Giacomo Puccini

Madama Butterfly

CONDUCTOR
Patrick Summers

PRODUCTION
Anthony Minghella

DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER
Carolyn Choa

SET DESIGNER
Michael Levine

COSTUME DESIGNER
Han Feng

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Peter Mumford

PUPPETRY
Blind Summit Theatre, Mark Down and Nick Barnes

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

Saturday, March 7, 2009, 1:00–4:25pm

Last time this season

The production of *Madama Butterfly* is made possible by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. Sid R. Bass**.

The revival of this production was made possible by a gift from The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation.

The revival of this production is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Minghella.

Madama Butterfly *is a co-production with English National Opera and the Lithuanian National Opera.*

The Metropolitan Opera

2008–09 Season

The 830th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Giacomo Puccini's

Madama Butterfly

Conductor
Patrick Summers

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Lt. B.F. Pinkerton
Marcello Giordani

Goro
Greg Fedderly

Suzuki
Maria Zifchak

U.S. Consul Sharpless
Dwayne Croft*

Cio-Cio-San
Patricia Racette

HER RELATIVES:

Cousin
Laura Fries

Mother
Linda Mays

Uncle Yakuside
Stephen Paynter

Aunt
Jean Braham

Imperial Commissioner
Keith Miller

The Registrar
Christian Jeong

The Bonze,
Cio-Cio-San's uncle
Dean Peterson

Yamadori
David Won*

Kate Pinkerton
Edyta Kulczak

Cio-Cio-San's child
Kevin Augustine
Tom Lee
Marc Petrosino

Ballet
Hsin Ping Chang FEMALE SOLO
James Graber MALE SOLO

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Saturday, March 7, 2009, 1:00–4:25pm

This afternoon's performance is being transmitted live in high definition to movie theaters worldwide. *The Met: Live in HD* series is made possible by a generous grant from the **Neubauer Family Foundation**.

Patricia Racette as Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Assistant Choreographer **Anita Griffin**
Musical Preparation **Robert Myers**, **Donna Racik**, **Robert Morrison**, **Gareth Morrell**, **Joshua Greene**, and **Hemdi Kfir**
Assistant Stage Directors **Gregory Keller** and **Paula Williams**
Prompter **Donna Racik**
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**
Puppets made by **Blind Summit Theatre**
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**
Costumes executed by **English National Opera Production Wardrobe; Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**
Additional costumes by **Han Feng** and **Karen Crichton**
Wigs executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig Department**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

Yamaha is the official piano of the Metropolitan Opera.

Latecomers will not be admitted during the performance.

