



**MADAMA  
BUTTERFLY**

Study Guide  
2008/09 Season

*Madama Butterfly* "is the most deeply felt and  
imaginative opera I have conceived!"

- Giacomo Puccini

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## WELCOME TO MANITOBA OPERA!

We're very pleased that you have decided to bring your students to *Madama Butterfly*. We appreciate both your interest in this wonderful art form and your willingness to expose students to opera and thank you for that.

This Study Guide has been created to assist you in preparing your students for their visit to the opera. It is our hope that you will be able to add this to your existing curriculum in order to expand your students' understanding of opera, literature, history, and the fine arts.

Some students may wish to go over the information at home if there is insufficient time to discuss in class. You can make the opera experience more meaningful and enjoyable by sharing with them knowledge and background on opera and *Madama Butterfly* before they attend the Dress Rehearsal.

Materials in the Study Guide may be copied and distributed to students.

### **Singing in Full Voice at the Dress Rehearsal**

Please Note: The Dress Rehearsal is the last opportunity the singers will have on stage to work with the orchestra before Opening Night. Since vocal demands are so great on opera singers, some singers choose not to sing in full voice during the Dress Rehearsal in order to avoid unnecessary strain.

Study Guide compiled by Manitoba Opera from sources including Bellevue University, *The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Opera*, *Fort Worth Opera 2000 Study Guide*, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Metropolitan Opera International Radio Broadcast Information Centre, New York City Opera, *Opera Columbus Study Guide*, *Opera News*, *Operas Every Child Should Know*, *Opera Today*, *Orchestra London Study Guide*, *San Diego Opera Study Guide*, *A Season of Opera*, *Tulsa Opera Study Guide*, University of Manitoba's Winnipeg Building Index, Wikipedia, [www.musicwithease.com](http://www.musicwithease.com)

## A SHORT OVERVIEW OF OPERA

An opera, like a play, is a dramatic form of theatre that includes scenery, props, and costumes. In opera, however, the actors are trained singers who sing their lines instead of speaking them. An orchestra accompanies the singers. A conductor coordinates both the singers on stage and the musicians in the orchestra pit.

Opera consists of many dimensions: the human voice, orchestral music, the visual arts (scenery, costumes and special effects), drama (tragedy or comedy), and occasionally dance. The melding of these elements creates one incredible theatrical experience.

Opera has its roots in Greek drama and originated in Florence, Italy, in the late 1500's, with a small group of men who were members of a Camerata (Italian for society). The intellectuals, poets and musicians of the Camerata decided they wanted words to be a featured aspect of music. They used ancient Greek drama as their inspiration, including the use of a chorus to comment on the action.

The Camerata laid down three principles for their new art form:

- The text must be understood; the accompaniment must be very simple and should not distract from the words.
- The words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, as if they were spoken, and must avoid the rhythms of songs.
- The melody must interpret the feeling of the text.

The first significant composer to fully develop the ideas of the Camerata was Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), whose opera *Dafne*, based on a Greek myth, was performed in 1594 and is regarded as the first opera.

Operas are divided into scenes and acts that contain different types of vocal pieces for one or many singers. An aria is a vocal solo that usually focuses on a character's emotions rather than actions. A recitative is sung dialogue or speech that occurs between arias and ensembles. It helps to further the action of the story and shape the relationships between the characters.

The story of the opera is written as a libretto, a text that is set to music. Composers write the score or the music for the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the text of the opera, but most often they work with a librettist. In the past, the libretto was also bound and sold to the audience. Today, the audience can easily follow the plot with the use of surtitles - the English translation of the libretto, which are projected onto a screen above the stage.

There are several differences between opera and musicals like *Phantom of the Opera*. One significant difference is the 'partnership' found between the music and the drama in an opera. While musicals use songs to help tell a story, in an opera, the music contributes to the drama, it does not only accompany it.

The musical style is another important difference between the two art forms; opera is usually classical and complex, while musicals feature pop songs and sometimes rock and roll. Also, singers in musicals have microphones hidden in their costumes or wigs to amplify their voices. The voices of opera singers are so strong no amplification is needed, even in a large venue. Furthermore, operas are almost completely sung while the use of spoken words are more common to musicals. There are some operas with spoken words and these are called singspiels (German) and opera-comique (French). Examples are Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Bizet's *Carmen*, respectively.

# THE "SKINNY" ON *Madama Butterfly*

## THE MUSIC

- Heart wrenching and beautifully exotic, *Madama Butterfly* will bring you to tears and sear your memory with its unforgettable melodies including Butterfly's aria "**Un bel di**," one of the most famous arias in the operatic repertoire; Pinkerton's American creed "**Dovunque al mondo**"; Butterfly's death aria "**Con onor muore**"; and the exquisite "**Humming Chorus**."
- Authentic Japanese folk melodies are woven throughout the score, yet *Butterfly* remains a full-throated, heart-on-the-sleeve Italian opera.
- Expertly contrasts Eastern and Western motifs to portray the jarring collision of two cultures.

## THE DRAMA: *Life with Dishonour or Death with Dignity?*

- An intensely moving and haunting portrayal of the dangers of misguided love.
- The work's universal themes of love, break-up, family, and death resonate with audiences the world over, rendering it amongst the most performed operas of all time.

## THE ARTISTS

- **Ai-Lan Zhu** as Cio-Cio-San "A fine actress, she endows this Butterfly with enormous dignity and a prescient, bittersweet wisdom." — *Vancouver Sun*
- Winnipegger **Kurt Lehmann** as B.F. Pinkerton "...a singer that you know is going to nail whatever he sings... always a pleasure to hear, displaying a beautiful ease and fluid expressiveness..." — *Winnipeg Free Press*

## THE STORY

Fifteen-year-old Cio-Cio-San marries American naval officer B.F. Pinkerton, which allows her to retire from geisha life. But some vows aren't forever. Pinkerton soon leaves, and Butterfly waits three long years for him to return. When he does, it is to claim the one thing she loves more than life itself.

## WHAT'S BEEN SAID ABOUT *Madama Butterfly*

- "I still love *Butterfly*. I never listen with pleasure to any of my operas, with the exception perhaps of the last act of *La bohème*. But *Butterfly*, yes — everything! And I have the knowledge that I have written the most modern of my operas."  
— Giacomo Puccini
- "*Madama Butterfly* is Puccini's greatest opera. In it he achieved a beauty, subtlety, and intensity of utterance he never surpassed. *Bohème* was more perfect, *Tosca* more powerful and his later works more sophisticated but *Butterfly* was the lynchpin of his entire output."  
— Conrad Wilson, author of *Giacomo Puccini*

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

# MADAMA BUTTERFLY

An Opera in Three Acts

April 25, 28, May 1, 2009  
(Dress Rehearsal: April 23)

Centennial Concert Hall

Music by Giacomo Puccini  
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica,  
after John Luther Long's story and David Belasco's play

Premiere Performance at La Scala, Milan, February 17, 1904  
APPROXIMATELY 2 HOURS, 30 MINUTES WITH ONE 20-MINUTE INTERMISSION

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

### THE CAST & CREW

B.F. PINKERTON  
GORO  
SUZUKI  
SHARPLESS  
CIO-CIO-SAN  
THE BONZE  
PRINCE YAMADORI  
KATE PINKERTON

Kurt Lehmann  
Gerald Isaacs  
Lauren Segal  
Gaétan Laperrière  
Ai-Lan Zhu  
Greg Atkinson  
David Watson  
Jennifer Sproule

Tenor  
Tenor  
Mezzo-soprano  
Baritone  
Soprano  
Bass  
Baritone  
Mezzo-soprano

Manitoba Opera Chorus  
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

Conductor  
Director  
Sets  
Costumes  
Lighting Designer  
Stage Manager  
Chorus Master

Daniel Lipton  
Ann Hodges  
New Orleans Opera  
Malabar Ltd. Toronto  
Bill Williams  
Paul Skirzyk  
Tadeusz Biernacki

For more information on the artists,  
go to [manitobaopera.mb.ca](http://manitobaopera.mb.ca) and click on *Madama Butterfly*

# **SYNOPSIS OF *Madama Butterfly***

Place and Time: Nagasaki, at the beginning of the 20th century

## **ACT I**

Lieutenant Pinkerton of the U.S. Navy inspects a house overlooking Nagasaki harbor that he is leasing from Goro, a marriage broker. The house comes with three servants and a geisha wife known as Madam Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San). The American consul Sharpless arrives breathless from climbing the hill. Pinkerton describes his philosophy of the fearless Yankee roaming the world in search of experience and pleasure "Dovunque al mondo." He is not sure whether his feelings for the young girl are love or a whim, but he intends to go through with the marriage ceremony anyway. Sharpless warns him that the girl's philosophy may not be as breezy as Pinkerton's, but Pinkerton brushes off such concerns and says someday he will take a real, American wife. He offers the consul whiskey and proposes a toast, "America forever!"

An eager Butterfly is heard climbing the hill with her friends for the ceremony "Spira sul mare." In casual conversation after the formal introduction, Butterfly admits her age of fifteen and tells him how her family was once prominent, but she has more recently had to earn her living as a geisha. Her relatives arrive and chatter about the marriage. Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her very few possessions, and quietly tells him she has been to the Christian mission and will embrace her husband's religion. The Imperial Commissioner reads the marriage agreement, and the relatives congratulate the couple.

Suddenly, a strident voice is heard from afar. It is the Bonze, Butterfly's uncle, a priest. He curses the girl for going to the Christian mission and renouncing her ancestral religion. Lieutenant Pinkerton orders the Bonze and Butterfly's shocked relatives to leave at once. Butterfly is upset, and her new husband tries to console with sweet words. She is helped by Suzuki into her wedding kimono, and joins Pinkerton in the garden "Viene la sera."

