



ROYAL  
OPERA  
HOUSE

## THE ROYAL OPERA

Music Director

**SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO** *cvo*

Director of Opera

**OLIVER MEARS**

# MADAMA BUTTERFLY

## JAPANESE TRAGEDY IN THREE ACTS

Music **GIACOMO PUCCINI**

Libretto **GIUSEPPE GIACOSA AND LUIGI ILLICA**

based on the story Madame Butterfly by John Luther Long  
and the play Madame Butterfly by David Belasco

Conductor **KEVIN JOHN EDUSEI**

Directors **MOSHE LEISER** and **PATRICE CAURIER**

Revival Director **DAISY EVANS**

Set Designer **CHRISTIAN FENOILLAT**

Costume Designer **AGOSTINO CAVALCA**

Lighting Designer **CHRISTOPHE FOREY**

## ROYAL OPERA CHORUS

Chorus Director **WILLIAM SPAULDING**

## ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Principal Guest Concert Master by arrangement with Trittico

**VASKO VASSILEV**

A co-production with Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona

Exceptional philanthropic support from

Royal Opera House Principals

**JULIA AND HANS RAUSING**

**MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024 AT 11.30 AM**

General rehearsal

## APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

The performance lasts about 2 hours 45 minutes, including one interval

**ACT I** 55 minutes

**INTERVAL** 25 minutes

**ACT II AND ACT III** 85 minutes

## LANGUAGE

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

## GUIDANCE

Parental guidance recommended.

This performance contains stylized depictions of suicide.

## CAST

Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton **JOSHUA GUERRERO**

Goro **YA-CHUNG HUANG**

Suzuki **HONGNI WU**

Sharpless **LAURI VASAR**

Cio-Cio-San **ASMIK GRIGORIAN**

Imperial Commissioner **ROMANAS KUDRIAŠOVAS**

Official Registrar **LEE HICKENBOTTOM**

Cio-Cio-San's Mother **ERYL ROYLE**

Uncle Yakusidé **ANDREW O'CONNOR**

Cousin **AMY CATT**

Aunt **KIERA LYNESS**

Bonze **JEREMY WHITE**

Dolore **CLAUDIA FLEMING**

Prince Yamadori **JOSEF JEONGMEEN AHN\***

Kate Pinkerton **AMANDA BALDWIN** replaces **VEEMA AKAMA-MAKIA**

Actors **JOHN KAMAU, BAO TIEU**

Cio-Cio-San's relations, friends and servants

\*Jette Parker Artist

Owing to illness Veema Akama-Makia will not be performing in today's performance. Amanda Baldwin will sing the role of Kate Pinkerton.

## PRODUCTION

Music preparation **RICHARD HETHERINGTON, EDWARD REEVE\*, SUSANNA STRANDERS, MARK PACKWOOD, PATRICK MILNE**

Assistant Directors **CECILIA STINTON, KEIKO SUMIDA**

Language Coach **ALESSANDRA FASOLO**

Movement consultant **SONOKO KAMIMURA**

Costume, wigs and make-up consultant **ETSUKO HANDA**

\*Jette Parker Artist

With grateful thanks to **BEATS, ERI NAKAMURA, ETSUKO HANDA, FLEUR BARRON, HONGNI WU, JONATHAN LO, JULIAN CHOU-LAMBERT, JUNE IYEDA, RAYMOND YIU, DR SATONA SUZUKI** and **YOKO ISHIKAWA**.

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## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

Lieutenant Pinkerton has negotiated with Goro, a marriage broker, to marry Cio-Cio-San (Butterfly). The wedding is about to take place and Pinkerton is inspecting the house that is included in the marriage contract. Goro introduces Pinkerton to the servants, who include Suzuki, Butterfly's maid. Goro is describing to Pinkerton the form his wedding will take when Sharpless, the American Consul, arrives. He and Pinkerton drink a toast to America (*Dovunque al mondo... America for ever*). Sharpless asks Pinkerton if he is not merely infatuated with Butterfly; Pinkerton is unsure (*Amore o grillo*), but he wants to possess her even though he knows this may hurt her. Sharpless fears for Butterfly's future and tries to dissuade Pinkerton from marrying her. Pinkerton's reply is to toast the 'real' American wife he will have one day.

