

Madama Butterfly

music by Giacomo Puccini

libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

premiered February, 1904 at La Scala in Milan

Nagasaki, 1904

A house on a hill overlooking the harbor.

ACT I

E soffitto.....e pareti

Pinkerton, Goro

The broker Goro shows Pinkerton, a Lieutenant in the US Navy, his new house.

The walls are sliding panels, allowing for many configurations and views.

Goro introduces the servants that come with the house.

Sorride Vostro Onore?

Suzuki, Pinkerton, Goro

Suzuki, the maid, quotes poetry; Goro elaborates on the arrangements.

The house comes with a bride, or the bride comes with a house. And family.

All will be made legal in the presence of family and the American Consul.

Ah! quei ciottoli

Sharpless, Pinkerton, Goro

Sharpless, Consul of the United States at Nagasaki, arrives breathless from the climb.

Goro brings refreshment while Pinkerton elucidates the terms of the agreement to Sharpless.

Pinkerton has bought the house for 999 years, with the option, every month, of canceling the agreement.

Dovunque al mondo

Pinkerton, Sharpless

Pinkerton goes on to say that a Yankee travels the world, taking what he wants.

Pinkerton concludes with the words, in English, "America forever."

Una ghirlanda di fiori freschi.

Goro, Pinkerton

Before exiting to fetch her, Goro praises Pinkerton's bride to be and offers to procure a woman for Sharpless as well.

Quale smania vi prende!

Sharpless, Pinkerton

Pinkerton speaks of his infatuation with his bride to be.

She was at the consulate recently and Sharpless heard her voice.

Sharpless discourages Pinkerton from hurting such a delicate creature.

Pinkerton offers a toast to the day when he will get married, legitimately, to an American woman.

Ecco! Son giunte

Goro, Chorus of Butterfly's friends and Butterfly offstage, Sharpless

Butterfly, Pinkerton's bride to be, and her friends are heard approaching.

The girls sing of the natural beauty, Butterfly sings of her happiness.

Siam giunte.

Butterfly, Female Chorus, Pinkerton, Sharpless, Goro

Butterfly introduces Pinkerton to her friends.

From her responses to Sharpless' inquiries, we learn that Butterfly is 15 years old, her mother lives but her father is dead,

that she comes from a wealthy, noble family that has fallen on hard times.

Butterfly is not ashamed to state that she has become a geisha for purposes of survival.

"*Cose del mondo*" - "So it is in the world."

L'Imperial Commissario

**Goro, Pinkerton, Butterfly's Cousins, Relations, Mother, Friends,
Uncle Yakuside, Sharpless**

The rest of the wedding crowd has arrived.
It is as at any wedding, anywhere, anytime.
Some persons are delighted and joyful, others are jealous and still others are scornful.
There is both praise and criticism of both bride and groom.
There's even an uncle is search of booze.
Sharpless warns Pinkerton more directly not to be careless with Butterfly; Pinkerton is dismissive and even vulgar.
Butterfly leads everyone to bow before the Americans.

Vieni amor mio!

Pinkerton, Butterfly, Goro

With Pinkerton's permission, Butterfly moves in.
Butterfly's belongings constitute just a few items that include statuettes of her ancestors
and the sword used by her father to take his own life (presented to him by the Mikado for that purpose).

Ieri son salita

Butterfly

Butterfly reveals that the day before she secretly went to the Mission to convert to Pinkerton's faith.

Tutti zitti!

**Goro, Commissioner, Butterfly, Butterfly's Friends, Pinkerton, Sharpless,
Registrar, Uncle Yakuside, Mother, Cousin, Guests**

The Commissioner performs the wedding ceremony.
Sharpless, the Commissioner and the Registrar depart together.
Pinkerton proposes a toast in an effort to get everyone else to leave, so that he and Butterfly can be alone.

Cio-cio-san!

Uncle Bonze, Butterfly, Full Chorus, Goro, Pinkerton,

Butterfly's Uncle Bonze, who calls her Cio-Cio San, appears and demands to know what she was doing at the Mission.
When Butterfly doesn't answer he announces to the crowd that she renounced their faith.
As she renounced them, they renounce her.
They exit, exclaiming their dismay as they go.

Bimba, bimba, non piangere

Pinkerton, Butterfly, Suzuki

Pinkerton comforts Butterfly, Suzuki is heard saying her prayers from within.

Viene la sera

Pinkerton, Butterfly, Suzuki

Pinkerton bids the servants close up the house for the night, Suzuki brings Butterfly her nightgown.
Now the bride and groom are alone together, they watch each other.
Butterfly is happy, but Bonze's curse stays with her.
Pinkerton is delighted that this "giocattolo" (toy) is his wife.

Bimba dagli occhi pieni di malia

Pinkerton, Butterfly

Pinkerton approaches Butterfly and they speak to each of love.

Vogliatemi bene

Butterfly, Pinkerton

The duet continues.

ACT II

E Izaghi e Izanami

Suzuki, Butterfly

Suzuki prays to the Japanese gods, asking them to stop Butterfly from crying anymore.
Butterfly criticizes the Japanese gods.

