

MEDIA RELEASE
14 September 2023

Smash-hit musical *West Side Story* returns to Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour in 2024



Opera Australia (OA) has announced that smash-hit musical *West Side Story* will return to the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour stage in 2024, along with renewed partnerships with Dr Haruhisa Handa’s International Foundation for Arts and Culture and Destination NSW.

This electrifying, larger-than-life production of *West Side Story* opened in 2019 to rapturous acclaim and remains the most successful of all Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour productions, having attracted record audience numbers, selling more than 65,000 tickets.

The monumental stage, vibrant costumes and a brilliant cast of singers and dancers will all return to Mrs Macquaries Point where unmatched views of Sydney’s famous skyline and a nightly fireworks display make Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour one of world’s most exciting theatrical experiences.

Directed by Francesca Zambello, *West Side Story* brings a slice of New York City to Sydney Harbour with iconic song and dance numbers, thrilling audiences for a limited four week season. Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s musical masterpiece will ring out across the Harbour and Jerome Robbins’ famed choreography will once again ignite the over-water stage.

OA CEO Fiona Allan welcomed the renewed commitment from the event’s long-standing partners.

“Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is one of the nation’s most spectacular cultural experiences and it is only with the ongoing support of our valuable partners, the International Foundation for Arts and Culture, the NSW Government through Destination NSW and our Principal Partner HSBC, that Opera Australia can continue to bring this exceptional event to life.

“*West Side Story* is a theatrical phenomenon, as is Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour. This combination has proved winning before and we highly anticipate that it will again,” said Ms Allan.

Since its inaugural season in 2012, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour has become a keenly anticipated and widely acclaimed mainstay of the city’s cultural calendar and is a testament to Dr Handa’s unwavering commitment to arts and culture in Australia.

“IFAC is very proud to continue this partnership with Opera Australia, bringing world class performances with the most iconic backdrop of Sydney Harbour to present an unforgettable experience that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world,” said Dr Handa.

“Our shared vision and commitment to excellence in the performing arts has been the driving force of this enduring and inspiring partnership that has brought transformative musical experiences to thousands of people,” continued Dr Handa.

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DR HARUHISA HANDA

The over water stage and pop-up dining venues are built on site each year offering a range of food and drink options. From fine dining amongst the treetops, to a more casual beverage and bite to eat in the Garden Bar, everyone in the audience can craft their own perfect night out. Combining world-class performances, harbour views and nightly fireworks, this is a quintessential Sydney event.

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is supported by the NSW Government, via its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and through the International Foundation for Arts and Culture as Naming Rights Partner, Dr Haruhisa Handa OA's Patron in Chief, and OA's Principal Partner HSBC.

Creatives

Director **Francesca Zambello**
 Set Designer **Brian Thomson AM**
 Costume Designer **Jennifer Irwin**
 Lighting Designer **John Rayment**

Performance dates

22 March – 21 April 2024
 Excluding Mondays and Good Friday on 29 March

Performed in English

Bookings

West Side Story on Sydney Harbour will be available as part of an Opera Australia subscription package from 28 September 2023.

Tickets will be available to the public from 5 October 2023.

For priority pre-sale access to tickets before they go on sale to the general public visit opera.org.au/harbour and join the waitlist.

Single adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)
 Group and concession prices available for most performances.
 Opera Australia Box Office
 +61 2 9318 8200
opera.org.au/harbour

WEST SIDE STORY

Based on a conception of JEROME ROBBINS

<u>Book by</u> ARTHUR LAURENTS	<u>Music by</u> LEONARD BERNSTEIN	<u>Lyrics by</u> STEPHEN SONDHEIM
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Entire Original Production Directed and Choreographed by
JEROME ROBBINS

Originally produced on Broadway by Robert E. Griffith and Harold S. Prince
By Arrangement with Roger L. Stevens

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