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puccini

MADAME BUTTERFLY

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MADAME BUTTERFLY

VOLUME 42 ISSUE 1

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Seattle Opera

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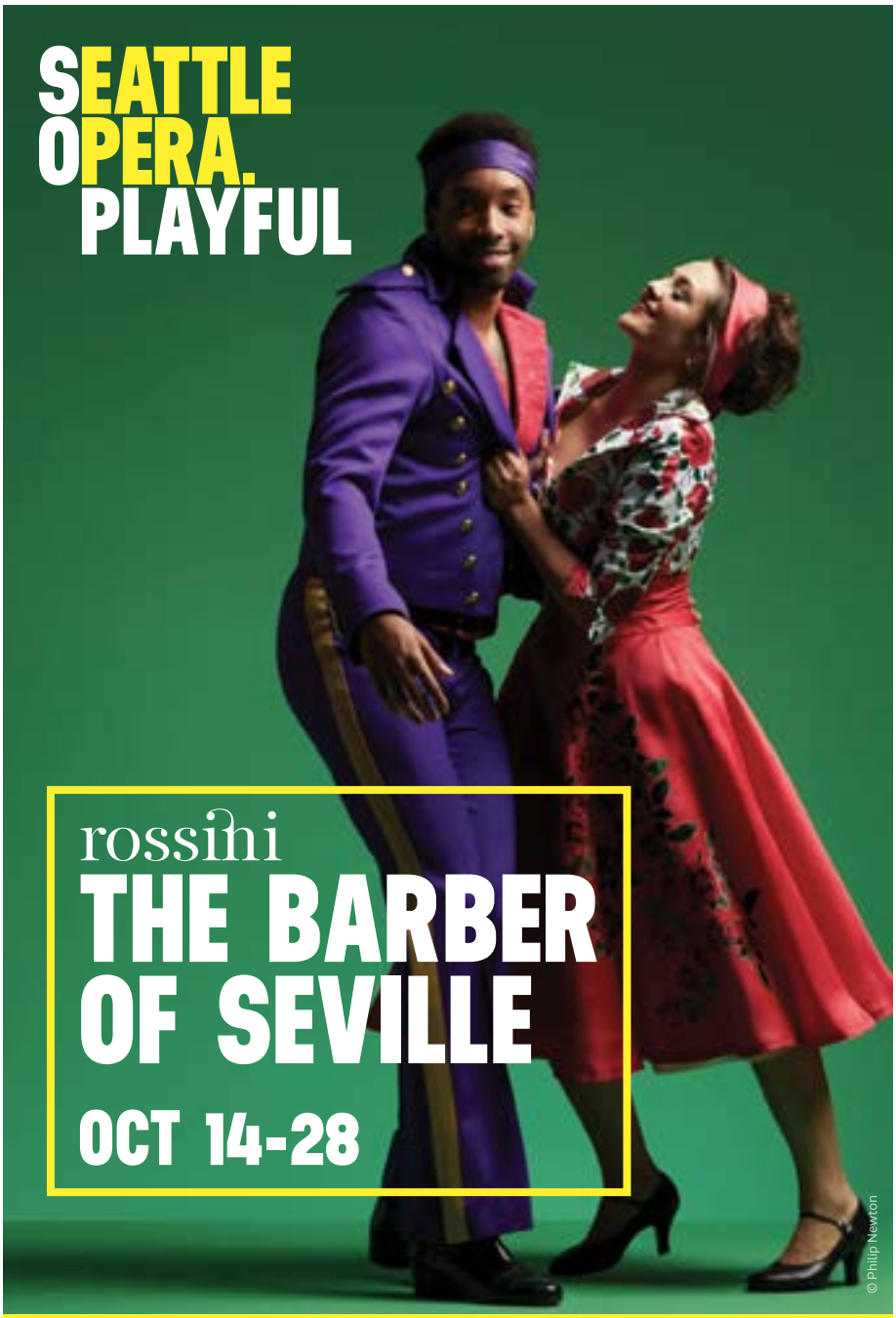

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Young love carries the day in Rossini's hilarious prequel to *The Marriage of Figaro.* Featuring familiar, toe-tapping music from the iconic overture to a joyous finale, this vivacious, new-to-Seattle production dazzles with vibrant sets and costumes celebrating the sunny spirit of Spain.

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FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

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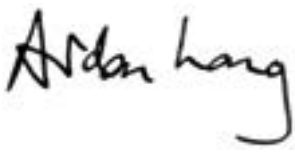
Welcome to our production of *Madame Butterfly*, the opening production of our 2017/18 season. As always, we plan our season with a range of different operas in the hope that there will be something there for everyone to enjoy, whether you are a long-time subscriber or coming to the opera for the first time.

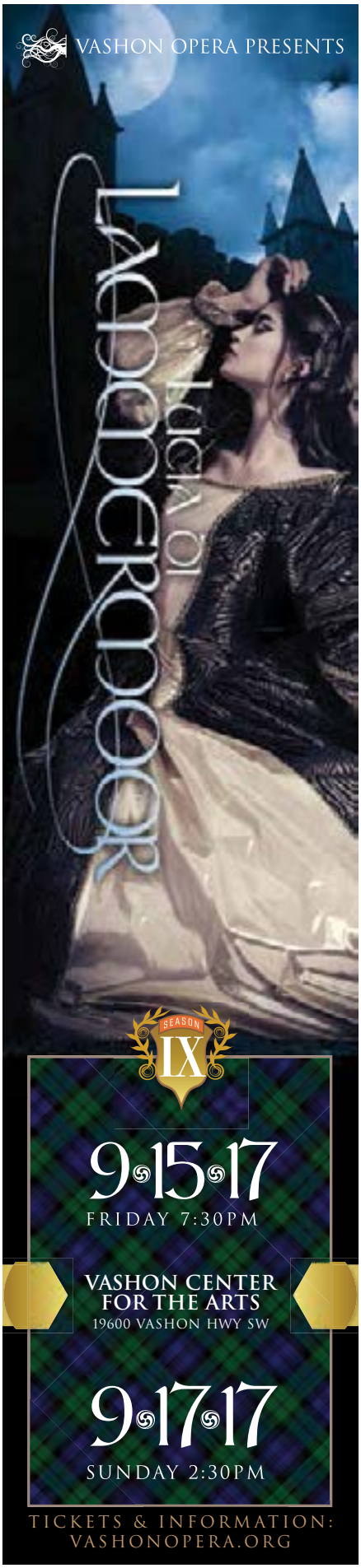
One of the ways that Seattle Opera is now moving forward is in creating partnerships with sister opera companies both far and near. The cost of a new production is huge. (A commercial musical can recoup those costs with performance runs lasting months—or in some cases years—but an opera company gives relatively few performances, which means that we have to think very carefully before investing in a new production.) One solution is to create new productions in partnership with other companies in a co-production arrangement. People often ask me what exactly this entails. Put simply, the partners share the cost of the sets, costumes, and props, and have equal input into the artistic conception of the production, but each company is free to cast as they will. This year we have two such co-productions—and look out for four next season!

