PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, September 10, 2026

Washington National Opera Begins Fall Residency at DAR Constitution Hall:
Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Nov. 7, 13, 15, 18, 20
John Adams' *Nixon in China*, Nov. 14, 19, 21
We the People special concert, Nov. 22

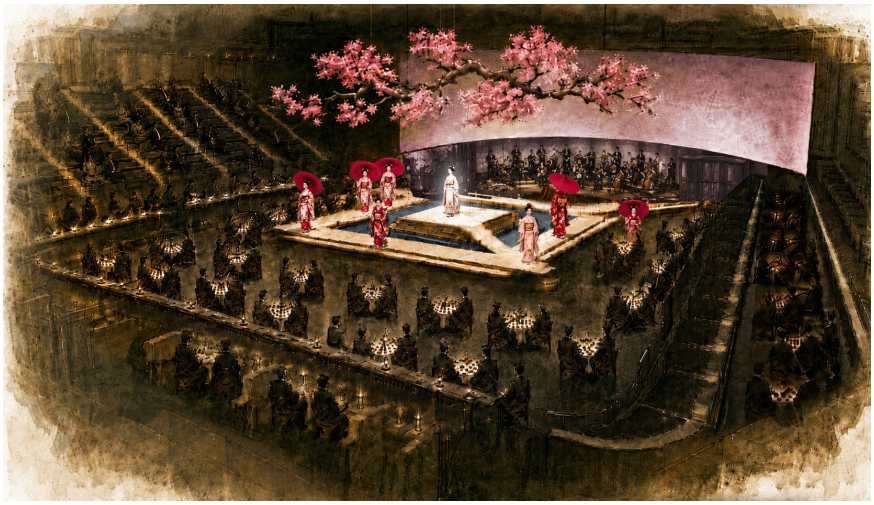
WNO announces new cast members, including internationally renowned ***tenor Jonathan Tetelman*** *performing in We the People*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Washington National Opera (WNO), led by General Director **Timothy O'Leary,** Artistic Director **Francesca Zambello**, and Music Director **Robert Spano**, opens its groundbreaking 2026-2027 season with a three-production residency at **Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Hall**. WNO has transformed this historic venue by decking the main seating area and added a three-quarter surround thrust stage, encircled with café-style seating. The resulting novel performance space is called WNO's **Revolutionary Stage**. This marks WNO's first full season as an independent company, following its departure from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in January 2026. ***Single tickets are on sale beginning Thursday, Sept. 10 at https://washnatopera.org/tickets.***

Appearing on the Revolutionary Stage is a new production of Puccini's ***Madama Butterfly (Nov. 7, 13, 15 18, 20)***, and the company premiere of John Adams's ***Nixon in China (Nov. 14, 19, 21)*** in celebration of the composer's 80th birthday, and a special concert, ***We the People (Nov. 22)***, highlighting music from across the operatic canon, featuring Renée Fleming, Thomas Hampson, and the season's Marian Anderson Award recipient Amber Monroe, conducted by Robert Spano. WNO also announces the addition of star tenor **Jonathan Tetelman** to the program. One of opera's most sought-after tenors, Tetelman has electrified audiences on the world's leading stages, including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Vienna State Opera, and Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Madama Butterfly

A fully staged new production of Puccini's **Madama Butterfly** (November 7, 13, 15, 18, and 20, 2026) tells one of opera's most tragic and beautiful love stories in a setting evocative of Japan by **Walt Spangler**, with period costumes by **Florence Klotz**. American naval officer Pinkerton marries the young geisha Cio-Cio-San, known as Butterfly. Innocent and deeply devoted, she ignores warnings about his intentions—until betrayal leaves her facing heartbreak and disgrace, propelling her toward one of opera's most unforgettable finales. This striking production is directed by **E. Loren Meeker** with choreography by Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company member **Kanji Segawa**. Korean soprano **Karah Son** makes her company debut in the title role—a role she has performed with nearly every major opera company in the world. She is joined by rising star tenor **Matthew White** as Pinkerton—a role he performed to acclaim with Opéra de Montréal. Cafritz Young Artist alumna and Grand Finals Winner of the 2025 Metropolitan Opera competition **Michelle Mariposa** performs as Suzuki. Grammy Award-winning baritone and Marian Anderson Laureate **Will Liverman** makes his role debut as Sharpless. Japanese-German conductor **Erina Yashima**—who has led orchestras around the world—conducts.



"Revolutionary Stage" design by Walt Spangler

Nixon in China

Nixon in China (November 14, 19 and 21, 2026), WNO's first opera by prolific American composer **John Adams**, with librettist **Alice Goodman**, is conducted by **Robert Spano**, a longtime collaborator of Adams. The composer celebrates his 80th birthday this year. This thought-provoking work revisits the 1972 meeting of Nixon, Kissinger, and Mao—blending political spectacle with intimate human reflection and culminating in the haunting question: "How much of what we did was good?" Directed by **Elkhanah Pulitzer**, the reimagined production incorporates rare archival film footage by **Bill Morrison** with scenic designs by **Alexander V. Nichols**. The cast is led by two of America's most celebrated artists, **Renée Fleming** as Pat Nixon and **Thomas Hampson** as Richard Nixon—in their return to WNO. The cast is rounded out by a string of WNO debutants including: **Kathleen Kim** as Madame Mao, **John Matthew Myers** as Mao Tse-tung, **Joo Won Kang** as Chou En-Lai, and **Robert Pomakov** as Henry Kissinger. The production, which features the iconic Chairman Mao dances, is choreographed by **Jessica Lang**, who has created more than 100 original works for companies worldwide including American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Special Concert: We the People

