

August 6, 2018

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Pittsburgh Opera presents Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*
The heart-breaking story of love, betrayal, and sacrifice

What:	Madama Butterfly Music by Giacomo Puccini , libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
Where:	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
When:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday, October 6 - 8:00 PM • Tuesday, October 9 - 7:00 PM • Friday, October 12 - 7:30 PM • Sunday, October 14 - 2:00 PM
Run Time:	2 hours and 38 minutes, including one intermission
Language:	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
Tickets:	<p>Single tickets go on sale August 27th. Single tickets for adults start at \$14 for all performances; tickets for children ages 6-18 start at \$7.</p> <p>Group Discounts available; group tickets are now available for sale.</p> <p>Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit pittsburghopera.org/tickets.</p>
Media Events	<p>Please contact ccox@pittsburghopera.org for reservations</p> <p>Photo Call (Sept. 24, 12:30 PM) – location TBA</p> <p>Full Dress Rehearsal (10/4, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center</p>
Related Events	<p>Opera Up Close (9/23)</p> <p>WQED Preview (9/29 & 10/5)</p> <p>Meet the Artists (10/9)</p> <p>Audio Commentary (10/9)</p> <p>Free Brown Bag concert (10/13)</p>

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of this release.



Madama Butterfly photograph by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera

Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera opens our 80th season with Puccini's [Madama Butterfly](#). Set in early 1900s Japan, **Madama Butterfly** is often considered the pinnacle of operatic tragedy, and has become one of today's most beloved operas.

Madama Butterfly follows the tragic love story of the innocent and naive geisha Cio-Cio San and the callous US naval officer Lieutenant Pinkerton.

Cio-Cio San, while still a teenager, forsakes her family, heritage, and religion for Pinkerton. But what she considers to be true love, he considers a casual fling. Cio-Cio San clings to the increasingly unrealistic belief that Pinkerton will return to her. Accompanied by an achingly beautiful score, **Madama Butterfly** promises to be an unforgettable experience.

Music Director Antony Walker conducts the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra and Chorus. Linda Brovsky directs.

On stage October 6, 9, 12 & 14, **Madama Butterfly** is unparalleled in its deeply affecting portrayal of love, betrayal, and sacrifice. Adult tickets start at just \$14 – with children's tickets for those ages 6-18 starting at just \$7. Season tickets are now on sale and [available online](#); single tickets go on sale August 27th.

Fun facts about *Madama Butterfly*

1. **Madama Butterfly** was the inspiration for the hit Broadway musical *Miss Saigon*, which is set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War.
2. Giacomo Puccini composed three of the world's top ten operas. World-wide, **Madama Butterfly** was the seventh-most performed opera of 2017-18, according to [Operabase](#). **La bohème** was fourth and **Tosca** was fifth.
3. Puccini wrote five versions of **Madama Butterfly**. Pittsburgh Opera will be performing the second of these five, called the Brescia version in honor of the Italian city where it was first performed in 1904.
4. For the second consecutive opera, a Russian soprano will make her Pittsburgh Opera debut. [Dina Kuznetsova](#), who was born in Moscow, will sing the title role of Cio-Cio San. This past April, [Ekaterina Siurina](#) made her Pittsburgh Opera debut as Adina in [The Elixir of Love](#).

The story, in brief

Act 1

Nagasaki, around 1900. U.S. Navy Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton inspects the house he has leased for 999 years from a marriage broker, Goro. Included with the house are three servants including Suzuki, the maid. They are expecting the bride, Cio-Cio San, known as Madama Butterfly, whom Pinkerton has purchased for 100 yen. To the American Consul, Sharpless, Pinkerton describes the carefree philosophy of a sailor roaming the world in search of pleasure (*Dovunque al mondo*). For the moment, he is enchanted with the young Butterfly, but when Sharpless warns that Butterfly may not take her vows so lightly, Pinkerton brushes aside such scruples, saying he will one day marry a “real” American wife. Butterfly is heard in the distance joyously singing of her wedding (*Ancora un passo or via*).

Entering surrounded by friends and family, Pinkerton's teenage bride tells him how she had to earn her living as a geisha when her family fell on hard times. In a quiet moment (*Vieni, amor mio!*), Butterfly displays her few possessions—including figures of her ancestors—and then reveals that she has converted to Christianity. The celebration is interrupted by Butterfly's uncle, a Buddhist monk, who curses Butterfly for having renounced her ancestral religion. Pinkerton angrily sends the guests away. Alone with the distraught Butterfly, he dries her tears (*Viene la sera*) and they proclaim their love under the immense starry sky (*Vogliateme bene, un bene piccolino*).

Act II, Scene 1. Three years later, Butterfly waits for her husband's return. As Suzuki prays (*E Izaghi ed Izanami*), her mistress stands with her eyes fixed on the harbor. When Suzuki shows her how little money is left, Butterfly urges her to have faith—one fine day Pinkerton's ship will appear on the horizon (*Un bel di vedremo*). Sharpless brings a letter from the lieutenant, but before he can read it to Butterfly, Goro appears with a handsome and wealthy suitor, Prince Yamadori. Brusquely dismissing both broker and prince, Butterfly insists her husband has not

deserted her. Sharpless tries again to read the letter and suggests Pinkerton may not return (*Ora a noi*). Butterfly triumphantly carries in her child, Trouble, proclaiming that as soon as Pinkerton knows he has a son he surely will come back. If he does not, she would rather die than return to her former life. Both moved and frustrated by her blind faith, Sharpless leaves without revealing the rest of the letter. Butterfly, on the point of despair, hears a cannon shot. Now delirious with joy on seeing Pinkerton's ship entering the harbor, she orders Suzuki to help fill the house with blossoms (Flower Duet: *Una nave de guerra*). Expecting Pinkerton to come running, Butterfly settles down to wait with Suzuki and little Trouble (Humming Chorus: *Coro a bocca chiusa*).