## **ACT II, Scene I**

Three years have passed, and Cio-Cio-San still waits for her husband's return. Suzuki prays to the gods for help, but Butterfly berates her for believing in lazy Japanese gods. She envisions the day when Pinkerton will return "Un bel di." Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it to Butterfly, Goro arrives with the latest potential husband for Butterfly, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. Butterfly insists she is not available for marriage as her American husband has not deserted her. She dismisses Goro and Yamadori.

Sharpless attempts to read the letter and suggests that perhaps Butterfly should reconsider Yamadori's offer. "And this?" asks Butterfly, showing the consul her small child. Sharpless is too upset to tell her more of the letter's contents. He leaves, promising to tell Pinkerton about the child. A cannon shot is heard in the harbour, announcing the arrival of a ship. Through a telescope, Butterfly and Suzuki read the name of Pinkerton's ship.

Overjoyed she has been proven right, Butterfly joins Suzuki in strewing the house with flower petals from the garden "Scuoti quella fronda." Night falls, and Butterfly, Suzuki, and the child settle into a vigil over the harbor (Humming Chorus).

## **ACT II, Scene II**

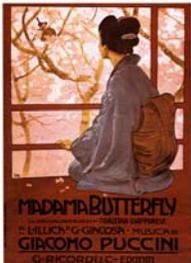
Dawn breaks, and Suzuki insists that Butterfly get some sleep. Butterfly carries the child into another room. Sharpless appears with Pinkerton and Kate, Pinkerton's new wife. Suzuki realizes who the American woman is and agrees to help break the news to Butterfly. Pinkerton is overcome with guilt and runs from the scene, pausing to remember other times in the little house "Addio, fiorito asil."

Cio-Cio-San rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton but instead sees Kate. Grasping the situation, she agrees to give up the child but insists Pinkerton return for him. Dismissing everyone, Butterfly takes out the sword with which her father had committed suicide, choosing to die with honour rather than live in shame. Suzuki sends in the child, hoping to change Butterfly's mind, but Butterfly says goodbye to the child and blindfolds him "Tu, piccolo Iddio." She kills herself as Pinkerton calls her name.

## THE MUSIC OF *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

- Pinkerton's American creed "**Dovunque al mondo**"
- Butterfly's entrance "**Quanto cielo...Ancora un passo or via**"
- The love duet "**Viene la sera**"
- Butterfly's aria "**Un bel di**" one of the most famous arias in the operatic repertoire
- Pinkerton's aria "**Addio fiorito asil**"
- Butterfly's death aria "**Con onor muore**"
- The exquisite "**Humming Chorus**"

1904 Italian poster



Like all other Puccini operas, *Madama Butterfly* is filled with excellent examples of his brilliant approach to orchestration, his sensitivity to the theatrical, his extraordinary ability to build immediately accessible (and recognizable) melodies and his remarkable gift for creating just the right aural atmosphere for every dramatic moment. Butterfly has a number of instances of exquisite tone-painting because the locale and the text offer the composer so many opportunities to do so, and as we've seen in *La bohème* and *Tosca*, Puccini takes wonderful advantage of these opportunities.

One case in point is how Puccini deals with Butterfly's vigil and the appearance of dawn over Nagasaki in the transition in Act II. Just as with the case of the opening of Act III of *Tosca*, an atmosphere is created that is as much about lighting and stage design as it is about the story. Puccini is creating a 'sonic environment' within which the denouement can naturally unfold.

There is, too, something magical about the "Humming Chorus" and its connection to the very specific stage directions that Puccini has placed in the score: Suzuki closes the shoji...the night grows darker...Butterfly leads the baby to the shoji...she makes three holes in it for herself, Suzuki and the baby...it is night...the rays of the moon light up the shoji from without. The music accompanying these actions is not so much specific as it allows for all of the above actions to take place in the proper environment. The lengthy orchestra prelude to the second scene of Act II is like a splash of water on one's face; it's not the dawn described in *Tosca* or at the barrier d'enfers in *La bohème* (in both cases a misty dawn which manages to be tinged with both hope and darkness), but the cold light of the day in which Butterfly must give up her dream of happiness, her son, and ultimately, her life.

Other touches of tone-painting involve some kind of expression of the Oriental and the exotic, like the Japanese 'band' that appears at the end of Butterfly's entrance. Puccini had no time for such authenticity as the use of true Japanese instruments, but he gives his audience the next best thing by recreating the effect of such a band by reducing the instrumentation to flute, piccolo, harp and glockenspiel. After the climax of the choral entrance and Butterfly's high note, this sudden reduction is indeed dramatic. The closest Puccini gets to using authentic instrumentation is the use of campanelli giapponese, Japanese bells, which make their appearance during the wedding scene.

In line with the touches of exoticism found in the orchestral score are the attempts made by the composer to identify authentic Japanese melodies that could be woven into the fabric of the work. There is the Japanese national anthem, a tune which Puccini uses to announce the Imperial Commissioner just prior to the wedding ceremony in Act I. A tune called the "Cherry

Blossom Song" can be found in the oboe part as Butterfly takes her personal possessions out of her sleeves and gives them to Suzuki for safe keeping.

The Nihon Bashi, another Japanese traditional melody, can be heard soaring in the violins immediately after the marriage ceremony is complete in Act I, just before Cio-Cio-San corrects her friends and relations and refers to herself as Madama B. F. Pinkerton. The song "My Prince" can be heard in association with the arrival of Prince Yamadori in Act II. Another tune is associated with Suzuki's prayer at the beginning of Act II. The original Japanese tune is Suzuki's vocal line: E Izaghi ed Izanami, Sarundasico e Kami.

Each character in *Madama Butterfly* has his or her own 'music', something that occurs in Puccini's earlier operas. Lieutenant Pinkerton, for instance, is identified by the theme that runs through "Dovunque al mondo". He is also identified by the 'head-motive' of "The Star-Spangled Banner" which is heard as an introduction to Dovunque. Sharpless, the American consul, is introduced by a broad, optimistic musical figure that begins as an octave leap and successfully describes him bounding up the hill just before his first appearance in the opera. Butterfly has two thematic ideas attached to her, both of which come into play during her entrance with the relatives. The first can be heard at the beginning of her entrance played by solo violin and viola, then by various other combinations of instruments as the motive goes up and up through various keys. The second idea is an immediate outgrowth of the earlier tune, on Butterfly's line D'amor venni alle soglie... (I have come to the threshold of love). Puccini separates these two tunes and uses them interchangeably in identifying Butterfly at various points in the opera.

But we can't leave the world of Butterfly without spending a little time with Cio-Cio-San's second act aria, "Un bel dì (One fine day)." This all-too-often-performed aria needs to be looked at afresh because it is truly one of the most wonderful 'character' arias in the operatic repertoire; it reflects Cio-Cio-San's state at a particular moment in the drama, is as structurally perfect as a piece of music can be, and gives us a sub-text of emotion that is not readily apparent unless we're listening for it. The beginning of the aria is simple and straightforward, describing how she will see that thin "thread of smoke rising over the horizon", sung to one of those typical Puccini melodies that seem to turn in on themselves. This is all sung to the most basic accompaniment in the orchestra: clarinet, harp and solo violin doubling the voice pp and ppp, muted violins and woodwinds providing a transparent harmonic wash. Notice that in this opening section there is essentially one note per syllable, one syllable per note in the melody. This is about to change radically.

In the second section, a Puccini thematic hallmark reappears: the arched melody based on rising and falling scale passages (Poi la nave bianca — Then the white ship). In the next few lines we can observe little touches of excitement on Butterfly's part, evinced by the occasional rapid note values (...e aspetto gran tempo e non mi pesa — and wait a long time but I won't mind). The winds in the orchestra now pulse off the beat, a kind of syncopated 'heart beat' as she grows more excited about picking him out of the crowd (È uscito dalla folla cittadina un uomo — It is a man coming from the city crowd); and then she sees the tiny speck, a man "who makes his way toward the hill" to another slightly arched melody describing in musical form the 'hill' itself.

The next section is eerily accompanied by three trumpets played with mutes emphasizing both her excitement and the distance from which she 'sees' him. His calling out to her from that distance (Chiamerà "Butterfly" dalla lontana— He will call "Butterfly" from a distance) is

expressed by two solo violins with mutes. The note values in these sections become shorter and shorter, perfectly expressing her excitement. But it is at the return of the 'big tune' where the true genius of Puccini's musical characterization is revealed. Think about the aria's sub-text: Butterfly is not only getting more and more excited about imagining her sailor's return, she is also deeply troubled about the possibility that he might not return at all. No longer do we have one syllable for one note of the melody. We have many notes superimposed over the melody. Why is Butterfly becoming so 'chatty' in the penultimate section of this aria? Her insecurity is beginning to show: she's trying to cover it up with words, words and more words! This insecurity is only banished in the final section of the aria when she finally convinces herself (if not Suzuki) that he will return, and that with "unshakeable faith," she will wait for him.

Puccini's grasp of human emotion and psychology in this aria is nothing short of extraordinary. The music describes exactly how we react not only emotionally but physically in such a situation, imagining that the more we stutter, shuffle and 'chat' when confronted with heartache, the easier it will be to stave off the pain that must inevitably come.

