

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. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission.

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/
Choreographer

Michael Levine, Set Designer

Han Feng, Costume Designer

Peter Mumford, Lighting Designer

Blind Summit Theatre, Puppetry

STARRING

Hui He

CIO-CIO-SAN

Andrea Carè

PINKERTON

Plácido Domingo

SHARPLESS

Elizabeth DeShong

SUZUKI

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



HE



DeSHONG



CARÈ



DOMINGO

This guide includes five sections:

- **THE OPERA'S PLOT AND CREATION:** The source, the story, who's who in *Madama Butterfly*, and a timeline with key dates for Puccini's work
- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:** Two activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula
- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:** Two activities to be used during the *Live in HD* transmission
- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** A wrap-up activity that will help students reflect on the transmission, express their opinions about the performance, and integrate the *Live in HD* experience into their understanding of the arts and humanities more broadly
- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:** Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

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 librettists and composer portray the main characters and their cultural backgrounds
- The relationship between the opera's story and 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

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.

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



A Japanese tea ceremony, photographer unknown, 19th century

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, also called an alto

TENOR

the highest standard voice type in adult males

BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

BASS

the lowest voice type



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 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.

Butterfly meets Pinkerton's "real" wife

KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA



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 cries out her name.

WHO'S WHO IN MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Cio-Cio-San (known as Madame Butterfly)	A 15-year-old geisha in Nagasaki	cho-cho-SAHN	soprano	Young and idealistic, Cio-Cio-San views her marriage contract as a permanent, sacred union.
Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton	A lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, stationed in Nagasaki	as in English	tenor	Dashing but callous, Pinkerton travels the world looking for pleasure—with no regard for how his actions affect others.
Suzuki	Maid to Cio-Cio-San	soo-DZOO-kee	mezzo- soprano	A faithful and empathetic servant, Suzuki remains with Cio-Cio-San throughout her changes in fortune.
Sharpless	U.S. consul at Nagasaki	as in English	baritone	Sharpless provides a necessary voice of sympathy and restraint.
Goro	A marriage broker	GOH-roh	tenor	Goro flatters his clients while treating Cio-Cio-San with derision.

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 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 Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica.
- 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.



Rosetta Pampanini sang the title role at La Scala in 1925.

Music

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *A Musical Collision Course*, a copy of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms*, and the audio selections from *Madama Butterfly* available online or on the accompanying CD.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music, History, Social Studies, Humanities, Arts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To develop students’ musical vocabulary while exploring the notion of “exoticism” in music
- To deepen students’ critical listening skills
- To foster students’ creativity and awareness of their own musical preferences

**A Musical Collision Course:
Puccini’s Representation of Conflicting Cultures**

When beginning work on a new opera, Puccini was often inspired by settings with a strong local flavor or ambience. Whether a bohemian garret in Paris in *La Bohème* or a mythic version of ancient China in *Turandot*, these locales stimulated Puccini to evoke the setting in his musical representation and to compose music that inhabits the same world as the opera’s characters.

In *Madama Butterfly*, the composer was very deliberate in crafting a sound world that would transport listeners to Japan—an aural setting that further juxtaposes Cio-Cio-San’s world with that of Pinkerton. Puccini incorporated Japanese and Chinese folk songs into the musical fabric of the score and quoted the Japanese national anthem. He also utilized Japanese gongs in the percussion parts and approximated the sound of Japanese music through the use of pentatonic scales. For Pinkerton, in contrast, he developed an identifiably “American” sound. For audiences both past and present, the musical representation of the cultures that collide in the opera’s story increases the dramatic tension and embodies the dueling desires within the person of Cio-Cio-San herself.



Utagawa Sadahide became world-famous for his woodblock prints of foreigners in Yokohama in the 1860s, such as the one seen here. The port had never before been open to foreign visitors. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, BEQUEST OF WILLIAM S. LIEBERMAN, 2005

In this activity, students will:

- Become familiar with some of the ways that Western composers have evoked Asian culture through music
- Listen to and analyze a selection of musical excerpts from *Madama Butterfly*
- Relate Puccini's musical choices to character, plot, and the emotional arc of the opera

AUDIO CLIPS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

For this activity, there are twelve audio selections from *Madama Butterfly*, available online or on the accompanying CD. A guide to these tracks can be found in Steps 2 and 3 below.

STEPS

Students will listen to and analyze a selection of musical passages in order to discern Puccini's compositional process in developing "Japanese" and "American" musical styles. They will use new musical vocabulary to describe the attributes of each passage and will apply their knowledge in the creation of an independent musical representation of their own identity and culture.

STEP 1: Distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* found in this guide. Have your students review it as a pre-lesson assignment or at the beginning of the class. Where applicable, you may want to demonstrate the terms on the piano or on another instrument. Several of the terms in particular will help students develop an ear for the ways that Western composers have evoked Asian culture, namely the concepts of pentatonic and whole-tone scales.

STEP 2: Using the chart provided in the reproducible handouts for this activity, invite students to listen to a selection of excerpts from *Madama Butterfly*. Each of the examples includes a musical element that Puccini uses to illustrate a kind of "local color," either American or Japanese. Have students make notes in the right-hand column on how that musical element is presented, any associations they feel the element possesses, and any opinions on what its meaning might be. It may be necessary to play each excerpt a few times.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.



FUN FACT: In a letter to the music publisher Giulio Ricordi, Puccini described how the wife of the Japanese ambassador, Madame Oyama, was sharing folk songs with him to increase the “faithfulness” of his opera. She also gave Puccini some clear feedback about the names in *Madama Butterfly*’s libretto: “She does not approve of the name *Yamadori*, on the ground that it is feminine and otherwise not appropriate,” Puccini wrote. “The uncle’s name of *Yaxonpidè* is wrong too. Similarly the names *Sarundpiko*, *Izaghi*, *Sganami*, etc. are all wrong.” Only some of Madame Oyama’s cultural corrections were heeded: *Yamadori*, for one, remained the name of a major character.

A completed chart with further details on how Puccini uses the musical element throughout the opera is provided below for your reference.

Answer Key

TRACK	MUSICAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION & MEANING/ASSOCIATION
1	The Star-Spangled Banner	Puccini quotes the American national anthem in the opera’s first scene to represent the character of Pinkerton and his nationality.
2	Imitation of the sound of traditional Japanese instruments	The music includes delicate combinations of harp, piccolo, flute, bells, and tremolo strings, which Puccini uses to recreate the effect of traditional Japanese instruments.
3	Japanese national anthem	This brief moment quotes the second phrase of “Kimigayo,” the Japanese national anthem. It corresponds to Butterfly’s text at “ <i>la legge giapponese</i> ,” or “the Japanese law.”
4	Chinese folk song	By quoting this excerpt from a Chinese folk song, Puccini is emulating a generic “Eastern” sound that audiences would have recognized.
5	Japanese chant melody (based on the pentatonic scale)	This moment quotes a Japanese chant melody and is based on the pentatonic scale. It is another example of Puccini creating an “Eastern” sound in a more general sense. The melody has a minor pentatonic sound to it, above a repetitive, static harmony.
6, 7	Pentatonic harmonies (two examples)	Puccini utilizes the pentatonic scale both melodically (creating melodies out of the notes of the pentatonic scale) and harmonically (playing two or more notes from the scale simultaneously). Using the pentatonic scale often creates open-sounding intervals, such as the perfect 4th and perfect 5th.
8	Japanese percussion	Puccini accentuates the cry of the Bonze with the crash of the tam-tam.

STEP 3: Now, have students turn to the texts and translations found on the next page of the reproducible handouts, corresponding to **Tracks 9 through 12**. These excerpts are longer and involve connecting the meaning of the words with the sound of the music. Working through the excerpts one at a time, have students follow along with the translation while listening to the corresponding music. As they listen, they may wish to highlight or underline passages in the text where they feel that Puccini is using one of the musical elements explored in the previous step. Play each excerpt two or three times to allow students enough time to make notes below the text with details on Puccini’s musical techniques and how they correspond to the meaning of the words.

