

# *Madama Butterfly*

## A Guide for Educators



The Met  
ropolitan  
Opera

Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera

# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

## MANY OF PUCCINI'S OPERAS FEATURE REALISTICALLY DRAWN FEMALE CHARACTERS THAT MEET

a tragic end, but none of these stories is more poignant than that of Cio-Cio-San, the title heroine of *Madama Butterfly*. This tale of a young Japanese geisha and her marriage to an American naval officer explores themes of devotion and irresponsibility, fidelity and justice. Cio-Cio-San's journey takes her from innocence and happy anticipation through failing hope to calm acceptance of the tragic destiny that her personal code of honor demands. But she is no frail victim. Her optimism in the midst of even the darkest of circumstances makes her a heroine in every sense of the word. It is Cio-Cio-San's touching mixture of sweetness and anguish, vulnerability and courage that elicits some of Puccini's most emotionally expansive and heartbreakingly tender music.

The Met's production, first seen on Opening Night of the 2006–07 season, was directed by acclaimed filmmaker Anthony Minghella, who pointed out that in *Madama Butterfly* everything revolves around Cio-Cio-San. "It's almost a monodrama," he noted at the time of the premiere. "Everyone exists only in relation to her." Minghella described what he saw as the director's responsibility in bringing this particular opera to the stage: "I'd have to be crazy to do anything other than tell the story. To impose some kind of directorial conceit or tricks on a work that has such great integrity, and that has been so beloved for so long would have been a foolish act of presumption." Minghella's methods of storytelling embrace several techniques from the traditional theater of Japan, most notably the use of a Bunraku-style puppet for the silent role of Cio-Cio-San's young son.

This guide is designed to help students both enjoy the musical and dramatic riches of *Madama Butterfly* and examine the complex, sometimes ambiguous attitudes and behaviors that doom Cio-Cio-San to her fate. By exploring the subjects of Westernization and tradition that pulse through this opera, students will gain an understanding of the cultural forces that inform the story and examine some of the themes that continue to make *Madama Butterfly* such a compelling work of music theater. Finally, by offering pathways for considering the many elements of a live opera performance—including music, story, and visual design—it will help students of all ages develop the confidence to engage with opera both during and after the Final Dress Rehearsal performance.

### THE WORK:

#### **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**

An opera in two acts, sung in Italian  
Music by Giacomo Puccini  
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and  
Luigi Illica  
Based on the play by David Belasco  
First performed February 17, 1904,  
at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy

### PRODUCTION

Pier Giorgio Morandi, Conductor  
Anthony Minghella, Production  
Carolyn Choa, Director and  
Choreographer  
Michael Levine, Set Designer  
Han Feng, Costume Designer  
Peter Mumford, Lighting Designer  
Blind Summit Theatre, Puppetry

### STARRING

Hui He  
CIO-CIO-SAN

Elizabeth DeShong  
SUZUKI

Piero Pretti  
B.F. PINKERTON

Paulo Szot  
SHARPLESS

A co-production of the Metropolitan  
Opera, English National Opera, and the  
Lithuanian National Opera

Production a gift of Mercedes and Sid  
Bass

Revival a gift of Barbara Augusta  
Teichert

## ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE



Johnathan Tichler/  
Metropolitan Opera

The Metropolitan Opera is a vibrant home for the most creative and talented singers, conductors, composers, musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers from around the world.

The Metropolitan Opera was founded in 1883, with its first opera house built on Broadway and 39th Street by a group of wealthy businessmen who wanted their own theater. In the company's early years, the management changed course several times, first performing everything in Italian (even *Carmen* and *Lohengrin*), then everything in German (even *Aida* and *Faust*), before finally settling into a policy of performing most works in their original language.

Almost from the beginning, it was clear that the opera house on 39th Street did not have adequate stage facilities. But it was not until the Met joined with other New York institutions in forming Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts that a new home became possible. The new Metropolitan Opera House, which opened at Lincoln Center in September of 1966, was equipped with the finest technical facilities of the day.

Each season the Met stages more than 200 opera performances in New York. More than 800,000 people attend the performances in the opera house during the season, and millions more experience the Met through new media distribution initiatives and state-of-the-art technology.



This guide includes several sections with a variety of background material on *Madama Butterfly*.

- **The Source, The Story, and Who's Who in *Madama Butterfly***
- **A Timeline:** The historical context of the opera's story and composition
- **A Closer Look:** A brief article highlighting an important aspect of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*
- **Guided Listening:** A series of musical excerpts with questions and a roadmap to possible student responses
- **Student Critique:** A performance activity, highlighting specific aspects of this production; and topics for wrap-up discussion following students' attendance
- **Further Resources:** Recommendations for additional study, both online and in print
- **Glossary:** Common musical terms found in this guide and in the concert hall

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Madama Butterfly*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera or the performing arts. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

In particular, this guide will offer in-depth introductions to:

- The way the librettist and composer portray the main characters and their cultural backgrounds
- The relationship of the opera to historical events in world history
- Puccini's musical representation of Asian and American cultures
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

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Metropolitan Opera



## SUMMARY

Cio-Cio-San, a young Japanese geisha, is engaged to marry the American naval lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton. She knows that the match will anger her family, but she loves Pinkerton and looks forward to a happy future with him. Pinkerton, however, views his marriage to Cio-Cio-San as a passing fancy: Someday, he tells his friend, the American consul Sharpless, he will enjoy a “real” marriage to an American woman. Soon, Pinkerton’s ship returns to America, and he leaves Cio-Cio-San behind in Japan.

