Performance Saturday, July 5 at 8:15 p.m.

**Opera in Two Acts**

After the book by John Luther Long and the play by David Belasco

**Premiere Performance** Teatro alla Scala, Milan, February 17, 1904

**Recent Chautauqua Opera Performances** 1998, 2005

Chautauqua Opera dedicates this production of Puccini’s *Madam Butterfly* to the memory of Julius Rudel (1921-2014). Maestro Rudel was Music Director of the Chautauqua Opera Company in 1958. In 1959, he was named Artistic Director. His tenure as head of the company was short, one year, but his influence was enormous, encouraging the performance of more new American operas and musicals. In 2004, Maestro Rudel returned to Chautauqua for the first time in almost 45 years to conduct our Young Artists in concert. From 1957 to 1979, he was General Director of The New York City Opera where he helped foster the careers of José Carreras, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, Beverly Sills, and later, a young budding stage director, Jay Lesenger. I will be eternally grateful for the education and opportunities he gave me during my City Opera years. This one is for you, Maestro.

**Madam Butterfly**

Music by **Giacomo Puccini** • Libretto by **Giuseppe Giacosa** and **Luigi Illica**

English Translation by **R.H. Elkin**; revised by **Jay Lesenger**

**CAST** (in order of appearance)

**Lt. B.F. Pinkerton, of the U.S. Naval Ship “Abraham Lincoln”**
Scott Quinn*

**Goro, a nakodo (Marriage Broker)**
Jesse Darden*

**Suzuki, Cio-Cio-San’s servant**
Renée Tatum**

**Mr. Sharpless, the U.S. Consul in Nagasaki**
Michael Chioldi

**Cio-Cio-San, a geisha known as Madam Butterfly**
Mary Dunleavy+

**Cio-Cio-San’s Relatives:**

**Uncle Yakuside**
Brian James Myer*

**Her Mother**
Caitlin Bolden*

**Her Aunt**
Helena Brown*

**Her Cousin**
Cheyanne Coss*

**The Cousin’s Son**
Hayden Heid+

**The Imperial Commissioner**
Brandon Coleman*

**The Official Registrar**
Jesus Vicente Murillo*

**The Bonze, a Shinto priest and Cio-Cio-San’s Uncle**
Brad Walker*

**Prince Yamadori, a wealthy businessman**
Jared A. Guest*

**“Sorrow”, Cio-Cio-San’s baby**
Madeleine Williams+

**Kate Pinkerton, Pinkerton’s American wife**
Kate Farrar*

**Geishas**
Cree Carrico*  Rachael Kim*
Nicole Haslett*  Clara Nieman*
Rebekah Howell*  Elizabeth Tredent*

**Relatives**
Chautauqua Opera Young Artists

**Servants**
Stephanie Dawson  Ralph G. Walton M.D.
Sammy Huh  Logan Webber

+ 2014 Chautauqua Opera Young Artist
**  Former Chautauqua Opera Young Artist

**Geisha ‘Sorrow’**
Madeleine Williams+

**CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION**

**Conductor**
Arthur Fagen

**Conceived/Directed by**
Jay Lesenger

**Chorus Master**
Carol Rausch

**Set Designer**
Ron Kadri

**Lighting Designer**
Michael Baumgarten

**Costume Designer**
B. G. FitzGerald

**Wig/Makeup Designer**
Martha Ruskai

**Coach/Accompanists**
Dorothy Randall
Jamison Livsey

**Diction Coach/Supertitles**
Allison Voth

**Technical Director**
Stephen M. Bush

**Properties Master**
Mary Houston

**Production Stage Manager**
Teri Jo Fuson

**Assistant Stage Director**
Cara Consilvio

**Assistant Stage Managers**
Amber Lewandowski
Kerry Concannon

**Concertmaster**
Vahn Armstrong
SYNOPSIS

Place: The terrace and interior of a rented house overlooking the Bay of Nagasaki, Japan
Time: ACT I: Spring, the early 1900s, ACT II: Spring, three years later

Act I
Seeking diversion during his tour of duty in Japan, Lt. Pinkerton has arranged with Goro, a marriage broker, for a temporary companion. Goro has obliged by providing a secluded house, servants, a beautiful young geisha named Cio-Cio-San, a traditional wedding ceremony, and a convenient contract which stipulates that the marriage is renewable by the husband on a monthly basis.