Operatic Conspiracies

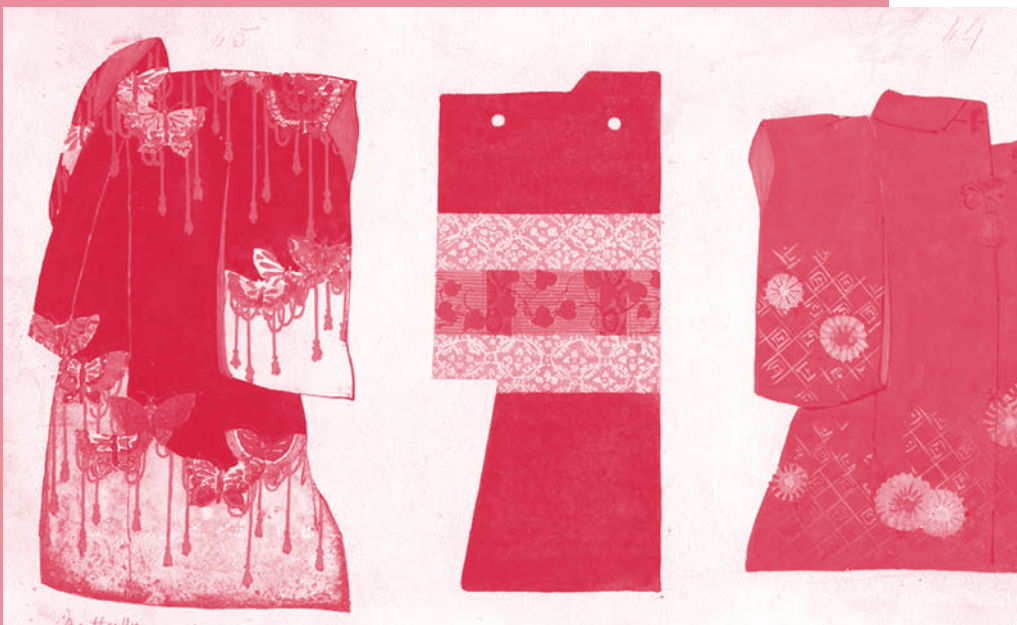
The premiere of *Madama Butterfly* at Milan's La Scala in 1904 was a disaster that has become notorious in theater history. Although audiences a century ago tended to be more vocally demonstrative than today's operagoers, the pandemonium during the opera's first performance was overwhelming even by historical standards. According to contemporary reports, there were animal and bird calls from the audience during the dawn scene, laughter when Butterfly presented her child to Sharpless, and shouts of "She is pregnant!" when a draught caught and billowed the lead singer's costume—all in addition to the typical whistles, hisses, and boos. The professional critics were no less hostile, with several reviewers repeating the claim that Puccini had plagiarized himself by reusing melodies from *La Bohème* in the new opera.

Puccini was convinced that this extremely negative reaction had been orchestrated by someone. A likely candidate for such a villain may have been Edoardo Sonzogno, owner of the music publishing firm that was the main competitor of Ricordi, which represented Puccini. Sonzogno had previously acted as impresario of La Scala, and his rivalry with Ricordi was so great that during his tenure, he forbade any operas published by Ricordi from appearing on the stage. His management of the opera house was disastrous and resulted in massive deficits, and after he was removed from office it was his turn to find few opportunities to

put his operas on stage. When the premiere of *Madama Butterfly* was delayed due to the injuries Puccini suffered in an automobile accident and his subsequent slow recovery, Sonzogno managed to put forward one of the operas from his own roster to fill the resulting void: the now-forgotten *Siberia* by Umberto Giordano. Sonzogno, who was known

After the disaster of the opening night and *Madama Butterfly* was withdrawn from the stage, an article appeared in the newspaper *Il Secolo*. It reflected,

"A second performance would have provoked a scandal among the Milanese, who do not relish being made fun of. The opera ... shows that Maestro Puccini was in a hurry.



Costume designs from the 1904 Milan production

ARCHIVIO STORICO RICORDI © RICORDI & C. S.R.L. MILAN

for his unscrupulous business tactics, would have been keen to ensure that the success of his opera was not eclipsed by Puccini's new work, which immediately followed it on stage. It would not have been the first or the last time that a discreet bribe before a premiere produced a disruptive claque that carried the rest of the public along with it.

Importuned as he was to bring out the work this season, sick as he was, he failed to find original inspiration and had recourse to melodies from his previous operas and even helped himself to melodies by other composers. His opera is dead."

It is worth mentioning that the owner of *Il Secolo* was none other than Edoardo Sonzogno.



Cio-Cio-San sees Pinkerton's ship in the harbor.

KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA

Before moving on to the next excerpt, discuss the passage as a class and have students provide details on the musical sounds Puccini uses to paint a colorful picture and create meaning. Encourage students to use their new musical vocabulary and to give concrete examples as they are able. A completed chart is provided below for your reference.

Answer Key

TRACK	EXCERPT	DESCRIPTION: CONNECTING MUSIC AND MEANING
9	Act I, Pinkerton's aria "Dovunque al mondo"	Pinkerton reflects on the benefits he enjoys as a member of the U.S. Navy, taking pleasure where he finds it. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is quoted, creating a strong association between his character and America.
10	Act I, from Pinkerton and Butterfly's first conversation, "Gran ventura"	The delicate melody in the solo violin is a quotation of a Chinese folk song. Puccini also emphasizes Pinkerton's question about Nagasaki by underscoring his vocal line with harmonies based on the pentatonic scale, creating a generic "Eastern" sound. When Butterfly reflects on her family history, Puccini quotes another folk song, now with a more minor inflection, as she tells of the hard life she has led.
11	Act II, Cio-Cio-San's aria "Un bel dì"	The aria includes frequent pentatonic inflections, both harmonically and melodically. Several melodic motives are drawn from different folk songs.
12	The opera's final scene	The final scene is rife with pentatonic and folk-like melodies. The opera ends with a dramatic quotation of a Japanese folk song, played in unison, based on the pentatonic scale.

FOLLOW UP: As homework, have students use the final page in the reproducible handout, “The Songs and Sounds of My World,” to brainstorm musical and other sound elements that they associate with their own cultures and everyday life. Using these elements, students should compose a brief essay, incorporating as many musical terms as they are able, in answer to the following questions:

If Puccini had written an opera with you as the title character, how would he have created local flavor to represent your world?

What are some of the songs, instruments, and sounds he would have incorporated into the score to capture the world and culture you live in?



Objects of Inquiry: Exploring Cio-Cio-San's Box of Memories

Humanities

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Objects of Inquiry*, the synopsis, colored pencils, and the audio clips available online or on the enclosed CD. If teachers wish to utilize the video clips in this activity, they will need video projection equipment and access to Met Opera on Demand, the PBS Learning Media website, or a DVD of the Metropolitan Opera's *Madama Butterfly* (dir. Anthony Minghella).

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Art, History, English, Drama, Music, Ethics, Social Studies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen students' comprehension of *Madama Butterfly*'s characters and story
- To deepen students' understanding of Cio-Cio-San's cultural identity and how it develops throughout *Madama Butterfly*
- To expand students' awareness of how objects can represent aspects of identity in fictional works and in their own lives
- To extend students' ability to make connections between their own identities and those of operatic characters
- Explore the scene in which Cio-Cio-San presents the belongings that are most important to her
- Predict the importance of these objects throughout the opera and analyze how Anthony Minghella's production incorporates them into *Madama Butterfly*'s story
- Create their own boxes of important objects and explain how these objects represent their identities

How can we understand someone whose life experiences are completely different from our own? In the opening act of *Madama Butterfly*, the American naval lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton marries the 15-year-old Japanese geisha Cio-Cio-San, yet he has little interest in understanding her life or culture. For Pinkerton, Cio-Cio-San is merely a passing fancy, and he looks forward to the "real" American wife he will have one day. But Giacomo Puccini's opera, with a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, works hard to do what Pinkerton cannot: approach Cio-Cio-San's story, her Japanese Buddhist identity, and her struggle to assimilate into her new husband's way of life with kindness, compassion, and real interest.