Three years pass. Cio-Cio-San has heard nothing from Pinkerton. Her friends counsel her to forget the American and find a Japanese husband; Cio-Cio-San replies that an oath of marriage cannot be broken. Then, one day, Pinkerton’s ship is spotted in the harbor. Cio-Cio-San is overjoyed. But when Pinkerton finally climbs the hill that leads to Cio-Cio-San’s little house, he brings with him a strange woman—and the loyal Cio-Cio-San finds herself facing a terrible choice.

## THE SOURCE: THE PLAY *MADAME BUTTERFLY* BY DAVID BELASCO

David Belasco was a Broadway impresario and playwright whose innovations in theater technology, including the use of spotlights and variations in colored lighting, were groundbreaking for the age. His 1900 stage play *Madame Butterfly* was based on a short story by John Luther Long, which itself was modeled after the novel *Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Loti. Drawing on his experience as a French naval officer, Loti structured *Madame Chrysanthème* as a semi-autobiographical work detailing his service in Nagasaki and dalliance with a local “temporary wife.” Loti’s works are typically set in exotic locales in the Near or Far East and frequently explore the conflict between romantic distractions and duty. Long’s short story similarly features a lieutenant in the U.S. navy who marries a young geisha and then leaves her. Both Loti and Belasco have Butterfly communicate in a primitive, pidgin English. Unlike its literary predecessors, Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* casts its heroine in a fully sympathetic light, free from the caricature that mars Loti, Long, and Belasco’s works.



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## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I: *Japan, early 20th century*

Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton of the U.S. Navy inspects a house overlooking Nagasaki harbor that he is leasing from Goro, a marriage broker. The house comes with three servants and a geisha wife named Cio-Cio-San, known as Madame Butterfly. The lease runs for 999 years, subject to monthly renewal. 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. 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. Sharpless warns him that the girl may view the marriage differently, but Pinkerton brushes off such concerns and says that someday he will take a “real,” American wife. He offers the consul whiskey and proposes a toast. Cio-Cio-San is heard climbing the hill with her friends for the ceremony. In casual conversation after the formal introduction, she admits her age, 15, and explains that her family was once prominent but lost its position, and she has had to earn her living as a geisha. Her relatives arrive and gossip 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 threatening voice is heard from afar—it is the Bonze, Cio-Cio-San’s uncle, a priest. He curses the girl for going to the Christian mission and rejecting her ancestral religion. Pinkerton orders the guests to leave, and as they go, the Bonze and the shocked relatives denounce Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton tries to console her with sweet words. She is helped by Suzuki into her wedding kimono, and she joins Pinkerton in the house.

### ACT II—PART 1

Three years have passed, and Cio-Cio-San awaits her husband’s return. Suzuki prays to the gods for help, but Cio-Cio-San berates her for believing in lazy Japanese gods rather than in Pinkerton’s promise to return one day. Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it to Cio-Cio-San, Goro arrives with the latest potential husband for her, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. Cio-Cio-San politely serves the guests tea but insists she is not available for marriage—her American husband has not

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deserted her. She dismisses Goro and Yamadori. Sharpless attempts to read Pinkerton's letter, but Cio-Cio-San keeps interrupting him with questions. He then asks her what she would do if Pinkerton never came back. With dark foreboding, she responds that she could do one of two things: go back to her life as a geisha, or better yet, die. Sharpless suggests that perhaps Cio-Cio-San should reconsider Yamadori's offer. "And this?" asks the outraged Cio-Cio-San, showing the consul her small son. Sharpless is too upset to tell her more of the letter's contents. He leaves, promising to tell Pinkerton of the child. A cannon shot is heard in the harbor announcing the arrival of a ship. Cio-Cio-San and Suzuki take a telescope to the terrace and read the name of Pinkerton's ship. Overjoyed, Cio-Cio-San joins Suzuki in strewing the house with flower petals from the garden. Night falls, and Cio-Cio-San, Suzuki, and the child settle into a vigil watching over the harbor.

#### ACT II—PART 2

Dawn breaks, and Suzuki insists that Cio-Cio-San get some sleep. Cio-Cio-San 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 Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton is overcome with guilt and runs from the scene, pausing to remember his days in the little house. Cio-Cio-San rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton—only to find Kate instead. Grasping the situation, she agrees to give up the child but insists Pinkerton return for him. Dismissing everyone, Butterfly takes out the dagger with which her father committed suicide, choosing to die with honor rather than live in shame. She is interrupted momentarily when the child comes in, but Butterfly says goodbye to him and blindfolds him. She stabs herself as Pinkerton calls her name.

#### VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

##### **SOPRANO**

the highest voice type, normally possessed only by women and boys

##### **MEZZO-SOPRANO**

the voice type lying below the soprano and above the contralto; the term comes from the Italian word "mezzo," meaning "middle"

##### **CONTRALTO**

the lowest female voice type, also called "alto"

##### **TENOR**

the highest standard voice type in adult males

##### **BARITONE**

the voice type lying below the tenor and above the bass

##### **BASS**

the lowest voice type

# WHO'S WHO IN MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Character		Pronunciation Guide	Voice Type	The Lowdown
<b>Cio-Cio-San</b> (known as Madame Butterfly)	<b>A fifteen year-old geisha in Nagasaki</b>	<b>cho-cho-SAHN</b>	<b>soprano</b>	<b>Young and idealistic, Cio-Cio-San views her marriage contract as a permanent, sacred union.</b>
<b>Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton</b>	<b>A lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, stationed in Nagasaki</b>	<b>as in English</b>	<b>tenor</b>	<b>Dashing but callous, Pinkerton travels the world looking for pleasure—with no regard for how his actions affect others.</b>
<b>Suzuki</b>	<b>Maid to Cio-Cio-San</b>	<b>soo-DZOO-kee</b>	<b>mezzo-soprano</b>	<b>A faithful and empathetic servant, Suzuki remains with Cio-Cio-San throughout her changes in fortune.</b>
<b>Sharpless</b>	<b>U.S. consul at Nagasaki</b>	<b>as in English</b>	<b>baritone</b>	<b>Sharpless provides a necessary voice of sympathy and restraint.</b>
<b>Goro</b>	<b>A marriage broker</b>	<b>GOH-roh</b>	<b>tenor</b>	<b>Goro flatters his clients while treating Cio-Cio-San with derision.</b>



