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## Innovative opera's adult side

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MERYL NAIDOO | January 18, 2012 12.01am

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**AUDIENCES attending MONA FOMA's commissioned opera this week are expected to be confronted with nudity and adult themes.**

The Barbarians, which is MONA FOMA's biggest commission, will be performed by Hobart's IHOS Theatre and Opera Company for five shows from tonight.

The piece is recommended for adults and older teens only and artistic director Constantine Koukias said the next instalment of the opera would be even more graphic.

"This is Part One for mature audiences, 15 and over," Koukias said yesterday. "We hope next year to begin work on the next part ... and it will be an 'R' rating because of some of the imagery I want to explore."

The opera borrows freely from Constantine Cavafy's 1904 poem Waiting for the Barbarians, which Koukias says still resonates today.

"It's that sense of otherness, of patriotism, of fear of others. In our political environment, it's poignant," he said.

Koukias said the poem was one of the most important works by Cavafy, who happened to be a favourite of festival curator Brian Ritchie.

"It's a hybrid, contemporary opera that blends movement, dance, spoken voice with singing, pre-recorded music with live music and a sound system that works all around the audience," Koukias said.

"It's a highly visual work."

Since its inception in 1990, IHOS has continued to push barriers with its confrontational and creative works.

The team began work on the piece a year ago for MONA.

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**PROVOCATIVE:** Dancer Christos Linou, left, and singer Grace Ovens. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE

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