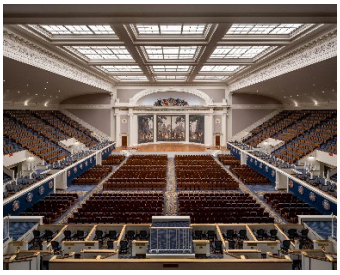
PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, November 4, 2026

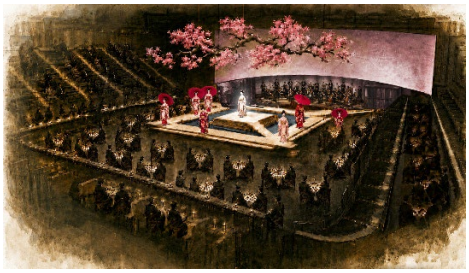
A New Stage for a New Era:
WNO Opens First Independent Season with *Madama Butterfly*, Nov. 7-20, Performed on Transformed "Revolutionary Stage" at DAR Constitution Hall

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Washington National Opera (WNO) opens its first season of independence in a completely transformed DAR Constitution Hall with **Puccini's *Madama Butterfly***, Nov. 7, 13, 15, 18 and 20. ***Tickets are available at https://washnatopera.org/tickets.***

WNO transformed DAR Constitution Hall into its novel Revolutionary Stage:



DAR Constitution Hall



Walt Spangler's Scenic Design



*WNO Revolutionary Stage: Madama Butterfly rehearsal**

These photos offer a small glimpse of the new stage; WNO will share professional quality photos of our dress rehearsal by Nov. 6. For a timelapse video of the transformation, CLICK HERE.

"This is a monumental moment of reinvention for our company," says WNO Artistic Director **Francesca Zambello**. "We have been incredibly thoughtful about building a stage that delights and surprises. Our whole company has walked through fire together—first navigating the demands of the new leadership in our former home and now building a company from scratch. I wanted to bring everything out of the background and into view. Our Orchestra is featured onstage rather than in the pit, and our sound engineers are visible, too. There is a real artistry to balancing the human voice with a full orchestra, and every space presents different acoustical challenges. By putting it all on display, audiences get a glimpse of what truly goes into the massive undertaking of producing an opera. I believe we're not just reimagining what's possible for WNO; we're helping shape the future of opera for a new generation. Grand opera offers spectacle, but sometimes at the expense of that intimacy. I saw our move to DAR as an opportunity to bring those two experiences together. You get the scale and spectacle of grand opera on a three-quarter thrust stage, with the action so close that the spectacle is practically in your lap."

"This moment is a true arrival," says WNO General Director **Timothy O'Leary**. "What a testament to the enterprising, resilient spirit of Francesca, our artists, staff, and such an amazing global network of supporters who stood with us to usher us into this new stage."

The 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.

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
Sung in Italian with Projected English Titles. Runtime is 2 hours and 40 minutes including a 25-minute intermission.

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.

Erina Yashima is generously sponsored by the Julian Family Foundation.