

# **MADAME BUTTERFLY**

## **BY GIACOMO PUCCINI**

### **AUSTIN OPERA CAST AND PRODUCTION STAFF**

#### **CAST**

**CIO-CIO-SAN — YUNAH LEE\*, SOPRANO**

**LIEUTENANT B.F. PINKERTON — DOMINICK CHENES, TENOR**

**SUZUKI — MIKA SHIGEMATSU\*, MEZZO-SOPRANO**

**SHARPLESS — MICHAEL CHIOLDI, BARITONE**

**GORO — DOUG JONES, TENOR**

**THE BONZE — JEFFREY BERUAN, BASS**

**PRINCE YAMADORI — AUSTIN SIEBERT, BARITONE**

**TROUBLE — TBD**

**KATE PINKERTON — KATHRYN GRUMLEY, MEZZO-SOPRANO**

**\*AUSTIN OPERA DEBUT**

#### **PRODUCTION**

**COMPOSER: GIACOMO PUCCINI**

**LIBRETTO: LUIGI ILLICA, GIUSEPPE GIACOSA**

**SUNG IN ITALIAN, WITH ENGLISH SUPERTITLES.**

**CONDUCTOR: RICHARD BUCKLEY**

**STAGE DIRECTOR: GARNETT BRUCE**

**CHORUS MASTER: JULIAN REED**

## SYNOPSIS

### Act I

Japan, early 20th century. Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton of the U.S. Navy inspects a house overlooking Nagasaki harbor that he is leasing from Goro, a marriage broker, who has also arranged his union with Cio-Cio-San, known as Madame Butterfly. The American consul Sharpless arrives for the wedding ceremony and Pinkerton describes to him his philosophy of the fearless Yankee roaming the world in search of experience and pleasure. Sharpless warns him that the girl may view the marriage more seriously. After the formal introduction, Cio-Cio-San explains that her family was once prominent but lost its position, and she has had to earn her living as a geisha. The Imperial Commissioner reads the marriage agreement, and the relatives congratulate the couple. Butterfly's uncle, the Bonze (a priest) interrupts the festivities. He curses the girl for rejecting her ancestral religion and the shocked relatives denounce Cio-Cio-San as they swiftly leave the house. Pinkerton tries to console his "Butterfly" as they are left alone on their wedding night.

### Act II

Three years have passed, and Cio-Cio-San awaits her husband's return. Suzuki prays for help, but is berated for believing in Japanese gods rather than in Pinkerton's promise to return "when the robins nest again." Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it, Goro arrives with the latest potential husband: Prince Yamadori. Butterfly politely insists she is not available for marriage—her American husband has not deserted her. Sharpless attempts to read Pinkerton's letter but is repeatedly interrupted. Giving up, he asks her what she would do if Pinkerton never returned. Cio-Cio-San replies she would either become a geisha again, or better, die. After Cio-Cio-San introduces her son, called Trouble, Sharpless leaves, promising to tell Pinkerton of the child. A cannon shot is heard in the harbor announcing the arrival of Pinkerton's ship: the "Abraham Lincoln". Overjoyed, Cio-Cio-San joins Suzuki in strewing the house with flowers. As night falls, they keep vigil, waiting through the night for Pinkerton.

At dawn, Suzuki insists that Cio-Cio-San get some sleep. Sharpless appears with Pinkerton and Kate, Pinkerton's new wife. Suzuki realizes who the American woman is and agrees to help break the news. Pinkerton is overcome with guilt and runs from the scene. Cio-Cio-San rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton, but sees Kate instead. After a moment, she grasps the situation. She agrees to give up the child but insists Pinkerton return for him. Once she dismisses everyone, she takes out the dagger with which her father committed suicide, reading the inscription, "It is better to die with honor than live without it."