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

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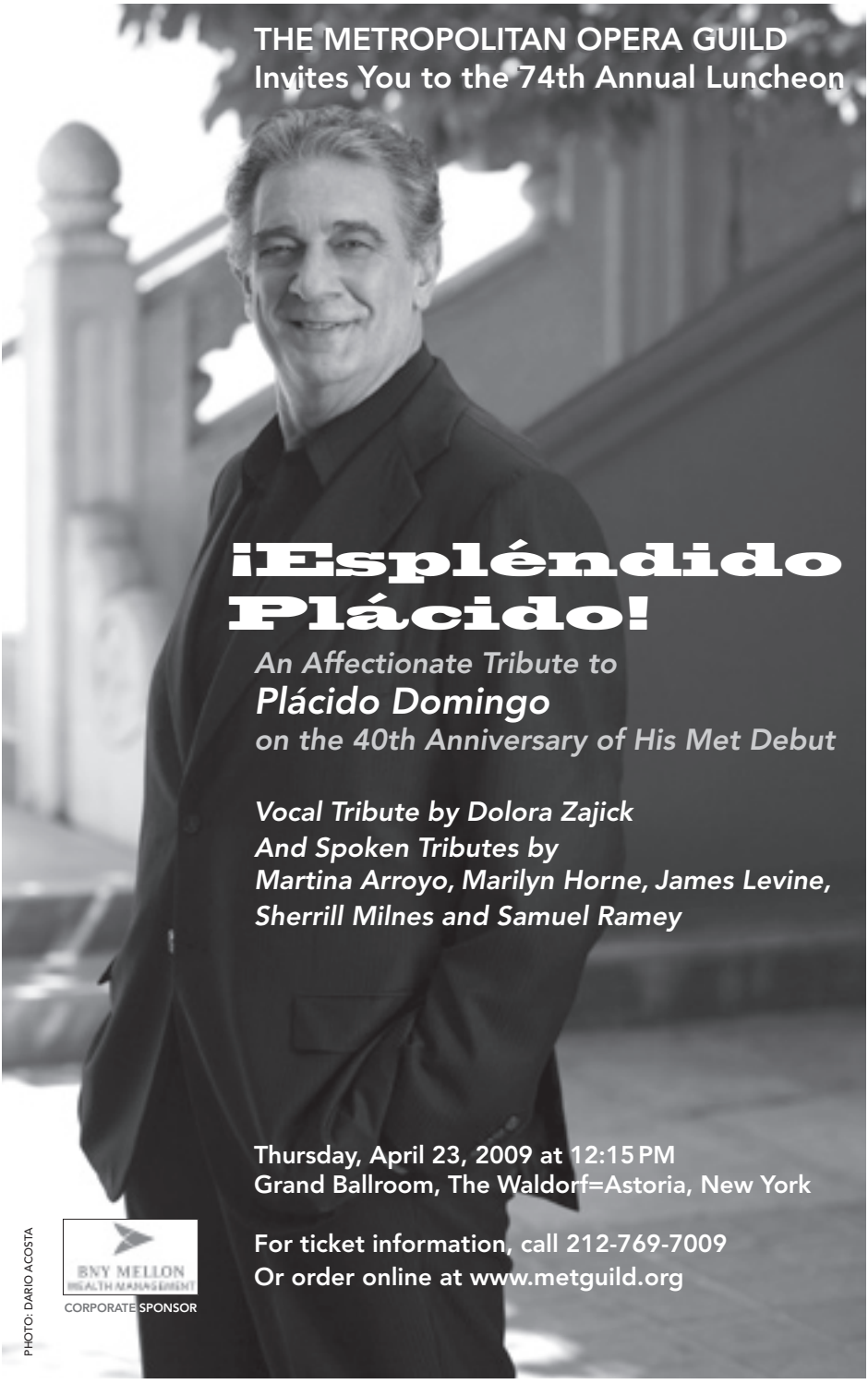

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Synopsis

Act I
Outside a house overlooking Nagasaki harbor

Intermission

Act II
PART 1 Cio-Cio-San's house, three years later

Intermission

Act II
PART 2 Cio-Cio-San's house, the next morning at dawn

Act I
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 known as Madame Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San). 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 ("Dovunque al mondo"). He is not sure whether his feelings for the young girl are love or a whim, but he intends to go through with the marriage ceremony. Sharpless warns him that the girl may view the marriage differently, but Pinkerton brushes off such concerns and says someday he will take a real, American wife. He offers the consul whiskey and proposes a toast. Butterfly is heard climbing the hill with her friends for the ceremony ("Spira sul mare"). In casual conversation after the formal introduction, Butterfly 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 chatter 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, Butterfly's uncle, a priest. He curses the girl for going to the Christian mission and rejecting her ancestral religion. Pinkerton orders them to leave and as they go the Bonze and the shocked relatives denounce Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton tries to console Butterfly with sweet words. She is helped by Suzuki into her wedding kimono, and joins Pinkerton in the garden, where they make love ("Viene la sera").

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 Butterfly berates her for believing in lazy Japanese gods rather than in Pinkerton's promise to return one day ("Un bel dì"). Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it to Butterfly, Goro arrives with the latest potential husband for Butterfly, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. Butterfly 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 and suggests that perhaps Butterfly should reconsider Yamadori's offer. "And this?" ("E questo?") asks the outraged Butterfly, showing the consul her small child. 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. Butterfly and Suzuki take a telescope to the terrace and read the name of Pinkerton's ship. Overjoyed, Butterfly joins Suzuki in strewing the house with flower petals from the garden ("Scuoti quella fronda"). Night falls, and Butterfly, Suzuki, and the child settle into a vigil watching over the harbor (Humming Chorus).

Act II PART 2

Dawn breaks, and Suzuki insists that Butterfly get some sleep. Butterfly 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 Butterfly. Pinkerton is overcome with guilt and runs from the scene, pausing to remember his days in the little house ("Addio, fiorito asil"). Cio-Cio-San rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton, but sees 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 ("Tu, piccolo Iddio"). She stabs herself as Pinkerton calls her name.

