



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 8, 2009

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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MANITOBA OPERA PRESENTS
MADAMA BUTTERFLY
APRIL 25, 28, MAY 1

Life with Dishonour or Death with Dignity?

Manitoba Opera closes the 2008/09 season with Puccini's heart wrenching and beautifully exotic, *Madama Butterfly* at the Centennial Concert Hall, **Saturday, April 25** (8 pm), **Tuesday, April 28** (7 pm), and **Friday, May 1** (8 pm). An intensely moving and haunting portrayal of the dangers of misguided love, *Madama Butterfly* is one of the world's favourite operas and its soaring, melodic music includes one of the most famous arias in the operatic repertoire, "Un bel di." The production will be sung in Italian with English surtitles projected above the stage.

Tickets are on sale now. Go to www.ticketmaster.ca; call (204)253-ARTS (2787); or visit a Ticketmaster outlet. Ticket prices: \$30 to \$114 (adults); \$30 to \$104 (students/seniors); Children 12 and under – 50% off the adult casual price. *Prices include GST, the MCCCH \$1.00 surcharge, and the Ticketmaster \$3.50 service charge.*

THE ARTISTS:

Madama Butterfly will star soprano **Ailan Zhu** as Cio-Cio-San in her Manitoba Opera debut. Ms. Zhu is a leading interpreter of the role, having sung it across North America and elsewhere including the Royal Albert Hall in London. Winnipegger **Kurt Lehmann** will sing the role of B. F. Pinkerton. This will mark his second appearance in a leading role at Manitoba Opera, the only Manitoban tenor to hold that honour.

Gaétan Laperrière, one of Canada's great baritones, who last appeared with Manitoba Opera in the title role of *Rigoletto* in 2004, will sing the role of the American Consul, Sharpless. A rising Canadian mezzo-soprano, **Lauren Segal**, will make her debut as Suzuki. The production will also feature **Gerald Issac** (Goro), **David Watson** (the Imperial Commissioner/Prince Yamadori), **Greg Atkinson** (The Bonze), **Jennifer Sproule** (Kate Pinkerton), and **Lauren Edmond** and **Anton Dahl Sokalski** sharing the role of Sorrow.

2. *MB Opera presents Madama Butterfly*

Maestro **Daniel Lipton**, who conducted the concert in 2007 and *Aida* in 2000, returns to conduct. Winnipegger **Ann Hodges**, who last directed *Die Fledermaus*, will direct.

Lighting design is by Bill Williams. The set is from New Orleans Opera and the costumes from Malabar Ltd. (Toronto).

THE STORY:

An American naval officer, B.F. Pinkerton, arranges, through a marriage broker, to take a 15-year-old bride, Cio-Cio-San (*Butterfly*). Although the marriage enables her to leave the life of a geisha, her family disowns her for renouncing her ancestral religion.

In love with the dashing Pinkerton, she ignores warnings and he soon returns to the U.S. *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.

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SPECIAL SCREENING OF *PUCCHINI*
SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2 PM (DOORS OPEN AT 1:30)
Cinematheque, 100 Arthur Street (Artspace)
Admission is Free

Learn more about the fascinating man behind the music of *Madama Butterfly*. Acclaimed and award-winning British film and stage director and author, Tony Palmer's film, *Puccini*, provides insight into the dramatic and colourful life of the popular composer.

Puccini interweaves dramatized episodes from the composer's life with a look at the creation of Palmer's Scottish Opera production of *Turandot*.

For more info, to register, call or email Debbie Melnick at 944-8929,
dmelnick@manitobaopera.mb.ca

Film is approximately two hours long.

2008/09 SPONSORS, FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Season Funders: Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Arts Council, Winnipeg Arts Council, The Winnipeg Foundation

Production & Performance Partners:

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McKim Cringan George, Delta Winnipeg, Beyond Flowers

Education & Outreach Partners:

RBC Financial Group, Peter D. Curry Memorial Fund

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