The third event on the "Revolutionary Stage" is a special concert, ***We the People*** (November 22, 2026), conducted by **Robert Spano**. The event promises a celebration of American ideals, exploring themes of liberty, independence, and creative freedom through a rich program of works by Beethoven, Verdi, and contemporary composers. The operatic journey across centuries explores how opera has given voice to moments of transformation, political upheaval, and the enduring human desire for freedom. The concert features an exceptional lineup of artists, including **Renée Fleming**, **Thomas Hampson, Jonathan Tetelman**, and this year's Washington National Opera Marian Anderson Award recipient and former Cafritz Young Artist **Amber Monroe**, performing with WNO Orchestra and singers from Cafritz Young Artists Program.

About Washington National Opera

(WNO) is one of the world's leading opera companies. Led by General Director Timothy O'Leary, Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, and Music Director Robert Spano, WNO presents a wide-ranging repertory spanning beloved classics, contemporary works, and newly commissioned operas, collaborating with many of opera's greatest luminaries, including Christine Goerke, Denyce Graves, Renée Fleming, J'Nai Bridges, and Ryan McKinny. Founded in 1956, WNO celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2026, a year that also marks its return to operating as a fully independent company. Recent seasons have featured acclaimed productions of *Aida, The Marriage of Figaro*, and a landmark *Turandot* with a newly commissioned ending by Christopher Tin and Susan Soon He Stanton. WNO's legacy includes Zambello's internationally celebrated Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle, the D.C. premiere of Jeanine Tesori's *Blue* and *Grounded*—a WNO co-commission—and the world premiere of Philip Glass' revised *Appomattox*.

WNO is also internationally recognized for its education and community engagement initiatives, including the American Opera Initiative, the Cafritz Young Artist Program, the WNO Opera Institute, and Opera in the Outfield, which advance its mission to make opera vital, accessible, and artistically ambitious in the nation's capital. Beyond the main stage, WNO artists bring opera into the community through initiatives such as workshops with incarcerated youth at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center, educational programs at the Library of Congress exploring themes from the season's repertory, and performances and musical events in venues throughout the Washington region.

Sincere thanks to the following Season Sponsors:

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Jacqueline Badger Mars
Dallas Morse Coors

Media Contact: press@washnatopera.org

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COMPLETE EVENT DETAILS

Madama Butterfly

Giacomo Puccini, composer / Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, librettists
Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall – 1776 D Street NW, Washington D.C., 20006

Saturday, November 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Friday, November 13, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, November 15, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 18, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Friday, November 20, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Cast:

Karah Son	Cio-Cio-San
Mathew White	Pinkerton
Will Liverman/Thando Mamba	Sharpless
Michelle Mariposa	Suzuki
Rodell Rosel	Goro
Lauren Carroll	Kate Pinkerton
Chandler Benn	Yamadori/Registrar
Atticus Rego	Bonze
Robert Frazier	Imperial Commissioner

Creatives:

Erina Yashima	Conductor
E. Loren Meeker	Director
Kanji Segawa	Choreographer
Walt Spangler	Set Designer
Florence Klotz	Original Costume Designer
Timm Burrow	New Costumes Designer
Duane Schuler	Lighting Designer
Alexander V. Nichols	Projections Designer
Andrew Harper	Sound Designer

In gratitude for an exceptional, substantial, and transformative contribution from the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation, Washington National Opera dedicates this production of *Madama Butterfly* to the foundation's benefactor, Dallas Morse Coors, in recognition of his philanthropic legacy and passion for the classical cannon.

Major Support for WNO's production of *Madama Butterfly* is generously provided by Betsy and Ed Cohen and The Dr. M. Lee Pearce Foundation, Inc.

Scenery and properties built by San Francisco Opera Scene Shop, Legacy Scenic Studios, and Cobalt Studio.

Costumes are owned by and on generous loan from the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Nixon in China
John Adams, composer / Alice Goodman, librettist
Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall – 1776 D Street NW, Washington D.C., 20006

Saturday, November 14, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 19, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Cast:

Thomas Hampson	Richard Nixon
Renée Fleming	Pat Nixon
Kathleen Kim	Madame Mao
John Matthew Myers	Mao Tse-tung
Joo Won Kang	Chou En-Lai
Robert Pomakov	Henry Kissinger
Veronica Siebert	1st Secretary
Anna Maria Vacca	2nd Secretary
Cecelia McKinley	3rd Secretary

Creatives:

Elkhanah Pulitzer	Director
Robert Spano	Conductor
Jessica Lang	Choreographer
Alexander V. Nichols	Scenic Designer
Elisabeth Scott	Costume Designer
Duane Schuler	Lighting Designer
Bill Morrison	Projection Designer
Mark Grey	Sound Designer

WNO's production of *Nixon and China* is generously supported by Robert L. Turner and Peter N. Speliopoulos.

Thomas Hampson and Renée Fleming are generously sponsored by Noémi Neidorff.

We the People
Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall – 1776 D Street NW, Washington D.C., 20006

Sunday, November 22, 2026 at 4 p.m.

Renée Fleming, soprano
Amber Monroe, soprano
Jonathan Tetelman, tenor
Thomas Hampson, baritone
Robert Spano, conductor
Washington National Opera Orchestra
Singers from Cafritz Young Artists Program