Giacomo Puccini
Madama Butterfly

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1904
The title character of *Madama Butterfly*—a young Japanese geisha who clings to the belief that her arrangement with a visiting American naval officer is a loving and permanent marriage—is one of the defining roles in opera, as convincing and tragic as any figure in drama. Part of the reason for the opera's enduring hold on the popular imagination may have to do with the fact that the mere mention of *Madama Butterfly* triggers ideas about cultural and sexual imperialism for people far removed from the opera house. Film, Broadway, and popular culture in general have riffed endlessly on the story and have made the lead role iconic. But the opera itself, while neither emphasizing nor avoiding these aspects of the story, focuses more on the characters as real people than on complicated issues of power. The opera survived a disastrous opening night but was reworked immediately and enjoyed great success in nearby Brescia a few months later, then in Paris, and soon all over the world. It has remained at the core of the opera repertory ever since, and the lyric beauty of the music for the thoroughly believable lead role has made *Butterfly* timeless.

The Creators
Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, their sensitivity to everyday subjects, their copious melody, and their economy of expression. Puccini's librettists for *Madama Butterfly*, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, also collaborated with the composer on his previous two operas, *Tosca* and *La Bohème* (both of which, along with *Butterfly*, are among his most enduringly successful). The opera is based on the play *Madame Butterfly* by playwright and producer David Belasco (1853–1931), a giant of the American theater and a fascinating, if controversial, character whose daring innovations brought a new level of realism and vitality to the stage.

The Setting
The story takes place in the Japanese port city of Nagasaki at the turn of the last century, at a time of expanding American international presence. Japan was hesitantly defining its global role, and Nagasaki was one of the country's few ports open to foreign ships. Temporary marriages for foreign sailors were not unusual. While other time periods have been used in various productions,

the issues of East/West cultural conflict as they existed in 1900 cannot be easily ignored in this opera, no matter when it's set.

The Music

Puccini achieved a new level of sophistication with his use of the orchestra in this opera, with subtle colorings and sonorities throughout the score. The chorus is similarly effective and imaginative, though used very sparingly, notably in the entrance of the relatives in Act I and the unforgettable and enigmatic "Humming Chorus" in Act II. The opera, however, rests squarely on the performer singing the title role as in few other works: she is on stage for most of the time and is the only character that experiences true (and tragic) development. The soprano who sings this role, among the most difficult in the repertory, must convey an astounding array of emotions and characteristics, from ethereal (her entrance) to fleshly (the Act I love duet) to intelligent and stinging (her Act II dealings with other Japanese characters) to dreamy-bordering-on-insane (the famous aria "Un bel dì") to resigned in the final scene. The vocal abilities needed to animate this complex character are virtually unique in opera.

Madama Butterfly *at the Met*

Madama Butterfly had its Met and U.S. premiere in 1907 in grand fashion, with Puccini in the audience and Enrico Caruso and Geraldine Farrar in the lead roles. Puccini always maintained that Farrar's voice was too small for the part, yet she sang it here to great audience approval 139 times over the next 15 years. In 1922 Joseph Urban designed a production that lasted for 36 years. Temporarily off the boards during World War II, *Madama Butterfly* returned to the Met stage in 1946 and was served well by Licia Albanese (72 performances) and Dorothy Kirsten (68 performances) for the following decade and a half. In a 1958 production (with Antonietta Stella in the title role), Yoshio Aoyama and Motohiro Nagasaka famously dispensed with the holes in the rice-paper walls that were specified in the libretto for Act II, calling that touch "wholly un-Japanese." This production showcased such stars as Renata Tebaldi, Renata Scotto (debut, 1965), Teresa Stratas, Pilar Lorengar, Martina Arroyo, Raina Kabaivanska, Leontyne Price, and Diana Soviero, and was replaced by Giancarlo del Monaco's 1994 production, featuring Catherine Malfitano as the heroine. The current production, by Anthony Minghella, opened the Met's 2006–07 season.

Program Note

As soon as Puccini recovered from the stressful world premiere of *Tosca* in 1900 (the worries included a bomb scare at the Rome Opera), he began thinking about a new opera. He looked to works by Zola and Dostoyevsky, considering the latter's *From the House of the Dead*, which was later set by Janáček. Though sometimes linked with the verismo, or realist, composers (Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Giordano), Puccini was more interested in an "extended" realism: stories steeped in the details of ordinary life but with a strong guiding theme and an accumulating dramatic thrust. It's a long way from Dostoyevsky to David Belasco, but it was the latter who provided Puccini with the source for his next opera.

In the summer of 1900, in London, Puccini saw the American playwright and director's *Madame Butterfly*. He went backstage and begged for the rights. "I agreed at once," Belasco wrote, "[though] it is not possible to discuss business arrangements with an impulsive Italian who has tears in his eyes and both arms around your neck."