## THE BACKGROUND TO *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

The Victorian period was a time when gentlemen (and sometimes ladies) of leisure embarked on adventurous escapades around the world. Many of these travelers were avid communicators, writing letters, articles, and keeping journals of their travels. All these personal interpretations of what they witnessed combined to create exotic images of distant lands for those remaining at home. Novels, plays, ballets and operettas were set in foreign locations. One of the last countries to be opened to the West was Japan. In 1854 Commodore Perry concluded his treaty with Japan, and quickly it became a must for travelers.

For example, Lafcadio Hearn, the half-Greek, half-Irish journalist and adventurer, led an impoverished career in Ireland and the United States before arriving in Japan in 1890. He became infatuated with the country, married a Japanese bride, changed his name to Koizumi Yakumo and eventually became a Japanese citizen. Over 15 years his writings, such as *Japan, an Attempt at an Interpretation* (1904), became popular and were printed in several European languages. He exalted Japan at the expense of the West and helped contribute to the image of Japan as a land of aesthetic accomplishment, peopled with charming, graceful - and complacent - women.

Japan's exotic allure contributed to a vast body of popular literature and fashion. "Japonisme" was the trend in late 19th and early 20th century Europe. Japanese gardens and interior design became in vogue. Whistler, Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats, to name a few, drew inspiration from Japanese art and culture. The sense of romance and intrigue fully infiltrated the common imagery of foreign countries.

### From Tabloid to Opera - The Genesis of Butterfly's Story

The road to the creation of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* begins with a reportedly true story, and continues through a series of re-tellings to become one of opera's iconic works.

The story began as a true account of the life of Tsuru Yamamura, a Japanese woman who had a son with an English merchant. Abandoned, she attempted suicide, and ultimately the child was taken not to America, but to Nagasaki.

Illustration in  
*Century Magazine*



John Luther Long, an American lawyer, romanticized and inflated the story and published it as an article in *Century Magazine* in 1898. His story is very close to *Madama Butterfly*, save the fact that Butterfly's suicide is not successful, and she disappears with the child rather than allow him to be taken by his father.

His story was undoubtedly influenced by the 1887 faux memoir *Madame Chrysanthème* by French naval officer Pierre Loti. Loti takes a far less kind view of his Japanese geisha, who is interested only in the riches she can extract from him, and the final scene shows Chrysanthème counting her money and waiting for her next "husband". Felix Regamey, outraged at the tone of the novel, wrote the reactionary novel in 1894, *Le cahier rose de Mme Chrysansthème*, a sympathetic reaction told from geisha's perspective.

These stories, and many like them, were at the forefront of popular culture. David Belasco, an American playwright and producer, was inspired to write a one-act play in 1900 as a companion piece to a farce *Naughty Anthony*. In Belasco's version, the play begins with the abandoned Butterfly of Act II, and three elements: Butterfly's silent vigil, her ultimate suicide and Pinkerton's delayed return were added by Belasco to build the dramatic thrust of the piece.

Puccini, who saw the play performed in English and could scarcely understand the dialogue, was intensely moved by the arch of the story. According to Belasco, Puccini raced backstage after the performance, embraced him, and begged for the rights to set the play to music: "I agreed at once, and told him he could do anything he liked with the play and make any sort of contract because it is not possible to discuss business arrangements with an impulsive Italian, who has tears in his eyes and both his arms round your neck."

In the hands of his librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, the events of Act I were created, as well as text far more poetic than Belasco's sensational drama. At one point during the exploration of libretto, Illica had created an additional act set in the consulate, but Puccini demanded its omission, insisting that "the drama must close without interruption – rapid, effective, horrible."

Ultimately, the story, realized in so many ways, found its most sensitive home in Puccini's opera, imperfect in its Japanese references perhaps, but most certainly true to the tragic events that befell the original characters.

# ABOUT THE COMPOSER

## Biography

### Giacomo Puccini (1858 - 1924)



Born in 1858 in Lucca, Italy, Giacomo Puccini came from a long line of professional musicians. When his father, organist and choirmaster of the San Martino church there, died, Giacomo was only five years old. The post as organist and choirmaster was held, through an uncle, to ensure Puccini could assume the post when he was old enough in order to maintain the line of Puccini musicians presiding there, which went back to Giacomo Puccini, having received that appointment in 1739. Young Puccini began his career as organist there when he was 14.

Despite a reluctance to follow in the family footsteps, his mother's persistence and his own interest in the gadgetry of organs and mechanics of music, Puccini not only held two jobs as a church organist during his teens, he did become a composer.

Puccini was encouraged in his career as a composer by the positive reception for some of his church pieces and a cantata. *Aida*, the latest Verdi opera he saw at age 18, also inspired him. Scholarships from a great-uncle and Queen Margherita of Savoy enabled him to study at the Milan Conservatory from 1880-83.

Puccini did not care for city life but it did influence his work. His bohemian existence as a poor student, sharing an apartment with two other artists, later found expression in *La Bohème* (just as the writer, Henri Mürger's early years as a poor author inspired his stories on which the opera was based). Though loosely associated with the verismo movement, which strove to create more natural and believable opera theatre, Puccini did not hesitate to write period pieces or to exploit exotic locales. In *Tosca* he wrote an intense melodrama set in Rome during Napoleonic times. For *Madama Butterfly* he chose an American story set in Japan. These three operas earned Puccini an international reputation.

Because Puccini was so theatrical, critics and academics have always tried to deny him his proper place among serious composers. The public, however, feels differently, and Puccini remains one of operagoers' favourites. Critics also point out that Puccini was more interested in his female characters – his heroines generally being a 'soft, smiling girl driven by emotion rather than by thought.'

Puccini experienced some initial failure with *Madama Butterfly* (1904) but his faith in the work led him to revise it until operagoers accepted it. This initial failure temporarily prevented him from new compositions, but a visit to New York ultimately resulted in his writing his first 'modern' work in *La Fanciulla del West*.

World War I caused the next major break in Puccini's creative life. Hostilities complicated his negotiations to write an operetta for Vienna, now in enemy territory. The operetta

became instead a light opera, *La Rondine*, produced at Monte Carlo and welcomed coolly at the Met as "the afternoon of a genius." Puccini never regained his youthful eminence and romantic spontaneity, but he continued to work seriously, broadening his horizons.

A chain-smoker, Puccini developed throat cancer and was taken to Brussels in 1924 for treatment by a specialist. Though the surgery was successful, Puccini's heart failed, and he died shortly afterward. At the time of his death, he had been working on the most ambitious of his 12 operas, *Turandot*, based on Schiller's romantic adaptation of a fantasy by Carlo Gozzi, the 18th-century Venetian satirist. In *Turandot*, for the first time Puccini wrote extensively for the chorus, and he provided an enlarged, enriched orchestral tapestry that showed an awareness of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* and other contemporary scores.

## The Operas of Puccini

<b>1883-84</b>	<i>Le villa</i>
<b>1884-85</b>	1901 & 1905 <i>Edgar</i>
<b>1893</b>	<i>Manton Lescaut</i>
<b>1896</b>	<i>La bohème</i>
<b>1900</b>	<i>Tosca</i>
<b>1904</b>	rev.1906 <i>Madama Butterfly</i>
<b>1910</b>	<i>La fanciulla del West</i>
<b>1917</b>	rev.1918-1919 <i>La rondine</i>
<b>1918</b>	<i>Il trittico</i> <i>Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, Gianni Schicchi</i>
<b>1920-26</b>	<i>Turandot</i> , last scene completed by Franco Alfano

## Timeline of Puccini's Life

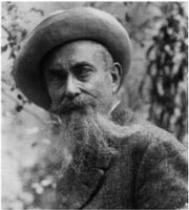
- 1858** Giacomo Puccini born, Lucca, Italy
- 1876** First contact with opera after hears *Aida*, by Verdi
- 1880** Goes to study at Milan Conservatory
- 1883** Enters his first opera *Le villi* in competition, does not win
- 1884** Two-act version of *Le villi* performed at Teatro dal Verne, Milan
- 1889** *Edgar* premieres at La Scala, Milan
- 1893** *Manon Lescaut* performed, Turin; Puccini becomes star overnight
- 1896** Premiere of *La bohème*, Turin, conducted by Toscanini
- 1900** *Tosca* performed, Teatro Costanzi, Rome
- 1900** Convent Garden premiere of *Tosca*
- 1904** *Madama Butterfly's* La Scala premiere is a fiasco
- 1904** Revised *Madama Butterfly* performed at Brescia
- 1904** Puccini marries Elvira Gemignani
- 1907** Puccini travels to New York
- 1910** *La fanciulla del West* premieres at the Metropolitan Opera, New York
- 1912** Death of Giulio Ricordi, Puccini's publisher
- 1914** Starts work on operetta, *La rondine*
- 1914** Start of the First World War
- 1917** Premiere of *La rondine*, Monte Carlo
- 1918** *Il trittico* produced at the Metropolitan Opera, New York
- 1920** Begins work on *Turandot*
- 1924** Puccini dies of throat cancer before *Turandot* is completed
- 1926** Premiere of *Turandot* after completion by Franco Alfano, La Scala, Milan

## ABOUT THE LIBRETTISTS

### Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Puccini's partnership with the playwright/librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa was one of the most successful in the history of Italian opera -- a meeting of great artistic minds akin to Verdi's association with Boito and Bellini's with Romani. Although Illica and Giacosa are best remembered for their work with Puccini, each had an active career of his own.

### Luigi Illica (1857-1919)



Luigi Illica had a rough beginning. At an early age he ran away to sea and in 1876 he found himself fighting the Turks. Three years later, however, he moved to the relatively peaceful enclave of Milan, Italy and there began his literary career, including a collection of prose sketches and plays.

