GIACOMO PUCCINI

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CONDUCTOR
Xian Zhang

PRODUCTION
Anthony Minghella

DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER
Carolyn Choa

SET DESIGNER
Michael Levine

COSTUME DESIGNER
Han Feng

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Peter Mumford

PUPPETRY
Blind Summit Theatre

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTORR
Paula Williams

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, based on the play by David Belasco

Thursday, March 14, 2024
7:30–10:30PM

The production of *Madama Butterfly* was made possible by a generous gift from **Mercedes and Sid Bass**

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Austin T. Fragomen, Jr.

Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, and Lithuanian National Opera

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
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MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Throughout the 2023–24 season, the Met continues to honor Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.

The Metropolitan Opera

2023–24 SEASON

The 913th Metropolitan Opera performance of

GIACOMO PUCCINI'S

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

CONDUCTOR
Xian Zhang

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

LT. B. F. PINKERTON
Matthew Polenzani

GORO
Scott Scully

SUZUKI
Elizabeth DeShong

U.S. CONSUL SHARPLESS
Davide Luciano

CIO-CIO-SAN
Aleksandra Kurzak

CIO-CIO-SAN'S RELATIVES

COUSIN
Elizabeth Sciblo

MOTHER
Chelsea Shephard

UNCLE YAKUSIDÉ
Craig Montgomery

AUNT
Rachele Schmiege

IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER
Rocky Eugenio Sellers

REGISTRAR
Christian Jeong

BONZE
Peixin Chen

PRINCE YAMADORI
Blake Denson

KATE PINKERTON
Maire Therese Carmack**

CIO-CIO-SAN'S CHILD
Kevin Augustine
Tom Lee
Jonothon Lyons

BALLET SOLOISTS
Hsin-Ping Chang
Amir Levy

Tonight's performances of the roles of Cio-Cio-San and Pinkerton are underwritten by the **Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Great Singers Fund.**

This performance is being broadcast live on the SiriusXM app and streamed at metopera.org.

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 7:30–10:30PM

Aleksandra Kurzak as Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Derrick Inouye**, **Caren Levine**,* **Bradley Moore**,* **Joseph Lawson**, and **Liora Maurer**
Assistant Stage Director **Sara Erde**
Assistant Choreographer **Anita Griffin**
Italian Diction Coach **Nicolò Sbuelz**
Prompter **Caren Levine***
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**
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Puppets made by **Blind Summit Theatre**
Costumes constructed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**
Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

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

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A scene from Puccini's *Turandot*

PHOTO: EVAN ZIMMERMAN / MET OPERA

Synopsis

Act I

Japan, at the turn of the 20th century. Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin 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 Madam Butterfly. The lease runs for 999 years, subject to monthly renewal. The American consul Sharpless arrives breathless from climbing the hill. Pinkerton describes his philosophy of the fearless Yankee roaming the world in search of experience and pleasure. He is not sure whether his feelings for the young girl are love or a whim, but he intends to go through with the wedding 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. Butterfly arrives with her friends for the ceremony. 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. Butterfly shows Pinkerton her few possessions and quietly tells him that 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 mission and rejecting her ancestral religion. Pinkerton orders them to leave, and as they go, the Bonze and the shocked relatives denounce Butterfly. Pinkerton tries to console Butterfly with sweet words. Suzuki helps her into her wedding kimono before the couple meets in the garden, where they make love.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:30PM)

Act II

Three years have passed, and Butterfly awaits her husband's return at her home. 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. Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it to Butterfly, Goro arrives with the latest suitor, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. Butterfly politely serves the guests tea but insists that 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. In response, she presents the consul with the young son that she has had by Pinkerton. She says that his name is "Sorrow," but when his father returns, he will be called "Joy." 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 in the harbor announces the arrival of a ship. Butterfly and Suzuki take a telescope to the terrace and read the name of the vessel—it is Pinkerton's. Overjoyed, Butterfly joins Suzuki in decorating the house with flowers from the garden. Night falls, and Butterfly, Suzuki, and the child settle into a vigil watching over the harbor.