In this activity, students will explore the cultural experiences and upbringing that shaped Cio-Cio-San—including her religious heritage, her father's ritual suicide, and her childhood as a geisha—through a box of prized possessions that she shares with Pinkerton in the opera's first act. Tracing how and when these objects reappear throughout the opera, students will get to know Cio-Cio-San as a woman of profound conviction struggling to find her place in two very different worlds. By completing this activity, students will gain a deeper understanding of the opera's story and protagonist and develop a greater awareness of how the objects we own can help define who we are. Students will:



Attributed to Felice Beato,
1867–68
COURTESY RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

GUIDE TO AUDIO AND VIDEO CLIPS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

For this activity, there are four audio selections from *Madama Butterfly*, available online or on the accompanying CD:

Track 13: Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her box of possessions

Track 14: Cio-Cio-San prays silently before her Hotoke, and Suzuki prays audibly offstage

Track 15: Cio-Cio-San prepares for Pinkerton’s arrival

Track 16: Cio-Cio-San’s suicide

For teachers who have access to video projection equipment in their classrooms, this activity can also be conducted with a video of the Met’s production of *Madama Butterfly*, available via Met Opera on Demand (<https://www.metopera.org/season/on-demand/>, by subscription), on the PBS Learning Media website (<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/madama-butterfly-opera/madama-butterfly-opera/>), or on DVD. The four video clips for this activity, which correspond to the four audio clips listed above, are:

Video Clip 1: Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her box of possessions

Met Opera on Demand: Track 10, complete–Track 11, 0:00–1:41

PBS Learning Media: Act 1, 27:35–32:02

Video Clip 2: Cio-Cio-San prays silently before her Hotoke, and Suzuki prays audibly offstage

Met Opera on Demand: Track 18, 2:00–3:42 PBS Learning Media: Act II, 2:00–3:42

Video Clip 3: Cio-Cio-San prepares for Pinkerton’s arrival

Met Opera on Demand: Track 29, 0:00–1:52 PBS Learning Media: Act II, 43:40–45:23

Video Clip 4: Cio-Cio-San’s suicide

Met Opera on Demand: Track 39, 0:00–4:55 PBS Learning Media: Act III, 29:45–34:57

STEPS

In this lesson, students will use Puccini’s music, Giacosa and Illica’s libretto, and Minghella’s staging to investigate the contents of Cio-Cio-San’s box. By studying how Cio-Cio-San presents the objects to Pinkerton and analyzing how (and when) these objects reappear in the opera, students will develop an understanding of how these objects represent Cio-Cio-San’s cultural identity. Students will then create their own boxes of important objects to present to the class.

STEP 1: As a warmup activity, ask students, “If you had to pick one object to represent you, what would it be?” For instance, a student who enjoys playing basketball might choose a basketball as their object; a student who enjoys reading and writing might choose a notebook, a pen, or a favorite book. The object does not need to be available in the classroom, but it should be something tangible that could easily be displayed. (You may wish to assign this question as a homework assignment and invite students to bring their object to class to share.)

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.e

Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.

FUN FACT: In Italian, “madama” as a form of address is reserved for married women, similar to the English “Mrs.” The opera’s title, *Madama Butterfly*, can therefore be seen as a commentary on the sad plight of its heroine. Cio-Cio-San herself prefers to be called “Madama Pinkerton,” although none of the other characters ever complies with her wish. The fact that she forever remains “Madama Butterfly” reflects a reality that everyone else already understands: Her married status and connection to Pinkerton are only temporary.

Once students have spent a few minutes brainstorming, invite them to explain their object to a partner or a small group of their peers. Why did they pick this object? What does it say about them? Other members of the group are free to ask questions about the item. If time allows, a few students can share their item with the whole class, but this is not essential at this stage in the activity.

STEP 2: Tell students that this activity will explore how Cio-Cio-San, the Japanese protagonist of *Madama Butterfly*, shares her culture and identity with her new American husband, Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton. Pass out copies of the *Madama Butterfly* synopsis. Ask for a volunteer to read the synopsis of Act I aloud. Define key terms (*consul*, *geisha*, etc.) if necessary.

STEP 3: Pass out the reproducible “What’s in Cio-Cio-San’s Box?” The first scene on the handout comes from Act I of the opera, as Cio-Cio-San and Pinkerton prepare for their wedding. In this scene, Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton a box of keepsakes that she has; one by one, she reveals the objects and explains (briefly) their significance. Play students the clip of this scene, available as **Track 13** on the enclosed audio CD or as **Video Clip 1** from the list above. If students are listening to the audio clip, they should follow along with the text and translation on the reproducible handout. If students are watching a video, they can follow along with the subtitles or closed captioning on the screen. (Note that the stage directions in the handouts have been adapted to correspond to the actions in Anthony Minghella’s production; thus, by following along with the handout, students will gain an understanding of what is taking place onstage even if no video is available.)

As students watch or listen to this scene, they should make a list of the objects in Cio-Cio-San’s box. Encourage students to pay attention to how Pinkerton reacts to the objects, as well.

When the clip is complete, have the class create a list of all the objects in the box. Write this list on the board. A complete list is provided below; the items in bold will feature prominently later in the activity.

- A handkerchief
- A pipe
- A belt
- A little brooch
- **A mirror**
- A fan
- **A jar of rouge**



- **A tantō** (A long knife, a gift from the Mikado to Cio-Cio-San's father, inviting him to commit ritual suicide)
- **Hotoke** (Statues representing the spirits or souls of Cio-Cio-San's ancestors)

STEP 4: Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group one of the objects in bold on the above list. (Depending upon the size of your class, some or all of the additional objects can be assigned to create additional groups.) Have students turn to the next page of the handout and invite them to work together to think through the prompts on the page. They should reference what they saw/heard in the clip, as well as the text of this scene (available on their handout). As students fill out their worksheet, they should:

Predict why the object is important to Cio-Cio-San: Why would Cio-Cio-San choose to keep this object? What might it represent from her past life? Why might it be important to her after she is married?

Describe Pinkerton's reaction to the object: Was Pinkerton surprised by the object? Did he seem to understand Cio-Cio-San's attachment to it and what it means to her? Did he counsel her to get rid of it? (If Pinkerton doesn't respond to the object in the scene, students should imagine how he might respond.)

Sketch an image of the object. (Students can be as creative as they want with this step.)



Hashiguchi Goyō's 1918 woodblock print shows a woman holding a mirror and applying cosmetics. RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM. PURCHASE FROM THE FG WALLER FUND

The following list offers an overview of each of the objects in bold; feel free to use this information to guide students' thinking or to spark conversations.

- **The mirror and the jar of rouge:** Both the mirror and rouge are beauty products. Although Pinkerton says nothing about the mirror, he appears scandalized by Cio-Cio-San's rouge. Since rouge was typically worn by geishas, this jar of makeup symbolizes Cio-Cio-San's former life.
- **The tantō:** Pinkerton is understandably shocked to learn that this is the knife used by Cio-Cio-San's father to commit suicide. For Cio-Cio-San, the knife is a source of both sorrow and pride: Although she is saddened by her father's death, she is proud to know that he chose death over dishonor.
- **The Hotoke:** When Pinkerton first sees these statues, he thinks that they are dolls and laughs. When he realizes that they are actually religious statues that represent the souls of Cio-Cio-San's ancestors, Pinkerton seems embarrassed by the gaffe he has committed. For Cio-Cio-San, these statues are a tie to Buddhism, the religion she left behind when she converted to Christianity for Pinkerton.

Once students have filled out the sheet in groups, they can briefly present their findings to the rest of the class.

STEP 5: Before moving on, ask the class: Why would Puccini (and his librettists, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica) include this scene with Cio-Cio-San's keepsakes in the opera? Do you think the objects will return later in the opera? If so, what role might the objects play in Cio-Cio-San's story?

Ask for volunteers to read the rest of *Madama Butterfly's* synopsis aloud. Do any of the objects they studied in Step 4 appear in the synopsis?

STEP 6: Explain to students that each and every one of the objects discussed above will return later in the opera; in the next phase of this activity, students will study the scenes when the objects reappear and think about what they signify.