- **1630s** Japan establishes the policy of *sakoku*, which closes the country to immigration and emigration and strictly limits foreign trade to a small number of designated locations. The only location open to trade with Europe is a Dutch trading post at Dejima, a man-made island off the coast of Nagasaki.
- **1853** Japan is compelled to open two of its ports to U.S. trade through the Kanagawa Treaty, after the U.S. Navy, led by Commodore Matthew Perry, infiltrates Tokyo harbor with four warships. The Kanagawa Treaty effectively ends Japan's centuries-long foreign policy of seclusion and border closure.
- **1858** Giacomo Puccini is born on December 22 in Lucca, Tuscany, to a family of church musicians.
- **1874** Puccini begins training in music at the local music institute, studying with his uncle, Fortunato Magi. He soon begins learning the scores of Verdi's operas.
- **1880** Puccini's exemplary musical gifts earn him entry to the Milan Conservatory, the most prestigious musical academy in Italy. In addition to his formal studies, he comes into contact with the bohemian and anti-conformist group of artists known as the Scapigliati (literally "the disheveled ones"). There, he meets many of the leading writers and intellectuals of the day.
- **1883** Puccini composes his first opera, *Le Villi*, which is first performed in a private recital at the home of a member of the Scapigliati. Among those present are the composer Pietro Mascagni, who plays double bass in the orchestra, and Arrigo Boito, who had just become Verdi's collaborator and was working on the libretto to *Otello*. Impressed with Puccini's talent, the music publisher Giulio Ricordi enters an exclusive contract with the composer and provides him with a monthly stipend to concentrate on composition. For the rest of Puccini's life, Ricordi acts as a mentor and friend to the composer.
- **1887** The French naval officer and travel writer Pierre Loti publishes *Madame Chrysanthème*, a semi-autobiographical account of his brief relationship with a geisha while stationed in Nagasaki. Loti's work colors the popular Western understanding of Japan for years to come.
- **1893** Puccini achieves his first major success with the premiere of *Manon Lescaut* on February 1 at the Teatro Regio in Turin.

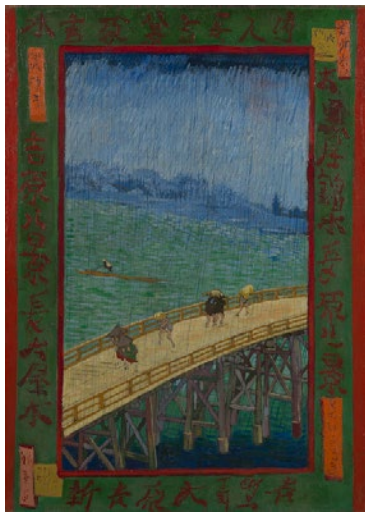


- **1897** John Luther Long publishes the short story *Madame Butterfly*, which is adapted from *Madame Chrysanthème*, in the periodical *Century Magazine*.
- **1900** Puccini visits London for the Covent Garden premiere of *Tosca* on July 12. While there, he attends a performance at the Duke of York's theater of the play *Madame Butterfly*, written by the American impresario David Belasco and based on Long's story. Immediately upon returning home to Milan, Puccini asks his publisher to obtain the rights to Belasco's play.
- **1901** Puccini officially acquires the rights to *Madame Butterfly* from Belasco in September and begins developing a scenario with his frequent collaborators Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa.
- **1903** Puccini's work on *Madama Butterfly* is interrupted when he is seriously injured in a car accident. (A lifelong technology enthusiast, he was among the first Italians to own a car.) The long duration of his convalescence with a broken leg is due, as he would learn later, to an undiagnosed case of diabetes.
- **1904** *Madama Butterfly* premieres at La Scala in Milan on February 17. Despite a starry cast, the performance is a disaster, with critics accusing Puccini of plagiarism. He immediately withdraws the score. After a series of revisions, *Madama Butterfly* finds great success elsewhere in Italy and abroad, although it is never again seen at La Scala during Puccini's lifetime.
- **1906** Puccini's fourth revision of *Madama Butterfly* is performed at the Opéra Comique in Paris on December 28. This is the version commonly performed today.
- **1924** While in Brussels for treatment of throat cancer, Puccini dies on November 29. His funeral at Milan's cathedral is attended by fellow musicians, dignitaries, and ambassadors from around the globe.

## JAPONISME

One of many wide-ranging effects of the opening of Japan to foreign trade in 1853 was the surge of interest on the part of Western artists in the decorative arts, aesthetics, costumes, and crafts of Japan. The London Exposition of 1862 and the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 showcased Japan's arts to Europeans for the first time, but even before this many visual artists were already collectors of Japanese fans, kimonos, bronzes, and examples of the rich Japanese tradition of woodblock prints known as *ukiyo-e*. Artists such as Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Vincent Van Gogh, among many others, began incorporating Japanese motifs and props into their own artworks, and many developed a visual style influenced by Japanese art in its use of asymmetrical composition, lack of perspective, bold colors, and clarity of line. As a stylistic movement, this interest in Japan and its arts is usually referenced using the French term "Japonisme" because of its prevalence among French artists.

