PRESS RELEASE (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

**Opera Hong Kong presents**

***Madama Butterfly* Semi-Staged Opera in Two Acts**

**Free gift of Paper Fan**

**8:00pm, 16-17 August 2016**

**Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall**

(13 July 2016), Hong Kong) *Madama Butterfly* is known as Puccini’s most melodious opera, exemplifying a perfect amalgam of eastern culture and traditional western opera. Opera Hong Kong will present this poignantly beautiful opera on 16-17 August at Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall at 8pm. Devised by award-winning Italian director Pamela Recinella, the brand new production will present all the characters in costume and with props, and the cast will interact while performing in front of the orchestra. In addition to an enhanced concert experience by this semi-staged production, the audience will also be treated to an exquisite pair of a Japanese fan for every purchase of any two tickets of the top three prices.

Riding on the great success of *Cosi fan tutte* last year, Opera Hong Kong continues to delight audience with this creative semi-staged production of the enduring tale of unrequited love *– Madama Butterfly*. At the beginning of the 20th century in Nagasaki, a pleasure-seeking American naval lieutenant (Pinkerton) marries a young geisha (Cio-cio-san/ Butterfly). Against all odds, she is totally committed to the marriage and soon gives birth to a son. But the husband sails back to the US, only returning years later with his new American wife to claim his son. Devastated, Butterfly makes an excruciating decision to end her life.

Conceived as a good format to express reading of the piece, Recinella’s semi-staged production will focus on the crucial dramatic moments and particularly on acting. The entire stage will be used to portray Nagasaki and Butterly’s house in the down stage, with costume referencing the first decade of the 20th century. The opera concentrates on Butterfly’s feelings, her psychological conflict and brings out the modern dilemma of many women today.

Cherished as Puccini’s favourite opera, his haunting music expresses the heartbreak of an innocent young woman who commits herself to a man unworthy of her loyalty. The opera is sophistically shaped to focus on the psychological drama which begins with an idyllic love meeting but ends in a heart-wrenching tragedy, creating incomparable melodies such as the romantic love duet *Viene la sera...Bimba dagli occhi... Vogliatemi bene* (Night is falling…Sweetheart, with blue eyes…Love me, please) on their wedding night; Butterfly’s *Un bel di* (One fine day) depicting how Pinkerton would return to reunite with her; the well-known wordless tune *Coro a bocca* chiusa (Humming Chorus) that describes Butterfly’s long wait for Pinkerton’s return; and his *Addio, fiorito asil* (Farewell, flowery refuge) as he flees in shame and cannot face Butterfly, to name a few of the best-loved.

Much sought-after American tenor Adam Diegel (Pinkerton) is a frequent guest of the Metropolitan Opera. He was praised by *Opera News* in the performance of *Tosca* at Glimmerglass Opera as ‘impulsive, shaggily handsome Cavaradossi… and built “E lucevan le stele” masterfully from hushed intimacy to an unfettered cri de coeur’. Nancy Yuen, a top graduate from the Royal Academy of Music, has made Cio-cio-san in *Madama Butterfly* her signature role, winning great critical acclaim since her debut with the Welsh National Opera. She has since repeated the role with opera house all over the world. Winner of the Second Prize, the Best Soprano prize in memory of “Dame Joan Sutherland” and the Audience prize in the 18th International Singing Competition “Ferruccio Tagliavini” 2012, Louise Kwong (Cio-cio-san) is also a much sought-after diva in Hong Kong. She was recently presented the Award for Young Artist (Music) by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Award winning baritone Corey McKern was recently praised as having ‘all the goods to rise to star stature – timing, stamina, vocal heft and an easy-going stage presence’. He has been a regular guest in Santa Fe Opera, Nashville Opera, Opera Birmingham, Opera Omaha and many others.