Three scenes from the opera are included in this step. For each scene, begin by briefly describing the scene and telling students which object will appear in it. Invite students to follow along with the text and translation (available on their reproducible handout) as they watch or listen to the clip; students are welcome to jot down their ideas as they listen. After each clip is finished, lead a class-wide discussion about what students have just heard. Guiding questions and introductions to each of the scenes are available below.

Scene 2 (Track 14 or Video Clip 2)

In this scene from the beginning of Act II, Cio-Cio-San is awaiting Pinkerton's return. Three years have passed since he left Japan, but still she waits patiently for the day he will come back. Cio-Cio-San prays silently before her Hotoke, the religious statues that represent the souls of her ancestors, while Suzuki prays audibly offstage. When

A Brief History of Japan

The Japanese archipelago has been inhabited since the Paleolithic Age, and by the eighth century CE it had become a powerful and unified state ruled by an emperor. Beginning at the end of the 12th century, a less centralized form of government emerged, with a warrior class of samurai, led by military commanders



Crest of the Tokugawa shoguns

called the *shogun*, effectively governing the nation. In this era, Japan was a feudal society, with peasants working the land in return for protection by the samurai.

The office of the *shogun* was subject to competition and coups, and rather than being strictly hereditary, the shogunate passed through a variety of powerful families. Beginning in the 1630s, the shogunate led by the Tokugawa family enacted a series of foreign policy measures that effectively closed Japan's borders, preventing immigration and emigration, strictly limiting foreign trade to a small number of designated locations, and prohibiting Christianity. This policy was known as *sakoku*, or "closed country," and its effects on Japan were significant. On the one hand, the Tokugawa shogunate was able to concentrate on domestic issues and ushered in a 300-year era of peace; on the other, their foreign policy prolonged the existence of the feudal system and isolated

the country from the industrial developments of the rest of the world.

The policy of *sakoku* ended only after intense pressure from the West, which was very keen to engage Japan in foreign trade. In 1853, the U.S. Navy, led by Commodore Matthew Perry, infiltrated Tokyo harbor with four warships. Under the implied threat of military action, Perry requested that Japan initiate relations with America. Faced with warships of a kind they had never seen, the Japanese had no alternative but to sign the Kanagawa Treaty, which immediately

opened two ports to U.S. trade and ended the country's centuries-long isolation.

In 1868, not long after the Kanagawa Treaty, the age of the shogunate also came to an end, when a group of political reformers succeeded in re-establishing a centralized, imperial government. This restoration of power to the emperor is known as the Meiji Restoration, named after Emperor Meiji, who ruled until 1912. During the 45 years of the Meiji era, Japan experienced rapid industrialization, vastly increasing its wealth and power, and successfully avoided falling under the expansionist aspirations of the Western powers. The fictional events of *Madama Butterfly* take place during the Meiji era, when Japan was only just adapting to the presence of foreigners, of Christian missions, of international trade, and of the notion of emigration. All of these issues are at play in *Madama Butterfly*.



New Year's Sunrise
by Eishōsai Chōki (1790)



Suzuki approaches, Cio-Cio-San quickly hides the statues, then chides Suzuki for still praying to the Japanese gods instead of Pinkerton's Christian god.

Guiding questions:

- What does Cio-Cio-San do while she listens to Suzuki's prayers?
- What does Cio-Cio-San do when she hears Suzuki enter?
- Why does Cio-Cio-San tell Suzuki, "The gods you pray to are lazy and fat. I'm convinced that the American god will respond to your prayers much more quickly"?
- How does this scene compare with what you predicted in Step 4? Why are the Hotoke important to Cio-Cio-San?

Scene 3 (Track 15 or Video Clip 3)

At the end of Act II–Part I, Cio-Cio-San sees Pinkerton's ship enter the harbor. Convinced that he has returned to Japan to be with her, she happily dresses for his arrival. By her side sits her child, whom Pinkerton is about to meet for the first time.

Guiding questions:

- Why do you think Cio-Cio-San takes out her mirror and jar of rouge?
- Cio-Cio-San says, "I'm no longer the beautiful girl I once was! Too many sighs have passed these lips, my eyes have spent too much time gazing at a far horizon." What do you think she means? Do you think Cio-Cio-San has only changed physically, or has she changed in other ways, too?

- Cio-Cio-San puts some rouge on her son’s face, saying, “And also some rouge for you, little one, so that this night of waiting won’t make you look pale and tired.” Why do you think she does this?
- How does this scene compare with what you predicted in Step 4? Why are the mirror and jar of rouge important to Cio-Cio-San?

Scene 4 (Track 16 or Video Clip 4)

Unfortunately, Pinkerton has not returned to live happily ever after with Cio-Cio-San. Instead, he has come (with his new wife) to take her child back to America. Cio-Cio-San is ashamed, heartbroken, and unable to bear the thought of living without Pinkerton and her child. She is also horrified by the idea that her child might one day think his own mother abandoned him. Feeling that she has no other option left, Cio-Cio-San decides to take her own life—using the same knife her father used to commit suicide.

Guiding questions:

- Why does Cio-Cio-San feel she needs to take her own life?
- What do you think the inscription on the tantō (“Let those who cannot live an honorable life have an honorable death instead”) means? Why does Cio-Cio-San feel that this applies to her?
- Why do you think Cio-Cio-San gives her son an American flag to hold? What might the flag symbolize?
- How does this scene compare with what you predicted in Step 4? Why is the tantō important to Cio-Cio-San?

Before moving on, ask students to return to the question posed in Step 5: Why is Cio-Cio-San’s box of objects important? Why would Puccini, Giacosa, and Illica choose to feature it so prominently at the beginning of the opera?

Ask students for additional thoughts and impressions on what they have seen and heard. How did Pinkerton’s responses to the objects in Cio-Cio-San’s box prefigure his behavior in the rest of the opera? Were they surprised by Cio-Cio-San’s belief that Pinkerton would return? Were they surprised by her decision to take her own life? Why or why not?

STEP 7: Now it’s time for students to think about creating their own version of Cio-Cio-San’s box. Pass out the reproducible “What’s in Your Box?” Ask students to think about five objects that are important to them and their families (including the one they came up with during the warmup).

As students work to fill out their “What’s in Your Box?” sheets, support their thinking with the following guiding questions:

- How might a stranger react to seeing each object in your box?
- What might a stranger think the objects mean?

FUN FACT: David Belasco, author and director of the play on which Puccini’s opera is based, was known for his innovations in stage technology. In *Madame Butterfly*, he won particular praise for creating a new and striking lighting effect in Cio-Cio-San’s vigil scene, which replicated the transition from dusk to dawn, including the simulation of starlight. Puccini was very impressed by this episode, set entirely without dialogue, and devised an equally unconventional musical effect for the corresponding moment in his opera, with a chorus of women’s voices humming behind the scene.

Asao Tamejōrō I operating a
Bunraku puppet by Katsukawa
Shunei (ca. 1790)

COURTESY THE LYON COLLECTION, KANSAS CITY



Bunraku Theater

For most Western audiences, puppet theater is identified either with provocative comedy, à la Punch and Judy or Charlie McCarthy ventriloquism, or with educational entertainment for children, as in *The Muppets* or *Sesame Street*. But the puppets featured in the Met's *Madama Butterfly* were inspired by Japanese Bunraku theater, a serious and sophisticated art form established in the late 17th century in the city of Osaka. The art of puppet plays accompanied by musical narration had a long history in Japan, appearing as early as the 11th century. Like the stylized theatrical genre of *kabuki*, which dates from close to the same time and shares many of the same stories, Bunraku was from its inception an entertainment created for ordinary people, unlike other dramatic forms of the time that were performed exclusively for the nobility and samurai classes.

Bunraku puppeteers go through lengthy apprenticeships to master the form, which may account for the gradual waning of its popularity in the 19th century. But there are still a number of practitioners today in Japan, and interest has revived in recent years, including in the West. Mark Down and Nick Barnes, the founders of Blind Summit Theatre, take inspiration from this tradition for their puppet-theater presentations. For Anthony Minghella's production of *Madama Butterfly*, they created Bunraku-style puppets to represent Cio-Cio-San's child, her servants, and, in a dream sequence, Cio-Cio-San herself. Generally one-half to two-thirds life size, a Bunraku puppet has no strings and is operated by three puppeteers, dressed in black and discreetly visible to the audience, each responsible for a different body part.