Japonisme influenced the most important French writers of the day, such as Stéphane Mallarmé and Marcel Proust, and popular interest in Japan also helped make the works of Pierre Loti wildly successful—including the novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887), one of the sources for *Madama Butterfly*. In music, examples of Japonisme can be found in the opera *La Princesse Jaune* ("The Yellow Princess," 1872) by Camille Saint-Saëns, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885), and the operettas *The Geisha* (1896) and *San Toy* (1899) by Sydney Jones.



Left: Van Gogh, *Bridge in the Rain*, after the work by the Japanese printmaker Utagawa Hiroshige, right.

The Guided Listening Activities are designed to introduce students to a selection of memorable moments from the opera. They include information on what is happening dramatically, a description of the musical style, and a roadmap of musical features to listen for. Guided Listening Activities can be used by students and teachers of varying levels of musical experience.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, teachers will need access to a recording of *Madama Butterfly* and the libretto.

## "DOVUNQUE AL MONDO LO YANKEE VAGABONDO"

Lieutenant Pinkerton, an American naval officer, is about to marry the young geisha Butterfly. He marvels at the strange customs of the Japanese, whose marriage contracts are supposed to last 999 years but may be cancelled at any time. Here he explains to Sharpless, the American consul, his approach to life: He travels around the world, enjoys whatever pleasures he can find, and never worries about the consequences.

### What to listen for:

- The inclusion of a well-known melody to highlight Pinkerton's country of origin
- The use of two main melodies to structure the duet
- The division of the duet into three parts: in the first, Pinkerton explains his mode of living; in the second, he briefly considers how things might go wrong; and in the third, he declares that, no matter what happens, things always work out for him in the end

- (00:00) A brief excerpt from "The Star-Spangled Banner" introduces the Americans Pinkerton and Sharpless. At (00:10), however, the melody suddenly changes. It becomes sad and dark, suggesting that trouble lies ahead. Puccini often used special musical effects to highlight his characters' exotic origins; in early twentieth-century Italy, America was almost as exotic as Japan!
- (00:15) The aria's first important melody (henceforth called Melody A) is played by the orchestra.
- (00:20) The aria's second important melody (Melody B) is sung by Pinkerton. Melodies A and B will repeat at (00:37) and (00:42), respectively.
- (00:57) The repeating melodies are briefly "interrupted" by Pinkerton offering Sharpless "milk punch or whiskey." Milk punch is a cocktail made with milk and either brandy or bourbon. Both drinks were considered to be characteristically American, and thus are further illustration of Pinkerton's "exotic" background.
- (01:02) Melodies A and B appear again, but at (01:16) Pinkerton's Melody B changes abruptly as he describes the potential pitfalls of his lifestyle. It is important to note, however, that Pinkerton seems only to worry about how he might hurt himself—not about how he might hurt the people he meets.
- (01:32) The orchestra plays Melody A, but Pinkerton does not sing Melody B as we might expect. Instead, he forges ahead with a different melody, perhaps indicating that neither tradition nor responsibility will keep him from doing what he likes.
- (01:44) Sharpless sings Melody A twice, observing that Pinkerton's philosophy is "easy," since it requires no commitment to anyone. What remains unsaid, yet is nevertheless evident, is Sharpless's concern that Pinkerton will hurt Butterfly. Meanwhile, Melody A is repeated three times by the orchestra, each time at a slightly higher pitch than the last. This compositional technique (i.e., when a single melody appears repeatedly at different pitch levels) is called a "sequence."
- (02:16) As the third portion of the aria begins, Pinkerton returns to Melody B. No matter what worries he expressed in the second part of the aria, he is confident in his enduring success.
- (02:33) Pinkerton explains his understanding of the Japanese marriage contract. At (02:46), as Pinkerton declares that he "can cancel at any time," Melody A is heard. Recall that Melody A is the tune with which Sharpless has repeatedly warned Pinkerton that his winner-take-all approach to life can have dire consequences.
- (03:03) The Star-Spangled Banner appears one last time as Pinkerton and Sharpless drink a toast to their country.

## "VOGLIATEMI BENE"

As the sun sets on the evening of Butterfly and Pinkerton's wedding, the two characters express their hopes for their future together. Alas, the profound tragedy of Butterfly's story is already apparent. Butterfly, who has had to sacrifice both her family and her faith to marry Pinkerton, wants to be loved forever. For Pinkerton, however, Butterfly is a beautiful trinket to be possessed, admired, and thrown away at whim.

What to listen for:

- The dramatic trajectory of the duet, from shy and frightened at the beginning to opulent and soaring at the end
- The use of orchestral instruments with unique timbres, specifically the harp, bells, and what Puccini called the "Japanese Tam-tam"
- How Puccini uses music to illustrate stage directions he includes in the score