Act III

Dawn breaks, and Suzuki insists that Butterfly get some sleep. Butterfly carries the child into the house. 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. Butterfly rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton but sees Kate instead. Grasping the situation, she agrees to give up her son but insists that 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 and blindfolds him. She stabs herself as Pinkerton arrives, calling out for her.

Giacomo Puccini

Madama Butterfly

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, February 1904 (original version); Teatro Grande, Brescia, May 1904 (revised version)

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, theater, 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 Milan opening night, and Puccini reworked it immediately. In its revised version, the opera 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. Audiences and critics alike celebrate his operas 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 (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), 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 20th century, during 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, regardless of 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 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 sensual (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 (the final scene). The vocal abilities needed to animate this complex character are virtually unique in opera.

Met History

Madama Butterfly had its Met premiere in 1907 in grand fashion, with the composer in the audience and Geraldine Farrar and Enrico Caruso in the lead roles. Puccini always maintained that Farrar's voice was too small for the part, yet she sang it with the company 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), director Yoshio Aoyama and designer 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. A new staging by Giancarlo del Monaco opened in 1994, featuring Catherine Malfitano as the title heroine. The current production, by Anthony Minghella, opened the Met's 2006–07 season with Cristina Gallardo-Domâs and Marcello Giordani in the leading roles, conducted by James Levine.

Program Note

Giacomo Puccini's greatest ambition was to excite his audiences, and with *Madama Butterfly*, he created an emotional force of nature. It's fair to say that after most performances there is barely a dry eye in the house. Seasoned *Butterfly* fans know exactly where and when the tears will fall, but that doesn't stop them from returning again and again. Puccini's masterpiece has long been a staple of the world's opera houses and is one of the most beloved works in the history of opera. How, then, is it possible that such a magnificent piece of musical theater failed miserably at its premiere?

Puccini suffered a great deal of angst as a composer in post-Risorgimento Italy. The root cause may well have been the fact that he had been born in the shadow of Verdi, national hero. As a young composer, he faced the enormous challenge of distancing himself from Verdi, even as Italy, newly unified, reinforced its cultural ties to opera. Verdi himself had embraced new musical trends in *Otello* and *Falstaff*, and Puccini needed to do likewise, but differently. While audiences delighted in his beautiful melodies, the press assailed his operas unmercifully. The passion and violence of *Tosca* were especially vulnerable to critics with a tabloid sensibility: They compared the opera to junk food, full of "hackneyed refrains ... rancid corny old tunes of the fairground ... the nauseating stench of candy-floss, of fried food and—above all—the hopeless odor of intellectual scum!" (Musicologist Joseph Kerman would later equate admirers of *Tosca* with fans of "chain-saw" movies.) Italian journalist Fausto Torrefranca dismissed Puccini outright and declared him a poster child for Italian cultural decline in the post-Verdian era.

Puccini's biggest flop, with both critics and audiences, however, was *Madama Butterfly*. One writer called it a "frame without a canvas," lacking "ideas, thought, [and] imagination." Others accused Puccini of being lazy: *Butterfly* was "no more than an encore of *La Bohème*, with less freshness and abundance of melodic ideas." In their view, Puccini deserved to be punished for sidestepping "traditional" operatic forms (there isn't a cabaletta in earshot). The opening-night audience at La Scala, bored by two long acts, did not withhold their displeasure. According to Alexandra Wilson, "The ominous silence that greeted much of Act I was replaced in Act II by contemptuous grunts, bellows, guffaws, and even bird and animal noises. The rumpus was so loud that the voices and instruments were inaudible, to the point that the leading lady, Rosina Storchio, was reduced to tears when she could not hear her cues."