Belasco was born in San Francisco to a Jewish Portuguese family. As a child, he ran away to join the circus, ended up on Broadway, and became the Steven Spielberg of his time. He used a remarkable facility with stage effects to dress up his plays—most of them derivative, some of them plagiarized. Belasco invented a remarkable series of lighting and scrim effects, which later would be called "montage" and become basic to the way stories are told in films. Puccini instinctively grasped the emotional power of the story of *Butterfly* and its suitability to his musical gifts. The themes of the one-act *Madame Butterfly*—cultural conflict, impossible love, the connection between forbidden love and death, the inevitable dislocation as modern internationalism sweeps away "traditional values"—remain remarkably potent and contemporary. Such prescience was perhaps as much a part of Puccini's genius as anything else.

Belasco (who would inspire Puccini again with *The Girl of the Golden West*) based his play on a short story by John Luther Long, a lawyer from Philadelphia, who had gotten the idea from his sister, who married a missionary and lived in Japan. Her husband converted a geisha to Christianity. Later, the geisha tried to commit hara-kiri when her American husband deserted her, but she was dissuaded.

In the story, the young girl called Butterfly does indeed kill herself, by inserting a knife between the nerves in the back of her neck—evidently painless and not very bloody; Belasco changed this to the gruesome self-disembowelment one usually sees. In the Met's current production, director Anthony Minghella has chosen to use the original method, for which he has staged a simple but striking image. Criticized by the genteel for its poor taste, the scene gave Puccini what he always needed: an overwhelming final image. (His failure to find one in *Turandot* impeded him in finishing that opera.)

The challenge of developing *Butterfly* into an effective full-length opera was building to that final scene with details that accumulate rather than distract. Wrestling with this were librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, who

looked to the novel *Madame Chrysanthème* by French writer Pierre Loti for additional material. To portray Japanese culture, Illica and Giacosa raided Loti for a range of characters, including a drunken uncle (who got his own theme) and the monstrous little son of Butterfly's cousin.

This approach raised questions among Puccini's associates. Was the incident-filled first act too long? More crucially, where would they find an Italian tenor who wanted to play a part as unsympathetic as Pinkerton? In the opera's first version, he didn't even have an aria.

Work was delayed when Puccini had a serious car accident. His broken leg failed to heal and the composer was diagnosed with diabetes. He never entirely recovered, walking with a limp for the rest of his life.

Madama Butterfly was given its world premiere at La Scala on February 17, 1904. It was one of the greatest scandals in the history of opera. Ricordi, Puccini's publisher, described how the opera was greeted by "roars, laughter, howls, bellowing, and guffaws." The noise began immediately and virtually none of the music was heard, not unlike the debacle suffered in 1913 in Paris by Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

Puccini was the victim of intrigue and also of a crowd that fell into a lynch-mob dynamic. Rosina Storchio, the first Butterfly, had trouble managing her kimono, which billowed up at one point. "She's pregnant again!" someone shouted from the audience. "By Toscanini!" someone answered, eager to show he was in on the backstage gossip (true, in fact) about the soprano and the famous conductor. When she said her child's name was "Dolore" ("trouble"), the battle was truly lost. One of the headlines following this premiere sums it up: "*Butterfly*, Diabetic Opera, Result of an Accident." The opera was taken off the boards after one performance. A shattered Puccini covered La Scala's costs.

With Ricordi's encouragement, Puccini and his collaborators set about revising the opera. They softened Pinkerton's character, making him slightly less offensive and, most importantly (for tenors), giving him an aria ("Addio, fiorito asil"). Kate was reduced to little more than a walk-on. Much of the "local color" that had bogged down Act I was cut.

The opera's second premiere, at Brescia on May 28, 1904, was a triumph. It was also a runaway success in Buenos Aires that same year, with Storchio singing and Toscanini conducting. Puccini made further changes for Covent Garden in 1905, when Caruso sang his first Pinkerton. There were even more changes for the Paris premiere in 1906. It is this version that is most widely performed.

