

to rock opera



Underground Opera Company.

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In the past four years the Underground Opera Company has performed in mines and caves around Australia, such as the naturally formed "Cathedral" in the Capricorn Caves in Rockhampton, where the company performed, last year.

They are about to come back to one of their favourite places to perform two concerts – at the Jenolan Caves, west of the Blue Mountains. Imagine sitting in one of the



'I met Paul Simon and got drunk with Hall and Oates.'

Bruce Edwards, above, Underground Opera director

world's oldest open caves, surrounded by the extraordinary calcite formations that make up two of the most famous caves at Jenolan Caves – The Cathedral and The Grand Arch – listening in a near-perfect acoustic environment to songs from *Carmen*, *Figaro*, *Cosi Fan Tutte*, and *Les Miserables*.

For Edwards and his troupe, mezzo soprano Kathryn Bradbury, soprano Milica Ilic, tenor Glenn Lorimer, bass David Hibbard, and pianist Brendan Murtagh, the chance to combine their love of performance in a venue that appeals to people who might not ordinarily go to opera was a beguiling package.

"I had one big burly farmer say to me 'I don't normally go for all this stuff, but mate, you just converted me'. It's that kind of thing that really inspires me," says Edwards, who is doing the final negotiations on a permanent home somewhere underground in Brisbane.

► **The Underground Opera Company will perform The Cathedral Concert February 17 and The Grand Arch Valentine's Concert on February 18 at the Jenolan Caves.**

24 HOURS THE ARTS DIARY

LOVE ME

Still trying to figure out where to take your beloved for Valentine's Day? Why not join cabaret and rock star **Paul Capsis**, pictured, performance art meets burlesque champs the **Wau Wau Sisters**, operatic marvel **Le Gateau Chocolat**, **Queenie van de Zandt** of *Smoke and Mirrors*, and pop-cabaret star **Emma Dean** on what is billed as a "musical safari through the jungle of love". Whether you'll come out of it with new insights on the jungle of love is debatable, but at least you'll be thoroughly entertained during the trek.



► **Today, doors open 7 pm, The Standard, Level 3, 383 Bourke Street, Surry Hills, \$35, 1300 438 849.**

TALK

What makes us sexually attractive? Is it genes? Pheromones? A cool sports car? Are we mere slaves to our biology, which drives us to reproduce with the most compatible mate? **Dr Ian Johnston**, a senior psychology lecturer at the University of Sydney, will examine the neurobiology behind love and attraction in his talk, *The Science of Sex Appeal*, examining the chemical basis behind desire, the trigger centres for arousal in the brain, mating behaviours and modern theories behind sex appeal. After he gives his talk, the night turns from the theory to the practice as famous love letters from history are read aloud.

► **Today, 6-8pm, State Library Galleries, city, free but registrations essential at sl.nsw.gov.au.**

ART

It's not every opening night that promises contortionists, pole dancers, roaming Cupids and "muscled up" topless waiters serving drinks. Then again, **Bright-Side** (Katie Bright) is not your usual artist, dwelling in a world of fantasy, escapism, animation characters and real-life dramas. She is interested in how fairytales have skewed the vision of romance. Rather than being rescued by knights in shining armour, her heroines are carried away by muscular mousemen, and when her Alice looks through the looking glass, she's actually peering through the outline of the *Playboy* logo (pictured). Patrons can examine her screen prints on mirrors to the beat of live music by **Erskine Brown**, **Mr Bamboo** and **The Cope Street Parade**.



► **Today, 6pm-10pm, aMBUSH Gallery, 4A James Street, Waterloo, free, ambushgallery.com, until February 19.**

The Artist' in London