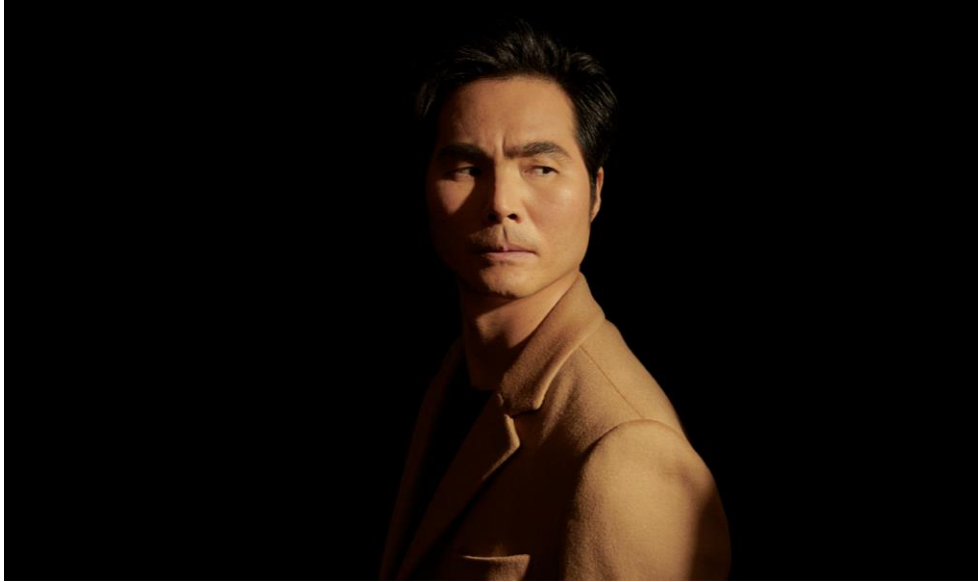


MEDIA RELEASE

7 June 2021

Verdi | Directed by Harry Kupfer | Conducted by Andrea Battistoni**Renowned singers Yonghoon Lee and Karah Son lead *Otello* in Sydney****July 16 - 29, 2021 | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House****Starring | Yonghoon Lee | Karah Son | Marco Vratogna**

This winter Opera Australia is presenting legendary German director Harry Kupfer's highly acclaimed production of *Otello*, one of Verdi's most magnificent works, with three internationally renowned singers leading a stellar cast.

Distilled from Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Otello* is an intense chamber-like piece that explores all the problems of the world, concentrated in the lives of the three main characters: Otello, Desdemona and Iago, three of Verdi's most demanding roles, both vocally and dramatically.

Internationally celebrated South Korean tenor Yonghoon Lee will, for the first time in his career, take on the titular role of war hero Otello. In his review of Lee's 2016 Met performance in Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Dr Neil Kurtzman labelled Lee's voice "exceptional" and "large" and predicted the role of Otello would be in his future, noting Lee has a "beautiful spinto voice that he uses with great skill and sensitivity; it's bright and rings"¹.

Having performed at prestigious opera houses all over the world, Lee debuted with Opera Australia in 2013 in the lead role of Cavaradossi in Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* and has since returned to Australia multiple times, most recently to play Don Jose in Georges Bizet's *Carmen* early last year (before it closed prematurely due to COVID 19).

The incomparable Karah Son, whose captivating performance made OA's *Madama Butterfly* a must-see in 2019, is expected to give a performance that is just as compelling in her long-awaited debut as Desdemona.

Fast becoming Australia's favourite villain, Italian baritone Marco Vratogna returns to Sydney with with a chilling portrayal of Iago alongside Virgilio Marino, Sian Sharp, Richard Anderson, John Longmuir, Andrew Moran and Christopher Hillier.

¹ [Yonghoon Lee in Cavalleria Rusticana at the Met](#), 2016/01/22, Medicine & Opera, Dr. N Kurtzman

Following his successful conducting of *Tosca* earlier this year, Andrea Battistoni, one of the world's most brilliant young conductors, returns to Sydney to lead the cast, Opera Australia Chorus and Opera Australia Orchestra through Verdi's glorious score.

Persuaded to come out of retirement after ten years, Verdi premiered *Otello* at La Scala in 1887 to an ecstatic audience that gave him 20 curtain calls. OA's production of this taut, vivid romantic tragedy will play at the Sydney Opera House this July.

Creatives

Conductor **Andrea Battistoni**
 Director **Harry Kupfer**
 Revival Director **Constantine Costi**
 Set Designer **Hans Schavernoch**
 Costume Designer **Yan Tax**
 Lighting Designer **Toby Sewell**
 Assistant Director **Tabatha McFadyen**

Cast

Otello **Yonghoon Lee**
 Desdemona **Karah Son**
 Iago **Marco Vratogna**
 Cassio **Virgilio Marino**
 Emilia **Sian Sharp**
 Lodovico **Richard Anderson**
 Roderigo **John Longmuir**
 Montano **Andrew Moran**
 Herald **Christopher Hillier**

Opera Australia Chorus
Opera Australia Orchestra

Opera Australia is committed to COVID Safe practices.

Please refer to the website for the Company's COVID Safe procedures:

<https://opera.org.au/covid-safety>

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Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm
 July 16, 20, 23, 26, 29

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes including one interval

Performed in Italian with English surtitles

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office
 (02) 9318 8200
www.opera.org.au/

Joan Sutherland Theatre
Sydney Opera House