Opera Queensland presented our new *Barber of Seville* with great success last year, and after our run of performances in October, the production will then move to New Zealand Opera to be enjoyed by their audiences. While that production will have some international travel, our co-production of *Aida* has been created by partners close to home here in the States—San Francisco Opera, Washington National Opera, and Minnesota Opera. And in February, our new production of Berlioz's *Beatrice & Benedict* finds us working with partners even closer to home, as we will feature the artistic leaders of two of Seattle's most treasured organizations—ACT Theatre and the Seattle Symphony—in a production that kicks off a city-wide celebration of William Shakespeare. The point of all these partnerships is to confirm our commitment to collaboration and to bring you the same art in a manner that is financially sustainable.

I am, of course, very excited about this production of *Madame Butterfly*, which is new to Seattle. You will, no doubt, have noticed the extensive display work featuring Asian Pacific Islander voices that we have placed throughout the lobby for you to look at prior to taking your seat. Given the popularity of this work, it is easy to forget that its premiere in 1904 was a disaster. In Broadway terms, it opened and closed on the same night! Substantial changes were therefore made to the score over the next two years, the most significant of which were made for its Paris performances in 1906. The effect of all this was to hugely dissipate and sanitize the potency of Puccini's original material, as its strong critique of the prevailing imperialist attitudes towards Japan was removed, leaving just the human-centered tragedy that we now know so well. We therefore feel it important to give you some of the context for a larger conversation about the work, as well as showing the impact of such imperialist attitudes on members of our own community today. Indeed, one example was in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor. To this end, I am delighted to mention that we will remount our production of *An American Dream*, which takes a critical look at the impact of the incarceration of Japanese and Japanese American people during World War II. Performances at Washington Hall start on September 7.

Our *Madame Butterfly* sees a very welcome friend, Carlo Montanaro, return to our podium, but also introduces the work of a creative team new to Seattle Opera: the distinguished Australian director Kate Cherry, and her design team Christina Smith and Matt Scott. I do hope that you will enjoy this marvelous opera; but for those of you who know it well, maybe you will also look at it with new eyes.





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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Thank you for joining us for an exciting kickoff to Seattle Opera's 2017/18 season! Today's production of *Madame Butterfly* is the first of a year's worth of passionate and moving performances. On behalf of the Seattle Opera Board of Directors, we are so thankful for your investment as ticket buyers and donors to our opera company.

This season also kicks off a board-approved budget that puts us on the path for fiscal success. As you may know, we are taking meaningful strides to move toward a twenty-first-century model of sustainable finance practices. Our balanced budget for the 2017/18 season aligns with General Director Aidan Lang's vision for long-term success without relying on special fundraising campaigns or one-time "angel" gifts. As always, we are incredibly grateful for the Seattle Opera donor family, whose gifts of all sizes keep our day-to-day operations humming along and continue to create opera magic on the McCaw Hall stage and throughout the state.

Another important aspect of this new season is the expansion of our partnerships for our programs that go beyond the McCaw Hall stage and into our region's many communities. Our Education and Community Engagement department has forged a new partnership with the Marrowstone Music Festival and the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra to offer Seattle Opera Academy, a new summer training program for young artists at Western Washington University in Bellingham. In September, Seattle Opera will partner with the Japanese American Citizens League and other organizations during the run of *An American Dream* at Washington Hall in Seattle's Central District. And our Youth Opera Project will be co-run by Seattle Opera and Seattle Public Theater throughout the school year, with upcoming performances at the Cornish Playhouse at Seattle Center. These examples and so many more are indicative of Seattle Opera's commitment to our Pacific Northwest community!

Seattle Opera at the Center is of course pivotal to Seattle Opera's future growth. This campaign for our new civic home adjacent to McCaw Hall will certainly open doors for increased and deepened community partnerships and programs. It will also upgrade our artistic endeavors through improved rehearsal and craftsmanship spaces, and will offer incredible operational efficiencies. We are on track for 100 percent funding of this project by the end of 2017—and you can double your impact thanks to an anonymous $3 million matching challenge for all new and increased donors! See page 32 of this program for more information, look for our display today in the Grand Lobby, or visit seattleopera.org/atthecenter.

Brian Marks
President, Seattle Opera Board of Directors

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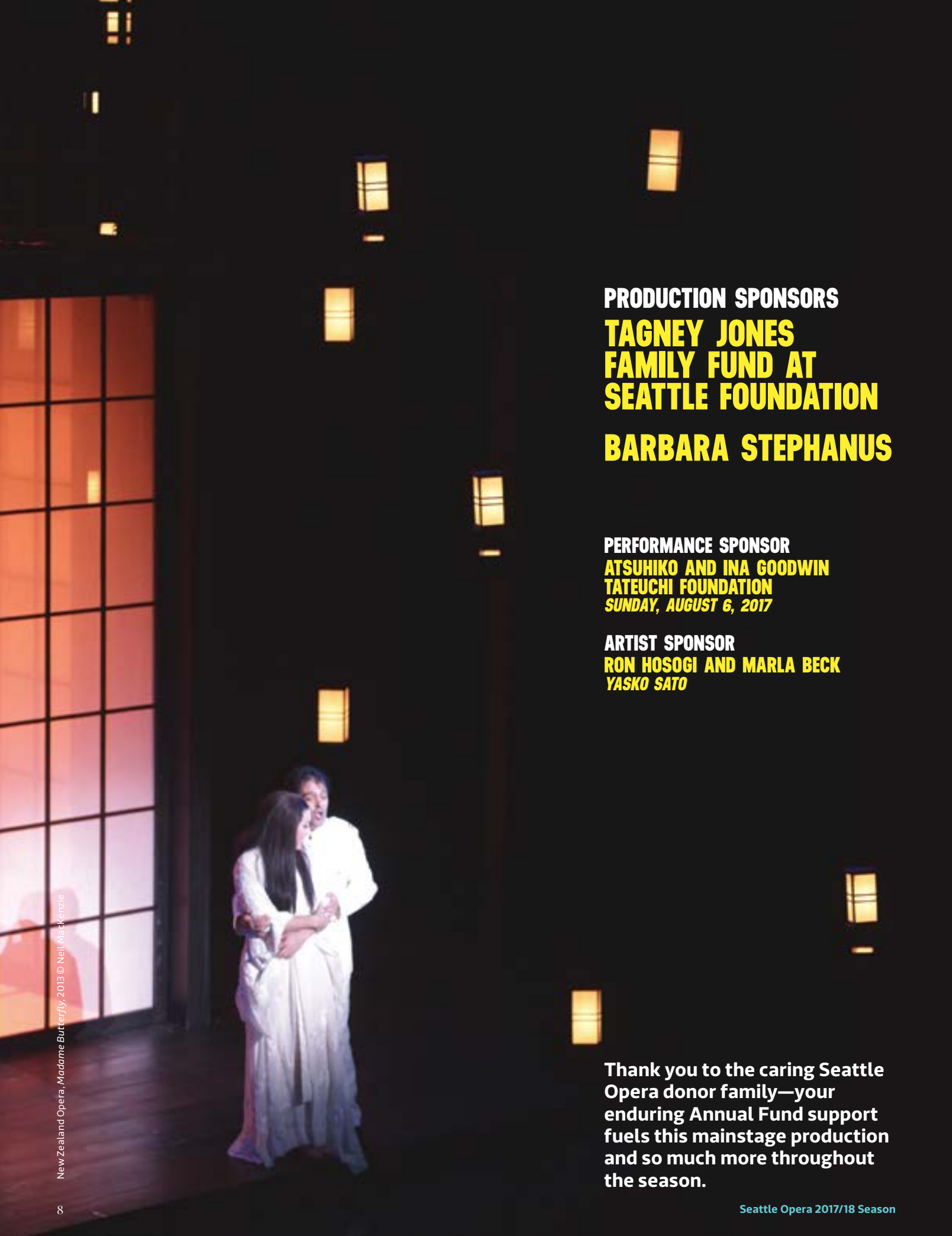

New Zealand Opera, *Madame Butterfly*, 2013 © Neil Mackenzie

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2017

ARTIST SPONSOR

RON HOSOGI AND MARLA BECK

YASKO SATO

Thank you to the caring Seattle Opera donor family—your enduring Annual Fund support fuels this mainstage production and so much more throughout the season.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Premiere: First version, Milan, 1904;
revised version, Paris, 1906
Seattle Opera Premiere: 1966

Performed at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall:
August 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 2017

In Italian with English Captions.

