

MEDIA RELEASE

# OA welcomes the 2020's and looks back at highlights of the last decade

As the new decade dawns, Opera Australia looks back on the highlights of the twenty-teens. From new productions to reaching new milestones in the company's long and celebrated history, here's a list of achievements that Opera Australia is most proud of.

## 1. OVER 4.2 MILLION TICKETS SOLD

Over the last decade, Opera Australia has welcomed over **4.2 million people** to its productions. As the third busiest opera company in the world, OA is the only one to **generate more than 50% of its revenue through ticket sales**. OA firmly believes that opera is for everyone, ensuring that it presents a diverse range of shows for audiences including perennial favourites and brand new productions across comedy, romance, drama and tragedy.



## 2. HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR

Perhaps one of the boldest ventures in the last decade, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour has become a 'must-see' on Sydney's cultural calendar. The inaugural show in 2012 marked the beginning of an annual event that has since **welcomed over 400,000 guests**. Beloved by locals and tourists, the experience features unbeatable views of the Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

Productions including *Carmen*, *La Bohème* and *Aida* have all featured on the waterfront stage, and in 2019, *West Side Story* broke box office records. The very first production, *La Traviata*, will return in 2020 with its towering **9 metre-high chandelier**.



## 3. FIRST FULLY DIGITAL PRODUCTION

In 2018, Opera Australia presented *Aida*, the first ever entirely digital production. Impressive Egyptian landscapes were created using twelve **7-metre high suspended LED screens, each weighing 650kg**. The technology was new to the Sydney Opera House and new to Opera Australia - staging this production took dedication from the enormously talented backstage crew, who are at the heart of every production OA presents. OA delivered a world-first fully digital season in 2019 with new productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Anna Bolena* and the world premiere of *Whiteley*. It marked the company's ongoing commitment to engaging new audiences in the modern era.

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## 4. MAGICAL MUSICALS

As the leading national arts company, Opera Australia expanded its remit over the last decade to include presenting the best musical productions to its audiences. In 2012 *South Pacific* opened at the Sydney Opera House to critical acclaim, with the *Sun Herald* giving it "10/10 The best musical of the year."



The musical program has continued to grow from strength to strength, with 2016's *My Fair Lady* breaking the Opera House box office with **over 112,000 tickets sold**. Musicals have proved a great financial success for the Company and allowed OA to take greater risks on lesser-known operas.

## 5. 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Opera Australia celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. For Australia's largest arts company, it marked six decades of bringing opera to audiences across the nation.

In the last ten years alone, Opera Australia has staged an incredible total of **6,463 performances**. It's National Tour has travelled over **150,000kms** to **115 locations** in all states and territories. It has also performed in **1,973 primary schools** across NSW and VIC.

The anniversary was marked with 60 performers in 60 costumes from the repertoire raising a glass of champagne on the steps of the Sydney Opera House.



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