Goro returns to announce the approach of Butterfly and her friends (*Quanto cielo! Quanto mar!*). Sharpless asks Butterfly about her family. She says they fell on hard times and the women had to become geishas to support themselves; her mother is coming to the wedding but her father is dead. Officials and relations arrive. Butterfly shows Pinkerton her possessions except for the most sacred one. Goro tells Pinkerton what this is: a dagger given by the Mikado to Butterfly's father – an order to die by suicide, which he obeyed. Butterfly tells Pinkerton that for his sake she has become a Christian, but she has not told her family.

The couple are married in a brief ceremony. The ensuing celebrations are interrupted by the Bonze, one of Butterfly's uncles, who berates Butterfly because he has discovered she has turned her back on her religion. Her family join his curses and Pinkerton angrily orders everyone to leave. Alone with Butterfly, Pinkerton tries to comfort his bride and, as night falls, he leads her into the house (*Viene la sera*).

### INTERVAL

### ACT II

Three years later, Pinkerton has been recalled to America. Butterfly and the faithful Suzuki are still living in the house. They have little money but Butterfly refuses to believe that Pinkerton has deserted her and tells Suzuki how he will return to her one fine day (*Un bel dì*).

Sharpless arrives with Goro to say that he has had a letter from Pinkerton. So great is Butterfly's excitement that he gets no opportunity to tell her the rest of Pinkerton's message. She tells Sharpless of Goro's attempts to marry her off to another suitor, and Sharpless watches while she fends off the latest of them, the wealthy Yamadori. Goro tells the men that Pinkerton's ship is on the point of arriving, and Yamadori leaves.

Sharpless attempts to read the rest of Pinkerton's letter to Butterfly and tries to persuade her to accept Yamadori. Her answer is to bring in her child – Pinkerton's child – of whose existence neither Sharpless nor Pinkerton had any knowledge. If Pinkerton deserted her, Butterfly would have two options – to become a beggar, or to die (*Che tua madre*). Sharpless, overcome with emotion, goes, promising to tell Pinkerton about his child.

Suzuki drags in Goro, who has been spreading rumours in Nagasaki that Butterfly has a fatherless child. Butterfly's anger

with him evaporates. The harbour cannon is heard signalling the arrival of a ship. Butterfly recognizes it as Pinkerton's. She decorates the house to celebrate his arrival and tells Suzuki to fill the room with flowers (*Scuoti quella fronda di ciliegio*). Then she puts on her wedding dress to wait for her husband.

### ACT III

At dawn the following day, Suzuki persuades Butterfly to sleep after her fruitless all-night vigil. Sharpless arrives at the house with Pinkerton and his American wife Kate. Suzuki tells Pinkerton of Butterfly's fidelity and her happiness at his return. But Sharpless explains that he needs Suzuki to help them break the news to Butterfly that Pinkerton is married; together they must secure the child's future (*Io so che alle sue pene*). Pinkerton gives Sharpless money for Butterfly and, unable to face her, leaves in distress (*Addio, fiorito asil*). It is left to Suzuki to tell Butterfly the truth.

Kate Pinkerton asks whether she may take the child away so that he can be properly cared for. Butterfly, maintaining her dignity, replies that if Pinkerton returns to the house in half an hour she will give him the boy. When the visitors have left, she dismisses Suzuki and prepares herself for a ceremonial suicide. Suzuki pushes the child into the room, and Butterfly bids him goodbye (*Tu? piccolo Iddio!*); she then kills herself. Pinkerton is heard calling her name.

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## THE ROYAL OPERA

Patron **THE FORMER PRINCE OF WALES**

Music Director **SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO CVO**

Director of Opera **OLIVER MEARS**

Director of Casting **PETER MARIO KATONA**

Administrative Director **CORMAC SIMMS**

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