

# Opera for the Dead

By Mindy Meng Wang & Monica Lim

## Access Guide



Image description: Two women, adorned in elaborate, vibrant headdresses and patterned silk garments, stand side-by-side against a neutral grey background. Their conical headpieces are fringed in bright orange, and their layered costumes mix embroidered fabrics in red, blue, green, and gold tones.

## **Updates to this document**

Arts House website will contain the most up to date version of this guide and all ticket holders will be notified of any changes made 3 days and 1 day prior to the event.

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## Where

Arts House

521 Queensberry Street

North Melbourne VIC

## When

**Thursday 26 February – Sunday 1 March 2026**

Thursday – Friday, 7.30pm

Saturday, 2pm & 7.30pm

Sunday, 5pm

Duration: 50 minutes, no interval

## Show Overview

This is a 55-minute, 7-performer show performed on 6 individual stages that move to 3 different positions during the performance.

A contemporary Chinese cyber-opera that harnesses old and new technologies to explore the connection between life and death. Opera for the Dead 祭歌 is inspired by Chinese mourning rituals but speaks to our common experiences of death, mourning and ancestry.

This multi-artform performance combines live musicians and singers with electronic processing, ambisonics sound, 3D animation and moving stage positions. Audiences are invited to move freely through the performance space as it transforms.

Opera for the Dead 祭歌 examines the many contradictions that exist in our traditions around death: the tension between spirituality and materialism, the eternal versus digital convenience, and the contrast between our experience of grief and the way it is performed.

## Important Notes

### Content Warnings

This performance explores themes of death. The work contains loud music, haze, abrupt lighting changes, and low lighting.

### General Notes

An Acknowledgement of Country and audience guidance announcement will play in the foyer and entry corridor before entering the main performance space.

## Access Services



Audio Description is available on-request – book by 23 February 2026



Assistance Animals are welcome.



Assistive Listening is available free of charge. Ask staff for assistance on arrival.



Visual Rating 50% - A mixture of visual and auditory components including dialogue, music, other sounds.



Aural Rating 75% - Mostly sound-based. Any non-sound based elements are incidental to the work.



This performance is fully wheelchair accessible. More information on wheelchair accessible entrances and bathrooms can be found later in this guide.



The quiet space will be available for you to use before, during and after the show. More information about the quiet space can be found later in this guide.



Companion card holders are welcome.

## Digital



Audio Description is available on-request – book by 23 February 2026

## Performers



Image: Monica Lim | Co Creator | Electronics



Image: Mindy Meng Wang | Co Creator | Guzeng



Image: YuTien Lin | Vocalist



Image: Nils Hobiger | Cellist



Image: Alexander Meager | Percussionist

## **Sensory Elements**

### **Sound**

The production is a performance that is primarily live music and soundscapes. The music is performed by an ensemble featuring vocals, guzeng, cello, percussion and electronic processing.

The sound is at times soft and acoustic, through to loud amplified volumes.

Mandarins placed on hanging 'altars' vibrate throughout the performance.

## **Lighting**

Lighting changes in colour and intensity. Lights go on or off, in moments during the show and change quickly.

The room is mostly very dark.

The movable stages feature projected images that sometimes are directly on the audience, if they stand close to the stages.

## **Physical**

Audiences can touch and feel the vibrating altars.

Performers are located on their small movable stages and sometimes move through the audience. Audiences can move up close to the performers on their stages.

## **Smell**

The performance space has a subtle aroma of mandarins. This references the mandarins that are placed on the 'altars' hanging.

## **Visual**

The visual experience includes projected images on curtains that are hung around the perimeters of the individual stages.

Each stage features a monitor positioned behind each of the performers that shows text, translations and imagery.

The stages feature lighting on the floor that flash on and off in different colours.

## **Audience Experience**

### **Entry to space**

The audience is invited into the space by walking along a corridor under an elongated LED screen with the words 'Remember' in yellow scrolling towards the space,

referencing the yellow road of the Chinese underworld, accompanied by muffled chanting from Buddhist chanting machines.

Upon entering the space, walking through a portal of yellow light and haze, the audience encounters two Wuchang (guardians of the Underworld), who are busy placing mandarins and bells on the vibrating altars. In the middle of the space, they can see the faint outline of an imposing rectangular structure.

### **Social expectations**

Audiences are free to move around the space during the performance.

Some seating is provided around the perimeter of the performance space.

Audiences can come and go, as well as make noise or stim in the space.

### **Performance expectations**

Audiences can manage their own experience and are welcome to move up close to the performers.

There is no eye contact, touch, or participation.

The music includes lyrics sung and spoken in Mandarin. There is a translation of the performance available via the QR codes on display in the foyer and on the website: [operaforthedead.com.au](http://operaforthedead.com.au)

The performance follows the ceremonial journey of a traditional Chinese funeral.

There are 5 musicians/performers each on their own stage, plus two performers who move around the performance space known as the Wuchang (guardians of the Underworld).