Semi-Staged Opera *Madama Butterfly* will be held on 16-17 August 2016 (Tue, Wed) at 8:00pm in the Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall. This production is sponsored by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets are now available for booking online at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk) at $350, $250, $150 and $80. Limited half-price tickets are available for senior citizens aged 60 or above, persons with disabilities and their carers, full-time students and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients on a first-come-first-served basis.

\* Each purchase of any 2 tickets at $350, $250 or $150 is entitled to have a pair of exquisite paper fans. Please register at [www.operahongkong](http://www.operahongkong).org on or before 30 July.

**Madama Butterfly semi-staged opera**

Producer [Warren Mok](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/Warren.pdf)

Conductor [Tsung Yeh](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/TsungYeh.pdf)

Director [Pamela Recinella](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/P.Recinella.pdf)

**Cast**

Cio-Cio san [Nancy Yuen](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/NancyY.pdf) (16 Aug)

[Louise Kwong](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/LouiseK.pdf) (17 Aug)

Pinkerton [Adam Diegel](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/A.Diegel.pdf)

Sharpless [Corey McKern](http://www.operahongkong.org/bio/McKern.pdf)

Fujian Symphony Orchestra

Opera Hong Kong Chorus

* End -

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Opera Hong Kong: [www.operahongkong.org](http://www.operahongkong.org)

**About Opera Hong Kong**

Opera Hong Kong is the first opera company to have been established in Hong Kong. The company was formed in July 2003 as a non-profit organization. Since its inception, Opera Hong Kong has become a firmly established part of Hong Kong’s cultural scene.

Since our establishment, Opera Hong Kong has gone from strength to strength under the artistic direction of Warren Mok, MH, the internationally acclaimed Hong Kong tenor, with grand-scale productions of operas including *La Traviata, Turandot, Carmen, The Marriage of Figaro, Roméo et Juliette, Aïda, Werther, Don Carlo, The Magic Flute, Poet Li Bai, Manon, La Bohème, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, The Tales of Hoffmann* and *The Flying Dutchman*. Apart from operas, the company has also presented the musical *Jinsha*, as well as concerts, including *Samson and Delilah*, the *Yellow River Cantata and Opera Highlights*, *Mozart Requiem and Favourite Arias,* Liao Changyong Recital, Denyce Graves Recital, *Opera Gala Concert, Musical Gala Concert*, Verdi’s Messa da Requiem, *Ode to Beethoven,* Gong Dongjian Recital and *Celebrity Fundraising Concert*; and *Operas and Musicals for Families* as part of the education and outreach programme. Opera school tours, summer schools and master classes are held regularly to reach the young population. Opera Hong Kong Chorus and Opera Hong Kong Children Chorus were established in 2004 and 2008 respectively and are becoming recognized forces in the local choral scene.

**Honourary Patron of Opera Hong Kong: K. Wah International Holdings Ltd**

Opera Hong Kong is grateful to K. Wah International Holdings Limited (KWIH) for being the Honourary Patron since 2013. Through staging the grand opera productions and organizing educational and outreach programmes including opera tours to schools, opera concerts at tertiary institutions, vocal arts scholarships, summer school and Children Chorus, KWIH helps promote the appreciation of opera to a wider community especially the young generation.

As a longstanding advocate of art and culture in Hong Kong, KWIH actively sponsors various performing arts and educational projects to promote the popularity and diversity of Hong Kong’s art scene and create a favourable environment for the budding talents.

**Artistic Development Patron of Opera Hong Kong: Prince Jewellery & Watch Company**

Opera Hong Kong would like to thank Prince Jewellery & Watch Company, who was Opera Hong Kong’s Principal Patron from 2010 to 2013, and who has become its Artistic Development Patron since 2014. Prince Jewellery & Watch Company has been devotedly supporting art and cultural development. Facilitated by its sponsorship, Opera Hong Kong brings world-class operas performed by internationally renowned singers to the Hong Kong audience. Prince Jewellery & Watch Company also provides learning and performance opportunities for local artists through the sponsorship.