He began writing librettos in 1889. While his work on three of Puccini's operas is recognized as his chief contribution to the field, he also wrote librettos for several other composers, including those for Giordano's *Andrea Chenier* (1896--the same year as *La Bohème*), an opera still popular and performed today, and two operas of Mascagni.

### Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906)



Giuseppe Giacosa began his professional life, not as a writer, but as a lawyer. He graduated in law from Turin University and immediately joined his father's firm in Milan. He moved permanently into the literary world, however, when his one-act verse comedy, *Una partita a scacchi*, became a popular success. From 1888-1894 Giacosa held the chair of literature and dramatic art at the Milan Conservatory.

The publisher, Giulio Ricordi, organized the Puccini/Illica/Giacosa partnership in 1893. The head of the most powerful publishing firm in Italy during the 19th century, Ricordi had the ability to make or break any young composer who came along, much in the same way that a CEO of a major record label can do today.

Having taken Puccini under his wing, Ricordi was intent on hiring the best writers to work with the young composer on his *La Bohème* -- he found them in Illica and Giacosa. The three had a very clear division of responsibilities when working together: it was Illica's job to plan the scenario (i.e., the opera's plan, and division into acts and scenes) and to draft the dialogue; next, Giacosa transformed the prose into polished verse; finally Puccini set this verse to music. This collaboration was such a success that the three worked together (dividing the responsibilities in the same way) on two other operas: *Tosca* (1900) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904).

The collaboration ended with the death of Giacosa in 1906. Puccini continued to discuss the idea of translating the story of Marie Antoinette into an operatic setting with Illica, but this project never came to fruition. For his final operas, Puccini turned to other librettists.

## ADAPTATIONS OF *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

**1915** A silent film version was directed by Sidney Olcott and starred Mary Pickford.

**1922** A silent color film, *The Toll of the Sea*, based on the opera/play was released. This movie, which starred Anna May Wong in her first leading role, moved the storyline to China. It was the second two-color Technicolor motion picture ever released and the first film made using Technicolor Process 2.

**1932** Sylvia Sydney and Cary Grant starred in a black and white sound film, *Madame Butterfly*, which had no singing role.

**1984** British Pop impresario Malcolm McLaren wrote and performed a UK hit single, "Madame Butterfly (Un Bel Di Vedremo)," produced by Stephen Hague, based on the opera and featuring the famous aria.

**1987** "Con Onor Muore" was played during a scene in the erotic thriller *Fatal Attraction*, in which Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) tells Alex Forrest (Glenn Close) the childhood memory of his father taking him to see the opera. Alex later tries to re-enact the act by attempting suicide when Dan leaves. The original ending of the movie featured a successful suicide by Alex, although the ending was reshot before the film reached theatres.

**1988** In David Henry Hwang's play *M. Butterfly*, the story of a French diplomat and a Chinese opera singer, Butterfly is denounced as a western stereotype of a timid, submissive Asian.

**1989** The Broadway and West End musical *Miss Saigon* was, in part, based on *Madama Butterfly*. The story was moved to Vietnam and Thailand and set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the fall of Saigon, but the central themes are largely unchanged.

**1995** Frédéric Mitterrand directed a film version of the opera in Tunisia, North Africa, starring Chinese opera singer Ying Huang.

**1995** *Madama Butterfly* is the central piece of *Magnetic Rose*, an animated short produced by Katsuhiko Otomo and directed by Koji Morimoto. The soundtrack by Yoko Kanno is largely influenced by Puccini's opera.

**1996** The album *Pinkerton* by the rock band Weezer was based loosely on the opera.

**1998** A part of the piece, "Un bel di vedremo," was sung when Midori Ito lit the Olympic Flame at Nagano.

**2001** *Aria* by Pjotr Sapegin, an animated short inspired by the opera, awarded as Best Animated Short by Tickleboots Best Online Videos 2006 and Best Short Film Norway 2002, won Grand Prix in the Odense International Film Festival 2002 and won the audience award in Århus Film Festival 2002.

**2004** On the 100th anniversary of *Madama Butterfly*, Shigeaki Saegusa composed *Jr. Butterfly* to a libretto by Masahiko Shimada.

## RELATED TOPICS OF STUDY

### From Verismo to *Turandot* – A Puccini Primer

In the late 1900's, a literary movement arose that came to be known as verismo (from the Italian word *vero*, or truth). The verismo writers steeped their stories in human passion rather than reason, and created white-hot tales of love, jealousy, revenge and violence. Giuseppe Verga, author of *Cavalleria Rusticana* from a selection of short stories *Vita dei campi* (*Life in the Fields*), and Luigi Capuana were the leading proponents.

Their stories proved great source material for a new age of Italian composers, searching for a post-Verdi voice that could capture the social tensions of fin-de siècle Europe. The first successful operas in this style, Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Ruggero Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, were dramaturgically based on compression. Based on short stories, these hour-long operas were created in reaction to the lengthening of the form during the late Romantic period. Characters were drawn in bold primary colours. Arias were shorter, and rather than memorable tunes and rhyming poetry, they offered rich, sweeping melodies based on narrative text. Plots were based on a few incidents that took place during a short period of time. The endings of each opera had the qualities of "grand guignol", a populist French theatrical counterpart.

Puccini's first operas, *Le Villi* and *Edgar*, were very much in this style. *Le Villi* is an operatic telling of the story of the ballet, *Giselle*, which presents the story of the forest spirits of jilted brides, who haunt and eventually kill false lovers. *Edgar* ends with the murder of the leading lady at the hands of her evil rival for the title character's affections. Both operas showed veristic promise, but were not ultimately lasting. With *Manon Lescaut*, Puccini began to establish a more complete version of verismo, rich with the passion of the previous decade, but fuller in characterization and musical development. *La Bohème* embraces the verismo value of celebrating the real lives of everyday people, created with a softer musical voice. *Tosca* followed, with a return to the grand and gruesome passions of the earlier operas.

With *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini found a balance between the sentimental and the overwhelming. Great moments of delicacy alternate with emotional outpourings that well from the emotional core of the characters. The villainy is one of Pinkerton's carelessness rather than a malevolence, Butterfly's tragedy is one of misplaced hope rather than blind jealousy or fatal illness. The conflict is both personal and cultural, a story of larger scope than the private stories of the earlier operas.

After *Butterfly*, Puccini began a period of experimentation with each opera different from the next. *La Rondine* was Puccini's attempt at writing in the operetta style. With rapturous waltzes and an ending marked by the end of a relationship rather than a life, *La Rondine* is perhaps Puccini's most sentimental work. In *La Fanciulla del West*, Puccini created an impressionistic landscape of the America of legend, equal parts Debussy and stories of the West. The operas of *Il Trittico* (*Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicci*) highlight different aspects of Puccini's personality: passionate, spiritual, and fun-loving. His final opera *Turandot*, his most musically adventurous, was more a precursor to the future than a celebration of the past.

## Puccini and Japonisme

Puccini called *Madama Butterfly* a “tragedia giapponese”: a Japanese tragedy. But it’s an Italian opera written by three men who had never visited Japan. How Japanese could it really be? And why write an opera set in Japan in the first place?

The answer to the last question is the French word “Japonisme”—to translate it literally as Japanism isn’t sufficient. Better to call it Japanamania. Soon after Japan ended its 200-year isolation from the West in 1854, the European art world discovered Japan. Western artists admired and imitated the incredible energy and authenticity of the images, the flat, coloured backgrounds, the cutting off of figures at the edge of a frame, the asymmetry and diagonal constructions, and the juxtaposition of wildly coloured fabrics in many-layered kimono.

But what brought “the Orient” to the general public were the World’s Fair held in Paris during the 19th century. National pavilions displayed the art and culture of Asia and the Pacific, including plays, poetry, and musical performances. The Expositions of 1867 and 1889 were especially important to composers, who heard Asian music for the first time and were exposed to a completely new and stimulating sound world. The five-note scale of Japan (easily played by using just the black keys on the piano), the complex rhythms of Japanese music, and a whole new world of percussion instruments found their way into piano pieces, orchestral works, and operas. Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* was written to satirize England’s Japanamania, spurred by the enormously popular Japanese village on view in London in 1885.

There were other “Japanese” operas too, all known to Puccini, before *Madama Butterfly*: *La princesse jaune* by Saint-Saëns (1872), Mascagni’s *Iris* (1898) based on a libretto by Luigi Illica, Puccini’s collaborator; and Messager’s *Madame Chrysanthème* (1893), one of the original sources of the Butterfly story. So surrounded by Japanamania on every side, the composer was primed for the encounter with his favourite character, Madama Butterfly.

**“There is no comparison between my love for Mimì, Musetta, Manon, and Tosca and that love which I have in my heart for her for whom I wrote music in the night.”  
– Giacomo Puccini**

It was while he was in London to supervise *Tosca* in 1900 that Puccini fell in love with the heroine of David Belasco’s melodrama *Madame Butterfly*. Afire with enthusiasm, he directed Giulio Ricordi to get the rights to Belasco’s play and John Luther Long’s story on which the play was based. While Puccini was engaged in an intense battle over the plot with his librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, he was also steeping himself in the music and culture of Japan.

In 1902 Puccini met in Milan with Sadayakko, the celebrated actress. He wanted to hear “the high twitter” of a Japanese woman’s voice, and probably also saw her play, *The Geisha and The Knight*, which has a cherry blossom scene much like the flower scene in his opera. Mrs. Oyama, wife of the Japanese ambassador to Italy, was also invaluable in singing “native” songs to Puccini who wrote them down and asked many questions. She procured sheet music from Japan and went through the libretto with the composer, pointing out errors in the names of characters, gods, and household objects. One mistake she noted was that “Yamadori” is a woman’s name. It remains uncorrected!