After inspecting the house, Pinkerton is greeted by Sharpless, the American consul. The groom marvels at the insubstantial nature of his Japanese wedding. When Sharpless warns him that the bride may not take her vows so lightly, Pinkerton brushes aside any reservations and looks forward to the day when he will take an American as his true wife.

Cio-Cio-San and her relatives arrive, including her drunken Uncle Suzuki. The Consul arrives bearing a letter from Pinkerton, but the exhausted Butterfly puts the baby to bed. Sharpless arrives with Pinkerton and his new wife Kate, who have come to take the child back to America. Suzuki understands the situation. Pinkerton is overcome by self-recrimination and leaves. Cio-Cio-San searches for Pinkerton, but finds Kate instead. Realizing who the stranger is, Butterfly promises to give the child to Pinkerton if he will come in person. Left alone, she finds the only honorable solution to her plight.

— Jay Lesenger, Stage Director

Act II

Three years pass, during which time Cio-Cio-San patiently awaits her husband’s return. Her only companion is her faithful servant, Suzuki. The Consul arrives bearing a letter from Pinkerton, but the overjoyed Butterfly interrupts and misinterprets its contents. Goro brings in Prince Yamadori with yet another offer of marriage. As a good “American” wife, Cio-Cio-San will have only one husband, and she rejects him. Sharpless suggests that Pinkerton might never return and the distraught geisha proudly brings in her baby, “Sorrow.” Butterfly assures the Consul that when Pinkerton hears of his son, he will surely return, and she will rename the child “Joy.” Unable to tell her that Pinkerton has remarried, the Consul leaves her. Suzuki accuses Goro of spreading rumors questioning the baby’s parentage and he is banished from the house. Just at the moment of greatest doubt, a cannon announces the arrival of Pinkerton’s ship in the harbor. Kishida, Butterfly and Suzuki prepare the house for his return and begin their vigil.

As the dawn arrives, the exhausted Butterfly puts the baby to bed. Sharpless arrives with Pinkerton and his new wife Kate, who have come to take the child back to America. Suzuki instantly understands the situation. Pinkerton is overcome by self-recrimination and leaves. Cio-Cio-San searches for Pinkerton, but finds Kate instead. Realizing who the stranger is, Butterfly promises to give the child to Pinkerton if he will come in person. Left alone, she finds the only honorable solution to her plight.

— Jay Lesenger, Stage Director

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

A look back at a look forward...
Madam Butterfly: The Brescia Version

The premiere of Madam Butterfly at La Scala on February 17, 1910, was one of those fantastic disasters that fill the books of operatic lore. This historic fiasco clearly had less to do with the opera itself and more to do with the anti-Puccini forces at work in the audience at that night. Puccini was successful enough to have enemies who wished to ensure the failure of the composer’s creation. Tito Ricordi, Puccini’s publisher, later wrote, “The performance in the auditorium seemed just as carefully organized as that on stage.” Ironically, most of the music with which modern audiences are familiar appeared in the La Scala version.

When Puccini saw the London production of David Belasco’s popular stage adaption, even though Puccini spoke little English, he was extremely moved by the plight of its fragile heroine. Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, Puccini’s librettists, fashioned a text based on the successful short story by John Luther Long. It was a strong indictment of the treatment of the fragile and naive Butterfly by the imperialistic Pinkerton. Puccini had been so sure of his new opera’s success that he was devastated by the catcalls and whistling during the premiere and by the negative reviews which followed. Determined to save his beloved geisha from oblivion, the composer immediately withdrew the score after the premiere. So began a series of revisions which changed the nature of Madam Butterfly from a darily original music drama to a beautiful, but conventional, piece of operatic theatre.

