



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

New York City Opera National Company

BEVERLY SILLS, *General Director*

NANCY KELLY, *Administrative Director*

TED TAYLOR, *Music Director*

THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 19, 1987, AT 8:00
POWER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Madama Butterfly

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

World première: February 17, 1904, Teatro alla Scala, Milan

Conducted by Theodore Ganger

Production conceived and directed by Anne C. Ewers

Scenery designed by Peter Dean Beck

Costumes by Malabar, Limited

Lighting designed by Mark W. Stanley

English subtitles by Sonya Friedman

All of the action takes place in a Japanese house
overlooking Nagasaki Harbor.

Act I Fall, 1900

Intermission

Act II Three years later

Intermission

Act III Early the next morning

The Musical Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of Ford Motor Company Fund for underwriting the costs of this house program.

Cameras and recording equipment are not allowed in the auditorium.

Madama Butterfly

The year is 1900, and American ships have by now become a familiar sight in Japanese harbors. American sailors, filled with the brash optimism of their expanding nation, thrust themselves upon a country that has stood isolated from Western civilization for thousands of years. This sudden influx of Western ideas leads inevitably to a clash of cultures that spells tragedy for those who become trapped between two worlds.

One of these unfortunate victims is Puccini's beloved heroine, Cio-Cio San, better known as Madama Butterfly. This gentle Japanese child of fifteen renounces family and religion to become the bride of the tall, handsome, and charismatic American lieutenant, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton. Embracing the customs of her husband's country, she places all of her hope and trust in the American ideal. Her faith remains unshaken throughout his three-year absence, though everyone around her insists that Pinkerton regards the marriage as only a temporary diversion. When the lieutenant finally returns to Japan, he brings with him his American wife — his "real" wife — and at last Cio-Cio San accepts the bitter truth. To add to her grief, Pinkerton wants her to give up the son that she bore him after his departure. Shunned by her own people, rejected by her husband, and facing the loss of her child, Butterfly follows the only path of honor left open to her: death.

Giacomo Puccini captures both the soaring romance and the bitter pathos of this compelling story in music of unsurpassed beauty. From the passionate Act I love duet and the celebrated "Un bel di," to the final agonizing chords, *Madama Butterfly* is a treasure-trove of melodic riches, making it a perennial favorite around the world. The music transcends mere surface attractiveness, however; nowhere is Puccini's renowned affinity for creating unforgettable operatic heroines more apparent than in his depiction of Cio-Cio San. In a tour-de-force of musical characterization, Butterfly gradually matures from the naïve young geisha who runs terrified from her husband's first ardent embraces to a world-weary woman who displays remarkable courage in the face of desperate circumstances.

Madama Butterfly, based on a play by American impresario David Belasco and John Luther Long, was a labor of love for Puccini, who named it the favorite among all his works. He researched Japanese musical styles, consulted with a well-known Japanese actress, and even incorporated authentic folk melodies into the opera. Working in collaboration with librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, with whom he had written *La Bohème* and *Tosca*, Puccini spent three years of painstaking effort on his Japanese music-drama.

The audience that assembled in Milan's famous Teatro alla Scala on the evening of February 17, 1904, included an anti-Puccini faction determined to spoil the composer's success; this factor, combined with several minor flaws in the opera's construction, turned the opening-night performance of *Madama Butterfly* into a fiasco that has since become legend. Puccini spent several months revising the opera, cutting superfluous characterization in some minor roles and dividing the two overlong acts into three concise ones. In this new version, the one that is known today, the opera had a triumphant return to the stage on May 28 of that same year. From that time forward, it has held a special place in the hearts of opera audiences everywhere.