## **Transport**

### **Tram**

Route 57 (High Floor trams only)

Stop 12, North Melbourne Town Hall.

Please note, this is not a wheelchair accessible tram

[GETTING TO ARTS HOUSE VIDEO LINK](#)

### **Train**

Arts House is 1.1km from

North Melbourne Train Station,

approximately 16 minute walk

[North Melbourne Station Information](#)

1.2km from Flagstaff Station,

approximately 15 minute walk

[Flagstaff Station Information](#)

### **Bus**

Bus number: 216

### **Parking**

There is limited paid on-street parking on Queensberry Street and Errol Street.

There are two accessible on street car parking spaces on Queensberry Street (150m to our accessible Errol Street entrance) for holders of a Parking Permit for Disabled people.

## The Venue



Image: North Melbourne Town Hall view from Queensberry Street which features giant red letters that say ARTS HOUSE out the front of it.

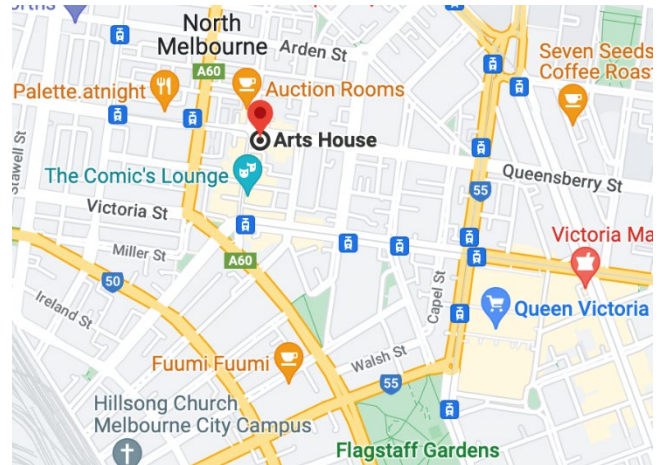


Image: a map of Arts House and its surrounding area. [LINK TO MAP](#)

## Front Entrance



Image: North Melbourne Town Hall entrance on Queensberry Street. The entrance is to the left of the giant red letters that say ARTS HOUSE and features a staircase of eight steps with grab rails in parts.

## Wheelchair Accessible Entrances



There are two Wheelchair Accessible Entrances. The first is on Errol St next to the Post Office.



Image: Errol Street entrance next to the Post office with wheelchair accessible ramp or two steps with grab rails.



Image: View of door at Post office entrance. Button to open automated door is on the right.

The second Accessible Entrance is towards the end of George Johnson Lane.