Act II, Scene 2. When Pinkerton still has not arrived at dawn, Suzuki insists that Butterfly rest. Before long, Sharpless enters with Pinkerton and Kate, his American wife. When Suzuki realizes who the woman is, she tearfully agrees to aid in breaking the news to her mistress. Seized with remorse, Pinkerton bids an anguished farewell to the scene of his former happiness (*Addio, fiorito asil*) and then rushes away. When Butterfly comes in expecting to find him, she finds Kate instead. Guessing the truth, the shattered Butterfly agrees to give up her child if his father will return for him. Then, sending even Suzuki away, she takes out the dagger with which her father committed seppuku and bows before a statue of Buddha, choosing to die with honor rather than live in disgrace. As she raises the blade, Suzuki pushes the child into the room. Sobbing farewell, Butterfly sends him into the garden to play, then stabs herself (*Con onor muore*). As she dies, Pinkerton is heard calling her name.

-Adapted from *Opera News*

For more complete plot information, plus videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit www.pittsburghopera.org/butterfly.

Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of **Madama Butterfly** start at \$14; tickets for children ages 6-18 start at just \$7.
- All performances are at the [Benedum Center](#), 7th Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District
- Tickets are currently available as part of a subscription/season ticket package, and can be [purchased online](#). Single tickets go on sale in late August. To purchase single tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or [buy online](#).
- Group and student discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213

Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2018-19 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor
- Tuesday performance sponsor: [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#).

Cast and Artistic Team: *Madama Butterfly*

Cio-Cio San	Dina Kuznetsova ⁺
Pinkerton	Cody Austin
Sharpless	Michael Mayes
Suzuki	Laurel Semerdjian ^{**}
Goro	Julius Ahn
Bonze	Brian Kontes
Prince Yamadori	Ben Taylor [*]
Kate Pinkerton	Antonia Botti-Lodovico [*]

The Artistic Team

Conductor	Antony Walker
Stage Director	Linda Brovsky
Scenic Designer	John Gunter
Costume Designer	Alice Bristow
Lighting Designer	Andrew Ostrowski
Wig and Make-up Designer	James Geier
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Assistant Conductor	Glenn Lewis
Chorus Master	Mark Trawka
Associate Coach/Pianist	James Lesniak
Assistant Stage Director	Matthew Haney
Supertitles	Chris Bergen
Assistant Stage Manager	Alex W. Seidel
Assistant Stage Manager	Nick Garcia
Assistant Wig Master	Nicole Pagano
Assistant Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Prop Master	Johnmichael Bohach

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

** Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

Related Events for *Madama Butterfly*

Opera Up Close: *Madama Butterfly*

Sunday, September 23, 2018 2:00 - 3:30pm

Founders' Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

Join Robert Boldin, Manager of Artistic Administration, and special guests from the production, for an in-depth look at the music and story of Puccini's [Madama Butterfly](#).

Admission is \$5; free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) and \$50+ donors. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-madama-butterfly>.

***Madama Butterfly* - Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**
Saturday, September 29, 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM and
Friday, October 5, 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Hosted by WQED's Anna Singer, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3 as well as the WQED website, WQED's preview of [Madama Butterfly](#) gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-madama-butterfly>

Pre-opera Talks for *Madama Butterfly*
One hour prior to each performance
Benedum Center

Ticketholders are invited to attend a free [Pre-Opera Talk](#) one hour before each performance's curtain in the Main Floor/Orchestra section of the Benedum Center. Learn about the composer, the story, and some juicy details about the opera!

Pre-Opera Talks are free to all ticketholders at all performances.

Audio Commentary: *Madama Butterfly*
Tuesday, October 9, 7:00 PM
Benedum Center

Ticketholders with visual impairments are invited to use [Pittsburgh Opera's Audio Description service](#) at our Tuesday performances. Trained volunteers describe the supertitles, scenery, costumes, and stage action. The listeners hear these descriptions via assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, October 9th performance by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or groups@pittsburghopera.org. Braille and large-print programs are also available.

Meet the Artists of *Madama Butterfly*
Tuesday, October 9, immediately following the performance,
Benedum Center Lower Lobby

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, October 9th performance of [Madama Butterfly](#) are invited to gather in the Benedum Lower Lobby immediately following the performance when [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of the opera. This event is free to all Tuesday performance ticketholders. Learn more at <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/meet-the-artists-madama-butterfly>

October Brown Bag concert

Saturday, October 13, Noon - 1:00 PM

George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free October Brown Bag concert, our first of the season. The program includes some of our 2018-19 Resident Artists' favorite selections. The concert is free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet the Resident Artists afterward at an informal reception.

Doors open at 11:30 AM. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/october-brown-bag-concert3>

COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:

Englebert Humperdinck's [Hansel & Gretel](#), November 3-11, 2018

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 80th season in 2018-19. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.

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