Peformances 7:30 p.m. Matinees 2:00 p.m.

Act I: 52 minutes
Intermission: 30 minutes
Acts II and III: 90 minutes

CONDUCTOR
Carlo Montanaro

STAGE DIRECTOR
Kate Cherry†

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
Christina Smith†

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Matt Scott†

CHOREOGRAPHER
Roxanne Foster

ENGLISH CAPTIONS
Jonathan Dean

CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON
Alexey Dolgov† (August 5, 9, 13, 18)
Dominick Chenes† (August 6, 12, 16, 19)

GORO
Rodell Rosel

SUZUKI
Renée Rapier

SHARPLESS
Weston Hurt

CIO-CIO-SAN
Lianna Haroutounian† (August 5, 9, 13, 18)
Yasko Sato† (August 6, 12, 16, 19)

IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER
Jonathan Silvia

REGISTRAR
Kwangsuk Ku

THE BONZE
Daniel Sumegi

PRINCE YAMADORI
Ryan Bede

"SORROW," CIO-CIO-SAN'S CHILD
Scarlett del Rosario† (August 5, 9, 13, 18)
Hazel del Rosario† (August 6, 12, 16, 19)

KATE PINKERTON
Sarah Mattox

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Philip A. Kelsey

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Dan Wallace Miller

FIGHT DIRECTOR
Geoffrey Alm

CHORUSMASTER
John Keene

MUSICAL PREPARATION
Philip A. Kelsey, David McDade,
Jay Rozendaal

STAGE MANAGER
Yasmine Kiss

† Seattle Opera debut

Scenery and costumes created by New Zealand Opera.
English captions by Jonathan Dean © 2017.
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THE STORY

ACT I

Nagasaki, at the turn of the twentieth century. Goro, a Japanese matchmaker, shows B. F. Pinkerton, an American naval lieutenant, a house he is leasing, complete with bride, with the option to cancel on a month's notice. The marriage is arranged. Sharpless, the US Consul in Nagasaki, is Pinkerton's only wedding guest. Pinkerton tells Sharpless he isn't sure whether his feelings for his bride are love or infatuation. Sharpless warns him not to take advantage of the innocent, trusting Cio-Cio-San, but Pinkerton ignores him and toasts the day when he will wed a real American wife. Cio-Cio-San arrives with her relatives; she tells Pinkerton she has renounced her religion for his. The marriage is finalized, and relatives and friends are celebrating when Cio-Cio-San's uncle, the Bonze, bursts in. Furious at Cio-Cio-San for embracing Pinkerton's religion, the Bonze ostracizes her from the family, and everyone abandons her. Left alone with her new husband, Cio-Cio-San is comforted by the possibility of happiness in her new life, and she and Pinkerton express their love.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Three years have passed since Pinkerton's departure from Nagasaki. Suzuki warns Cio-Cio-San they have almost no money and are near destitution, but Cio-Cio-San is confident that Pinkerton will return for her. Sharpless enters, bearing a letter from Pinkerton. He doesn't get a chance to read it, at first because of Cio-Cio-San's constant interruptions and then because Goro arrives with Prince Yamadori, who also wants to wed Cio-Cio-San. According to Goro, under Japanese law Pinkerton's absence is grounds for divorce. Cio-Cio-San replies that since she is American, Japanese law doesn't apply to her.

After Goro and Yamadori depart, Sharpless bluntly asks Cio-Cio-San what she will do if Pinkerton doesn't return. She replies that she would either return to the life of a geisha, or more likely, take her own life. When he urges her to accept Yamadori's proposal, Cio-Cio-San is deeply hurt. She shows Sharpless her son, and asks Sharpless to inform Pinkerton that he is a father—surely this news will make Pinkerton hurry back to her. Sharpless promises her that Pinkerton will know.

Suzuki and Cio-Cio-San hear a cannon shot from the harbor. Pinkerton's ship, the USS *Abraham Lincoln,* arrives, and Suzuki and Cio-Cio-San decorate the house with flowers in preparation for his return. Night falls, and they settle in to wait for Pinkerton.

ACT III

At dawn, the drowsy Cio-Cio-San sings a lullaby to her boy and goes in to sleep. Pinkerton and Sharpless arrive. Suzuki notices a woman in the garden, and Sharpless tells her that she is Kate, Pinkerton's American wife, who wants to raise Cio-Cio-San's child as her own. Pinkerton, overcome by remorse, is unable to confront Cio-Cio-San.

Cio-Cio-San enters and sees Kate in the garden. Cio-Cio-San figures out who Kate is, and Kate asks Cio-Cio-San to relinquish her son. Cio-Cio-San says she will, if Pinkerton comes to ask for him. Cio-Cio-San readies herself for Pinkerton's arrival, with tragic consequences.

ARTISTS

GEOFFREY ALM
Fight Director (Seattle, WA)

Seattle Opera Debut: *War and Peace* ('90)
Previously at Seattle Opera: *The Combat* ('17); *La traviata* ('17); *The Ring* ('00-'13)
Recently: *Man of La Mancha* (5th Avenue Theatre); *Dangerous Liaisons* (ACT Theatre); *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *Here Lies Love* (Seattle Repertory Theatre

RYAN BEDE
Prince Yamadori

Baritone (Tacoma, WA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Second Priest, *The Magic Flute* ('17)
Recently: Moralès/Le Dancaïre, *Carmen (*Pacific Northwest Opera); Papageno, *The Magic Flute* (Opera Idaho); Bass soloist, Mozart *Requiem* (Sofia, Bulgaria)
Upcoming: Jim Crowley, *An American Dream*, and Fiorello, *The Barber of Seville* (Seattle Opera); Bass soloist, Handel *Messiah* (Bremerton Symphony)

DOMINICK CHENES
Lieutenant Pinkerton

Tenor (Las Vegas, NV)
Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: Rodolfo, *La bohème* (Welsh National Opera); Pinkerton, *Madame Butterfly* (Austin Opera); Don José, *Carmen* (Utah Opera)
Upcoming: Rodolfo, *La bohème* (Opera Colorado); Turiddu, *Cavalleria rusticana* (New Orleans Opera)

KATE CHERRY
Stage Director (Sydney, Australia)

Seattle Opera Debut
Director/CEO, National Institute of Dramatic Art
Recently: *La traviata* and *Madame Butterfly* (New Zealand Opera); *La traviata* (Opera Queensland)