In *Butterfly*, Puccini's musical dramaturgy centers on contrasting "Eastern" and "Western" sounds. His method was to utilize native Japanese music, including the Japanese national anthem, as well as Asian orchestral sounds like bells, gongs, and high woodwinds. The combination immediately creates an utterly concrete and convincing ambience. With the utmost delicacy and imagination, Puccini invented melodies in "Japanese" style, so that the lyrical expansion essential in opera can occur without contradicting that precise color. Butterfly's famous entrance in Act I is the first of many examples. Puccini

moves effortlessly and with seeming inevitability from Eastern to Western styles (including a use of our own "Star-Spangled Banner"). Butterfly, thinking herself an American in Act II, uses some Western gestures in her famous aria, "Un bel dì." But a striking whole-tone phrase on the words "I'll see him climb up the hill," which sounds consistent with a Western melos, is hurled back at us at the very end of the opera. As Butterfly lies dying, Pinkerton does indeed climb the hill one final time—to take their child. The phrase, now sounding distinctly "Asian," is thundered out rapidly in unison by harsh brass.

Puccini uses many harmonic devices that were cutting-edge at the time, at least in the commercial medium of opera. One of the most effective is the ostinato—the obsessive repeating of a note or rhythm. As Butterfly answers Sharpless's question in Act II—"What will you do if Pinkerton doesn't return?"—the insistence of two clarinets in ostinato is like a beating heart. When Sharpless encourages her to forget Pinkerton, a pedal-point D in the harp turns the heartbeat into a death knell. The crushing terror the 18-year-old Butterfly feels at this dreaded eventuality is heart-stoppingly dramatized and leads in turn to the staggering eruption as she reveals her son by Pinkerton.

There is nothing doctrinaire in Puccini's advanced harmony (unmatched by any of his Italian contemporaries); perhaps that's why he has gotten so little credit for it. But in the theater what matters is the use made of these techniques, and there have been very few opera composers as skillful as Puccini. There are two remarkable uses of the added sixth in *Butterfly*. The first is the quiet final chord of Act I—the lack of a clear harmonic resolution sinks into our consciousness like a dangerous hint. The thunderous final chord, which adds the note G to a B-minor chord, not only is shocking as a conclusion to the drama, but brilliantly suggests that the tragedy will continue, as Butterfly's young son faces likely ostracism and bigotry in turn-of-the-century America.

Butterfly has all the earmarks of what critics hated in Puccini. It is full of instantly memorable melodies; its writing unabashedly and continually goes for the jugular; and, worst of all, it is overwhelmingly effective. There are few other stage works of any description that are as sure-fire. —*Albert Innaurato*

What Is Bunraku Puppetry?

Western audiences are accustomed to seeing puppets used in the spirit of provocative comedy (à la Charlie McCarthy or Punch and Judy) or as homespun, educational entertainment for children (Pinocchio, the Muppets). The puppets featured in the Met's *Madama Butterfly*, on the other hand, have been inspired by Japanese Bunraku puppetry, a serious and sophisticated theatrical art form born in 17th-century Osaka. Most traditional Bunraku plays feature historical storylines and address the common Japanese theme of conflict between social obligation and human emotion. Puppeteers go through lengthy apprenticeships to master the form, which could account for the gradual waning of its popularity. There are still a number of practitioners today in Japan, however, and in the West, Mark Down and Nick Barnes, the founders of Blind Summit Theatre, also take inspiration from this tradition for their puppet-theater presentations. For Anthony Minghella's staging of *Butterfly*, they created Bunraku-style puppets to represent Cio-Cio-San's child and, in a dream sequence, Butterfly herself. Generally one-half to two-thirds life size, a Bunraku puppet has no strings and is operated by three highly trained puppeteers, each responsible for a different body part and discreetly visible to the audience.

Patrick Summers
CONDUCTOR (WASHINGTON, INDIANA)

THIS SEASON *Salome, Madama Butterfly*, the National Council Grand Finals Concert, and the Opening Night Gala at the Met; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Rigoletto*, *Chorus!* (encompassing scenes from great choral operas, conceived and staged by David Pountney), and the world premiere of Previn's *Brief Encounter* with Houston Grand Opera; Heggie's *Three Decembers* with San Francisco Opera; and the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *The Letter* with Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES *I Puritani*, *Die Fledermaus* (debut, 1998), *Così fan tutte*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rodelinda*, and *La Traviata*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Currently music director of the Houston Grand Opera, where he has conducted more than 30 productions, including the world premieres of Heggie's *The End of the Affair*, Machover's *Resurrection*, Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree*, and Portman's *The Little Prince*. Has also conducted Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* at San Francisco Opera and at Strasbourg's Opéra National du Rhin and Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* with the Vienna Symphony at the Bregenz Festival. Formerly principal guest conductor of the San Francisco Opera, he has conducted numerous performances there, including Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and the world premiere of Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.