- How would you explain to a confused stranger what the objects mean to you?
- What makes these objects important to you?

Once students have completed their worksheets, give them an opportunity to share their work, either in small groups or in front of the whole class. Are any objects in students' boxes unfamiliar to other students in the class? Are any objects familiar to everyone? How might these objects help students get to know one another better?

FOLLOW-UP: Anthony Minghella's production of *Madama Butterfly* integrates several aspects of traditional Japanese theater, most prominently *Bunraku*, a form of Japanese puppetry performance. Distribute the sidebar *Bunraku Theater* for students to read at home. Students should then watch a short clip from *Madama Butterfly*, the scene in which Cio-Cio-San sits down to wait for Pinkerton after seeing his ship in Nagasaki harbor (available at <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/madama-butterfly-opera/madama-butterfly-opera/>, Act III, 0:40–5:15). Cio-Cio-San waits all night, and in Minghella's production, her silent vigil is accompanied by a beautiful ballet that incorporates Bunraku puppets.

When students return to class, invite them to discuss their experience watching this scene. Some guiding questions:

- Why do you think Minghella chose to use Bunraku puppets in his staging?
- How did Minghella's use of Japanese theatrical traditions change your impressions of this scene?
- What happens in the ballet? What actions and events do the dancers and puppeteers evoke?
- Do you think the ballet represents a dream? A daydream? Something else?
- A fan was one of the objects in Cio-Cio-San's box, and fans feature prominently in this ballet. How were the fans used?
- How does Minghella's use of Japanese theatrical practices reflect *Madama Butterfly's* theme of cross-cultural exchange?

Ten Essential Musical Terms

Aria A self-contained piece for solo voice, typically with orchestral accompaniment. Arias form a major part of larger works such as operas and oratorios.

Exoticism The inclusion or imitation of foreign musical styles in Western music. Composers have long drawn on the exotic sounds of other cultures to enrich their own works. In the 18th and 19th century, musicians were inspired by influences as varied as Turkish janissary bands and Spanish dance rhythms. In *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini's use of pentatonic scales and Japanese and Chinese folk songs represents a type of exoticism.

Folk Music and Folk Song

Music derived from an oral tradition, usually in a simple style and understood to represent the history or "essence" of a nation or cultural group. The term implies a separation between this kind of music and the "higher" form of art music developed by trained composers. Interest in folk songs grew steadily throughout the 19th century, parallel and related to the growth of cultural and political nationalism. Folk songs formed a rich resource for many 19th-century composers as they sought to broaden the classical idiom and evoke rustic settings, traditional cultures, and the distant past.

Fugue A musical form based on a brief theme, or "subject," and its imitation throughout multiple voices of a composition. The term derives from two Latin words meaning "to flee" and "to chase," reflecting the way that fugal subjects (i.e. repeated musical ideas) figuratively chase one another. The art of fugal composition reached its pinnacle in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach in the 18th century, but fugues can be found in the works of many later composers, both in orchestral music and in opera. The fugal theme from *Madama Butterfly's* prelude recurs throughout the opera, evoking the hustle and bustle of Cio-Cio-San's wedding day.

Gong A percussion instrument, usually flat and round in shape, made out of resonating metal such as bronze or brass. Typically hung from a frame and played with a mallet, gongs have a very specific timbre. Puccini uses two different kinds of gong in *Madama Butterfly* to evoke the sounds of the Far East: tuned gongs, which create a pitch when they are hit, and the tam-tam, which creates an unpitched crashing sound.

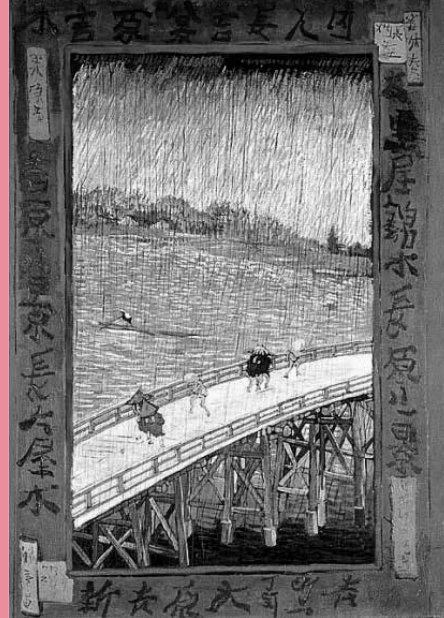
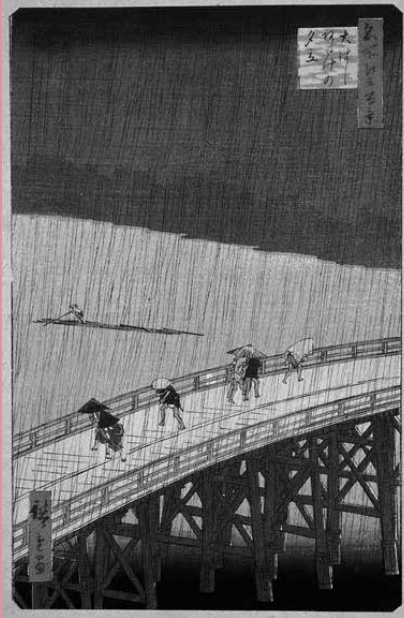
Musical Quotation As in the corresponding concept in speech or literature, a composer's use of a brief passage of pre-existent musical material. The principle is similar to the contemporary notion of sampling, where sounds are taken from a recorded medium and inserted into a new musical work. Musical quotation most frequently entails the borrowing of the melodic line of its source, although it can include borrowed harmony as well. Often, a composer's use of musical quotation increases the web of meanings of a given passage, as it inspires the listener to make associations with the source's text, composer, culture, or musical tradition. An example from *Madama Butterfly* is Puccini's quotation of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Pentatonic Scale A scale made up of five pitches (from the Greek *pente*, five). The most common pentatonic scale includes the pitches C-D-E-G-A, although other combinations of intervals are possible, including some that have a more "minor" inflection to Western ears. The black keys of the piano keyboard form another pentatonic scale. Pentatonic scales have been used in music from many cultures around the world and throughout history, from China, Japan, and Java to European folk music and American popular music, especially the African American spiritual and jazz. In *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini uses pentatonic melodies and harmonies to represent Cio-Cio-San and her Japanese heritage.

Through-Composed A style of seamless musical composition without obvious repetitions or breaks. The concept may be applied to works as a whole, as in entire operas, or to individual pieces. It is understood in contrast to the various types of strophic song, all of which include some variety of internal repetition (such as the da capo aria and rondeau form). Through-composed songs, even when they are based on strophic texts, include new music for each stanza. The technique of through-composition allows a composer greater invention and flexibility, as the music may change to reflect the dramatic situation and develop organically, rather than being restricted by repetition or other formal limitations.

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, the outcast, and the criminal. Characters in verismo operas are often driven to defy reason, morality, and occasionally the law. In order to reflect these emotional extremes, composers developed a musical style that communicates raw and unfiltered passions. Before its exploration on the operatic stage, the verismo aesthetic developed in the realm of literature.

Whole-Tone Scale A six-note scale (seven including the upper octave) consisting exclusively of whole steps (or "tones"). There are only two possible whole tone scales: C-D-E-F#-G#-A# (or Bb, spelled enharmonically); and C#-D#-E# (or F)-G-A-B. Whole-tone scales and chords are harmonically unstable as they lack the pitches used in chord resolutions typical of the tonal era. In *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini often uses whole-tone inflections to lend his music an otherworldly or exotic feeling.



Near left: Van Gogh: *Bridge in the Rain*, after the work by the ukiyo-e printmaker Utagawa Hiroshige, far left

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* (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.

Supporting the Student Experience during the *Live in HD* Transmission

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found at the back of this guide.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Watching and listening to a live performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. These performance activities are designed to help students analyze different aspects of this experience while engaging critically with the performance. Each performance activity incorporates a reproducible sheet; students should bring these activity sheets to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill them out during intermission and/or after the final curtain.