Puccini's hunger for authenticity led him to weave versions of 11 Japanese songs throughout the score. Besides infusing the music with local color, Puccini used them for their dramatic effect. The original words to the songs didn't seem to matter. For example, one of the most searing moments of the score is Butterfly's aria "Che tua madre," in which she describes life on the streets. Here Puccini excerpts a traditional rice-planting song. Scholars can't agree on how many songs Puccini quoted— there may be more than the 11 substantiated. It seems that Puccini so immersed himself in this music that he was able to synthesize new Japanese sounding tunes. Even Japanese scholars can't always tell what's authentic and what's invented.

Puccini's delicious orchestration adds another Japanese flavour for us Westerners. He used traditional Western orchestral instruments in combinations that mimic the sounds he heard from Japanese musicians and enlarged the usual percussion section to include tam-tams (gongs) of various sizes, Japanese bells, tubular chimes, and a keyboard glockenspiel.

With all these efforts to honour and include Japanese culture, did Puccini succeed in writing a Japanese tragedy? Not really. It remains a Western artwork based on racial stereotypes and colonialist attitudes. But Puccini dearly loved his suffering beauty. Out of his dream of Japan, he created an indelible work that transcends its cruelty.

## East Meets West

Giacomo Puccini was just one of many opera composers who have been intrigued by the lure of the East. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, composers in search of exotic locations focused more on the Middle East and the Islamic world, though for the most part their musical styles did not exhibit the influence of that region. Other than some crashing chords in the overture meant to emulate Turkish janissary music, Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* sounds no different from his other compositions, just as all of the music in Rossini's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* is quintessentially Italian.

Toward the later part of the century, however, many composers began to evoke exotic locales through the inclusion of foreign-sounding musical modes in their works. Bizet introduced Gypsy music in *Carmen* and near-Eastern sounds in *The Pearl Fishers*. The famous Bacchanal in Saint Saëns' *Samson and Delilah* creates an air of authenticity, as does the Nile scene in Verdi's *Aida*. The principal theme of the grand march in that opera can be played on the natural horn (that is, a horn without valves), an instrument which was known to have existed in ancient Egypt.

In 1885, Gilbert and Sullivan exploited the growing interest in the culture of the Orient in *The Mikado*, and while this operetta actually uses Japanese society to satirize British society of the time, Sullivan did use some genuine Japanese melodies. In addition to *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini himself added folk motifs associated with exotic locales in two other operas: California during the gold rush in *La Fanciulla del West* and China in *Turandot*. In the late twentieth century, the most notable operatic treatment of East-West issues was John Adams' *Nixon in China*, a complex attempt to contrast the world views of the two cultures.

The problems caused by romances between European men and Eastern women has been explored in a number of operas before and after *Madama Butterfly*, including Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* and Delibes' *Lakme*. Rodgers and Hammerstein included such a story in *South Pacific*, primarily in the subplot, in which a U.S. military officer becomes involved with a Polynesian woman but initially refuses to marry her, though the main plot also deals

indirectly with similar prejudice, as Nellie nearly leaves Emil because his first wife was non-white. The authors said that the *raison d'être* for the entire show was the song "You've Got to be Taught," a polemic against irrational prejudice, though theatre historian Andrea Most has pointed out that the play itself is not free of such bias.

Similar bias could be seen in the same writers' *The King and I*, which presents a decidedly Eurocentric view of Thailand. The pair explored East vs West themes once more in *Flower Drum Song*, a comic depiction of the challenges faced by 20 Chinese immigrants in *San Francisco*. Stephen Sondheim, in *Pacific Overtures*, explored the way in which Perry's expedition altered Japanese society. The most direct musical descendent of *Madama Butterfly* is *Alain Boublil* and Claude-Michel Schoenberg's *Miss Saigon*. This play depicts the romance between Chris, a U.S. military officer, and Kim, a Vietnamese prostitute (albeit, one new to the trade). There is even an opportunistic Goro-like character known as "The Engineer." While the plot roughly follows that of *Madama Butterfly*, Chris is more sympathetic than Pinkerton. He is accidentally separated from Kim in the hurried American evacuation of Saigon at the end of the war, and he marries an American woman only after he has given up hope of finding her. Nevertheless, the authors still had something to say about the problems caused by such liaisons in the song "Bui Doi," a protest song describing the sad fate of the mixed-race children abandoned by American fathers. Like *Madama Butterfly*, this play depicts the dangers of American involvement in the affairs of foreign lands.

## Japan - Historical Background

1904 Map of Japan



Much of Japan's early culture, including art, language, Buddhism and Confucianism was derived from China and, over the years, has become Japanese.

During a period of civil wars in the 15th and 16th centuries, a feudal system, much like that of medieval Europe, developed. Each lord had his knights, or samurai, who were bound to them by oaths of fealty. But it wasn't until the middle of the sixteenth century that the Western world became interested in this island nation.

In 1542, a Portuguese mariner, Fernando Mendez Pinto, was wrecked there and brought back such glowing reports of the country that Portugal established a trading mission at Nagasaki. Soon Dutch merchants and European missionaries followed. In 1600 Tokugawa Ieyasu won a victory over the Western lords and in 1603 became the Shogun, founding a dynasty which effectively ruled Japan until 1867. An Englishman, William Adams, who had served under Sir Francis Drake and had been a pilot for the Barbary merchants, joined a Dutch fleet which sailed for Japan. After a troubled beginning there, the Shogun, Tokugawa, took a liking to him, and he was given a house. Jesuits and missionaries acted as interpreters. The Emperor sent for him and asked him to build a ship. Although Adams knew nothing about shipbuilding, he was so successful that the Emperor gave him two swords (the mark of a samurai). He also taught the Emperor some mathematics. Although Adams had a wife in England, the Emperor declared that William Adams was dead and reborn as Miura Anjin, free to marry again. He married a high-born Japanese woman, but eventually wished to go home. Permission was refused, he built another, larger ship and had over 80 retainers. He died in Japan in 1620. James Clavell's novel *Shogun* is based on his experiences.

Soon the Exclusion Decrees were published and Japan was closed to the West. After it was reopened in 1854, the Western world became fascinated with all things Japanese. Commodore Perry had opened a view to a society and a culture which had been hidden for hundreds of years. Soon exhibitions of Japanese art opened throughout the United States and Europe and Japonisme became the rage as chinoiserie had been a century before. Japanese motifs such as bridges, fans, cranes, butterflies, and bamboo were incorporated into Western art and furnishings. Literature also responded to the influx of new themes. Poets such as Whitman, Longfellow and Yeats incorporated Japanese images into their works. Stories set in Japanese locals were written and several of these merged into the one depicted in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*.

## Shame, Honour, and Duty in Japanese Culture

When we talk about the concepts of Japanese shame, honour, and duty, one of the first things you might think of is harakiri (suicide by cutting one's own belly). To Westerners, this may seem to be a barbaric, painful, and horrifying act. Today, people in Japan do not commit harakiri; however, shame, honor, and duty still prevail within the society. How did this importance of honor and shame start?



Bushido (meaning "Way of the Warrior") was developed between the 11th and 14th centuries in Japan. This code of conduct that samurai (aristocratic Japanese warriors) followed included: loyalty, courage, humility, forbearance, generosity, and self-control. In the pursuit of these moral principles, samurai maintained their dignity and honour, which was considered to be as much their duty as protecting their *Shogun* (Japanese feudal lords). If you were samurai and lost your honor, you had only one way to preserve it: harakiri. By killing yourself in such a painful, but at the same time, fearlessly heroic way, you were able to sustain your honor and eradicate shame.

Why does shame have to be avoided at all costs? In Japan, relationships between people are greatly affected by duty and obligation. In duty-based relationships, what *other* people believe or think has a more powerful impact on behavior than what the individual believes. Shame occurs through others' negative feelings towards you or through your feelings of having failed to live up to your obligations. In contrast, the culture of the United States and most of the West is based on guilt, where truth, justice, and the preservation of individual rights are more important components of consciousness.

In Western culture, guilt can be relieved through confession, self-righteousness, or the justice system, but in Japanese culture, shame cannot be removed until a person does what society expects, which may include drastic measures such as committing suicide. For example, if you are falsely accused of a crime, your guilt will be removed when you are proven innocent in court, but shame will stay as long as other people are suspicious of your actions or think negatively of you.

The desire to preserve honor and avoid shame played a key role among Japanese Americans during World War II. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 shamed many Japanese Americans. It also resulted in intense racism and discrimination against Japanese Americans by some other Americans.

Of the 110,000 Japanese and their descendents on the U.S. west coast who were imprisoned in internment camps, two thirds of them were American citizens. At first, Japanese American

military volunteers were rejected; young men of draft age were classified as “enemy aliens.” In spite of prejudice, young Nisei (second generation Japanese in the U.S.) were eager to fight against Japan. They wanted to remove the shame caused by Pearl Harbor, and they were determined to prove their loyalty to their country, thus bringing honour to their Japanese community in the U.S.

In January 1943, the U.S. military began to admit Nisei. As sons set off to war, so many mothers and fathers told them, “Live if you can; die if you must; but fight always with honor, and never, ever bring shame on your family or your country.”

The 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, the largest all-Nisei unit in World War II, fought in Italy and southern France. Their bravery and conviction helped end the war in Europe, and the 442nd became the most decorated military unit of its size and length of service in World War II. One of the ironies was that Japanese Americans were among the first Allied troops to liberate a concentration camp in Germany, while some of them had family members kept in internment camps back in the U.S. (Clinton, 2000).