ALEXEY DOLGOV
Lieutenant Pinkerton

Tenor (Moscow, Russia)
Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: Lensky, *Eugene Onegin* (Metropolitan Opera); Pinkerton, *Madame Butterfly* (Bayerische Staatsoper); Edgardo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Israeli Opera)
Upcoming: Rodolfo, *La bohème* (Israeli Opera)

ROXANNE FOSTER
Choreographer (Bainbridge Island, WA)

Seattle Opera Debut: *The Pearl Fishers* ('09)
Previously at Seattle Opera: *Count Ory* ('16); *The Marriage of Figaro* ('16); *The Pearl Fishers* ('15)
Recently: *Turandot* (Opera Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Opera)
Upcoming: *Turandot* (Vancouver Opera)

LIANNA HAROUTOUNIAN
Cio-Cio-San

Soprano (Metsamor, Armenia)
Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: Cio-Cio-San, *Madame Butterfly* (Staatsoper Hamburg); Leonora, *Il trovatore* (Royal Opera Covent Garden); Elisabetta, *Don Carlo* (Deutsch Oper Berlin)
Upcoming: Amelia, *Simone Boccanegra* (Concertgebouw Amsterdam); Aida, *Aida* (Teatro Real de Madrid); Tosca, *Tosca* (Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Valencia)

WESTON HURT
Sharpless

Baritone (Houston, TX)
Seattle Opera Debut: Germont, *La traviata* ('09)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Giorgio Germont, *La traviata* ('17); Talbot, *Mary Stuart* ('16); Nabucco, *Nabucco* ('15)
Recently: Scarpia, *Tosca* (Houston Grand Opera); Valentin, *Faust* (New Orleans Opera); Scarpia, *Tosca* (Tulsa Opera)
Upcoming: Scarpia, *Tosca* (Nashville Opera); John Peeribyngle, *Il grillo del focolare* (Teatro Grattacielo); Creon, *Medea* (Opera Omaha)

KWANGSUK KU
Registrar

Baritone (Seoul, South Korea)
Seattle Opera Debut: Messenger, *La traviata* ('17)
Seattle Opera Chorus Member since 2016
Recently: Chorus, *The Flying Dutchman, Katya Kabanova,* and *The Magic Flute* (Seattle Opera)
Upcoming: Officer, *The Barber of Seville* (Seattle Opera)

SARAH MATTOX
Kate Pinkerton

Mezzo-Soprano (Seattle, WA)
Seattle Opera Debut: Fyodor, *Boris Godunov* ('00)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Second Lay Sister, *Suor Angelica* ('13); Second Maid Servant, *Elektra* ('08); Alisa, *Lucia di Lammermoor* ('00)
Recently: Carmen, *Carmen* (Pacific Northwest Opera, Opera Bend, and Walla Walla Symphony)
Upcoming: Mezzo-Soprano soloist, Verdi *Requiem* (UW Symphony); Mezzo-Soprano soloist, Mahler 2nd Symphony (Poulsbo Orchestra); TangleTown Trio, Art Song Series (Songs@Tsunami)

ARTISTS CONT.

CARLO MONTANARO
Conductor (Cecina, Italy)

Seattle Opera Debut: *Don Quichotte* ('11)
Previously at Seattle Opera: *Mary Stuart* ('16); *Nabucco* ('15); *The Consul* ('14)
Recently: *La bohème* (Sydney Opera House); *Rigoletto* (Oper Frankfurt); *La bohème* (San Francisco Opera)
Upcoming: *La traviata* (Dallas Opera and Opera Australia Melbourne); *La bohème* (Korea National Opera)

RENÉE RAPIER
Suzuki

Mezzo-Soprano (Marion, Iowa)
Seattle Opera Debut: Anna, *Mary Stuart* ('16)
Recently: Suzuki, *Madame Butterfly* (Opera Theatre St. Louis); Secretary, *Nixon in China* (LA Philharmonic); Rosina, *The Barber of Seville* (Opera San Jose)
Upcoming: Flora Bervoix, *La traviata* (San Francisco Opera)

RODELL ROSEL
Goro

Tenor (Manila, Philippines)
Seattle Opera Debut: Monostatos, *The Magic Flute* ('17)
Recently: First Jew, *Salome*, and Spalanzani, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Los Angeles Opera); Mime, *Das Rheingold* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
Upcoming: Tanzmeister, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Kentucky Opera); Njegus, *The Merry Widow* (Florentine Opera); Pang, *Turandot* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)

YASKO SATO
Cio-Cio-San

Soprano (Abiko, Japan)
Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: Cio-Cio-San, *Madame Butterfly*, and Aida, *Aida* (Luglio Musicale Trapanese); Tosca, *Tosca* (Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Japan)
Upcoming: Tosca, *Tosca* (Fujisawa Civic Center, Japan); Nedda, *Pagliacci* (Tokyo Bunka Kaikan); Donna Elvira, *Don Giovanni* (Tokyo Nissay Hall, Yokosuka Art Hall)

MATT SCOTT
Lighting Designer (Melbourne, Australia)

Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: *The Rover* (Belvoir); *Once in Royal David's City* (Queensland Theatre/Black Swan State Theatre Company); *The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera Australia)
Upcoming: *Brigadoon* (The Production Company); *The Pearl Fishers* (State Opera of South Australia); *Madame Butterfly* (Opera Australia)

JONATHAN SILVIA
Imperial Commissioner

Bass-Baritone (Kirkland, WA)
Seattle Opera Debut: First Villager, *Pagliacci* ('08)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Second Armored Man, *The Magic Flute* ('17); Marquis D'Obigny, *La traviata* ('17); High Priest of Baal, *Nabucco* ('15)
Recently: Leporello, *Don Giovanni* and Zuniga, *Carmen* (Pacific Northwest Opera); Oroveso, *Norma* (Skagit Opera)

CHRISTINA SMITH
Production Designer (Melbourne, Australia)

Seattle Opera Debut
Recently: Set Designer, *The Flying Dutchman* (Victorian Opera); Set and Costume Designer, *Madame Butterfly* (New Zealand Opera); Set and Costume Designer, *La traviata* (State Opera South Australia, New Zealand Opera, Opera Queensland)
Upcoming: Set Designer, *Hayfever* (Melbourne Theatre Company); Set Designer, *Brigadoon* (The Production Company); Set and Costume Designer, *Gloria* (Melbourne Theatre Company)

DANIEL SUMEGI
The Bonze

Bass (Sydney, Australia)
Seattle Opera Debut: Daland, *The Flying Dutchman* ('07)
Previously at Seattle Opera: Daland, *The Flying Dutchman* ('16); Fafner and Hagen, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* ('09 and '13)
Recently: Fasolt/Hagen, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Opera Australia); Johnny Iselin, *The Manchurian Candidate* (Austin Opera); Walter, *Luisa Miller* (San Francisco Opera)
Upcoming: Don Basilio, *The Barber of Seville*; Don Pedro, *Beatrice and Benedict*; Ramfis, *Aida* (Seattle Opera)

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Melanie Hingson
Dana Johnson
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Mary McLaughlin
Eleanor Stallcop-Horrox
Shelly Traverse
Lyndee White

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Erica Convery
Laura Eichelberger
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Allison Brooke Robertson
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Rosetta Greek

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Scarlett del Rosario
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Shana Moffatt
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Victoria Parker
Jennifer Caine Provine
Mikhail Shmidt, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Clark Story
Jeannie Wells Yablonsky
Arthur Zadinsky

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Kathleen Boyer, *Asst. Principal*
Evan Anderson
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Wesley Dyring
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Sayaka Kokubo
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Nathan Chan, *Asst. Principal*
Eric Han
Roberta Downey
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Joy Payton-Stevens

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The Orchestra is composed of members of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

ALL THE WORLD'S (OUR) STAGE

By Jessica Murphy Moo

Madame Butterfly has its roots firmly planted in the Italian opera tradition of the early twentieth century, but our cast attests to opera's global reach in the twenty-first century.