For *Madama Butterfly*, the first activity sheet, “The Art of the Director,” encourages students to tease out the interpretive decisions of the director from the visual clues on stage. Students will consider how added props and various staging decisions affect their perception of the opera’s meaning and its overall style.

The second activity sheet, “Opera Review: *Madama Butterfly*,” includes a scene-by-scene rating system to help students keep track of the opera’s story and develop their own opinions about what they see and hear. This activity is the same for each opera, and it is intended to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations while enriching their understanding of the art form as a whole.

The performance activity reproducible handouts can be found at the back of this guide. On the next page, you’ll find a follow-up activity created specifically for reviewing the *Live in HD* performance of *Madama Butterfly*. This activity is intended to inspire careful, critical thinking about what students have seen and heard while also inspiring students to engage in further discussion and study.

Asking for Help: Could Cio-Cio-San's Crisis Have Been Averted?

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they like? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? This discussion should be an opportunity for students to review their performance activity sheets and express their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production, the singers' performances, and *Madama Butterfly*'s music and story.

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-



Cio-Cio-San with her son and her servant, Suzuki
KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA

San's world, as her hopes gradually narrow and her future disappears. Her sweet optimism and grace under tragedy render her suicide 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.

IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attending the *Live in HD* transmission of *Madama Butterfly*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review students' understanding of *Madama Butterfly*
- To encourage students to develop and express their own opinions about the *Live in HD* performance
- To create a safe space for students to discuss the opera's tragic ending

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.9-12.1.d

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.

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.

**Excerpts taken from the
Metropolitan Opera broadcast of
December 17, 2011**

CIO-CIO-SAN

Liping Zhang

PINKERTON

Robert Dean Smith

SUZUKI

Maria Zifchak

SHARPLESS

Luca Salsi

GORO

Joel Sorensen

Conducted by

Plácido Domingo

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

- 1 The Star-Spangled Banner
- 2 Imitation of the sound of traditional Japanese instruments
- 3 Japanese national anthem
- 4 Chinese folk song
- 5 Japanese chant melody
- 6 Pentatonic harmonies
- 7 Pentatonic harmonies (example 2)
- 8 Japanese percussion
- 9 Pinkerton's aria "Dovunque al mondo"
- 10 Pinkerton and Cio-Cio-San's interaction at "Gran ventura"
- 11 Cio-Cio-San's aria "Un bel dì"
- 12 The final scene
- 13 Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her keepsakes
- 14 Cio-Cio-San prays to her Hotoke
- 15 Cio-Cio-San prepares for Pinkerton's arrival
- 16 Cio-Cio-San's suicide

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course

MUSICAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION & MEANING/ASSOCIATION
The Star-Spangled Banner	
Imitation of the sound of traditional Japanese instruments	
Japanese national anthem	
Chinese folk song	
Japanese chant melody (based on the pentatonic scale)	
Pentatonic harmonies (two examples)	
Japanese percussion	

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

“Dovunque al mondo”

PINKERTON: Dovunque al mondo
lo Yankee vagabondo
si gode e traffica
sprezzando i rischi.

Affonda l'ancora alla ventura ...

(interrupts himself to offer Sharpless a drink)

Milk-Punch, o Wiskey?

(starting again) Affonda l'ancora alla ventura
finchè una raffica scompigli nave e
ormeggi, alberatura.

La vita ei non appaga
se non fa suo tesoro
i fiori d'ogni plaga ...

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo.

PINKERTON: ... d'ogni bella gli amor.

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo
che fa la vita vaga
ma che intristisce il cuor.

PINKERTON: Vinto si tuffa e la sorte racciuffa.
Il suo talento fa in ogni dove.
Così mi sposo all'uso giapponese
per novecento novantanove anni.
Salvo a prosciogliermi ogni mese.

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo.

PINKERTON: “America forever!”

SHARPLESS: “America forever.”

Wherever the Yankee
vagabond roams,
he throws caution to the wind and
seeks his fortune and pleasure.
He drops his anchor where and when he wants ...

Milk punch or whisky?
He drops his anchor where and when he wants
until a storm wind blows and rocks his boat;
then he raises sail and casts off again.
Life isn't worth living
unless he can make
all the flowers in the fields ...

That's an easy philosophy.

... his own special treasures.

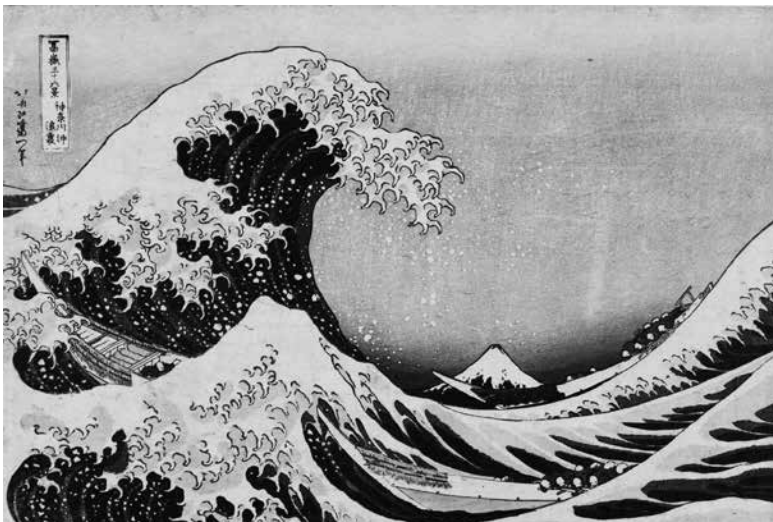
That's an easy philosophy,
which makes life pleasant
but leaves you with an empty heart.

Always undaunted, his luck will never run out.
He works his magic in every place he goes.
And so I'm marrying in the Japanese manner,
for nine hundred and ninety-nine years,
with the option to renew each month.

That's an easy philosophy.

“America forever!”

“America forever.”



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

“Gran ventura”

BUTTERFLY: Gran ventura.

I'm delighted.

BUTTERFLY'S FRIENDS: Riverenza.

We are honored.

PINKERTON: (*smiling*) È un po' dura la scalata?

Did you find it difficult to climb the hill?

BUTTERFLY: (*calmly*) A una sposa costumata più penosa è l'impazienza.

For a genteel bride, the waiting is much more difficult.

PINKERTON: (*somewhat derisively*) Molto raro complimento.

What a beautiful thing to say.

BUTTERFLY: (*naively*) Dei più belli ancor ne so.

I know even more beautiful phrases.

PINKERTON: (*encouragingly*) Dei gioielli!

Such jewels!

BUTTERFLY: (*wishing to show off her collection of compliments*)
Se vi è caro sul momento ...

If you would like to hear more of them now ...

PINKERTON: Grazie, no.

Thank you, no.

Having already observed the group of girls with curiosity, Sharpless draws near Butterfly, who listens to him attentively.

SHARPLESS: Miss Butterfly. Bel nome, vi sta a meraviglia.
Siete di Nagasaki?

Miss Butterfly. A beautiful name, and it suits you so well.
You are from Nagasaki?

BUTTERFLY: Signor sì. Di famiglia assai prospera un tempo.
(*to her friends*) Verità?

Yes, sir. And my family was at one time rather wealthy.
Isn't that true?

BUTTERFLY'S FRIENDS: (*agreeing eagerly*) Verità!

It's true!

BUTTERFLY: Nessuno si confessa mai nato in povertà,
e non c'è vagabondo che a sentirlo non sia
di gran prosapia. Eppur conobbi la ricchezza.
Ma il turbine rovescia le quercie più robuste
e abbiam fatto la ghescia per sostentarci.
(*to her friends*) Vero?

I know that no one will admit to being from a poor family,
and even the humblest vagabond will say he was
born of noble forebears. Still we were wealthy once.
But storm winds can uproot even the strongest oaks.
And so, we had to work as geishas to support ourselves.
Didn't we?

BUTTERFLY'S FRIENDS: Vero!

It's true!

BUTTERFLY: Non lo nascondo nè m'adonto.
(*seeing that Sharpless is laughing*) Ridete? Perché? Cose del mondo.

