

MEDIA RELEASE

25 November 2025

Opera Australia's 70th anniversary celebrations begin with iconic production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*



Opera Australia's 70th anniversary season will open with the welcome return of former OA Artistic Director Moffatt Oxenbould's beloved production of Puccini's beautifully tragic *Madama Butterfly*, one of the most iconic in OA's repertoire.

A "beautiful and moving experience" (Sydney Morning Herald), Oxenbould's award-winning production creates a serene, stunning backdrop that immerses the audience into Cio Cio San's world that quickly transitions from love to heartbreak. Tiny candles glimmer among floating flowers in an onstage moat. Contrasting lighting schemes reflect the journey of the opera and the characters are dressed in sumptuous costumes inspired by traditional Japanese dress.

Newly appointed OA Music Director, internationally celebrated conductor Maestro Andrea Battistoni will lead the OA Orchestra through Puccini's yearning score before handing over the baton to German Japanese conductor, Erina Yashima - who returns to Australia after conducting *La Bohème* - and OA's Chorus Master Paul Fitzsimons for the remainder of the season.

A stellar cast of international and Australian singers will bring their vocal prowess and acting skills to roles that bare every emotion on the stage. Four emerging international stars make their Australian debuts: Guanqun Yu (a role debut) and Vittoria Yeo share the role of Cio Cio San along with Australian Olivia Cranwell who most recently shined as Mimi in OA's production of *La Bohème*. Young American tenor Robert Watson, together with La Scala-trained, Italian tenor Oreste Cosimo sing the role of Pinkerton.

Madama Butterfly transports the audience to Nagasaki, Japan, to tell the story of Cio-Cio San, a young woman who falls in love and marries Pinkerton, a US Navy lieutenant. In doing so, she gives up her family and life as she knows it only to be brutally betrayed by Pinkerton, which leads to her ultimate demise.

The emotional turmoil of the opera is evocatively portrayed through the passionate score that ranges from soaring arias like Cio Cio San's iconic *Un bel di* (One Fine Day) to moments of exquisite stillness with *The Humming Chorus*.

Despite a disastrous opening night at La Scala in 1904, the opera was revised by Puccini four times and *Madama Butterfly* is now one of the most-loved and most-performed operas in the canon. Between the music and the poignant staging of this production, it is an all-consuming performance that will not be quickly forgotten.

3 January – 25 March | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House

PATRON-IN-CHIEF
DR HARUHISA HANDA

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Creatives

Conductor **Andrea Battistoni** (3-24 Jan, 7-14 Mar)

Paul Fitzsimon (29 Jan – 4 Feb, 18-25 Mar)

Erina Yashima (7 Feb – 3 Mar)

Director **Moffatt Oxenbould AM**

Movement & Revival Director **Matthew Barclay**

Set & Costume Designers **Russell Cohen, Peter England**

Lighting Designer **Robert Bryan**

Cast

Cio-Cio San **Guangun Yu** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Vittoria Yeo (7 Feb – 7 Mar)

Olivia Cranwell (11 – 25 Mar)

Suzuki **Sian Sharp** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Angela Hogan (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Pinkerton **Robert Watson** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Oreste Cosimo (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Sharpless **Samuel Dundas** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Luke Gabbedy (7 Feb – 7 Mar)

Warwick Fyfe (11 – 25 Mar)

Goro **Virgilio Marino** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Michael Petruccelli (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Bonze **David Parkin** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Gennadi Dubinsky (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Kate Pinkerton **Jane Ede** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Chelsea Burns (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Yamadori **Leon Vitogiannis** (3 Jan – 4 Feb)

Alexander Hargreaves (7 Feb – 25 Mar)

Registrar **Na Ra Lee** (3 Jan – 25 Mar)

Opera Australia Chorus

Opera Australia Orchestra

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Performance information

Evenings at 7:30pm

Jan 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, 16, 22, 24, 29

Feb 4, 11, 14, 20, 25

Mar 3, 11, 14, 18, 20, 25

Matinees at 12:30pm

Jan 31

Feb 7

Mar 7

Matinees at 2:00pm

Mar 1

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes including one interval.

Performed in Italian with English surtitles

This production contains adult themes.

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**