Our Cio-Cio-Sans hail from Armenia and Japan, and our Pinkertons are Russian and American. Below is a brief introduction of the four singers in these roles and some of the experiences they will bring to the stage.

CIO-CIO-SAN

LIANNA HAROUTOUNIAN

FOURTH *BUTTERFLY*: Before singing in Seattle, Lianna Haroutounian has performed this role in France, in Amsterdam, and at San Francisco Opera. **FAVORITE MOMENT:** When the guns on the ship go off, announcing Pinkerton's return. "This moment is so emotionally strong. This character has such blind hope and belief that for a moment the audience might almost fall for it because of the amazing chord progression that Puccini has written. You may think the end may not be so bad." **EXTREME VOCAL CONTROL:** Cio-Cio-San is a long sing that involves stamina and technique that produces many colors. "All this must be done in such a natural form, with such ease, so that the audience doesn't feel the strain, so the drama continues." **HOME BASE:** She has lived in Paris for 20 years with her family. She has an 18-year-old son. **ALL IN THE FAMILY:** In her childhood home in Armenia she grew up in a musical family. Her father sang Armenian art songs and songs about folklore, but he also had a love of opera. She played piano and eventually started to sing and attended the Conservatory of Music in Armenia. **HER ARTISTIC HOME:** After performing *Don Carlo* at Royal Opera Covent Garden, her career began to take off. **WHAT SHE ALWAYS TRAVELS WITH:** "My pillow. Then it always feels like home."

YASKO SATO

US DEBUT: This performance marks Yasko Sato's first performance in the US. She first started performing Cio-Cio-San in 2007, and it is the role she has performed the most, at least 100 times. It has become her favorite role. **CONNECTING TO THE CHARACTER:** "I resonate with Cio-Cio-San because of her pride and the fact that she is the daughter of a Samurai warrior in Japan. I like how she carries that dignity and pride, which speaks not just to a Japanese audience. It goes beyond cultural boundaries and speaks to us all as humans." **ON THE RECEPTION OF *BUTTERFLY* IN JAPAN:** In general it is well liked. "I do hear that Butterfly is not a typical Japanese female character... Also, when Japanese people see the set, often times it doesn't look Japanese." **HOME BASE:** Italy. She moved there to continue studying with her voice teacher. **THE CALL OF ITALY:** Sato started piano at age eight and by age 12 her teacher broke the news that being a concert pianist might be a tough road. At the same time her choir instructor recommended that she study the Italian classics, and she started to fall in love with them. "They say that French is the language to communicate love; Italian is the language to communicate poetry." **FAVORITE PLACE TO SING:** The southern tip of Italy. **NON-OPERATIC INTERESTS:** Pop music, such as Michael Jackson and Lady Gaga.

PINKERTON

ALEXEY DOLGOV

FIRST PINKERTON: Washington National Opera, 2011. "I have been booed every time I've sung Pinkerton in America. The first time I was shocked. My colleagues told me, 'Don't worry. Those boos are for Pinkerton, not for you!'" **EARLY INSPIRATION:** He saw the first concert of *The Three Tenors* (Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, and Luciano Pavarotti) and decided that was what he wanted to do. **FAVORITE PLACE TO SING:** Houston Grand Opera. "It was my first serious theater and the house has incredible acoustics." **HOW HE SEES PINKERTON:** "He is a young man who doesn't think about the consequences of his actions.... The audience needs to see an evolution in his character, from selfishness to repentance." **DOES PINKERTON SEEM AMERICAN?** "It's a difficult question. I think every nation has people like him who don't think about their behavior. We Russians have the same people." **OTHER MUSICAL INTERESTS:** The Beatles, Queen, Russian rock. **OTHER INTERESTS:** Mobile gadgets, reading, and pneumatic (air-pressure) guns from England, American, Germany, and Russia. **HOME BASE:** Moscow. **WHEN HE ISN'T SINGING:** He's home spending time with his kids and his wife. **PERFORMANCE DAY REGIMEN:** He sleeps a minimum of eight hours, then does morning exercises with respiratory gymnastics. **NEXT UP:** Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* in Scotland.

DOMINICK CHENES

PINKERTON PAST: Dominick Chenes performed the role previously at Austin Opera. **DID HE GET BOOED?** Yes. (Booing Pinkerton is mostly a US tradition, but Chenes did hear a Pinkerton get booed in Wales.) **LOVE DUET "WITH AN EDGE":** At the end of Act I, there is a long love duet—17 minutes long!—between Cio-Cio-San and Pinkerton. "The soprano is singing all the beautiful lines with me. But I need to be impetuous. Pinkerton is on a 90-degree edge." **WHEN HE'S NOT ONSTAGE DURING ACT II:** "I eat my dinner and run up scales, then I go backstage to watch the action and get back in the moment." **FIRST INSTRUMENT:** Saxophone. **CAREER PLAN A:** Chenes originally thought he'd be a pediatrician. **FAMILY REACTION TO THE CAREER CHANGE:** "Some were great. Some were confused." **AGE HE STARTED SINGING:** 18. **THE SONG THAT GOT HIM NOTICED AT A HIGH SCHOOL TALENT SHOW:** Brian McKnight's "Back at One." He then started to learn Italian art songs, and his vocal coach asked him to sing for a friend of his. That friend ended up giving Chenes a full scholarship to UNLV's school of music. **WHERE HE CALLS HOME:** Philadelphia, after going through the program at the Academy of Vocal Arts. **FAMILY:** He has two young boys (ages 3 ½ and 9 months). **SELF DESCRIBED:** "Shoe person." **RECENT TRAVELS:** Welsh National Opera, Geneva, Sweden.

MY STORY

By Gabrielle Nomura Gainor

Most opera companies perform *Madame Butterfly* because of Puccini's beautiful melodies. But not everyone can see themselves in this story. For Asian Americans like myself, *Butterfly* can be uncomfortable, a reminder of how often our stories are taken from us, then twisted, creating caricatures out of our ancestry.

An opera about a submissive Japanese maiden may seem harmless when world-class music is involved, but the stereotype persists beyond the stage. While some viewers can enjoy an evening of music and theater, then go home, Asian Americans don't have the option of leaving *Butterfly* behind. So long as our ancestry remains etched on our faces, we will be burdened by the exotic lotus blossom, the martial arts master, and the sidekick. We carry the full weight of these stereotypes wherever we go.

To be Asian in America means to grow up amidst mocking depictions of people like you. In the US, our timeless and treasured films include characters resembling buck-toothed propaganda (Mr. Yunioshi, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*) and dopey, forever-foreigners (Lung Duk Dong, *Sixteen Candles*). Is it any wonder we Asian Americans get questions like "Where are you really from?" or "How do you speak English so well?" Here in the US, it's normal to see a white Hollywood actress like Emma Stone cast as a mixed-race, Chinese/Hawaiian woman. Or a movie remake of a Marvel comic that changes the race of a Tibetan character in order to hire Tilda Swinton. At least now we have Mulan and Moana—neither of whom were around when I was small and searching for a princess who looked like me. When you can't see your story, it can feel like you don't matter.

