



# INFORMATION GUIDE

COMPILED BY MICAH PATSTON FOR BK OPERA  
(C) 2024



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We start by acknowledging the lands we perform on, those of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and the Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to this land's first story tellers and their elders, past and present. We extend that respect to any First Nations people here today on this land that has remained unceded for over 60 000 years.

Opera as an art form is political and it is a privilege to be able to explore it here on this stage.

This land always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

# Welcome to the world of Mozart and Don Giovanni in 2024.

Step in and experience a dark and intimate take on the classic opera that retells the legend of Don Juan- a womaniser whose appetite for desire leads to his ultimate downfall.

Composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and written by Lorenzo Da Ponte, BK Opera presents a modern take on the work that challenges not only the form of Opera, but preconceptions around sex positivity, BDSM and themes of trauma and sexism.





Kate Millett

*BK Opera Artistic Director*

Opera is a peak art form of communicating heightened emotions. When exploring trauma and sexism themes, you have a social responsibility to communicate those messages for modern audiences. Opera is a living artform and should be treated as such.

As a heightened artform, it makes sense to set a cannon Opera like Don Giovanni in various BDSM Play parties to contrast healthy communication, consent and pleasure with coercive, controlling and abusive behavior.

BDSM is often depicted as abusive [however] it is not abuse; in fact there are clear rules to ensure people feel safe.







# INSTRUCTIONS

Some gentle instructions for the evening are as follows - for those that would prefer something stricter, we humbly apologise.

Please be advised that this performance is recommended for an audience of 18+. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian.

During the performance, please ensure that phones are turned to silent. No photos, videos or recordings of this production are allowed.

Please refrain from physical contact with performers and their equipment both during and after performance.



# CONTENT WARNINGS

Please be advised the performance contains the following elements that have been rehearsed and choreographed.

Violence

Sexual assault and sexual violence

Drug use

BDSM practices

Sexual activity and sexual themes

Use of haze and flashing lights

If you feel uncomfortable at any stage of tonight's performance please do not feel pressured to watch, or stay in the room.

It is always possible to leave and re-enter the space.



# BDSM 101

## What is BDSM?

BDSM is an acronym that describes a range of sensual, sexual and connective activities, including kinks and fetishes. The acronym

lists the following;

- > Bondage/Discipline,
- > Domination/Submission,
- > Sadism/Masochism.

BDSM and kink holds a vast amount of history, with acts often coming from the re-appropriation of cultures of subjugation, punishment, power dynamics, torture and pain, and being developed molded into consensual acts of pleasure and gratification for the body, mind and soul.





# “BDSM IS CHILDHOOD JOYOUS PLAY WITH ADULT PRIVILEGE AND COOL TOYS”

Midori – Educator and writer

In the last 10 years, BDSM culture has seen an extraordinary increase in visibility with many BDSM practitioners including sex workers and the LGBTQIA+ communities pushing for accurate and consensual representations in mainstream media. This has particularly come in response to the *50 Shades of Grey* phenomenon, which many lived experience workers and practitioners saw as a portrayal of abuse and violence despite it being labelled as “BDSM”.

In reality, many people explore and participate actively in acts of consensual BDSM in their every day lives. From puppy play, to shibari, to flogging and collars; the acts to explore and experience are as wide and varied as humanity itself. The act of play and connection followed by after care and debriefing is for many an integral part of this, just as the gratification itself.

# CONSENT 101

Consent is the ability to say yes or no to something suggested or requested by another party.

While there are many structures to consider consent through, this production has chosen to explore the following.

## Traffic Lights

At the beginning of the performance, you will see a Consent 101 workshop led by 'Il Commendatore' (the play master). She states one of the most well known consent models, the traffic light system, and you will see the cast exploring this in character.

While there are alternatives and additions, the most simply version is as follows;

Green – yes, good to go/continue.

Orange – pause, stop and check in/adjust, possibly continue.

Red – stop entirely.

## Safe, Sane and Consensual

The SSC approach is a broad way of discussing kink activities before playing. This model looks towards acts being 'safe', 'sane/sober', and consensual as a form of best practice.





### Others

There are as many models for consent as there are people who discuss it. Many are hyper specific to use, or environment (e.g. Safe, Sane/Sober, Consensual is not always useful in a club environment with alcohol involved).

For the most part though, practitioners agree that to participate in something you should know or understand what you are doing and freely agree to it with no pressure or coercion.

This is how the behaviour of Don Giovanni might be seen as non consensual throughout this production. He is not emotionally or physically safe, he is consistently high (i.e. not sane/sober), and the people he is playing with don't agree to the acts.



# CONSENT IN PROCESS

## Consent/Intimacy Choreography

The importance of consent in modern society has seen the rise in consent, culture and intimacy coordination. The consent and intimacy coordinators for this show (Cohan and Micah) assisted throughout the production to not only ensure realistic depictions of acts, but to educate and increase the capacity of all members of the company in the realm of consent and negotiation.

In the room, Cohan and Micah worked with Kate and the cast members to develop intimate choreography that kept to individual boundaries and requirements. This ensured that while the acts on stage may look intense and violent, cast have not only rehearsed everything, but are actively consenting and understanding what they are portraying.



## Designs and Costuming

Costume designer for this production Oliver Hall has taken consent processes to include the act of dressing the cast each evening. Part of the design process has included the layering of costume options in line with not only the requirements of the script/score, but levels of comfort with exposure of various cast members.

Parts of some of the costume and set pieces have been included here for audience to explore.