Meanwhile, on mainland Japan, a negative effect was being drawn from the shame/honour tradition: Japanese turned to suicide tactics, the use of kamikaze bombers, to evade the humiliation of defeat. Japanese pilots deliberately attempted to crash their aircrafts onto Allied ships because they believed that surrender was the ultimate dishonorable act. Young men volunteered to be kamikaze pilots in the hopes of showing patriotism and bringing honor to their families. Kamikaze pilots composed and read “death” poems, a custom from the samurai, who had done the same before committing harakiri.

Over 60 years have passed since World War II, and Japan has gone through many post-war changes. If you saw many young Japanese today showing their individuality through outrageous fashion and non-conformist behavior or if you watched television programs that bring audiences pleasure by humiliating individuals, you might assume that the shame/honor tradition has been eroded. However, obligations to family, school, employer, and friends still tend to guide most Japanese behavior. For instance, students are encouraged to work hard and enter prestigious colleges with the goal of bringing honour to their families. Television news occasionally broadcasts a president of a bankrupt company weeping and bowing his head in shame as he apologizes for the failure of his company. Japan still remains a culture of shame, honour, and duty.

## Japanese Phrases in the Libretto

Puccini and his librettists used (and mis-used) many Japanese words in the libretto.

**Bonze**                      Archaic English word for a Japanese Buddhist monk (Japanese bonso).

**Cio-Cio-San**              Pronounced Cho-Cho-San in English; “san” is an honorific title.

**Kami**                        “Higher ones” in the Shinto religion. Suzuki (a Buddhist) prays to **Izanagi**.

<b>Nagasaki</b>	The center of Western influence until well into the 20th century. America dropped the plutonium bomb on Nagasaki in 1945. Its leading tourist site today is the Glover House. Tom Glover, known in Japan as Guraba Tomisaburo, was the son of a Japanese woman and the Scottish businessman who built Glover house. Many believe he is the real model for Trouble. Having been shunned by his countrymen for years because of his mixed ancestry, Tomisaburo committed suicide after the atomic bomb shattered his city.
<b>Nakodo</b>	Marriage broker (Goro).
<b>Obi Long</b>	Sash that binds a kimono.
<b>Ottoke Hotoké</b>	Deceased ancestors represented by small wooden figures.
<b>Samurai</b>	Members of the feudal military class. They rarely had to fight after 1650, so devoted themselves to the study of Confucianism, the arts, or government.
<b>Seppuku</b>	Ceremonial suicide in the samurai class, also known as hara-kiri. Women committed jigai by piercing their necks.
<b>Shoshi Shoji</b>	Sliding rice-paper doors of a Japanese home.

## Geisha



Although Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is a geisha, her prototype was not. Pierre Loti, author of the 1887 *Madame Chrysanthème*, was emphatic that those who entered into the 'treaty port' marriages were neither geishas nor prostitutes. Still, in an era where a woman's place was either in the home or in a brothel, the life of a geisha provided an alternative for someone like Cio-Cio-San, not lucky enough to have a secure home.

The word **geisha** literally means 'arts person' — a Japanese girl trained to be an entertainer. The true geisha are living works of art and, contrary to popular opinion, geisha are not prostitutes. While some may have 'protectors', the strenuous life of a geisha is not compatible with that of a 'lady of the evening'. The Geisha tradition for women goes back to the eighteenth century. Before then, the earliest geisha were men! One hundred years ago there were about 80,000 geisha. Today there are fewer than 1,000. While some geisha are still being trained, their art is disappearing. The system is under attack from Japanese women and other social reformers, who see it as a relic of Japan's past.

A girl wishing to become a geisha goes through several years of rigorous training. As a maika she must remain a virgin, and she lives in an all-female house. She is not even allowed to go home during her first year of training. This training is very expensive. She must learn to sing, dance, and play the koto (harp) and the samisen (Japanese ukelele). She must have enough general education to tell stories and converse intelligently about business and current events with her clients, and she must be discreet, keeping to herself the business and state secrets discussed by those clients in her presence. She must also learn all of the Japanese customs relating to costume and flower arranging. And she must learn how to turn away

amorous men with discretion. At 15, Cio-Cio-San was young to be a full-fledged geisha. Training normally starts about age 11 and takes at least five years.

When appearing before the public, the geisha wears an extremely colourful *kimono*, a wide sash or *obi*, and exaggerated white makeup which conceals emotions. She becomes the image of the perfect woman, the symbol of Japanese culture and refinement, a living work of

art. She is not allowed to cry, must always be smiling, and must never seem bored. Her one job is to amuse men and her clients are usually men in their fifties and sixties who often treat a young geisha as they would their daughter.

Most geisha remain single, if not virginal, all their lives. It is an occupation which can last a lifetime (one geisha performed regularly until a few months before her recent death at age 102), and a good geisha can become very rich. Only the wealthiest men can afford to be protectors to a geisha.

## Japanese Canadian Timeline

- 1877** Arrival of Manzo Nagano, first Japanese person known to land and settle in Canada.
- 1895** British Columbia Government denies franchise (voting rights) to citizens of Asiatic origin.
- 1907** Anti-Asiatic Riot in Vancouver led by the Asiatic Exclusion League.
- 1908** Hayashi-Lemieux Gentlemen's Agreement: Japan voluntarily agreed to restrict the number of passports issued to male labourers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of 400.
- 1916-17** 200 Japanese Canadians volunteer for service with Canadian army in France (WWI). 54 are killed and 92 are wounded.
- 1919** Japanese fishermen control nearly half of the fishing licenses (3,267). Department of Fisheries reduces number of licenses issued to "other than white residents, British subjects and Canadian Indians." By 1925 close to 1,000 licenses stripped from Japanese Canadians.
- 1920** Japanese Labour Union (eventually the Camp and Mill Workers' Union) formed under Etsu Suzuki.
- 1923** Gentlemen's agreement: Number of Japanese male immigrants (same categories as in 1908) not to exceed 150 annually.
- 1924** The labour union newspaper *The Daily People [Minshu]* begins publication.
- 1928** Gentlemen's Agreement amendment. Wives and children now included in the annual quota of 150.
- 1931** Surviving veterans are given the right to vote.
- 1936** Delegation from Japanese Canadian Citizens League goes to Ottawa to plead for franchise (the right to vote). They are unsuccessful.
- 1941** (January 8): Despite citizenship, Japanese Canadians are excluded from military service (WWII).
- 1941** (March 4): Registration of all Japanese Canadians.
- 1941** (August 12): Japanese Canadians are required to carry registration cards that have their thumbprint and photo.
- 1941** (December 7): Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.

Japanese-Canadian  
fisher whose boat  
has just been interned.



**1941** (December 8): 1,200 Japanese Canadian fishing boats are impounded. Japanese language newspapers and schools close.

**1942** (January 16): Removal begins of Japanese immigrant males from coastal areas.

**1942** (February 24): All male Japanese Canadian citizens between the ages of 18 and 45 ordered to be removed from 100-mile-wide zone along the coast of British Columbia.

- 1942** (February 26): Mass evacuation of Japanese Canadians begins. Some given only 24 hours notice. Cars, cameras and radios confiscated for "protective measures." Curfew imposed.
- 1942** (March 4): Japanese Canadians ordered to turn over property and belongings to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property as a "protective measure only."
- 1942** (March 16): First arrivals at Vancouver's Hastings Park pooling centre. All Japanese Canadian mail censored from this date.
- 1942** (March 25): British Columbia Security Commission initiates scheme of forcing men to road camps and women and children to "ghost town" detention camps.
- 1942** (April 21): First arrivals at detention camp in Greenwood, British Columbia.
- 1942** (May 21): First arrivals at camps at Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan, Sandon and Tashme, British Columbia.
- 1942** (June 29): Director of Soldier Settlement given authority to buy or lease confiscated Japanese Canadian farms. 572 farms turned over without consulting owners.
- 1943** (January 19): Federal cabinet order-in-council grants Custodian of Enemy Alien Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadians' property without owners' consent.
- 1945** (January-May): 150 Japanese Canadians volunteer for service with Canadian army in Far East.
- 1945** (April 13): Beginning of intimidation campaign towards Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia to move to Eastern Canada or be deported to Japan.
- 1945** (September 2): Japan surrenders after atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (WWII).
- 1946** (May 31): "Repatriation" begins; 3,964 go to Japan, many of whom are Canadian citizens.
- 1947** (January 24): Federal cabinet order-in-council on deportation of Japanese Canadians repealed after protests by churches, academics, journalists and politicians.
- 1948** (June 15): Federal franchise (the right to vote) extended to all Japanese Canadians.
- 1949** (April 1): Removal of last restrictions; Japanese Canadians are free to move anywhere in Canada.
- 1967** Canadian government announced new immigration regulations - a point system for selection. It no longer used race as a category.
- 1988** (September 22): Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announces the Canadian Government's formal apology for the wrongful incarceration, seizure of property and the disenfranchisement of thousands of Canadians of Japanese ancestry. A redress settlement was also announced which included individual compensation for all survivors.
- 1992** National Nikkei Heritage Centre Society is incorporated. Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation grants \$3.0 million for heritage centre project.
- 1995** Japanese Canadian National Museum & Archives Society is incorporated and begins planning for museum and archives facility in National Nikkei Heritage Centre (NNHC).
- 2000** The Japanese Canadian National Museum officially opens with its inaugural exhibit, *Reshaping Memory, Owning History, Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress*.