Desdemona Chiang, a stage director who has worked at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and ACT, says she doesn't see herself reflected in classical art such as opera, ballet, or symphonic music. "I think when we say 'classical,' we really mean 'European,'" she says. "I might see representations of how white America perceives people who look like me, but those representations don't usually speak to me, nor do they reflect how I see myself... I do, however, see myself represented in works of art that deconstruct classical art forms, but I think that's usually more about rebellion than anything else."

While Asian representation remains a struggle, ironically, our numbers are increasing. Asian Americans have become the fastest-growing racial group in both the United States and here in Washington, followed by people who identify as two or more races. So when it comes to works featuring non-European characters, performing arts troupes simply can't afford to stick with the status quo.

Both the audience and our world have changed considerably since *Madame Butterfly*'s 1904 premiere (we now have Broadway shows about the founding fathers told through hip-hop, for example). Westerners don't need to daydream about far-away exotic lands of "The Orient"; people of Asian ancestry are an essential part of the fabric of American life, especially here in the Pacific Northwest.

For years, my community has been speaking out regarding issues of yellowface, cultural appropriation, and minority representation. What's changed is who's listening. Since a production of *The Mikado* made national news in 2014, this broader conversation has permeated the Puget Sound theater community, including here at Seattle Opera. Now, as the company mounts *Butterfly*, changes are also taking place in the opera world. As seen through the Metropolitan Opera's decision to drop blackface in a 2015 *Otello* production, the art form is just beginning to reevaluate practices like colorblind casting and how it represents non-European characters. For example, Seattle Opera's *Madame Butterfly* will not attempt to change a given singer's race through wigs or makeup.

Of course, art must ultimately do more than simply mitigate harm. In order to make real strides in racial equity, people of color need to be involved at every level of the creative process, from selecting repertoire, to casting, to directing. Simply recreating Meiji-era Japan for *Butterfly* is not what will lead to the empowerment of marginalized people. Empowerment comes from having a diverse group of

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Above: Gabrielle Nomura Gainor (far right) with members of her family at the 2015 opening of An American Dream. *Next to Gabrielle from right: John Nomura (grandfather) who was born behind barbed wire while Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II; Elise Nomura (aunt); Stephanie Nomura-Henley (mother).*

visionaries and decision-makers at the table—artists like Matthew Ozawa, for example, who recently directed *Butterfly* at Arizona Opera.

Butterfly had always made Ozawa uncomfortable in the past, so he needed to find a way to connect with it and ultimately direct a production that he didn't find offensive at its core. Part of the answer for him was the racially diverse cast. The Arizona production felt inclusive because there was no yellowface, and "there was a representation of all humanity." The Suzukis were African American and white, the Cio-Cio-Sans were white and Latina, and Pinkerton was Latino. He also knew he had to look at the opera with fresh eyes unhampered by opera's traditions, which have largely been created through a Eurocentric lens. Ozawa's own multicultural identity surely contributed to a more nuanced production, too. "As a kid, I was not allowed to perform in the opera *Werther*. I was rejected because I was not white," he says. "That hit me hard. From that point on, I knew I'd never be a performer in opera. I wasn't part of the culture of all these shows. And yet I chose to make this art form my love and my career. So now that I am able to speak up I want to see change in the industry."

I too have chosen to dedicate my life to art forms that originate from Europe. I am also part of the community that protests *The Mikado* and *Madame Butterfly*. Like Matthew Ozawa, I stay because it's a worthwhile fight. Just as brown girls deserve to watch ballerinas with their skin tone dance, and yellow boys deserve to see movies with a handsome hero who looks like them (not just another ninja), people of color deserve to see themselves represented in this beautiful space: McCaw Hall. We need to see stories that hold up our complexity and potential on an equal arm's length to white people and European traditions. Is opera willing to help make this happen?

I know the potential is there. I am thankful for Lawrence Brownlee, a self-proclaimed short black man, who not only redefines what a prince looks like, but is unafraid to be visible as an opera star who speaks out on NPR against racism, racial profiling, and the "senseless deaths" of young African Americans. I have sat in awe as transgender kids discovered aspects of themselves in opera during *As One*, the story of a transgender woman's journey to finding her true self. I have even experienced an opera that illuminated what happened to Japanese Americans like my family, my *bachan* and *jichan*, imprisoned during World War II because they looked like the enemy. As the performers of *An American Dream* wove a tale of dignity and pain, the audience saw more and felt more deeply in a way that only art makes possible. They were connecting to this story. My story. There were no stereotypes or mocking caricatures in the room, just powerful storytelling and music.

ASIAN ARTS LEADERS RESPOND TO *MADAME BUTTERFLY*

By Jessica Murphy Moo

Members of the Asian American community are speaking out about *Madame Butterfly*, and Seattle Opera is listening.

On July 9, Seattle Opera hosted "Asian Arts Leaders Respond to *Madame Butterfly*: A Community Forum and Panel Discussion" at SIFF. There were 93 people in attendance.

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Frank Abe, co-founder of the Asian American Journalists Association in Seattle, moderated the discussion and posed questions to street-styles dancer Angel Alviar-Langley; artist and activist Kathy Hsieh; artist and performer Jenny Ku; associate professor Dr. LeiLani Nishime; opera stage director Matthew Ozawa; tenor Karl Reyes; and playwright and producer Roger Tang.

The thoughtful and candid discussion involved individual testimonials of the challenge for Asian Americans in the arts, many of whom have charted new territory without role models. Alviar-Langley teaches dance to youth, for instance, so they can say, "This is a possibility for me." Rates of representation of Asian Americans in both film and onstage still remain low, and the stats are particularly stark in a community like Seattle where the Asian Pacific Islander population is at 18 percent and those onstage are 2-4 percent (and half of those are at Asian American theater companies).

Several also spoke about the power of a story—one that some see as a story with a stereotype—that is repeated again and again.

"I think a lot of the issues surrounding *Madame Butterfly* have less to do with the actual opera itself or this iteration of it and more of the repetition of it and that we tell these stories over and over again in all sorts of different forms," said LeiLani Nishime. There is Puccini's version, which we've been telling for more than a century, but also the adaptations for Broadway. What does it mean to be represented in one way again and again? And when audiences hear this same story again and again, what impact does that have? Do we stop seeing it? Do we stop questioning it?

Stage director Matthew Ozawa (who is one of the few Asian American opera stage directors working at major professional companies in the US) decided to question everything when he directed *Madame Butterfly* for Arizona Opera. His takeaway is that no one in the opera comes away looking "good," and that much of the problem with the piece lies in the traditional interpretations that have become accepted over time.

Seattle Opera and our audiences know well the place that this work has in the traditional operatic canon, and the company is hosting these discussions to start asking the important questions. We would like to find a way forward—the right way forward—for this art form in contemporary society. We aren't presenting opera in a vacuum. We are Seattle's opera company, and this role bears responsibility to the many communities that make up our region.

For the full transcript of the event and to hear from more Asian American voices in our blog interviews please go to seattleopera.org/butterflydiscussion. And to learn more about the American discussion about this work and the impact of its story, please see our lobby displays during intermission today.

