanagh

**Irish National Opera**

69 Dame Street

Dublin 2 | Ireland

**T:** 01 679 4962

**E:** [info@irishnationalopera.ie](mailto:info@irishnationalopera.ie)

Company Reg No.: 601853

Registered Charity: 22403

(RCN) 20204547



[irishnationalopera.ie](http://irishnationalopera.ie)