Cast

(in order of vocal appearance)

Goro	David Ronis
Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton	Paul Hartfield
Suzuki	Mari Opatz
Sharpless	Kenneth Shaw
Cio-Cio San	Louisa Jonason
Imperial Commissioner	Frank Curtis
The Bonze	George Hogan
Yamadori	Philip Bologna
Trouble	Rebecca Bani Kerr
Kate Pinkerton	Margaret Anne Davis
Cio-Cio San's relatives, friends, servants	Deborah Andrews, Lee Bellaver, Philip Bologna, Judith Burbank, Margaret Anne Davis, Neil Eddinger, Scott Flaherty, Kathryn Hartgrove, Karen Notare, Susan Schafer, Janet Wilson, George Wyman, Valerie Yova

Act I

Cio-Cio San's house overlooking Nagasaki harbor, 1900

Goro, a Japanese marriage broker, shows off the house to its new owner, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, a lieutenant in the United States Navy. Pinkerton meets the three servants who come with the house, including the garrulous housemaid, Suzuki. Joining the group is Sharpless, the United States Consul in Nagasaki. He is impressed by the house, especially when Pinkerton explains that the nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine-year lease, like the marriage contract he will soon conclude with his Japanese bride, can be canceled at any time. The lieutenant launches into a carefree aria, "Dovunque al mondo" (All over the world), describing the pleasure-seeking life of the American sailor. The Consul warns Pinkerton not to treat his young bride too carelessly, for she believes his attachment to her to be genuine. Laughing at his friend's concern, the lieutenant pours out two glasses of whiskey and proposes a toast to the day when he will marry a "real" — that is, American — wife.

Cio-Cio San, the bride-to-be, arrives with her relations and tells Pinkerton and Sharpless that she comes from a once-wealthy family that has fallen upon hard times. Butterfly, as Cio-Cio San is known, shows Pinkerton her few possessions, including a box containing the *hara-kiri* knife with which her father killed himself. After the Imperial Commissioner performs the marriage ceremony, Sharpless turns to go, again cautioning Pinkerton to treat Butterfly with care.

The celebration is interrupted by the Bonze, Cio-Cio San's uncle, who denounces Butterfly for betraying her religion. Furious, Pinkerton orders all the guests to leave, and they curse Butterfly as they go. The lieutenant comforts his weeping bride, and as daylight fades, he begins an impassioned love duet. The timid Cio-Cio San pleads with her husband to love her tenderly, as though she were a child. As Pinkerton's caresses become increasingly ardent, the music grows ever more urgent. "Vieni, vieni" (Come, come), he sings, as he leads Butterfly into the house.

Act II

Cio-Cio San's house, three years later

Suzuki and Butterfly are alone. The servant reports that they have very little money left, and she remains doubtful of Pinkerton's fidelity. Cio-Cio San, however, has not given up hope. In the celebrated aria, "Un bel di vedremo" (One beautiful day we'll see), she describes her vision of Pinkerton's return. Sharpless brings Butterfly a letter from Pinkerton, but his efforts to explain its contents are frustrated by the girl's questions and exclamations. Goro arrives with Yamadori, a wealthy Japanese who hopes to marry Butterfly. She refuses the offer; despite Goro's claim that she has been abandoned, she fiercely insists that she is still married to Pinkerton according to American law. Sharpless whispers to Goro and Yamadori the message he has tried unsuccessfully to relate to Cio-Cio San: Pinkerton does not wish to see Butterfly when he returns to Nagasaki. The marriage broker and his client depart.

The Consul suggests to Butterfly that Pinkerton might not return and encourages her to marry Yamadori. Terribly upset, Cio-Cio San runs to another room and returns with a child — Pinkerton's son, she informs the Consul. Surely her husband will not abandon her when he learns about the child. Butterfly says that for now the boy is called "Dolore" (Trouble), but when his father returns his name will be "Gioia" (Joy). Promising to tell Pinkerton about the child, the Consul departs.

Suzuki drags in Goro, who has been spreading gossip that the child is illegitimate; Butterfly throws the marriage broker out of the house. Suddenly a cannon shot signals the arrival of a ship in the harbor, and to Cio-Cio San's delight, she discovers that it is the "Abraham Lincoln," Pinkerton's ship. She orders Suzuki to help her arrange flowers to decorate the house, and they sing a charming duet, "Scuoti quella fronda di ciliegio" (Scatter the cherry blossoms). From afar begins a gentle murmur — the well-known "Humming Chorus" — which accompanies Cio-Cio San, Suzuki, and Trouble as they begin a vigil of waiting for Pinkerton.