These are the four versions with the composer’s major dramatic changes:

La Scala — This opening night version was performed in two acts. Act I contained extended exposition for Cio-Cio-San’s family at the wedding and a long drunk scene for Uncle Bonzo. Lt. Pinkerton was clearly depicted as the “ugly American,” a very untypical tenor anti-hero. Kate Pinkerton had an extended scene with Cio-Cio-San. This version had only one performance.

Brescia — Puccini’s first revision opened three months later (May 1904). The principal melody of Cio-Cio-San’s entrance was revised. A number of deletions were made in Act I wedding scene. Act II was divided into two shorter acts. Pinkerton received an aria of remorse to make him more sympathetic. The opera was an unqualified success and a vocal score was published.

The following people and organizations were instrumental in reconstructing the orchestration of the Brescia version of Madam Butterfly: Maestros Peter Leonard, David Lawton, Carol Cracium, William Fred Scott, Peter Clogg, Lionel Friend and Arthur Fagen. N.J. Opera Festival, Charlotte Opera, and Opera Omaha.

Washington – (October 1906) For Butterfly’s first performances in English, some further cuts were made, mostly small ones. The English translation was made by R.H. Elkin. Puccini seemed pleased with this “final” version. This version is still available in the Kalmus vocal score.

Paris – (December 1906) More cuts were made in the wedding scene. Pinkerton’s caustic references to the Japanese were eliminated. Many of Cio-Cio-San’s dramatically telling lines, including references to the possibly temporary nature of her marriage, were excised and the music was left intact. The text given to her Act II aria “Che tua madre.” Kate Pinkerton’s part was almost completely cut and many of her lines were reassigned to Sharpless. This is the version performed in most opera houses today.

Though Puccini was pleased with his work and assured of Butterfly’s success after the Washington version, the general manager of the Paris Opera was able to convince him that what was most original and unconventional about the earlier versions of the opera would never be acceptable to the conservative Parisian audience. Consequently, he felt that the general manager’s wife was singing the title role had a bearing on these decisions? Above all, Puccini was practical and did not want to risk another failure. So what had started out as daring and unconventional, especially in the characterizations of its protagonists and the social message it put forth, became more predictable, sentimental, and less complex.

I have felt for a long time now that something was missing dramatically in the “traditional” version of Butterfly. It appeared hard to believe that Puccini would have completely ignored the tone and bite of the original materials upon which he based his opera. In the past few years, more and more productions are using bits and pieces of material from the earlier scores of Madam Butterfly. By performing the Brescia version, we get a clearer look at the unedited intentions of Butterfly’s composer. In order to be faithful to Puccini’s original plan, we are returning to his earliest two-act structure. In this light, Cio-Cio-San seems less a victim, and more a tragic figure which, incapable of bending in the storm, must surely break.

— Jay Lesenger, Stage Director

CREDITS

English translation by R.H. Elkin, revised by Jay Lesenger
Scenery constructed by Atlantic Studios Inc., Newark, NJ and Local #266 I.A.T.S.E.
Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group
Costumes for Madam Butterfly provided by Malabar Ltd., Toronto, Canada
Wigs provided by Martha Ruskai

Herbal cigarettes will be used onstage during this performance.
History sings in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*

When Horace Tabor, the “Silver King of Colorado,” leaves his wife for the petite blonde, Elizabeth ‘Baby’ Doe, the resulting scandal costs him a seat in the U.S. Senate and makes headlines across the U.S. Soon after, Tabor loses everything in the Panic of 1893. Would ‘Baby’ stand by him even though his fortune had failed?

America’s Western Expansion comes to vivid life in one of the most tuneful and popular American operas. July 25th and 28th at Norton Hall. Bring the whole family!

Photos Courtesy of History Colorado

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