- (01:00) A solo violin plays a yearning melody as the strings play a gently throbbing accompaniment in the background. If you try to tap your foot or nod your head in time with the melody, you will notice that the repeated notes of the accompaniment occur on the "off-beat" (i.e., between taps of your foot). As a result, the passage feels nervous and shy. Perhaps the repeated notes in the orchestra are like the quick beats of a nervous heart.
- (01:13) The violin pauses briefly as Butterfly begins to sing. Puccini's score includes many specific instructions for stage actions; here, he suggests that Pinkerton is sitting on a bench in a garden as Butterfly timidly approaches. How might the music reflect these actions?
- (01:35) At (00:35), (00:39), and (00:43), the harp plucks three chords. Puccini uses the harp strategically to add a dash of sparkle at special moments.
- (01:01) Butterfly sings the same melody the violin played at the beginning.
- (01:30) Now Butterfly and the whole orchestra sing and play the violin's melody. It is the most confident moment of this scene so far, and it occurs just as Butterfly promises to love Pinkerton with "a love as wide as the sky and as deep as the sea."
- (01:43) Pinkerton responds, singing the now-familiar melody that Butterfly and the violin have already performed several times.
- (02:11) Butterfly has heard a horrible rumor: In America, collectors stick pins in butterflies and attach them to a board. Listen to how the music changes to express her fear and revulsion.
- (02:29) A harsh, heavy melody is heard in the background. This melody will return periodically throughout the opera, always accompanying moments that point to Butterfly's tragic end.
- (02:36) Pinkerton tells Butterfly that she should be unconcerned by the rumor she has heard. Puccini specifies that Pinkerton smiles while he explains that the practice developed "so that butterflies don't fly away." Does the music sound reassuring? The irony of this line is that it will eventually be Pinkerton who flies away, while Butterfly dutifully waits for him.
- (02:56) "You are mine!" Pinkerton triumphantly announces. "Yes," Butterfly replies, "for life!" She plans to be married to Pinkerton forever. As we already know, however, he has no intention of staying with her.
- (03:11) The rhythm changes. Now, the music is in "compound meter," which means that each beat is divided into three shorter notes (rather than the duple division of "simple meter," which we heard before; you can easily count "one-two-three, one-two-three" as you listen to the strings). The result is music that feels lush and full of motion.
- (04:16) As Butterfly sings about the night full of stars, the harp glitters in the background. Puccini specifies that at this point fireflies should appear among the trees surrounding Butterfly and Pinkerton. Listen carefully, and you will hear that Butterfly sings the same melody four times, each time at a slightly higher pitch than the last.
- (06:08) A giant crescendo slowly leads to a climax marked by the crash of a cymbal (06:23). During the diminuendo that follows, the collage of sounds in the orchestra includes harp, bells, and the Japanese Tam-Tam (a low gong).



## "CORO A BOCCA CHIUSA (HUMMING CHORUS)"

Sharpless has tried repeatedly to warn Butterfly that Pinkerton will never return, but she cannot believe it. As if in answer to her prayers, she sees a ship in the harbor. It is the "Abraham Lincoln," Pinkerton's vessel. Convinced that her beloved Pinkerton will soon be climbing the hill to her home, Butterfly sits with Suzuki and Sorrow to await his arrival. The humming chorus accompanies her silent vigil.

What to listen for:

- The sonic contrast between the plucked strings and the legato line of the humming voices
- How the different melodies in the chorus inspire different images or emotions

- (00:00) The silent vigil begins with the strings plucking a soft melody. The technique of plucking stringed instruments, as opposed to playing with a bow, is called "pizzicato" (from an Italian verb meaning "to pluck" or "to pinch"). Perhaps Puccini used pizzicato to approximate the sound of the koto, a Japanese plucked string instrument.
- (00:08) The humming voices join the orchestra.
- (00:34) As a new melody begins, Puccini adds a single bowed violin to the mix. This additional timbre increases the complexity of the sound. It also harkens back to the yearning violin solos of "Vogliatemi bene," when Butterfly believed her marriage would last forever.
- (01:01) The first melody returns.
- (01:29) A new melody briefly takes over. Ask your students if this melody inspires different emotions than the previous melodies. Why?
- (01:56) The melody of (00:34) returns, yet this strong, vibrant statement of the theme will soon sink into a long diminuendo.
- (02:20) A small fragment of the melody is repeated over and over, a wistful reminiscence of the past.
- (02:39) A new melody brings the chorus to a close. Such a section is called a "coda," from the Italian word for "tail."
- (02:56) The chorus ends on a glorious, shimmering final chord.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *Opera Review* reproducible handout found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## ENCOURAGING STUDENT RESPONSE IN ATTENDING THE FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

The enclosed performance activity is called “Opera Review: *Madama Butterfly*.” The reproducible handout for this activity, available at the back of this guide, will invite students to think of themselves as opera critics, taking notes on what they see and hear during the performance and critiquing each singer and scene on a five-star scale. Students should bring this activity sheet to the final dress rehearsal and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. When you return to class, students can use their “Opera Review” sheets as they review and discuss their experience.

## FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Start the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did students like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' "Opera Review" sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Madama Butterfly* experts.

Students may feel the need to discuss the opera's shocking ending and to voice their emotional responses to viewing Cio-Cio-San's suicide. Over the course of the opera, viewers are drawn more and more closely into Cio-Cio-San's world, as her hopes gradually narrow and her future disappears. Her sweet optimism and grace under tragedy render her tragic end all the more affecting, a fact acknowledged by director Anthony Minghella, who said of his approach to bringing the opera to the stage that, "It's no good unless it breaks your heart."

It may be helpful for students to consider the various causes, both personal and cultural, that contributed to Cio-Cio-San's suicide, and how her circumstances might have been improved by different kinds of help and support. Some of the questions your students might want to consider are:

- What would Cio-Cio-San's life have been like if she had not been disowned by her family? How might they have helped her?
- Would it have been different or better if Pinkerton had not waited three years to return to Nagasaki?
- Is there anything that Sharpless could have done to help Cio-Cio-San?
- Was giving up her son to Pinkerton and his American wife the right decision? Do you think his life in America will be better than his life with a loving mother?
- Could Suzuki have done anything differently to help Cio-Cio-San?
- Do you think that Cio-Cio-San's young age played a role in her response to Pinkerton and/or her reaction to losing him?