Act III

Cio-Cio San's house, early the next morning

The curtain rises to reveal that Butterfly still waits for Pinkerton. A waking with a start, Suzuki sends Cio-Cio San and the child to the other room to rest. The servant is surprised at the arrival of Pinkerton and Sharpless, who caution her not to awaken Butterfly. The lieutenant, seeing the preparations to welcome his arrival, bitterly laments that he has caused Butterfly so much pain. The Consul says that they have come to take the child and asks Suzuki to help break

the news to her mistress. He then angrily reminds Pinkerton of his admonition that Butterfly would take the marriage seriously. Aghast at the devastation he has so thoughtlessly inflicted, the lieutenant sings an emotional aria, "Addio, fiorito asil" (Farewell, flowery haven), bidding goodbye to the little house he once shared with his Japanese wife. He runs off.

Butterfly awakens and, seeing Sharpless, searches the house in vain for Pinkerton. Spying an American woman in the garden, Cio-Cio San quickly realizes that Pinkerton has taken a new wife. Kate Pinkerton pleads for and receives Butterfly's pardon, then asks her to give up her son. Pinkerton may have the child, replies the Japanese wife, if he himself will come in half an hour to get the boy. The matter settled, Kate and Sharpless leave.

Butterfly orders Suzuki to go outside with the child to play. Alone in the house, she takes out her father's ritual knife and reads aloud the inscription on the blade: "Let him who cannot live with honor die with honor." Suzuki pushes little Trouble into the room, causing Butterfly to drop the knife and embrace her child. In a tense, emotional aria, "Tu, tu, piccolo Iddio" (You, you, my little idol), she bids the boy an anguished farewell. Giving him his favorite toy, she encourages him to play where he cannot see her. Returning to the shrine, she picks up the knife and stabs herself. From the distance comes Pinkerton's voice, shouting "Butterfly! Butterfly!" Completely unaware of the tragedy behind him, the child goes on playing as the opera draws to a tragic conclusion.

New York City Opera National Company Orchestra

<i>Violins</i>	<i>Basses</i>	<i>French Horns</i>
Francisca Mendoza, <i>Concertmaster</i>	Matthew Zory, <i>Principal</i>	Donna Dolson, <i>Principal</i>
Susan Lorentsen, <i>Assistant Concertmaster</i>	Gail Kruvand	Stuart Butterfield
Moirsheen Kelly, <i>Principal Second</i>	<i>Flutes</i>	<i>Trumpets</i>
Wendy Evans	Peter Ader, <i>Principal</i>	Kenneth De Carlo, <i>Principal</i>
Robert Gerry	Wendy Stern	John Sheppard
Henry Kao	<i>Piccolo</i>	<i>Trombone</i>
Wende Namkung	Wendy Stern	Mark Johansen
Gina Tavelli	<i>Oboe</i>	<i>Harp</i>
<i>Violas</i>	Linda Kaplan	Amy Berger
Emily Onderdonk, <i>Principal</i>	<i>Clarinets</i>	<i>Timpani</i>
Allegra Askew	Barbara Koostra, <i>Principal</i>	Daniel Haskins
<i>Cellos</i>	Richard Shapiro	<i>Percussion</i>
Daniel McIntosh, <i>Principal</i>	<i>Bassoon</i>	Richard Hilms
Daniele Doctorow	Stephen Wisner	
Roger Shell		

About the Company

Founded by Beverly Sills in 1979 as the touring arm of the New York City Opera, the National Company continues to live up to its original mandate: to provide talented young artists with valuable performing experience while fulfilling the company's role as America's National Opera. Each production is designed to show the creativity and energy of America's best new singers, instrumentalists, and designers, and also provides the ideal environment for veteran singers who wish to develop new roles. General Director Beverly Sills supervises each step in the artistic process, thus ensuring a production of high standards.

The National Company takes top-quality opera productions on tour, from coast-to-coast — such classics as *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto*, and *Faust*. This season's staging of *Madama Butterfly* is being presented in eighteen states and Canada, over a period of six weeks. Tonight's performance marks the National Company's second Ann Arbor appearance — the first was in 1985 with *Rigoletto*.

The current tour continues an innovation that has become a City Opera hallmark: the use of subtitles. While the performers sing the opera in Italian, a simultaneous English translation is projected above the stage, allowing comprehension of the action and preserving the integrity of the original-language libretto.

Support for the National Company's activities was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, Citibank, N.A., and The Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc.

Watch for new 1987-88 season announcement in April.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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