

MEDIA RELEASE

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Opera Australia wraps another hugely successful season of their Sydney Harbour spectacular



Turandot closes on a high note 90 years after its debut

Turandot is a spectacular tour-de-force that should not be missed. From the first notes to the last, the show carries you on a wave of auditory and visual excitement and never fails to impress with its subtle yet sophisticated stage and lighting design.

Australian Stage

Opera Australia's magnificent production of *Turandot* for the 2016 Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour season came to a close on Sunday night, almost 90 years to the day since it debuted in Milan in 1926.

In director Chen Shi-Zheng's masterful hands, *Turandot* attracted critical and public acclaim across the board. For the incredible stage design and costumes, the stunning performances above and below the stage, the spine-tingling rendition of THAT aria, and of course the breath-taking setting on Sydney Harbour. *Turandot* managed to cast a spell over the city through its four-week run in near perfect weather conditions.

More than 51,000 people attended *Turandot*, the fifth production in the Handa series, which resulted in the second highest box office takings after the blockbuster *Aida* in 2015.

Opera Australia's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini has watched 'his baby' evolve into a much-loved and highly anticipated event that is growing in stature every year in Australia and around the world, becoming a 'must-see' on Sydney's cultural calendar.

"Watching this production come to life has certainly been an exciting time. To see all the elements come together so beautifully this year and to see how much joy it brings to the audiences, it's been incredibly satisfying.

"I must congratulate director Chen Shi-Zheng and designer Dan Potra for bringing Puccini's final opera to our Sydney Harbour stage in such incredible fashion. And huge thanks to all those who helped make it a reality, from our production team to the wardrobe department and everyone in between.

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“And to all our amazing talent, conductor Brian Castles-Onion and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, the singers, dancers and actors from Australia and around the world, heartfelt thanks for all your efforts. A lot of heart and soul goes into every single performance, that’s what makes them so memorable,” he said.

Dr Haruhisa Handa’s International Foundation for Arts and Culture (IFAC) has supported Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour since 2012 and continues its commitment through to 2017.

“Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is an incredible achievement and continues to exceed expectations by bringing Opera to tens of thousands of new audiences. As Principal Partner of the event for the fifth consecutive year, the International Foundation for Arts and Culture (IFAC) is delighted to see proof of our belief that art and music are extremely powerful tools for good,” said Dr Handa.

NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres said, “I congratulate Opera Australia on another exceptional season of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour. This year’s incredible production of *Turandot*, set amongst the spectacular backdrop of Sydney Harbour and its surrounding icons, has once again shown why this event is considered one of the world’s greatest outdoor operas. The NSW Government is proud to have helped establish this remarkable event through a strategic partnership with our tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and we look forward to welcoming its return in 2017.”

After the enormous success of *Aida*’s cinema release last year, recognised as the highest grossing non-live opera release and the highest grossing *Aida* release in the UK history, *Turandot* was also filmed for TV, Cinema and DVD. It will be released in cinemas nationally in August with a worldwide release scheduled in September (details www.cinemalive.com).

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