As a culminating activity, students can apply their observations about Cio-Cio-San and her plight in an interactive game incorporating modern-day resources. Divide the class into pairs of students and have them imagine that Cio-Cio-San is telephoning a crisis hotline. (Students may imagine that Cio-Cio-San is calling just prior to the final moments of the opera, or alternatively pick an earlier moment from the opera when she is facing a crucial decision.) One student will play the role of Cio-Cio-San, explaining her desires and emotions, and the other student will work with Cio-Cio-San, attempting to talk her down from her crisis and bring about a more positive outcome. After interacting in this vein for several minutes, students should switch roles.

By discussing Cio-Cio-San's plight and its causes, students can engage with *Madama Butterfly* and the issues it raises; practice flexible, critical thinking; sharpen their skills of persuasion and logical argument; and practice empathy and positive emotional modeling.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### IN PRINT

Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. New York: Schirmer, 1963.

*The complete opera libretto, in both English and Italian. Available at the Metropolitan Opera Shop at [metoperashop.org](http://metoperashop.org).*

Budden, Julian. *Puccini: His Life and Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

*Budden's biography includes lengthy chapters on each of Puccini's major operas. It is the most scholarly work on this list, but the writing is accessible and engaging, and Budden's book is well worth the effort for those who wish to delve more deeply into the composer's life and music.*

Weaver, William. *Puccini: The Man and his Music*. New York: E. P. Dutton, in association with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, 1977.

*An entertaining and insightful overview of Puccini's life and work, richly illustrated with numerous photographs and other relevant images.*

### ONLINE

The Metropolitan Opera. "*Un bel di*" (Martínez).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c--TdUCCOnE>

*Ana María Martínez sings an excerpt from Cio-Cio-San's aria "Un bel di" from Act II of Puccini's Madama Butterfly at the final dress rehearsal at the Met.*

The Metropolitan Opera. "*Vogliatemi bene*" (Patricia Racette & Marcello Giordani).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLtwCaYptdQ>

*Patricia Racette and Marcello Giordani sing "Vogliatemi bene" from Puccini's Madama Butterfly.*

The Metropolitan Opera. *Madama Butterfly - The Metropolitan Opera*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkn1Q1Cihyl>

*A video preview of the Met's production of Madama Butterfly.*

## act/scene

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

## adagio

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

## allegro

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” Allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

## aria

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. In opera, arias mostly appear during a pause in dramatic action when a character is reflecting musically on his or her emotions. Most arias are lyrical, with a tune that can be hummed, and many arias include musical repetition. For example, the earliest arias in opera consist of music sung with different stanzas of text (strophic arias). Another type of aria, da capo arias, became common by the eighteenth century and feature the return of the opening music and text after a contrasting middle section. Nineteenth-century Italian arias often feature a two-part form that showcases an intensification of emotion from the first section (the cantabile) to the second section (the cabaletta).

## articulation

The smoothness or hardness with which a note is begun and ended. Articulation is a way of indicating the degree to which each note connects to the next, and can be seen while watching the bow of a stringed instrument player. A note can be attacked sharply and made short, or it can flow smoothly into the next note.

## baritone

Literally “deep sounding,” a baritone is what a typical male voice sounds like—the term refers to a male singer with a low but not extremely low vocal range. A baritone will sing notes that are higher than those sung by a bass and lower than those sung by a tenor. Uncommon until the nineteenth century, baritone roles have grown in popularity in opera since the works of Verdi, who often reserved the voice type for villains.

## baroque

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1600 to 1750. The beginning of the Baroque period coincides with the invention of opera as a genre, and its end coincides with the death of the composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The Baroque period saw the rise of modern tonality, an expansion of performing forces, and increased ornamentation. The term “baroque” means bizarre or exaggerated, and was used by critics in the Eighteenth century critics who preferred a simpler and less-ornamented style.



## bass

The lowest sounding line in music. Bass also refers to the lowest singing range for the male voice. Opera composers often choose a bass voice to sing one of two opposite types of roles: comic characters or dramatic and serious characters. For example, Mozart and Rossini wrote comic parts for bass voice, using musical repetition and low register for comic effect. Wagner and Mozart wrote serious parts for bass voice, focusing on the gravity that a low register can contribute to the overall musical texture.

## bel canto

Referring to the Italian vocal style of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bel canto singing emphasizes lyricism and ornamentation in order to showcase the beauty of the singer's voice. Its focus on lyrical embellishment directly contrasts with a contemporary Germanic focus on a weighty, dramatic style. Bel canto singing is most closely associated with the music of Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti.

## cadenza

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity. Cadenzas are typically improvised—that is, created by a performer on the spot—though they can also be written out in advance. They most frequently occur near the end of a piece, at a point of harmonic tension when the piece is about to conclude.

## chorus

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. Most choruses include at least four different vocal lines, in registers from low to high, with multiple singers per part. The singers are typically from a particular group of people who play a certain role on stage—soldiers, peasants, prisoners, and so on. Choruses may offer a moral or commentary on the plot, or participate in the dramatic action.

## Classical

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1750 to 1830, bordered by the earlier Baroque period and the later Romantic period. Contrasting with the ornamentation common to the preceding Baroque period, Classical music is characterized by simple and elegant melodies, regular harmonic accompaniment, and contrasts between melodic themes. The composers most closely associated with the Classical period include Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven.

## coloratura

A rapid and elaborate ornamentation by a solo singer, particularly common in operas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Requiring vocal agility and a wide and high range, coloratura showcases the virtuosity of a singer by featuring repeating melodic figures, rapid scales, trills, and other embellishments.