## Winnipeg at the Time of *Madama Butterfly's* Premiere

Winnipeg was in the midst of its greatest period of growth. It grew from 8,000 in 1881 to almost 26,000 in 1891 and then to 42,000 by 1901. But then came a decade of explosive growth that took the population to 128,000 by 1911.

Union Bank, Winnipeg.  
Under construction, 1904



In 1904, the year of *Butterfly's* premiere, the CPR opened its magnificent station on Logan Ave (now the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg) and began construction on the Royal Alexandra Hotel which opened in 1906. The Dominion Theatre and the Manitoba Club both opened their doors in 1904. The City of Winnipeg built three new firehalls, befitting the needs of the burgeoning city (Number 3 on Maple Street, Number 5 on Sherbrook Street and Number 6 on Burrows Avenue). The province opened the Land Titles Building on Broadway in the same year.

Among the commercial buildings completed in 1904, the most prominent was the Union Bank (Royal Bank) Building on Main Street. Construction of the Eaton's store on Portage Avenue began in 1904 and was completed in 1906. And, the Trappist Monastery in St. Norbert was being built at this time.

Princess Opera House, Winnipeg, 1886.  
The Opera House could seat almost 1,400  
and cost approximately \$75,000 to erect.



As Winston Churchill, who visited Winnipeg in 1901 noted, "Fancy, 20 years ago there were only a few mud huts-tents: and last night a magnificent audience of men in evening dress & ladies half out of it, filled a fine opera house...Winnipeg has a wonderful future before it."

# THE OPERATIC VOICE & PROFESSIONAL SINGING

Operatic singing, which was developed in Europe during the 17th century, places far greater vocal demands on an opera singer than on any other type of singing. Opera singers rarely use microphones, and therefore must develop their voices to make a sound that will project and be heard above an orchestra and be heard throughout a large theatre.

After years of practice and study, an opera singer learns to use his or her body as an amplification device. By controlling the muscles of the diaphragm (a muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach) the singer can regulate the amount of breath used. The diaphragm expands and contracts, regulating the air that passes through the vocal cords, which, in turn, causes them to vibrate. The speed at which the cords vibrate determines the pitch. As the sound passes through the mouth, it resonates in the upper chest cavities and the sinus cavities of the face and head. These cavities act as small echo chambers and help amplify the sound. The shape of the mouth and the placement of the tongue near the lips contribute to the tone and sound of the words.

Many singers begin their operatic training in university. Opera students study singing, music history, composition and vocal pedagogy (voice teaching). In addition to music classes, they study diction and often study at least one foreign language. After university, singers begin to work in the professional world. Their first roles are usually small parts, but if they continue to study and train, they may move on to the bigger principal roles.

Professional singers develop a number of roles in their repertoire. Since the principal artists are required to have their parts memorized before rehearsals begin, singers must prepare well in advance of each contract. Singers have voice teachers who help them refine their singing techniques and many will also have an acting coach. Even a well established singer will have a vocal coach to teach singing and acting techniques for specific roles.

Each person's vocal tract is constructed differently. The roles that a singer performs are dependent mostly upon their vocal range, but within the vocal ranges, there are many colours and weights of voice that further determine which roles he or she can sing safely. Vocal colour refers to the richness of the sound and vocal weight refers to how powerful a voice sounds.

After the role has been studied intensely and the singer is hired to perform, they arrive at the opera company for the rehearsals. This time is spent refining the music with the conductor and staging the action with the stage director. Each director has a different idea of how the character should be played, and each conductor has a different idea of how the character should sound, therefore the singer must modify his or her techniques to reach the desired result.

Physical health is a major priority to a singer. Contrary to popular belief not all opera singers are overweight. Conventional wisdom used to state that excessive weight gave added volume and richness to the voice however, in recent years, people have discovered that physical fitness can give similar benefits to a voice. Plus, the overall health benefits of being in shape overshadow any loss of vocal power. Most singers, like professional athletes try to avoid such substances as tobacco, alcohol and caffeine.

## Vocal Categories

### Women:

**Soprano:** The highest female voice, similar to a flute in range and tone colour. Usually plays the heroine in the opera since a high, bright sound can easily suggest youth and innocence.

**Mezzo-Soprano:** The middle-range female voice, similar to an oboe in range and tone colour. Called an alto in choral arrangements, can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers and even the part of a young man (trouser role).

**Contralto:** The lowest female voice, similar to an English horn in range and tone colour. Usually play unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches and older women. Not very common.

### Men:

**Tenor:** The highest male voice, similar to a trumpet in range, tone color and acoustical "ring." Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.

**Baritone:** The middle-range male voice, similar to a French horn in tone color. Often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera or the villain in tragic opera, sometimes even the hero.

**Bass:** The lowest male voice, similar to a trombone or bassoon in tone color. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

The vocal parts overlap each other. The notes that are high for baritone to sing are low for a tenor. The notes that are low for a baritone to sing are high for a bass. For this reason you may see a high range mezzo-soprano singing a soprano's role or a low range baritone singing a bass' role.

The following terms can be used to describe special characteristics in a vocal range:

**Coloratura:** A light, bright voice that has the ability to sing many notes quickly, usually with an extended upper range.

**Lyric:** A light to medium weight voice, often singing beautiful sweeping melodies.

**Dramatic:** Dark, heavy and powerful voice, capable of sustained and forceful singing.

## GLOSSARY: IMPORTANT WORDS IN OPERA

**Act**- a section of the opera that is then divided into scenes.

**Aria**- means "air" in Italian. This is a piece of music written for a one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.

**Aside**- a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.

**Baritone**- the middle singing range of the male voice.

**Bass**- the lowest singing range of the male voice.

**Basso buffo** (Italian)- a bass singer who specializes in comic characters.

**Basso profundo** (Italian)- the most serious bass voice.

**Baton**- short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.

**Bel Canto**- Italian phrase literally meaning "beautiful singing." A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.

**Blocking**- directions given to the performers for movement on stage.

**Bravo**- (Italian)- a form of appreciation shouted by audience members at the end of a particularly pleasing performance. Technically, Bravo refers to a male performer, Brava refers to a female performer and Bravi refers to many performers.

**Buffo**- from the Italian for "buffoon." A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa.)

**Cadenza**- a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.

**Castrato**- (Italian)- a castrated male prized for his high singing voice.

**Choreographer**- the person who designs the steps of a dance.

**Chorus**- a group of singers of all vocal ranges, singing together to support the vocal leads.

**Classical**- the period in music which comes after the Baroque and before the Romantic, roughly from the birth of Mozart to shortly after the death of Beethoven. It represents the greatest standardization in orchestral form and tonality.

**Coloratura**- elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.

**Composer**- the individual who writes all the music for both voice and instrument.

**Comprimario**- (Italian)- a nineteenth century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.

**Contralto**- the lowest female voice range.

**Conductor**- the person responsible for the musical interpretation and coordination of the performance. The conductor controls the tempo, the dynamic level and the balance between singers and orchestra. You will see this person standing in the orchestra pit conducting the musicians and the singers.

**Countertenor**- a male singer with the highest male voice range, generally singing within the female contralto or mezzo soprano range.

**Crescendo**- a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.

**Cue**- a signal to enter or exit from the stage, to move or to change lighting or scenery; or a signal given by the conductor to the musicians.

**Curtain Call**- occurs at the end of the performance when all the cast members and the conductor take bows. This can occur in front of the curtain or on the open stage.

**Designer**- a production can have two or three designers: a lighting designer, a costume designer, a set designer, or someone who is both costume and set designer. They work closely with the stage director to give the production a distinctive look.

**Diva**- literally, "goddess" in Italian. An important female opera star. The masculine form is divo.

**Dress Rehearsal**- the final rehearsal before opening night, includes costumes, lights, makeup, etc. Sometimes it is necessary to stop for adjustments, but an attempt is made to make it as much like a regular performance as possible.

**Duet**- music that is written for two people to sing together.

**Encore**- a piece that is performed after the last scheduled piece of a concert. An encore is usually performed because the audience wants to hear more music even though the concert is over.

**Ensemble**- a part of the opera written for a group of two or more singers. This may or may not include the chorus.

**Falsetto**- the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.

**Finale**- the last musical number of an opera or an act.

**Grand Opera**- spectacular French opera of the Romantic period, lavishly staged, with a historically-based plot, a huge cast, an unusually-large orchestra, and ballet. It also refers to opera without spoken dialogue.

**Helden**- German prefix meaning "heroic". Can also apply to other voices, but usually used in "heldentenor."

**House**- the auditorium and front of the theatre excluding the stage and backstage areas.

**Impresario**- the proprietor, manager, or conductor of an opera or concert company; one who puts on or sponsors an entertainment; manager, producer.

**Interlude**- a short piece of instrumental music played between scenes and acts.

**Intermission**- a break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around.

**Librettist**- the writer of the opera's text. Libretto- Italian for "little book." It is the text or story of the opera.

**Lyric**- used to describe a light to medium weight voice with an innocent quality, capable of both sustained, forceful singing and delicate effects.

**Maestro**- means "master" in Italian. Used as a courtesy title for the conductor (male or female).

**Mark**- to sing, but not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer's voice so most performers mark during rehearsals. During the Dress Rehearsal singers try to sing at full voice for part if not all of the rehearsal.

**Mezzo-soprano**- the middle singing range for a female voice.

**Motif or Leitmotif**- a recurring musical theme used to identify an emotion, person, place, or object.

**Opera**- a dramatic presentation which is set to music. Almost all of it is sung, and the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Like a play, an opera is acted on stage with costumes, scenery, makeup, etc. Opera is the plural form of the Latin word opus, which means "work".