Questo e l'ultimo rondo

Suzuki, Butterfly

Pinkerton has arranged for the rent to be paid on the house, but otherwise the ladies are destitute.
Suzuki does not believe that Pinkerton will return. Butterfly believes that he will fulfill the promise he made at their parting, to return in the season when the robin builds his nest.

Un bel di vedremo

Butterfly

Butterfly believes that one beautiful day they will see the smoke from Pinkerton's ship in the distance, and describes how he will approach and how she'll greet him.
Until that day she will wait faithfully.

C'e. Entrate.

Goro, Sharpless, Butterfly

Goro and Sharpless have come to visit.
Sharpless has had a letter from Pinkerton.

Mio marito mi promesso

Butterfly, Goro, Sharpless

Butterfly asks Sharpless when robins build their nests in America.
In Japan the robins have built their nests three times since Pinkerton left.
Thus we learn that it has been three years since Act I.
During that time Goro has been trying to, in essence, resell Butterfly.
The current suitor is Yamadori, who approaches.

Eccolo. Attenti.

Butterfly, Yamadori, Sharpless, Goro

According to Japanese law, desertion constitutes divorce.
Butterfly believes that she is married according to American law, and believes that, according to American law, divorce is much harder to come by.

Udiste?

Yamadori, Sharpless, Goro, Butterfly

The gentlemen confer.
Pinkerton has returned, but does not wish to see Butterfly.
Sharpless has come to tell her so.
Yamadori leaves, hopeful.

Ora a noi

Sharpless, Butterfly

Sharpless reads Pinkerton's letter to Butterfly.
Butterfly interprets everything she hears positively.

Ebbene, che fareste

Sharpless, Butterfly

Sharpless, in an effort to be more direct, asks Butterfly what she would do were Pinkerton never to return.
He encourages her to accept Yamadori's proposal.

E questo? E questo?

Butterfly

Butterfly goes off stage and returns with a little boy, her son, and Pinkerton's.
If Pinkerton does not return she can either beg and dance and sing to support herself and her child or die.

(Quanta pietà!) Io scendo al piano. Sharpless, Butterfly

Sharpless leaves Butterfly and her child, promising to tell Pinkerton of the boy's existence.

Vespa! Rospo maledetto!

Suzuki, Butterfly, Goro

Suzuki drags in Goro.

In addition to being a general nuisance to the women, Goro claims that the father of the child is unknown. Butterfly throws him out and tells her son that his father will come and take them away to America.

Il cannone del porto!

Suzuki, Butterfly

Suzuki has spied the warship in the harbor.

It is Pinkerton's ship, the Abraham Lincoln.

Butterfly feels entirely vindicated.

Scuoti quella fronda di ciliegio **Butterfly, Suzuki**

Butterfly wants to have all of the petals of all the flowers gathered in her garden for the arrival of Pinkerton. The women are light hearted.

Or vienmi ad adornar.

Butterfly, Suzuki

Suzuki dresses Butterfly in her wedding clothes, does her hair and her make-up.

Suzuki, Butterfly and her son will watch and wait.

Humming chorus

Chorus (offstage)

As the trio waits, we hear a chorus offstage, humming.

Act III

As before. Suzuki and the boy have fallen asleep. Butterfly continues to wait.

Intermezzo

Orchestra, Chorus of Sailors (offstage)

Gia il sole!

Suzuki, Butterfly

Suzuki wakes Butterfly and sends her off to get some rest, along with her son.

Zitta! Zitta! Non la destare.

Pinkerton, Suzuki, Sharpless

Pinkerton and Sharpless arrive.

Pinkerton begins to comprehend the gravity of the situation.

Suzuki sees a woman waiting in the garden.

The woman is Pinkerton's (American) wife.

Io so che alle sue pene

Sharpless, Pinkerton, Suzuki

The men want Butterfly to give up the child to Pinkerton and his wife Kate, to guarantee a future for the boy.

Suzuki goes out to the garden to speak with Kate.

Non ve l'avevo detto?

Sharpless, Pinkerton

Nothing in the house has changed.

Pinkerton is overwhelmed, and overcome with remorse.

Pinkerton leaves.

Glielo dirai?

Kate, Suzuki

Kate will care for the child as if it were her own.

Suzuki agrees to convey her good will to Butterfly, but does so with great sorrow.

Suzuki, Suzuki! Dove sei? Suzuki!

Butterfly, Suzuki

Butterfly wakes to find discover Sharpless and Kate in her house, but no Pinkerton.

Tu, Suzuki, che sei tanto buona

Butterfly, Suzuki, Sharpless, Kate

Butterfly gradually discovers the truth.

Potete perdonarmi, Butterfly?

Kate, Butterfly, Sharpless

Butterfly agrees to give up her son.

Butterfly bids Kate to return in half an hour.

Kate and Sharpless depart.

Come una mosca prigioniera

Suzuki, Butterfly, Pinkerton

Butterfly commands Suzuki to go play with her son.

Butterfly takes up her father's knife.

Suzuki brings in the little boy.

Butterfly says goodbye to her child, then blindfolds him.

Butterfly takes her father's knife behind the screen, then, having stabbed herself,
steps out and collapses next to her child.

Pinkerton and Sharpless arrive as Butterfly is dying.