## conductor

The person who directs the orchestra, setting the tempo, giving interpretive directions to the musicians, and generally holding all the musical elements of a performance together. In orchestra performance, the conductor typically stands on a podium in front of the players and uses a baton to communicate the meter and tempo, and his or her non-baton hand to indicate dynamics, phrasing, and articulation to the musicians. The gestures of a conductor can be likened to a non-verbal language that the musicians understand.

## contralto

A deep female voice, with a vocal range that extends lower than that of a mezzo-soprano. Contraltos are known for having a very wide range and for the power and depth of sound with which they can sing. As is the case for roles for basses, many of the earliest roles in opera for contraltos are comic roles, though nineteenth-century composers also wrote dramatic roles for female singers with a lower range.

## crescendo

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder. One of the most famous types of crescendos in opera, the Rossini crescendo, includes an increase in volume together with repeating melodic and rhythmic phrases, higher instrumental registers, and the gradual addition of instruments in order to create a particularly dramatic effect.

## diminuendo

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

## dynamics

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. During the eighteenth century, composers began indicating their desired intensity of volume in music by writing words such as piano (soft) and forte (loud) into the musical score. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from pianissimo (very soft) to piano (soft) to mezzo piano (moderately soft), all the way up to fortissimo (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a crescendo or diminuendo.

## ensemble

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include duets (for two soloists), trios (for three soloists), and quartets (for four soloists). Sometimes singers will respond directly to one another during an ensemble. At other times, singers will each sing to themselves as if the other singers were not on stage. In ensembles, multiple characters may simultaneously express very different emotions from one another.

## finale

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters. When it occurs at the end of an early act in the opera, a finale may create a messy situation—and the resolution of this situation will only happen in subsequent acts. One type of finale common in comic operas, a chain finale, features characters entering or exiting from the stage to create unexpected combinations of characters, in turn increasing the opera's dramatic tension.

## forte

Meaning “loud” or “strong” in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix “-issimo” to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means “loud,” fortissimo means “very loud.”

## harmony

The simultaneous sounding of pitches to produce chords, and the relationship between different chords as they succeed one another. Throughout much of Western music, systems of rules govern these progressions to help create our sense of musical tension, expectation, and conclusion. Tonal harmony is based on progressions of chords in relationship to a tonic (or home) key. In the 19th century, as composers sought novel sounds to reflect the originality of their invention, they began to employ chords and progressions of greater dissonance and greater distance from the home key. As such dissonances moved beyond mere sound effects into the musical structure itself, the traditional theory of tonal harmony began to become insufficient as a way to understand and describe musical structure.

## intermission

A break between acts of an opera. At the beginning of an intermission, the curtain will fall (that is, close) on stage, and the lights in the auditorium, called the house lights, will become brighter. Intermissions provide audiences with a chance to walk around, talk with one another, and reflect on what they have seen and what could happen next. The break in the performance may also correspond with a change of time or scene in the story of the opera—the next act may take place hours or months later, or be set in a different location. Usually lights will dim and a bell may sound to indicate that the intermission is drawing to a close and the opera is about to resume.

## legato

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. A legato passage does not include any pauses between notes or any accents at the beginnings of notes, as the notes blend into one another without a break. In contrast, a passage that is played staccato features notes played in a separated manner.

## Leitmotif

From the German for “leading motive,” a leitmotif is a recurring musical idea, or motive, that represents a particular person, object, idea, emotion, or place. This musical idea is usually a few seconds in length and can occur in the music’s melody, harmony, rhythm, or a combination of the three. Leitmotifs are most closely associated with the operas of Richard Wagner, where they are used repeatedly throughout the opera to provide unity; they also less frequently appear in operas of other composers, including Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Strauss.

## libretto

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers. Until the early eighteenth century, a composer would frequently set music to a pre-existing libretto, and any given libretto could thus be set to music multiple times by different composers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, collaboration between the author of the libretto, known as the librettist, and the composer became more frequent. Some opera composers, most notably Richard Wagner, are known for writing their own text.

## maestro

A title of respect used to address a conductor. The term is often applied to conductors with several decades of experience. However, performers often use this honorific when addressing the conductor.

## melody

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing. During arias, the singer will usually sing the main melody, though other instruments may play parts of the melody. Sometimes, such as during ensembles, multiple melodies can occur simultaneously.

## mezzo-soprano

A female voice with a range between that of a contralto and soprano. A mezzo-soprano's voice is slightly deeper than that of a soprano, so mezzo-sopranos are often cast in supporting roles as older women, including nurses, confidantes, or maids.

## opera buffa

A term applied to Italian comic operas from the mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. The plot of an opera buffa often features scenes and characters from everyday life and addresses a light or sentimental subject, concluding with a happy ending.

## opera seria

An eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Italian opera employing a noble and serious style. The plot of an opera seria often upholds morality by presenting conflicting emotions such as love versus duty, or by modeling enlightened rulers.

## operetta

Featuring spoken dialogue, songs, and dances, an operetta is a short theatrical piece. Shorter in duration than operas, operettas typically feature a light subject matter, incorporate melodies composed in a popular style, and feature spoken dialogue. Most popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the genre is the precursor of the American musical.

## ornamentation

An embellishment to the melody, rhythm, or harmony of music, intended to make a melody more expressive or ornate. Ornamentation can be either indicated through symbols written into the music or improvised by the performer.

## overture

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. After the conductor enters the orchestra pit and takes a bow, the music for the overture begins. Most overtures are a few minutes in duration, and set the mood for the opera—even featuring musical themes that will occur later in the opera.