A devastated Puccini wrote to his friend Camillo Bondi to express anger, but also his abiding love for *Butterfly*: "Those cannibals didn't listen to a single note. What an appalling orgy of lunatics, drunk on hate! But my *Butterfly* remains as it is: the most heartfelt and evocative opera I have ever conceived!" Nonetheless, Puccini withdrew this first version of *Madama Butterfly*, and by 1907, he had produced several revisions, each of which was tested in various locales, including Brescia, Washington, D.C., and, finally, New York. The last became the "standard,"

celebrated for its gorgeous vocal writing and orchestration, especially in the Act I love duet, Butterfly's "Un bel dì" in Act II, and the shocking Act III finale.

* * *

Puccini composed *Madama Butterfly* at the end of an era obsessed with Japonisme following the opening of Japan in 1868. In addition to the numerous woodcuts and other artifacts that were exhibited at European World's Fairs, there were "Orientalist" operas, including Saint-Saëns's *La Princesse Jaune* (1872), Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885), Messager's *Madame Chrysanthème* (1893), Sidney Jones's *The Geisha* (1896), and Mascagni's *Iris* (1898). A recurring character in the tragedies among these works is the abandoned woman—in at least two instances, a real person. Messager based *Madame Chrysanthème* on Pierre Loti's fictionalized memoir of his affair with a Japanese woman during his stint as a naval officer in Japan, while the plot of *Madama Butterfly* originated from an incident witnessed by an American missionary, Jennie Long Correll, who later published an article about it in *The Japan Times*:

> On the hill opposite ours lived a little tea-house girl; her name was Chô-san, Miss Butterfly. She was so sweet and delicate that everyone was in love with her. In time, we learned that she had a lover. That was not so strange, for all tea-house girls have lovers, if they can get and hold them. Chô-san's young man was quite nice, but very temperamental, of a moody, lonely disposition. ... One evening, there was quite a sensation when it was learned that poor little Chô-san, and her baby, had been deserted. The man had promised to return at a certain time; had even arranged a signal so that Chô-san would know when his ship had come in; but the little girl-wife awaited that signal in vain. Many an hour and many a long night did she peer from her shoji over the lovely harbor, but to no purpose: He never returned.

Correll's experience was the impetus for a chain of precursors to Puccini's opera. In 1898, Mrs. Correll's brother, John Luther Long, published a short story in which he captured the essence of Pinkerton's arrogance:

> With the aid of a marriage broker, he found both a wife and a house in which to keep her. This he leased for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. Not, he explained to his wife later, that he could hope for the felicity of residing there with her so long, but because, being a mere "barbarian," he could not make other legal terms. He did not mention that the lease was determinable, nevertheless, at the end of any month, by the mere neglect to pay the rent. Details were distasteful to Pinkerton; besides, she would probably not appreciate the humor of this.

The story was soon thereafter dramatized in a one-act play by David Belasco, which Puccini saw in London in 1900. The composer was enthralled by Belasco's stagecraft, especially in the scene of the vigil, in which Butterfly sits, nearly

motionless, throughout the night, waiting for Pinkerton's return. Belasco had portrayed the time-lapse of 12 hours from sunset to the following morning through changing lighting effects achieved through the use of colored silks. It was an elaborate process, devised by the playwright's lighting technician Louis Hartmann, who described it as follows:

> The several colors of silk were in long strips. These strips were attached to the tin rollers; the rollers were set into bearings fastened to a wooden frame that slid into the color groove of the lamp. The turning of the rollers passed the colors in front of the light, and they were projected on the windows in a series of soft blends. As the orange deepened into blue, floor lanterns were brought on the scene and lighted, as the pink of the morning light as seen the lanterns flickered out one by one. The light changes were accompanied by special music. Music and lights were perfectly timed, and the entire change consumed less than three minutes.

Puccini had his librettists transfer Belasco's stage directions for the vigil scene gesture for gesture into the libretto, and he set it to a nostalgic offstage humming chorus.