**Opera buffa**- (Italian)- an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the eighteenth century.

**Opera seria**- (Italian)- a serious opera. The usual characters are gods and goddesses, or ancient heroes.

**Opera-comique**- (French) or Singspiel (German)- a form of opera which contains spoken dialogue.

**Operetta**- lighthearted opera with spoken dialogue, such as a musical.

**Orchestra**- an ensemble, led by a conductor, that is comprised of string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

**Orchestra pit**- sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.

**Overture**- an orchestral introduction to the opera played before the curtain rises. Usually longer than a prelude and can be played as a separate piece.

**Pitch**- how high or low a note sounds.

**Prelude**- a short introduction that leads into an act without pause.

**Prima Donna**- literally, "first lady" in Italian. The leading woman in an opera. Because of the way some of them behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior and demanding fashion. The term for a leading man is primo uomo.

**Principal**- a major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.

**Production**- the combination of sets, costumes, props, and lights etc.

**Props**- objects carried or used on stage by the performers.

**Proscenium**- the front opening of the stage which frames the action.

**Quartet**- four singers or the music that is written for four singers. Also quintet, sextet, etc.

**Raked Stage**- a stage that slants downwards towards the audience.

**Recitative**- lines of dialogue that are sung, usually with no recognizable melody. It is used to advance the plot.

**Rehearsal**- a working session in which the singers prepare for public performance.

**Score**- the written music of an opera or other musical work.

**Serenade**- a piece of music honouring someone or something, an extension of the traditional performance of a lover beneath the window of his mistress.

**Soprano**- the highest range of the female singing voice.

**Soubrette**- (French)- pert young female character with a light soprano voice.

**Spinto**- (Italian)- a lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.

**Stage Areas**- refers to the various sections of the stage as seen by those on stage.

**Stage Director**- the person in charge of the action on stage. He or she shows the singers, chorus and cast where and when to move and helps them create their characters. The stage director develops a concept for how the entire performance should look and feel. He or she works closely with the stage managers, lighting designer, set designers, costume designer and wig and make-up artists to make his or her vision into reality.

**Stage Manager**- the person who coordinates and manages elements of the performance.

**Supernumeraries**- (Supers)- appear on stage in costume in non-singing and usually, non-speaking roles.

**Surtitles**- the English translations of the opera's language, in this production Italian, that are projected above the stage during a performance to help the audience follow the story. Much like subtitles in a foreign film.

**Synopsis**- a short summary of the story of the opera.

**Tableau**- occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.

**Tempo**- speed of the music.

**Tenor**- the highest natural adult male voice.

**Trill**- very quick alternation between two adjacent notes. See coloratura.

**Trio**- an ensemble of three singers or the music that is written for three singers.

**Trouser role**- the role of an adolescent boy or young man, written for and sung by a woman, often a mezzosoprano. Also known as a pants role.

**Verismo**- describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.

# AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

The following list will help you (and those around you) enjoy the experience of a night at the opera:

- Dress to be comfortable. Many people enjoy dressing up in formal attire.
- Arrive on time. Latecomers disturb the singers and others in the audience. Latecomers will only be seated at suitable breaks - often not until intermission.
- Find your seat with the help of your teacher or an usher.
- Remove your hat. This is customary and is respectful to the artists and to people sitting behind you.
- Turn off cell phones, ipods, pagers, digital watch alarms and all electronic devices.
- Leave your camera at home. A flash can be very disturbing to the artists and audience members.
- Save all conversations, eating and drinking, and chewing gum, for the intermission. Talking and eating can be disruptive to other audience members and distracts from your ability to be absorbed by the show. The audience is critical to the success of the show – without you, there can be no performance.
- Settle in and get comfortable before the performance begins. Read your program before the performance – rustling through the program during the show can disrupt everyone.
- Clap as the lights are dimmed and the conductor appears and bows to the audience. Watch as the conductor then turns to the orchestra and takes up his or her baton to signal the beginning of the opera.
- Listen to the prelude or overture before the curtain rises. It is part of the performance. It is an opportunity to identify common musical themes that may reoccur during the opera.
- Sit still during the performance. Only whisper when it is absolutely necessary, as a whisper is heard all over the theatre, and NEVER (except in an emergency) stand during the performance.
- Applaud (or shout Bravo!) at the end of an aria or chorus piece to show your enjoyment. The end of a piece can be identified by a pause in the music.
- Laugh when something is funny – this is a performance and you are expected to respond!
- Read the English surtitles projected above the stage.
- Listen for subtleties in the music. The tempo, volume and complexity of the music and singing often depict the “feeling” or “sense” of the action or character.
- Notice repeated words or phrases; they are usually significant.
- **Finally, have fun and enjoy the show!!!**

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

## Optional Activity #1 – A Review

### Step 1 – Think-Group-Share

Individually students will write, in point form, the answers to the following questions:

1. What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?
2. What did you think about the sets, props and costumes?
3. Would you have done something differently? Why?
4. What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
5. What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed. Place their poster papers on the walls.

### Step 2 – Class Discussion

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

### Step 3 – Outlining your review

Go over the essential aspects of a review including: a clearly stated purpose, a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern, a summary paragraph capturing the interest of the reader, precise nouns, revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for fine arts events from the newspaper as examples – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline worksheet below. Once this has been completed, students may write their rough draft.

Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)

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Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)

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Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Summary/Closing Paragraph

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#### **Step 4 - Peer Conferencing**

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

#### **Step 5 - Creating the final draft**

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces up and organize them into a newspaper.

### **Optional Activity #2 – A 20<sup>th</sup> Century Newspaper Review**

Be a music critic in 1905. Students imagine they are living at the time of the first performance of *Madama Butterfly*.

#### **Step 1 - Historical Research**

Students will need to learn about the historical context in Japan (and America) in the early 1900s, around the time Puccini composed *Madama Butterfly*. They may want to learn more about what was happening in other art forms (e.g., literature and painting).

#### **Step 2 - Writing the Review**

Students may want to create a newspaper in which their review is included. The review itself could incorporate quotes and/or headlines from actual historical reviews. The students' reviews can follow a similar outline to that for the activity above, but they must remember the time period in which they are writing.

If they design a newspaper, they can try to use similar type styles (font) and page layout as were used in the early 1900s.

As with the previous activity, peer evaluations of the reviews can be completed.

Manitoba Opera would love to receive a copy of any reviews or newspapers produced by the students. Please forward them to the attention of:

**Sally Sweatman, Education & Outreach Coordinator**

**Manitoba Opera**

1060 - 555 Main St.

Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3

204-949-0377 (fax)

[ssweatman@manitobaopera.mb.ca](mailto:ssweatman@manitobaopera.mb.ca)

## Opera Comprehension Tests

### General Opera

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest male vocal range.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ An instrumental introduction to an opera.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The area where the orchestra is seated.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The female vocal range lying between soprano and contralto.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for solo voice in an opera.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The highest female vocal range.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for two voices.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest female vocal range.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Italian word meaning "little book."
11. \_\_\_\_\_ The middle male vocal range.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ He/she has the artistic view for the performance of the opera.

### ***Madama Butterfly***

1. The opera *Madama Butterfly* takes place in \_\_\_\_\_ (location & date).
2. The libretto for *Madama Butterfly* was written by \_\_\_\_\_.
3. *Madama Butterfly* is written in the realistic style of opera that is known as \_\_\_\_\_ (from the Italian word *vero*, or truth).
4. 2008 marks the 150th anniversary of composer Giacomo Puccini's \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Puccini began his career as organist when he was \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The role of Cio-Cio-San is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
7. The role of B.F. Pinkerton is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
8. A "Nakodo" is a \_\_\_\_\_ (give the English translation).

# WINNIPEG PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES

## SOUND RECORDINGS

**Madama Butterfly/ Puccini: [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica].**

Decca Records, c2002.

**Call No:** CD OPERA PUCCINI MAD

**Madama Butterfly / Puccini ; [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica].**

Decca Records, c1999.

**Call No:** CD Opera Puccini MAD

**Madama Butterfly / Puccini ; [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa & Luigi Illica].**

EMI Records, p1990.

**Call No.:** CD OPERA PUCCINI MAD

**Madama Butterfly / Giacomo Puccini ; [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica].**

Deutsche Grammophon, p1988.

**Call No.:** CD OPERA PUCCINI MAD

**Madama Butterfly / Puccini ; [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica].**

London Records, c1987, p1975.

**Call No.:** CD OPERA PUCCINI MAD

**Madama Butterfly / Giacomo Puccini ; [libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa & Luigi Illica].**

EMI Classics, p1986.

**Call No.:** CD OPERA PUCCINI MAD

## DVD & VHS RECORDINGS

**Madama Butterfly [DVD] / Puccini.**

Deutsche Grammophon, c2005.

**Call No:** DVD 792.542 MAD

**Highlights from Madama Butterfly [VHS].**

London, c1993.

**Call No.:** VHS792.542 HIG

## SCORES

**Madama Butterfly, in full score [music] / Giacomo Puccini ; [libretto by Luigi Illica & Giuseppe Giacosa].**

Dover, c1990.

**Call No.:** SCORE 782.1 PUC

**Madama Butterfly, opera in three acts [music] / music by Giacomo Puccini ; libretto by L. Illica and G. Giacosa ; based on the book by John Guitman ; vocal score revised by Victor Truccho.**

G. Schirmer, c1963.

**Call No.:** SCORE 782.1 PUC