I do not hide it, and why should I?
You're laughing? But why? That's life.

PINKERTON: (*having listened with interest, he turns to Sharpless*)
(Con quel fare di bambola quando parla m'infiamma.)

(With her innocent chatter, she sets me on fire.)

SHARPLESS: (*also interested in Butterfly's chatter, he continues to question her*) E ci avete sorelle?

And do you have any sisters?

BUTTERFLY: No, signore. Ho la mamma.

No sir. I just have my mother.

GORO: (*solemnly*) Una nobile dama.

A gracious lady.

BUTTERFLY: Ma senza farle torto povera molto anch'essa.

But to speak the truth, she's just as poor as I am.

SHARPLESS: E vostro padre?

And your father?

BUTTERFLY: (*taken by surprise, she replies dryly*) Morto.

He's dead.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

“Un bel dì”

BUTTERFLY: Un bel dì, vedremo levarsi
 un fil di fumo sull'estremo confin del mare.
 E poi la nave appare.
 Poi la nave bianca entra nel porto,
 romba il suo saluto. Vedi? È venuto!
 Io non gli scendo incontro, io no.
 Mi metto là sul ciglio del colle e aspetto,
 e aspetto gran tempo e non mi pesa
 la lunga attesa.
 E uscito dalla folla cittadina
 un uom, un picciol punto
 s'avvia per la collina.
 Chi sarà? chi sarà?
 E come sarà giunto
 che dirà? che dirà?
 Chiamerà “Butterfly” dalla lontana.
 Io senza dar risposta
 me ne starò nascosta
 un po' per celia, e un po' per non morire
 al primo incontro, ed egli alquanto in pena
 chiamerà, chiamerà: “Piccina mogliettina,
 olezzo di verbena”
 i nomi che mi dava al suo venire.
(to Suzuki) Tutto questo avverrà, te lo prometto.
 Tienti la tua paura—io con sicura fede l'aspetto.

One fine day, we'll see a thin thread of smoke rising
 on the horizon where the sky meets the ocean.
 And then a ship appears.
 The white ship enters the harbor,
 booming its salute. You see? He's come!
 But I won't go down to meet him—not me.
 I'll go to the top of our little hill and wait,
 and wait for a long time, but I don't mind
 the long interval.
 And emerging from the crowded city,
 a man, a tiny figure,
 sets out for the hilltop.
 Who is it? Who can it be?
 And when at last he arrives,
 what will he say? What?
 From afar, he'll call, “Butterfly.”
 I'll give no answer,
 I'll stay hidden,
 partly to tease him, and partly so that I don't die
 at our reunion! And then he'll call to me, worried,
 he'll call: “My little wife, my darling,
 my sweet girl who smells of flowers”—
 the names he used to call me when we first met.
 All of this will happen, I promise you.
 Have no fear; I wait for him with unshaken faith!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

The opera's final scene

BUTTERFLY: *(softly reading the words inscribed on the knife)*

"Con onor muore chi non può serbar
vita con onore."

"Let those who cannot live an honorable life have an
honorable death instead."

She places the tip of the blade at her throat. Suddenly the door opens, and Suzuki pushes the child into the room. The child runs toward his mother with his hands outstretched. Butterfly lets the knife fall. She rushes toward the child, embraces him, and smothers him with kisses.

BUTTERFLY: Tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu?

(with great feeling, breathing hard)

piccolo Iddio! Amore, amore mio,
fior di giglio e di rosa.

(taking the child's head and pulling it toward herself)

Non saperlo mai per te,

pei tuoi puri occhi,

(in tears) muor Butterfly ...

perché tu possa andar di là dal mare

senza che ti rimorda ai di maturi,

il materno abbandono.

(with great love)

O a me, sceso dal trono dell'alto Paradiso,

guarda ben fiso, fiso di tua madre la faccia!

che ten resti una traccia, guarda ben!

Amore, addio! addio! piccolo amor!

(her voice breaking) Va, gioca, gioca!

You? You? You? You? You? You? You?

Oh, my dearest darling,
blossom of lily and rose.

I hope you never know this,
but it's for your sake, for your beautiful eyes,
that Butterfly must die ...

So that you can go to the other side of the sea
without thinking, when you've grown up,
that your mother abandoned you.

Oh my angel, who came to me from heaven,
look at your mother's face with care,
so that you'll one day remember a trace of it.

Goodbye, love! Goodbye, my little one!

Go now, go play! Go play!

Butterfly picks up the child and places him on her tatami mat. She hands him an American flag and a little doll, then carefully puts a blindfold over his eyes. Then she picks up the knife again and, with her gaze fixed on her child, places the knife against her own chest. With great conviction, she stabs herself and pulls the knife across her stomach. Collapsing on the floor, she looks up at her child, who is oblivious to what is happening. With a weak smile, she drags herself toward him, hugs him one last time, and then falls dead on the ground.

PINKERTON: *(from outside)* Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

THE SONGS AND SOUNDS OF MY WORLD

BRAINSTORMING CATEGORIES:	MY IDEAS:
Folk songs and instruments from my cultural background <i>(Example: the songs "Danny Boy" or "Santa Lucia," and instruments like the oud, conga drums, flamenco guitar, etc.)</i>	
Songs I listen to on a regular basis <i>(Example: your favorite song from your favorite band)</i>	
Sounds that I encounter on a daily basis <i>(Example: car horns, subway door closing chimes, alarm clock, etc.)</i>	
Sounds that I associate with my favorite memories <i>(Example: bird calls in the summer, my father playing guitar, my mother singing, etc.)</i>	
Instruments that I think capture my personality <i>(Example: violin, harp, trumpet, guitar, etc.)</i>	

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course (CONTINUED)

THE SONGS AND SOUNDS OF MY WORLD

Written Response:

If Puccini had written an opera based on your life, what are some of the songs, instruments, and sounds he would have incorporated into the score to best capture the world and culture you live in? Draw from your list of brain-stormed songs and sounds, and incorporate as many musical terms as you can in your description.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 1: Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her box of possessions

PINKERTON: Vieni, amor mio! Vi piace la casetta?

Come, my love! Do you like the house?

BUTTERFLY: Signor F. B. Pinkerton
Perdono ... io vorrei ... pochi oggetti da donna ...

Mr. F. B. Pinkerton
Sorry ... I'd like ... a few lady's things ...

PINKERTON: Dove sono?

Where are they?

She indicates the lacquer box.

BUTTERFLY: Sono qui ... vi dispiace?

They're here ... does that bother you?

Slightly surprised, he smiles, then invites her to show him.

PINKERTON: O perché mai, mia bella Butterfly?

Why would it bother me, my beautiful Butterfly?

One by one, she takes the objects from the box.

BUTTERFLY: Fazzoletti. La pipa. Una cintura.
Un piccolo fermaglio. Uno specchio. Un ventaglio.

A handkerchief. A pipe. A belt.
A little brooch. A mirror. A fan.

PINKERTON: (*seeing a little jar*) Quel barattolo?

The jar?

BUTTERFLY: Un vaso di tintura.

A pot of rouge.

PINKERTON: Ohibò!

Oh!

BUTTERFLY: Vi spiace? ... Via!

You don't like it? ... I'll get rid of it!

He pulls a long, narrow case out of the box.

PINKERTON: E quello?

What's this?

BUTTERFLY: (*very seriously*) Cosa sacra e mia.

Something sacred that belongs to me.

PINKERTON: (*with curiosity*) E non si può vedere?

Can I see?

BUTTERFLY: C'è troppa gente. Perdonate.

There are too many people here. Excuse me.

She disappears into the house, taking the case with her.

GORO: (*approaching Pinkerton and whispering into his ear*)
È un presente del Mikado a suo padre ...
coll'invito ...

It's a present from the Mikado to her father ...
with an invitation to ...

He makes a gesture of slicing open his own stomach.

PINKERTON: (*softly, to Goro*) E ... suo padre?

And ... her father?

GORO: Ha obbedito.

He obeyed.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

Goro moves away, heading back into the house. Butterfly, meanwhile, has returned. She sits by Pinkerton on the terrace and removes several small statues from her box.