* * *

What Puccini's musical imagination needed most was visual stimulation, specifically the colors of foreign, and to him, exotic places, including Nagasaki at the turn of the 20th century. Puccini did more research on *Madama Butterfly* than he had ever done to find the right look and sonority of the opera: He consulted with his neighbor in Viareggio, Hisako Oyama, the wife of the Japanese ambassador to Italy; he attended performances of the Imperial Japanese Theatrical Company; and he visited with the Japanese actress Sadayakko during her Milanese tour. Puccini also devoted himself to capturing the "American-ness" of Pinkerton. As he wrote to music publisher Tito Ricordi in April 1902, he had been "laying stone on stone and doing my best to make Mr. […] Pinkerton sing like an American," most obviously in the quotation of the music of "The Star-Spangled Banner" in Act I.

Today, however, Puccini's undeniable efforts to define his Japanese characters and setting authentically have been shown to be at times inaccurate; more troubling for the 21st-century audience, as Arthur Groos has put it, the opera is sometimes viewed as "an Orientalizing tragedy with a racially inflected representation of the heroine." Questions about cultural appropriation are frequently posed, specifically regarding whether or not non-Japanese artists, who have no relevant life experience, should portray Japanese people on the stage. Is it enough to understand the story as one of many iterations of a plot about a man's cruelty to a woman and simply enjoy Puccini's magnificent score?

The earliest performances of *Madama Butterfly* in Japan elicited more ground-level concerns about the Western origins of the opera: What could an Italian composer possibly understand about Japanese culture? The opera was

first performed in Japan in abbreviated form at the Imperial Theater in Tokyo in 1914, conducted by Takaori Shūichi, the husband of the lead soprano, Takaori Sumiko. The Takaoris were well travelled and familiar with European and American performances of *Madama Butterfly*. Shūichi, in particular, a well-respected man of letters in addition to being a musical eminence, sought to preempt concerns about potential offense at the work in an essay that was published in the journal *Ongakukai* in advance of the premiere:

> We must sometimes overlook those things to some extent. If Westerners see our Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Maeterlinck productions, won't they have similar feelings as we? There are things we can laugh at or resent regarding misunderstandings of East-West customs, but such errors can only be dissolved by understanding each other's cultures. Humanity has nothing to do with East or West, past or present.

* * *

Musically, Puccini's greatest personal challenge was defining the opening gesture of an opera, the right musical "hook" that would capture the ear with stunning immediacy. As he once remarked to playwright and librettist Giuseppe Adami, "The difficulty for me is to begin an opera, that is, to find its musical atmosphere. Once the opening is fixed and composed, there is nothing more to fear: The opera is […] on its way." Puccini used diverse and often original strategies to capture the attention of the audience, for example, the brisk first four notes that catapult *La Bohème* into motion, the whoosh of wind in the high Sierras (*La Fanciulla del West*), and the heaving sobs of the Donati family that open *Gianni Schicchi*. Puccini took a unique approach in *Madama Butterfly*, intended to express his characters' cultural differences musically, as he wrote to librettist Luigi Illica in January of 1902: "I've now embarked for Japan and will do my best to portray it, but more than publications on social and material culture, I need some notes of popular music." He found a selection of melodies that not only employed non-Western scales but also had a distinctive rhythmic signature, the anapest—two short strokes followed by a long one. In *Madama Butterfly*, the anapest is a pervasive pattern and a subtle means to underscore the East-West dichotomy fundamental to the story. In his brief prelude to the opera, Puccini cloaks this social polarity in a vintage Western compositional technique—a fugue with an anapestic subject that begins in the strings and expands with the addition of winds and brass. The same anapest opens the prelude to Act III, but its most profound expression is its final, articulated fortississimo by full orchestra as Butterfly falls dead by her own hand.

—Helen M. Greenwald

Helen M. Greenwald is chair of the department of music history at New England Conservatory and editor of The Oxford Handbook of Opera.

MARTY SOHL / METROPOLITAN OPERA

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. —*Charles Sheek*

Xian Zhang

CONDUCTOR (DANDONG, CHINA)

THIS SEASON *Madama Butterfly* for her debut at the Met and concerts with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Suzhou Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, Houston Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and National Symphony Orchestra.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She is in her eighth season as music director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and also serves as principal guest conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and conductor emeritus of the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, having been that ensemble's music director between 2009 and 2016. She also previously served as principal guest conductor of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales. She has conducted concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, among others, and led *Tosca* and *La Traviata* at the Norwegian National Opera, *Tosca* at Cincinnati Opera, *La Bohème* at English National Opera, *Nabucco* at Welsh National Opera, *La Forza del Destino* at Washington National Opera, and Stravinsky's *The Nightingale* at Dutch National Opera.