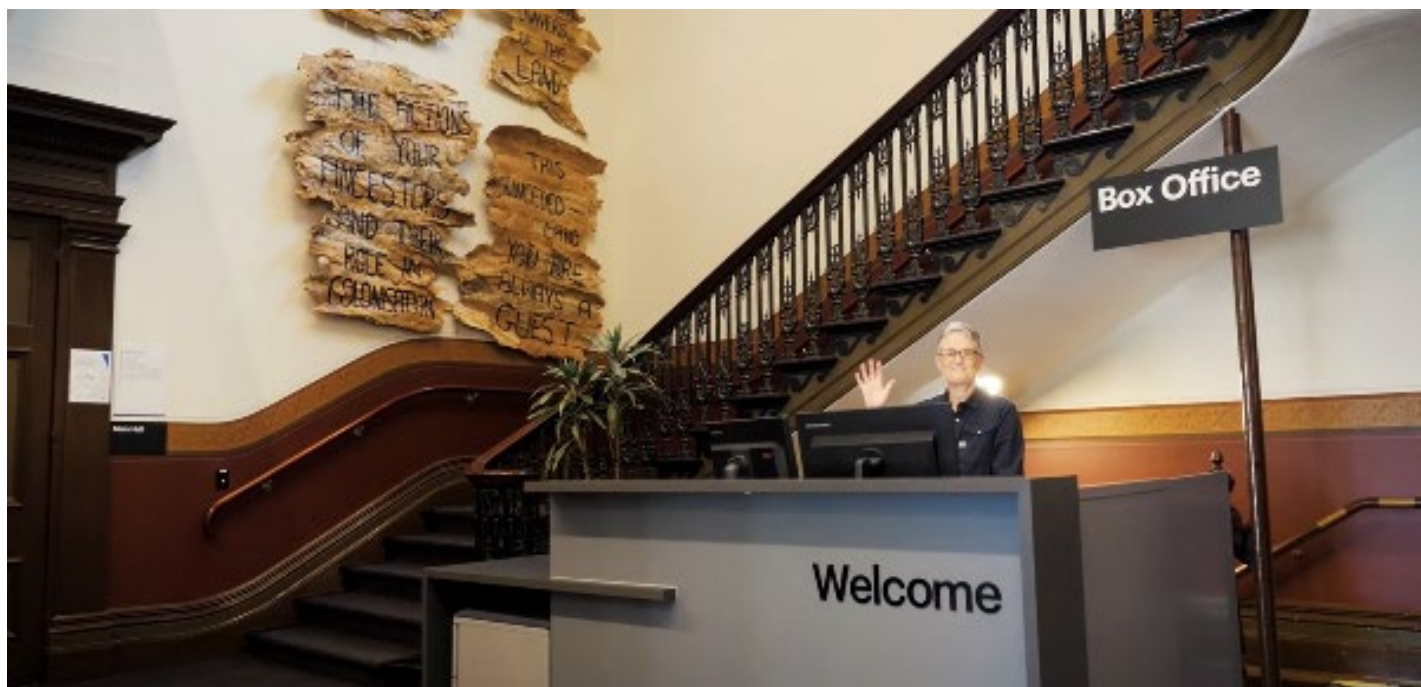


Image: View of George Johnson Lane from Errol St. The laneway passes through an archway with a brick wall at the end.



Image: view of the ramp with grab rail leading from George Johnson Lane to the automated door which opens into the Arts House foyer.

## Box Office



The Box Office is located in the foyer under the stairwell. If you enter from the Main Entrance it should be straight ahead of you. If entering from the Post Office or George Johnson lane your should approach on its right hand side.

## Ushers



Image Description: Ushers will be wearing black with an Arts House Logo on the left hand shoulder.

## Bar



Image Description: The Arts House Bar with vases on each side of the bar filled with native flowers. In the centre there is a bar menu displayed with drinks set up on the top level on the bar. Towards the back wall there is a Arts House sign that is lit up. The lighting of the space is lit up orange.

The bar is to the Bar staff will be wearing black with an Arts House Logo.

We have a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for sale.

We are a cashless venue and accept EFTPOS, Visa and Mastercard payments.

## Quiet Space



Arts House Quiet Space is located on Ground Level and is nearby reception and opposite the accessible bathrooms. It includes a range of seating options including soft furnishings, dimmable lights, sensory and stim objects. It is open during venue opening hours and events as a quiet space, prayer or parenting space.



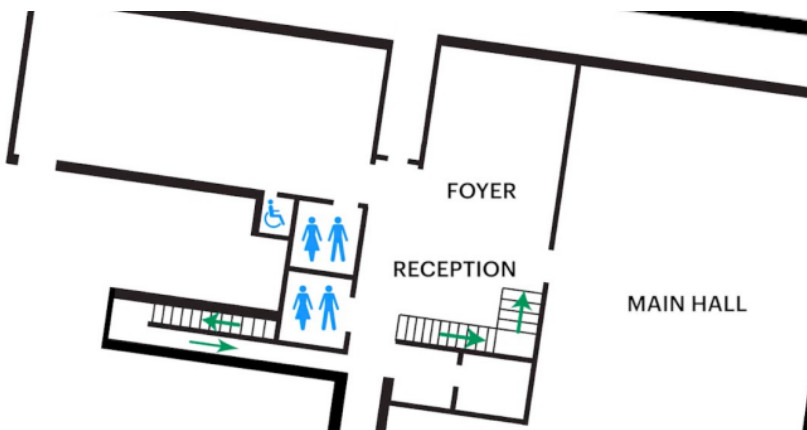
Image: Quiet space with lights dimmed



Image: Quiet space kitchenette and book shelf

## Bathrooms

All bathrooms have Dyson hand dryers with sensor activation. There is an accessible bathroom that is single use on ground level opposite the Quiet Space. There is another accessible bathroom upstairs – this is accessible via lift or stairs.



## Door to Main Hall

The Performance is in the Main Hall.

It is on the ground floor.

It is to the left of the box office desk and right of the bar.

An artist statement is available on signage and warnings on the door.



Image to be updated by Arts House

## COVID Safety

Please note: If you have a cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath or flu-like symptoms, you **must not** attend our venue or programs in person.

We will provide a refund if you need to cancel your attendance due to illness. Please contact us by 9am on the day of the event.

To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, we advise all patrons, artists and staff to:

- Wear a well fitted mask of P2 or comparable standards
- Practise physical distancing where possible
- Practise good hygiene by washing and or sanitising your hands often
- Test often (PCR or PlusLife testing recommended where possible)
- Stay up to date with vaccines (as recommended by your healthcare professional)

Throughout the venue you will find:

- hand sanitiser stations available
- masks available (ask one of our staff for assistance)
- increased signage to direct patron movement and avoid crowd congestion
- two air filters, which move between different parts of the venue as needed.

We also ensure that spaces are well ventilated.

Staying COVID-safe remains important. We must all follow these steps:

- Follow the Victorian Government's measures on how to stay safe.
- When you cannot safely socially distance it is recommended to wear a well fitted mask.
- Practise COVID-safe hygiene protocols.