U.S. Bank believes the play encouraged by youth arts programming is beneficial to young people's long-term development.

Through U.S. Bank's support of Seattle Opera's Touring Opera, Opera Time, and Experience Opera programs, students build problem-solving skills, greater creativity, and collaborative relationships with their classmates.

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Scenic artists and hair/makeup work is performed by employees represented by I.A.T.S.E., Local #488.

STAFF CHAT: JON FARMER

Jon Farmer, an incredibly versatile musician, has performed with the Seattle Opera Chorus since the 2005 *Ring* and also performed the Officer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Most recently he toured nearly 40 schools as Guillermo (Town Crier/King's Assistant) and Margarita (one of the stepsisters) in Seattle Opera's school touring show *Cinderella en España*. He has performed the role of Pinkerton in several productions for other companies, and this is the first production where he has performed in the chorus for *Madame Butterfly*.

—Jessica Murphy Moo

WHERE WILL WE SEE AND HEAR THE CHORUS IN *MADAME BUTTERFLY*?

The men don't start singing until the wedding. We're the extended family. Later on we sing the famous Humming Chorus. *Les Mis* was written by Claude-Michel Schönberg, and "Bring Him Home" does bear a striking resemblance to Puccini's Humming Chorus from *Butterfly*. Andrew Lloyd Webber lifted music for *Phantom of the Opera* from Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*. (Puccini's family and Webber are settling out of court on that matter.)

DO YOU REALLY HUM WHEN YOU SING THE HUMMING CHORUS?

In this production, yes, as specified in the score. We will be singing from the "Red Zone" in the theater by the high box seats. It sounds otherworldly. Beautiful.

Later we will be mic'd offstage for four lines. Sometimes when we're offstage, they'll add an effect, maybe an echo or reverb. In *The Flying Dutchman*, we were supposed to sound like ghosts.

I have no idea if we'll be used when we're not singing. In *Katya Kabanova* I was a stage hand!

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR ROLES IN *CINDERELLA EN ESPAÑA*. WHAT A SUCCESSFUL RUN!

The kids really loved it. I think it had to do with it being a familiar story—and being bilingual.

DID YOU HAVE ANY MEMORABLE RESPONSES FROM THE STUDENTS?

In Quincy, there was a boy who said, "I didn't go to assemblies, because I never understood what they were saying." We were singing in Spanish, a language he did understand. It was awesome for them and it was awesome for us. There were kids who wanted us to sign our autographs on their wrists.

WHAT DID YOU TALK TO THE STUDENTS ABOUT AFTER THE SHOWS?

We talked about how the production involved more than just singers. There were people who designed the costumes and the set and an accompanist, a stage director, a music director. There are all these career possibilities.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS FIELD?

My father was a music minister at a Baptist Church in Tennessee. We did gospel quartets—my mom was the alto, my dad was the tenor, my sister was the soprano, and I was the baritone and the pianist. I was also accompanist/assistant director of my high school choir and played tuba/sousaphone in the marching band, which led me to bass guitar. I grew up listening to funk like James Brown, Parliament Funkadelic, the Commodores, Rick James, and Sly and the Family Stone. The first time I heard opera—there was the Grand Ole Opry but that was different—was in college when I decided to major in voice.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU AREN'T SINGING OPERA?

Opera is not all I do. I cobble together a bunch of things, like Rodolfo in *La bohème*. He wrote for the newspaper, though all he wanted to write was plays. We do what we have to do to do the things we want to do.

I perform and I teach. I teach piano, guitar, bass guitar, and voice. I play piano, bass guitar, drums, and guitar—and I sing. If someone asks me "What do you sing?"—I sing in most all styles/genres, so I just say, "What do you want to hear?"

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NEW OPERAS IN NEW PLACES

This September Seattle Opera's Education and Community Engagement Department will partner with local Japanese American organizations to present *An American Dream*, the third production in its new series of chamber operas that tackle contemporary issues in our community.

Seattle Opera, *An American Dream*, 2015 © Philip Newton

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed to enact the forced removal and arrest of Japanese and Japanese American people living on the west coast during World War II. Executive Order 9066 had an enormous impact on the Pacific Northwest. The opera *An American Dream*, which premiered in 2015, grew out of a community storytelling initiative here in Seattle. The opera involves the story of a family affected by the incarceration of Japanese American citizens during World War II.

"Given the anniversary of Executive Order 9066 and the impact this had on our immediate community," says Barbara Lynne Jamison, Director of Education and Community Engagement, "we decided that now was the time to program this piece again."

An important aspect of the company's new community engagement programming is to bring opera out of its traditional home, which in Seattle is McCaw Hall, and into new neighborhoods. *An American Dream* will be presented at Washington Hall in Seattle's Central District.

Seattle's Japanese American Citizen League (JACL) will play an important role as a community partner. JACL members will host post-show discussions and will highlight its role in the national "Power of Words" campaign, in which the organization interrogates the words we use to describe the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. The campaign looks at words that were used at the time, such as calling incarcerated citizens "evacuees," and argues that this word is a euphemism to soften the impact of the true story—where rights and properties and homes were taken from innocent men, women, and children.

"Racial profiling and anti-immigrant attitudes continue to harm marginalized people today," says Gabrielle Nomura Gainor, JACL board member and Seattle Opera's Media Relations Manager. "We Japanese Americans understand this painfully well. For many of us, sharing our incarceration story goes hand in hand with a responsibility to work for justice. Art, including opera, can be a powerful ally to our activism."

WASHINGTON HALL PERFORMANCE DATES:
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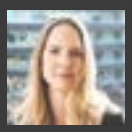

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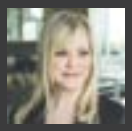

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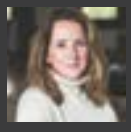

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Seattle Opera at the Center, our project to build a new operational facility adjacent to our performance space here in Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, is well on its way to opening doors in Fall of 2018. This state-of-the-art building will house new and improved education, artistic, and administrative spaces to create opera for all!

On June 20, we officially broke ground on the construction site at the corner of Mercer Street and Speight Jenkins Way (4th Ave N). As the foundation is poured and steel begins to rise, our shared vision for the community will come to life!

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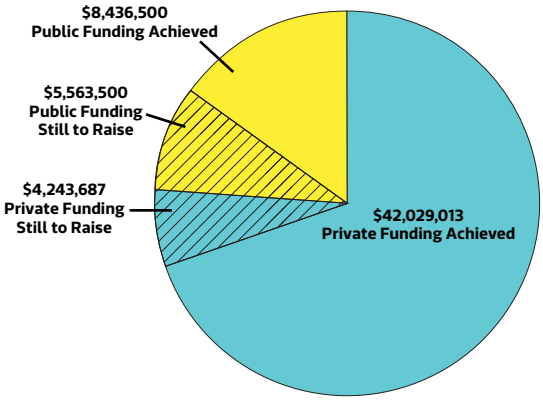

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The Producer's Circle recognizes donors who have made a three-year Annual Fund commitment of $60,000-$99,999. This new tier of customized giving brings more possibilities than ever before to ensure the present and future of your opera company. Make your pledge today and enjoy memorable behind-the-scenes experiences with Seattle Opera!

LEARN MORE ABOUT MULTI-YEAR GIFTS by contacting Donor Services at donor.services@seattleopera.org or 206.389.7669.