BUTTERFLY: Gli Ottokè.

The Hotoke.

Pinkerton picks up a statue and examines it with curiosity.

PINKERTON: Quei pupazzi? ... Avete detto?

What, dolls? ... What did you call them?

BUTTERFLY: Son l'anime degli avi.

They hold the souls of my ancestors.

Pinkerton puts the statue back down.

PINKERTON: Ah! ... il mio rispetto.

Ah! ... Then they have my respect.

She leans respectfully toward Pinkerton, as though wishing to tell him a secret.

BUTTERFLY: Ieri son salita tutta sola in segreto alla Missione.

Yesterday I went all by myself to the Mission.

Colla nuova mia vita posso adottare nuova religione.

With my new life, I want to adopt a new religion.

(fearfully) Lo zio Bonzo nol sa,

My uncle, the Bonze, doesn't know,

nè i miei lo sanno.

nor do my relatives.

Io seguo il mio destino e piena d'umiltà,

I'm following my own path, and, full of humility,

al Dio del signor Pinkerton m'inchino.

I wish to bow to the god of my husband Pinkerton.

È mio destino.

This is my destiny:

Nella stessa chiesetta in ginocchio con voi
pregherò lo stesso Dio. E per farvi contento

praying with you, in the same church,
to the same god. And if you want,

potrò forse obliar la gente mia.

I can perhaps even forget my own people entirely.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What is the object?

Why might this object be important to Cio-Cio-San?

How did (or how might) Pinkerton react to this object?

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Draw the object.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 2: Cio-Cio-San prays silently before her Hotoke, and Suzuki prays audibly offstage

The walls of Butterfly's house are closed, leaving the living room in semi-darkness. Suzuki prays, bowing before an image of the Buddha. From time to time, she sounds her prayer bell. Butterfly sits alone, with her lacquered box open in front of her. One by one, she silently removes her Hotoke and looks at them longingly.

SUZUKI: (*praying*) E Izagi ed Izanami, Sarundasico e Kami ...
(*interrupting the prayer*) Oh! la mia testa!

Izagi and Izanami, Surundasico and Kami ...
Oh, my head!

She rings the bell again, to capture the gods' attention.

E tu Ten-Sjoo-daj!
(*on the verge of tears, looking at Butterfly*)
fate che Butterfly non pianga più,
mai più, mai più!

And you, Ten-Sioo-dai!

Please make Butterfly stop crying.
Please, may she never, never cry again!

BUTTERFLY: (*without moving*) Pigri ed obesi
son gli Dei giapponesi.
L'americano Iddio son persuasa
ben più presto risponde a chi l'implori.
Ma temo ch'egli ignori
che noi stiam qui di casa.

The gods you pray to
are lazy and fat.
I'm convinced that the American god
will respond to your prayers much more quickly.
But I'm afraid that he doesn't know
that we live here.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 3: Cio-Cio-San prepares for Pinkerton's arrival

BUTTERFLY: (*to Suzuki*) Or vienmi ad adornar.
No! pria portami il bimbo.

Come help me get dressed.
No, first bring me my child.

Suzuki goes into the neighboring room and brings the child, whom she places next to Butterfly. Butterfly, meanwhile, looks at a little hand mirror.

BUTTERFLY: (*sadly*) Non son più quella!
Troppi sospiri la bocca mandò,
e l'occhio riguardò nel lontan troppo fiso.
(*to Suzuki*) Dammi sul viso un tocco di carmino

I'm no longer the beautiful girl I once was!
Too many sighs have passed these lips,
my eyes have spent too much time gazing at a far horizon.
Put a hint of rouge on my cheeks ...

She takes a brush and places some rouge on the cheeks of her child.

ed anche a te, piccino, perché la veglia non ti faccia
vôte per pallore le gote.

... and also some rouge for you, little one, so that this
night of waiting won't make you look pale and tired.

SUZUKI: (*asking Butterfly to sit still*) Non vi movete,
che v'ho a ravviare i capelli.

Don't move!
I need to fix your hair.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 4: Cio-Cio-San's suicide

Butterfly picks up her lacquer box, carries it to the center of the room, and slowly lifts the lid. She takes out the long, thin case, and slowly pulls out the knife with which her father killed himself. Holding the hilt in one hand and the tip of the blade in the other, she kisses the blade with almost religious devotion.

BUTTERFLY: *(softly reading the words inscribed on the knife)*

"Con onor muore chi non può serbar
vita con onore."

"Let those who cannot live an honorable life have an
honorable death instead."

She places the tip of the blade at her throat. Suddenly the door opens, and Suzuki pushes the child into the room. The child runs toward his mother with his hands outstretched. Butterfly lets the knife fall. She rushes toward the child, embraces him, and smothers him with kisses.

BUTTERFLY: Tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu?

(with great feeling, breathing hard)

piccolo Iddio! Amore, amore mio,
fior di giglio e di rosa.

(taking the child's head and pulling it toward herself)

Non saperlo mai per te,

pei tuoi puri occhi,

(in tears) muor Butterfly ...

perché tu possa andar di là dal mare

senza che ti rimorda ai di maturi,

il materno abbandono.

(with great love)

O a me, sceso dal trono dell'alto Paradiso,

guarda ben fiso, fiso di tua madre la faccia!

che ten resti una traccia, guarda ben!

Amore, addio! addio! piccolo amor!

(her voice breaking) Va, gioca, gioca!

You? You? You? You? You? You? You?

Oh, my dearest darling,
blossom of lily and rose.

I hope you never know this,

but it's for your sake, for your beautiful eyes,
that Butterfly must die ...

So that you can go to the other side of the sea

without thinking, when you've grown up,

that your mother abandoned you.

Oh my angel, who came to me from heaven,

look at your mother's face with care,

so that you'll one day remember a trace of it.

Goodbye, love! Goodbye, my little one!

Go now, go play! Go play!

Butterfly picks up the child and places him on her tatami mat. She hands him an American flag and a little doll, then carefully puts a blindfold over his eyes. Then she picks up the knife again and, with her gaze fixed on her child, places the knife against her own chest. With great conviction, she stabs herself and pulls the knife across her stomach. Collapsing on the floor, she looks up at her child, who is oblivious to what is happening. With a weak smile, she drags herself toward him, hugs him one last time, and then falls dead on the ground.

PINKERTON: *(from outside)* Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in *Your* Box?

1.	3.	4.
2.		5.

Object 1: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 2: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 3: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 4: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 5: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

The Art of the Director

The stage production of *Madama Butterfly* seen in this *Live in HD* presentation was conceived by the late Anthony Minghella, best known as the director of films such as *The English Patient* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Minghella's staging includes a number of actions and designs not mentioned in Puccini's score or Giacosa and Illica's libretto. We've listed a selection below. Look for them in the production, and then write a few words about what you think about the director's innovations. Why did he make the creative choices he did, and how do you interpret those choices?

The opening dance: _____

Cio-Cio-San prays while Suzuki sings her own prayers: _____

Cio-Cio-San wears a cross around her neck: _____

Flower petals hang frozen in the air during Act II: _____

Puppet household servants: _____

Depiction of the child as a puppet: _____

Falling flower petals during the love duet: _____

Representation of Cio-Cio-San's dream: _____

Cio-Cio-San's vision of Pinkerton at the beginning of Act II: _____

Puppet birds: _____

Pinkerton's representation as an empty armchair: _____

Depiction of Cio-Cio-San's death at the opera's close: _____

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Opera Review: *Madama Butterfly*

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	☆☆☆☆☆	
Elizabeth DeShong as Suzuki	☆☆☆☆☆	
Andrea Carè as Pinkerton	☆☆☆☆☆	
Plácido Domingo 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:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Pinkerton explores the house MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Pinkerton describes a sailor's life MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The wedding MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
The wedding night MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN / STAGING
Cio-Cio-San imagines Pinkerton's return MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Goro brings Yamadori to meet Cio-Cio-San MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Sharpless reads the letter MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Pinkerton's ship arrives MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Cio-Cio-San's vigil MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Cio-Cio-San meets Mrs. Pinkerton MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Cio-Cio-San's tragic end MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