Elizabeth DeShong

MEZZO-SOPRANO (SELINSGROVE, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met, Octavia in John Adams's *Antony and Cleopatra* in Barcelona, Bradamante in *Alcina* in concert with Les Musiciens du Louvre at La Scala, and Mozart's Requiem at Lyric Opera of Chicago.
MET APPEARANCES Suzuki, Arsace in *Semiramide*, the Wardrobe Mistress / Schoolboy / Page in *Lulu*, Hermia in *The Enchanted Island* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the First Norn in *Götterdämmerung*, the Priestess in *Aida*, and Suzy in *La Rondine* (debut, 2008).
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Fidès in *Le Prophète* in concert at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Marilyn Klinghoffer in Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* in concert with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* at the Atlanta Opera, Sara in *Roberto Devereux* and Calbo in *Maometto II* with Washington Concert Opera, Octavia in the world premiere of *Antony and Cleopatra* at San Francisco Opera, and Bradamante with the English Concert. She has also sung Pauline in *The Queen of Spades* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of *Rinaldo* and Suzuki at the Glyndebourne Festival, Ino/Juno in *Semele* with the English Concert, and Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at LA Opera.

Aleksandra Kurzak

SOPRANO (BRZEG DOLNY, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* and Liù in *Turandot* at the Met, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Covent Garden, the title role of *Tosca* at Staatsoper Berlin and in concert in Orange, Cio-Cio-San in Madrid and in concert with the Stuttgart Philharmonic, the title role of *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Barcelona, and concerts at the Wiener Konzerthaus, San Francisco Opera, Silesian Opera, and Grand Théâtre de Genève.

MET APPEARANCES Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Tosca, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (debut, 2004).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Cio-Cio-San, Tosca, and Violetta in Verona; Elisabetta di Valois in *Don Carlo* at Staatsoper Berlin; Cio-Cio-San at Staatsoper Berlin; Adina in Rome; and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Naples. She has also appeared at the Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salzburg Festival, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among many others. Between 2001 and 2007, she was a member of the ensemble at Staatsoper Hamburg.

Davide Luciano

BARITONE (BENEVENTO, ITALY)

THIS SEASON Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*, and the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Vienna State Opera; Marcello in *La Bohème* at the Bavarian State Opera; Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* in Muscat; and the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Salzburg Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème* and Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (debut, 2018).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Macerata Opera Festival, Don Giovanni in Valencia and Liège, Slook in Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* in Muscat, Sgt. Belcore at the Vienna State Opera and La Scala, Riccardo in *I Puritani* and Figaro in Naples, Sharpless at the Bavarian State Opera, the Duke of Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux* in Palermo, Silvio in *Pagliacci* in Verona, Don Profondo in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Ford in *Falstaff* in Valencia. He has also sung Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and the Count at Dutch National Opera, Guglielmo in Valencia, Dr. Malatesta in Florence, and Marcello in Monte Carlo.

Matthew Polenzani

TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's Requiem, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Met; Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Vienna State Opera; Orombello in Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* in concert in Naples; Florestan in *Fidelio* in Hamburg; Handel's *Messiah* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Giasone in *Medea* at the Canadian Opera Company; the title role of *Werther* in concert at the Klangvokal Musikfestival Dortmund; and Pinkerton in Madrid.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1997 debut as Boyar Khrushchov in *Boris Godunov*, he has sung nearly 450 performances of 43 roles, including Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Giasone, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Rodolfo, Macduff in *Macbeth*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Tito, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and the title roles of *Don Carlos*, *Idomeneo*, and *Roberto Devereux*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has appeared at many of the world's greatest opera houses, including the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Salzburg Festival, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among others. He was the 2008 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.