



Youthful ambition . . . Marc Stagg, left, and Emily Cascarino with fellow hopefuls at an audition for *Carmen The Musical*.

Picture: JAGGED/STYD

Finding a voice

News

Lauren Zolezzi had a modest dream as a child — to become the world's first singing ballerina. As an 18-year-old, she still has ambition but it's now tinged with a sense of realism. "My dream now is to become an opera singer," says Zolezzi, who left school this year. "Obviously it's a really hard industry to succeed in. I'm determined to keep fighting, though."

Zolezzi and hundreds of other young hopefuls will tomorrow get a priceless, and nerve-wracking, opportunity to take the first steps on the path to a career as singers and dancers when they audition for roles in

Carmen The Musical, an adaptation of Bizet's opera.

Director Nigel Jamieson is looking for more than 100 performers aged 16 to 25 who can dance and sing, including one to fill the title role. The open auditions for *Carmen*, which is part of the Mid Summer Opera series, will see wannabes from Australia and New Zealand descending on NIDA's Parade Theatre in Kensington.

"Often, someone walks into the audition room and you think they haven't got the presence," Jamieson says. "Then they surprise you with some strong dance moves and there's a great sense of excitement."

The show, which will have four

performances at Sydney Theatre in Walsh Bay in January, could mark the unveiling of our next opera superstar. But plenty will be disappointed by late tomorrow when a short-list is drawn up.

"Everyone goes in with ambition," Zolezzi says. "When you don't get the part, it's disappointing but that setback helps you grow as a person."

☐ 215 Anzac Pde, Kensington. Auditionees can register between 9am and 11am tomorrow. Singers should bring musical backing on CD. Further details available at alexanderproductions.com.au

GARY SMITH