## piano

Abbreviated *p* in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level. Musicians may achieve a piano sound by using less bow, less air, or less force. In opera, soft music will often correspond with emotions of sadness or moments in the plot when a character is reflecting on a course of action or emotional state. Pianissimo is “very soft,” and can be so quiet that an audience may need to listen carefully in order to discern its melody and harmony.

## pitch

The quality of a musical sound corresponding to its perceived highness or lowness. Scientifically, pitch can be measured as the number of vibrations (or repetitions) of a sound wave per second, which is called its frequency. A sound with a low frequency, like a bass drum, will sound low and have a low pitch, while a sound with a high frequency, like a siren, will sound high.

## prima donna

Meaning “first lady” in Italian, the prima donna is the leading female role in an opera. The term may apply to the role or to the singer herself, who usually sings in the soprano register and is the star of the show. Since the nineteenth century, the term has also been applied to a singer of any gender with a self-centered and demanding personality.

## recitative

A type of vocal writing between speech and song that imitates the accents and inflections of natural speech. Composers often employ recitative for passages of text that involve quick dialogue and the advancement of plot, since the style allows singers to move rapidly through a large amount of text. Recitative may be accompanied either by keyboard or by the whole orchestra.

## rhythm

Rhythm refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music. Rhythm is perceived in relation to an underlying beat and within the context of a meter. Western musical notation indicates to the performer the exact duration of each note or rest.

## Romantic

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1830 to 1900. Beginning in literature and later adopted by composers, romanticism reflected a newfound focus on individuality, nature, and emotional extremes. Music from the Romantic period often explores music’s redemptive power, focusing on the sublimity of nature, love, and the mysterious. Composers began to experiment with shortening and lengthening the standard forms and durations of musical works, and also added more expressive harmonies to convey the originality of their musical vision.

## score

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition. In an opera orchestra, the conductor follows the score during rehearsals and performances, while each performer follows his or her individual part.

## Singspiel

Literally “sung play,” a Singspiel is an opera with spoken dialogue. Singspiels are typically in German and are from the Classical or early Romantic eras. The plot of a Singspiel is usually comic in nature, and its music may include songs, choruses, and instrumental numbers that are separated by spoken dialogue.

## solo

A piece, musical passage, or line for a lone singer or other performer, with or without instrumental accompaniment. The most common type of solo in opera is the aria, which is composed for a single voice with orchestral accompaniment.



## soprano

The highest singing range for the female voice. Roles composed for soprano singers are typically among the leading roles in the opera and require soprano singers to show off their virtuosic flexibility and range.

## tempo

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music. Tempo is indicated in a score by a variety of conventional (often Italian) words—such as *allegro*, *adagio*, *vivace*, *moderato*, *grave*, and many more—that not only provide direction on the composer’s desired rate of speed, but also carry associations of gesture and character. For instance, *vivace* indicates not only a brisk speed but also a lively spirit. Additional tempo markings may indicate when a composer asks for a section of music to be sped up (such as “*accelerando*”) or slowed down (such as “*rallentando*”).

## tenor

The highest natural male vocal range. By the nineteenth century, the tenor had become the most common vocal range for male leading roles in operas. Tenor roles often feature high-pitched notes for male voice in order to showcase the singer’s range and power. A related voice type is the countertenor, with a range above that of a tenor and similar to that of a contralto.

## theme/motive

Themes are the melodic ideas that are musical building blocks for a piece. A theme is often recognizable as a distinct tune and may reappear in its original form or in altered form throughout the piece. A motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a musical work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas.

## timbre

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. Just as we can recognize each other by the differences in our speaking voices, operatic singing voices are distinguishable by their unique timbres. Listeners can also identify orchestral instruments by their timbre without being able to see them. The creative combination of different instrumental timbres is one of the artistic aspects of orchestration.

## trill

A rapid alternation between two pitches that are adjacent to one another. Trills are a type of ornamentation, serving to embellish the melodic line, and appear regularly within *coloratura* passages. Trills also may appear near the end of a piece in order to prolong the musical tension before the music concludes.

## verismo

A movement in Italian theater and opera in the late 19th century that embraced realism and explored areas of society previously ignored on the stage: the poor, the lower-class, and the criminal. Its characters are driven by passion to defy reason, morality, and the law. In order to reflect these emotional extremes, composers of verismo opera developed a musical style that communicates raw and unfiltered passions. Musically, verismo operas react against the forced ornamentation of the *bel canto* style and instead emphasize a more natural setting of the text to music. Before its exploration on the operatic stage, the verismo aesthetic first developed within the realm of literature.

# OPERA REVIEW: *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*, OCTOBER 8, 2019

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever wanted to be a music and theater critic? Now's your chance!**

As you watch *Madama Butterfly*, use the space below to keep track of your thoughts and opinions. What did you like about the performance? What didn't you like? If you were in charge, what might you have done differently? Think carefully about the action, music, and stage design, and rate each of the star singers. Then, after the opera, share your opinions with your friends, classmates, and anyone else who wants to learn more about Puccini's opera and this performance at the Met!

THE STARS:	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
Hui He as Cio-Cio-San	*****	
Piero Pretti as Pinkerton	*****	
Elizabeth DeShong as Suzuki	*****	
Paulo Szot as Sharpless	*****	
The Child (Puppet)	*****	
Conductor Pier Giorgio Morandi	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Opening dance			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Pinkerton explores the house			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Pinkerton describes a sailor's life			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The wedding			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The wedding night			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Cio-Cio-San imagines Pinkerton's return			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Sharpless reads the letter			
My opinion of this scene	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Pinkerton's ship arrives			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Cio-Cio-San's vigil			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Cio-Cio-San meets Mrs. Pinkerton			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Cio-Cio-San's tragic end			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5