**Executive Director** Carolyn Chard AM  
**Artistic Director** Chris van Tuinen

**West Australian Opera presents**

**OTELLO**

20 – 29 July 2023  
His Majesty’s Theatre

This production of Otello is presented by arrangement with Opera Australia.

**Composer** Giuseppe Verdi

**Librettist** Arrigo Boito

**Conductor** Christopher van Tuinen

**Original Director** Harry Kupfer

**Revival Director** Miranda Summers

**Set Designer** Hans Schavernoch

**Costume Designer** Yan Tax

**Lighting Designer** Toby Sewell

**Otello** Paul O'Neill

**Desdemona** Naomi Johns

**Iago** José Carbó

**Emilia** Ashlyn Tymms

**Cassio** Nicholas Jones  
**Roderigo** Matthew Reardon  
**Lodovico** Mark Alderson  
**Montano** Brett Peart  
**A Herald** Lachlan Higgins

**WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHORUS   
WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Act I**

Cyprus. A storm batters the Venetian fleet, but Otello, a Venetian general and governor of Cyprus, lands his ship safely in the port. He announces victory over the attacking fleet. Otello’s ensign Iago tells Roderigo that Desdemona, Otello’s new wife, will soon tire of her husband. He reveals his hatred for Otello, who promoted Cassio and passed Iago over. Iago provokes Roderigo to get into a fight with Cassio. Otello appears from the castle to restore order, furious about his soldiers’ behaviour. He takes away Cassio’s recent promotion.

**Act II**

Iago advises Cassio to present his case to Desdemona, who might influence the general. Alone, Iago declares his belief that a cruel God created man wicked and life has no meaning. He watches as Cassio approaches Desdemona in the garden. Otello enters and greets his wife, but when she brings up the question of Cassio’s demotion, he grows angry.

She offers her handkerchief to cool his head, but he throws it to the ground. Her attendant Emilia, Iago’s wife, picks it up. As Desdemona tries to calm Otello, Iago seizes the handkerchief from Emilia. Otello asks to be alone and everybody leaves, except for Iago, who remains to observe Otello’s growing suspicion. He invents a story of how Cassio spoke of Desdemona in his sleep; he mentions that he saw her handkerchief in Cassio’s hand. Otello swears vengeance.

**Act III**

A herald informs Otello that Venetian ambassadors will soon arrive. Iago tells the general he will soon have evidence of his wife’s infidelity. Desdemona enters, and brings up Cassio’s demotion. Otello demands the handkerchief he gave her. She again pleads for Cassio. Unable to control his fury any longer, Otello accuses her of infidelity and dismisses her. Left alone, he suffers a fit of desperation and self-pity, then hides as Iago returns with Cassio. Iago flashes the handkerchief he stole and leads the conversation with Cassio so that Otello overhears only fragments and incorrectly assumes they are talking about Desdemona. As trumpets announce the Venetian ambassadors, Otello vows to kill his wife that very night. The ambassador Lodovico arrives, recalls Otello to Venice and appoints Cassio to govern Cyprus. Losing control at this news, Otello pushes his wife to the floor, hurling insults. He orders everyone out and collapses in a seizure. Iago gloats.

**Act IV**

Emilia helps Desdemona prepare for bed. Frightened, Desdemona sings about a maiden forsaken by her lover and recites her prayers. As soon as she has fallen asleep, Otello enters and wakes Desdemona with a kiss, before killing her. Emilia knocks with news that Cassio has killed Roderigo. Shocked to find Desdemona dying, she summons help. Iago’s plot is revealed and Otello realises what he has done. He kills himself.

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