Patricia Racette
SOPRANO (MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE)

THIS SEASON Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and San Diego Opera; Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* with Washington National Opera; and concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Musetta (debut, 1995) and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Ellen Orford, Roberta in the world premiere of Picker's *An American Tragedy*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Blanche de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, and Elisabeth in *Don Carlo*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Magda in *La Rondine* with Los Angeles Opera, Love Simpson in the world premiere of Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* with Houston Grand Opera, the title role in Picker's *Emmeline* for its world premiere at Santa Fe Opera, Liù in *Turandot* and Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Jenůfa with Washington National Opera. She has also appeared at Covent Garden, Paris's Bastille Opera, La Scala, and the Vienna State Opera.

Maria Zifchak

MEZZO-SOPRANO (SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Albine in *Thaïs*, the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Inez in *Il Trovatore* at the Met, and Herodias in *Salome* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

MET APPEARANCES Kasturbai in *Satyagraha*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Meg Page in *Falstaff*, Enrichetta in *I Puritani*, Bersi in *Andrea Chénier*, Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger*, the Nursing Sister in *Suor Angelica*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (debut, 2000), and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Bianca in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Central City Opera, Effie Belle Tate in Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* with Atlanta Opera, Adalgisa in *Norma* in Bogotá, Dorabella in Seattle, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Opera North, Angelina in *La Cenerentola* with Utah Festival Opera, and the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. She was a winner of the Met's 1998 National Council Auditions.

Dwayne Croft

BARITONE (COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and the Opening Night Gala at the Met, Germont in *La Traviata* with the San Francisco Opera, Marcello in *La Bohème* for his debut with the Dallas Opera, Eugene Onegin with the Pittsburgh Opera, and Escamillo in *Carmen* with the Cincinnati Opera.

MET APPEARANCES More than 350 performances of 27 roles, including Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Marcello, Ernesto in *Il Pirata*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 1990), Billy Budd, Pelléas, and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Count Almaviva and Figaro with the Vienna State Opera, Eugene Onegin and Sharpless at the Paris Opera, Billy Budd with Washington National Opera, and Jaufré Rudel in the world premiere of Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin*, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, and Count Almaviva at the Salzburg Festival.

Marcello Giordani
TENOR (AUGUSTA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON The Verdi Requiem, Faust in *La Damnation de Faust*, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met; Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Vienna State Opera; Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* in Barcelona; Andrea Chénier in Genoa; and Calàf in *Turandot* in Budapest.

MET APPEARANCES Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Roméo, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, Ernani, Benvenuto Cellini, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (debut, 1995), Alfredo in *La Traviata*, des Grieux in *Manon*, Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, Gualtiero in *Il Pirata*, Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Gabriele Adorno, and Enzo in *La Gioconda*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS The Sicilian tenor has sung in all the world's leading theaters. Among his recent performances are Andrea Chénier in Zurich, Calàf at La Scala, Cavaradossi and Roméo at the Arena di Verona, Paolo in Zandoni's *Francesca da Rimini* in Zurich, Arnold in *Guillaume Tell* at the Vienna State Opera, and Henri in *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* with Paris's Bastille Opera.

On Stage at the Met

Verdi
IL TROVATORE

David McVicar directs a "psychologically insightful and fluid staging" of Verdi's opera, *The New York Times* says. *The Associated Press* calls it, a "winning Trovatore." The all-star cast includes Marcelo Álvarez as Manrico, Sondra Radvanovsky as Leonora, Dolora Zajick as Azucena, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky as di Luna.

FEB 24, 28 mat MAR 4, 7 eve, 10, 13, 16, 20

Dvořák
RUSALKA

Renée Fleming's sumptuous voice is ideally suited to Dvořák. This revival also stars Stephanie Blythe as the witch Ježibaba, with Maestro Jiří Bělohlávek conducting this story of a water nymph who falls in love with a prince.

MAR 9, 12, 14 mat, 17, 21 eve

Mascagni
CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Leoncavallo
PAGLIACCI

Taking on both tenor leads on the same night is momentous—and this season two extraordinary singers scale this verismo height. Roberto Alagna and José Cura share the run, each singing both the headstrong Turiddu and the jealous clown Canio, in this ever-popular double bill.

MAR 19, 23, 26, 30 APR 2, 7, 10

Donizetti
L'ELISIR D'AMORE

A knockout cast will deliver the melodic delights—and laughs—of this lyric gem. Rolando Villazón plays the country bumpkin in pursuit of Angela Gheorghiu's Adina.

MAR 31
APR 4 mat, 8, 11 eve, 15, 18, 22

Visit metopera.org for full casting information and ticket availability.