



Acclaimed American Soprano to replace Cheryl Barker in the role of Floria Tosca

Opera Australia announced today that Takesha Kizart, the acclaimed American soprano who performed the title role in the 2008 Opera North production of *Tosca* will replace Cheryl Barker in the forthcoming Sydney Summer season. Miss Barker has withdrawn from the role for personal reasons.

OA Artistic Director, Lyndon Terracini, said today: 'Securing Takesha Kizart in this role is a real coup for the Company. Whilst we are disappointed that Miss Barker will not be performing, we are excited that Miss Kizart has agreed to perform at such short notice'.

The Chicago-born soprano has received outstanding critical acclaim for performances around the world and worked with Christopher Alden on the 2008 production for Opera North in the same production being presented by Opera Australia. Reviewing for *The Times*, Richard Morrison wrote of the production and its star:

If Alden plays fast and loose with specifics, he is utterly truthful to what really matters in this gruesomely sadistic opera: the warped psychology that compels human beings to destroy each other. And what convincing characterisations he obtains from his three central protagonists. As Tosca, the lustrous-voiced American soprano Takesha Meshé Kizart may look every inch the megastar: a stunning Naomi Campbell figure in chic shades and boots when she first appears. But this is no haughty diva, pitting her wits against Scarpia. Rather, she's vulnerable, needy, neurotic, raped and demented by the time she is reunited with ... Cavaradossi.

'Having seen a dvd of Miss Kizart in the title role, I am thrilled she has accepted our invitation to perform the title role in this provocative and passionate interpretation of *Tosca*, one of the great political thrillers. Not only is she a powerful singer, but she is a great dramatic actress" said Terracini.

Miss Kizart will be joined by an outstanding cast including Rosario La Spina in the role of Cavaradossi and John Wegner in the role of Scarpia. Nicole Youl, Carlo Baracelli and Warwick Fyfe will perform the final eleven performances as previously advertised. *Tosca* opens Opera Australia's 2010 season at the Sydney Opera House on January 8th, 2010.

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