OPERA TOUCHES OUR HEARTS, ENGAGES OUR MINDS

Seattle Opera's 2017/18 season is chock full of possibilities to connect, engage, and inspire.

Your donor support fuels our programming, bringing powerful opera onto the stage here at McCaw Hall and throughout Washington State.

Opera is for all, and it comes to life through YOU! Join the Seattle Opera donor family to make a positive impact on your community.

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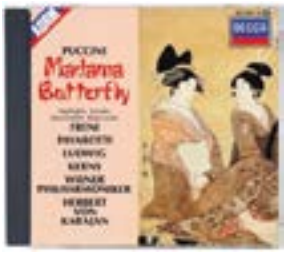
AMUSEMENTS

Gifts of Artistic Expression

Located on the Kreielsheimer Promenade Level of McCaw Hall. Open two and a half hours prior to curtain.



MADAME BUTTERFLY HIGHLIGHTS CD

Mirella Freni sings Cio-Cio-San and Luciano Pavarotti is Pinkerton in this "highlights" CD featuring more than an hour of the most beloved music from Puccini's classic work. Herbert von Karajan conducts Wiener Philharmoniker in the 1974 Decca studio recording. $26.95

NEW—INSULATED WATER BOTTLE

Bevi Acqua! Drink water! The key to a healthy singing voice is staying hydrated. Why not drink in style? Twenty-six-ounce turquoise and silver insulated bottle stays cold for 24 hours and hot for 12 hours. $32.95

NEW—"MINE" MUG

Make sure everyone knows this Seattle Opera mug belongs to you! Light gray porcelain with white and dark gray lettering and turquoise accent. Holds 16 ounces. $16.95

CDS, BOOKS, DVDS

Butterfly and Puccini fans will find lots of souvenir options for sale in the main gift shop located near the box office in the lower lobby. Prices vary.

EXCLUSIVE ARTWORK T-SHIRTS

Designer Kitty Kough created this evocative illustration for Seattle Opera's poignant production of Puccini's heartbreaking masterpiece. Available in men's and women's long sleeve. Prices vary.

SHOP AMUSEMENTS ONLINE AT SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/SHOP.

SEATTLE OPERA ONLINE

Visit seattleopera.org to find trailer videos, photos, audio clips, and interactive guides about *Madame Butterfly* and all the upcoming operas in our exciting 2017/18 season.

VIDEOS

DIRECTOR'S CHAT

Meet Stage Director Kate Cherry and learn more about her concept and inspirations behind this new-to-Seattle production of Puccini's classic.

PUCCINI HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SO ARCHIVES

A three-minute collection of video clips from our recent presentations of Puccini's most popular works: *Tosca* (2015), *La bohème* (2013), *Madame Butterfly* (2012), and *Turandot* (2012).

FAMOUS OPERA DUETS FROM THE SO ARCHIVES

When two incredible voices sing as one, the result is pure magic. In honor of the stirring songs for two featured in *Butterfly*, we've created a two-minute montage of notable duets from productions throughout our history—including *Lakmé* (1967), *The Pearl Fishers* (2016), and *Porgy and Bess* (2011).

ONE-MINUTE TRAILER

A montage of dress rehearsal footage from Seattle Opera's current *Madame Butterfly* production.

AUDIO PLAYER

MUSICAL EXCERPTS

Sample audio clips and highlights from *Madame Butterfly* and many other Seattle Opera performances at soundcloud.com/seattle-opera.

ALSO ON THE WEB

#SOButterfly

UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR DONORS

WAM: DIRECTING *BARBER* WITH LINDY HUME
October 1, 2017
Join Wagner and More for an enlightening discussion and Q&A with *Barber of Seville* director Lindy Hume and General Director Aidan Lang.
(Annual Fund donors of $100 and more)

***THE BARBER OF SEVILLE* DRESS REHEARSALS**
October 11 & 12, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Watch the final details come together at the last rehearsals prior to opening night.
(Annual Fund donors of $250 and more)

SPOTLIGHT DINNER: *THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*
October 12, 2017, 5:00 p.m.
General Director Aidan Lang hosts this insightful three-course dinner prior to the Dress Rehearsal, featuring a special guest artist.
(Annual Fund donors of $500 and more)

SOUND AND SOWING
Fall TBD
Join The SOWING Circle for an intersection of performance, broadcast, cultural criticism, and opera in this special partnership event with KUOW.
(Annual Fund donors of $1,000 and more)

Questions? Contact Donor Services at rsvp@seattleopera.org or 206.389.7669.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/DONATE

OPERA ON THE RADIO

Tune to 98.1 Classical KING-FM every Saturday evening for more great opera, including live performance from the Seattle Opera stage and great recordings hosted by Aidan Lang or Jonathan Dean.
KING.ORG

BRAVO!

BRAVO! Nights

BRAVO! members enjoy complimentary wine and coffee in the BRAVO! Lounges during intermission.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/BRAVO

BRAVO! WINE TASTING
Sunday, September 24 at 2:00 p.m.
Novelty Hill Januik Winery
Mix, mingle, and enjoy a tasting with BRAVO! in beautiful Woodinville wine country.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/BRAVORSVP

BRAVO! AT THE MOVIES: *AMADEUS*
Saturday, November 4 at 12:00 p.m.
SIFF Cinema Uptown
Free for BRAVO! members and one guest

Join BRAVO! for a viewing of *Amadeus*, the iconic 1984 film that won eight Academy Awards including Best Picture. Mozart's music features prominently in this fictionalized account of his life.
Reservations will open in Fall 2017.

TALKS AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Pre-Performance Talks

60 minutes before every Seattle Opera performance. Free admission with performance ticket.
Nesholm Family Lecture Hall, McCaw Hall

Opera Talk Backs

This 30-minute event is hosted by a member of the artistic or education staff and will feature a special guest from the cast or creative team. Join us to explore a variety of perspectives on performance and production. In the Allen Room at McCaw Hall after every performance. Space is limited. Free with admission.

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Speakers Bureau

Previews by Norm Hollingshead are available throughout King, Pierce, and Kitsap counties. Visit SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/SPEAKERSBUREAU for a full list of dates and events.

Seattle Opera Lecture Series at SU

Next: September 26, 7:00 p.m.
Join us in the Pigott Auditorium at Seattle University for a fun and interactive multi-media experience designed to make you think about opera in new and innovative ways. Free admission.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/SULECTURES

Artful Aging

In community centers, retirement homes, and memory loss centers, Seattle Opera will provide a host of engaging creative experiences, including recitals, guided sing-alongs, workshops to create original opera scenes, and more. The arts keep our minds engaged and our spirits strong!
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/ARTFULAGING

Youth Events

THE YOUTH OPERA PROJECT

Students ages 7-18 of all experience levels will explore stagecraft, singing, acting, dancing, and more, culminating with public performances of an opera. Next placement auditions: September 9.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/YOP

STUDENT DRESS REHEARSALS

Up Next: *The Barber of Seville,*
October 11 and 12, 7:00 p.m.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/EXPERIENCEOPERA

Family Day Matinee
The Barber of Seville Family Day,
October 22, 2017
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/FAMILYDAY

CLASSROOM OPERA FORUMS

A customized classroom-based discussion where students will "read between the lines," engaging with opera through the underlying social, historical, and literary connections.
SEATTLEOPERA.ORG/EXPERIENCEOPERA

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