

Welsh National Opera to Perform *Madam Butterfly* and *La bohème* at Dubai Opera in March 2017

Dubai UAE, 7 November: Dubai Opera is proud to host the renowned Welsh National Opera (WNO) for the first time at the stunning venue in March next year (2017).

Performing two of the world's most beloved Giacomo Puccini operas; *Madam Butterfly* from 2nd – 4th March followed by *La bohème* from 9th – 11th March, tickets will go on sale for all performances on 9 November at 9am. We are delighted that these performances are part of UK/UAE 2017, a year of Creative Collaboration led by the British Council, who are also supporting a programme of learning activities with Welsh National Opera. This will involve WNO working with schools and colleges across Dubai, where young people will have the chance to take part in workshops and masterclasses with WNO singers and orchestral players and will get to see behind the scenes of an opera company at open rehearsals. WNO will also be offering 'Come and Sing' workshops where anyone who enjoys singing can get involved, and a special Access All Arias – a pop-up opera event taking place in public spaces.

One of Italy's greatest composers, Puccini's work often includes a tale of love and tragedy and both operas are no exception. *La bohème* is based on the book written by Henri Murger called *La Vie de bohème* and is set in Paris in the 1830s where a young poet; Rodolfo, falls in love with a seamstress, Mimi, and *Madam Butterfly* is possibly one of the saddest tales of unrequited love ever to grace the stage. Centred around Cio Cio San, a young Japanese girl who falls in love with a careless American naval officer, Pinkerton, the opera is set in Japan and based on a short story (of the same name) by John Luther Long. Both operas are a beautiful, poignant reminder of the fragile nature of the human heart and love.

This year, WNO celebrates its 70th anniversary and with an operatic pedigree which includes performing 145 different operas in 391 different productions and their first performance at Dubai Opera promises to be a must-see event for all music and culture lovers from across the GCC and beyond.

WNO Artistic Director David Pountney says: "It is an enormous privilege for Welsh National Opera to take part in the inaugural season of the magnificent Dubai Opera. We carry the passionate and emotional musicianship of Wales around the world, and it is a special honour to be entrusted with bringing the wonderful qualities of Puccini's sublime operas to a new audience in the Gulf. We look forward to working with young and old in Dubai to convey the special transformative power of music and theatre."

Jasper Hope, Dubai Opera Chief Executive says: "Madam Butterfly and *La bohème* offer audiences everything that is magical about great opera productions. Their stories of love and loss are brought to life with some of the greatest arias ever written and the result is going to be two exquisite Puccini masterpieces to treat audiences in Dubai."

For full details of both shows performed by WNO at Dubai Opera please visit: www.dubaiopera.com
Tickets will be available from 9 November at www.dubaiopera.com

For further information, please contact:

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About Dubai Opera:

Dubai Opera is a truly unique venue and the city's first purpose built multi-format performing arts theatre, situated in the heart of Downtown Dubai. With an iconic dhow shaped design rooted in Emirati heritage, Dubai Opera offers the ultimate flexibility of a proscenium arch theatre, an acoustic concert hall and a 2000m² flat floor event space, and is the definitive destination for quality entertainment productions and performances. Dubai Opera's stage will host an incredible array of world-class talent, with opera, ballet and classical music concerts and productions at the core, Dubai Opera will also stage musical theatre, fashion shows, jazz, comedy, family shows and a full range of live entertainment.

About Welsh National Opera

Welsh National Opera is the national opera company for Wales and transforms lives through the power of opera. WNO is funded by the Arts Councils of Wales and England to provide large scale opera across Wales and to major cities in the English regions. WNO is passionate about opera and want to share this passion with as many people as possible. Award winning performances of fully staged operas combine a sense of adventure with the highest possible quality. Beyond the theatre WNO connects with people through youth and community work and digital projects.

Welsh National Opera's Patron is His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

For more information on Welsh National Opera, photos and interviews please contact Rachel Bowyer / Penny James, Press and Public Affairs Manager (job-share) at rachel.bowyer@wno.org.uk / penny.james@wno.org.uk