

# Harry's at home on the stage

DANNY GOCS

YEAR 7 Bialik College student Harry Hendell, 12, has been performing on the stage since he was five and is currently appearing in Opera Australia's *Tosca* at the State Theatre.

This is his third opera with Australia's leading opera company, but there was a shock in store when he started rehearsals for the season that opened last month and runs until May 10 at the State Theatre.

Director John Bell has set Puccini's *Tosca* in World War II in Rome under the Nazis, with soldiers and swastikas on the stage.

Harry is one of 12 children in the production and also has a solo role as a shepherd boy who wears the Star of David on his clothes.

"The boy is with his family and is about to be sent to a concentration camp," said Harry.

"I'm doing my Roots project



Harry Hendell (left, standing) is one of the children in *Tosca*.

at school this year, so I have been researching about my grandfather who was in a similar situation in the war. I was able to think more about how my character would have felt."

After the first act the other children are no longer required for the remaining two acts, but Harry has a scene in the final act.

"I have a big solo in Act III where I sing in Italian," he said, adding that he learnt Italian phonetically.

Mum Suzie Hendell said:

"Harry is the only kid in the curtain calls, so he's really lucky."

Harry appeared in Opera Australia's productions of *La Boheme* in 2016 and *Carmen* last year, and has also performed with Melbourne Opera.

His first solo performance was aged five at Bialik College's 70th birthday celebrations. He has had roles in amateur productions of musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Lion King*.

"I enjoy both opera and musicals as I really like the musical elements, but they are both good experience for whatever I end up doing as a career," he said.

Harry plays piano and violin and has performed in the B'nai B'rith Jewish Youth Music Eisteddfod.

He has been performing with the National Boys Choir for the past five years and his next performance is on July 21 at Hamer Hall.