

**Media Release**

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## Opera Australia announces cancellation of Melbourne Autumn Season

Opera Australia has today announced that their 2020 Melbourne Autumn Season at Arts Centre Melbourne due to run 6 – 30 May, their only scheduled performances of Grand Opera in the southern capital this year, will regrettably not go ahead.

The program included the Melbourne premiere of Graeme Murphy's eagerly awaited production of *Madama Butterfly*, the first of Opera Australia's fully digital productions to be performed at Arts Centre Melbourne, along with Wagner's classic *Lohengrin* and the Verdi spectacular *Attila* that opened in Sydney last week to rave reviews before being cancelled after just two performances.

Opera Australia CEO Rory Jeffes said this was a further disappointment on top of the cancellations of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour and the Summer Season announced earlier this week.

"Our first thoughts are for our staff, our performers, the technical crews, creatives, workmen and women and the administrative teams that work tirelessly to bring all our productions to the stage. Their ongoing well-being, their mental, physical and financial health is paramount.

"We are moving quickly, working hard and collaboratively with our partners to ensure there is some level of continuity through these unprecedented times. By making the decision now not to proceed with the Melbourne Autumn Season, rather than having to do so later, we are able to avoid out-laying considerable touring costs that would otherwise not be able to be recovered."

"While this will be incredibly disappointing to our opera fans in Victoria, who have been relishing our arrival for the season, we trust that they will understand the position we are in – together with so many other presenting organisations."

"I'd also like to reiterate our earlier request that patrons holding tickets for any of our shows that have cancelled to consider, where possible donating the value of the ticket back to the company or exchanging for a voucher for a future performance to help us navigate the uncharted economic waters that lie ahead," he said.

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