

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

by Giacomo Puccini

Opera in three acts (performed with one intermission)

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa After the play by David Belasco, based on a story by John Luther Long

Cast

Cio-Cio-San:

Suzuki:

Pinkerton:

Sharpless:

Synopsis

In Nagasaki, early in the twentieth century, the geisha, Cio-Cio-San (Madame Butterfly of the opera's title) marries B. F. Pinkerton, an officer in the United States Navy. Despite the warnings of the American consul Sharpless, Pinkerton treats the matter of the marriage lightly.

A few years later. Abandoned by Pinkerton shortly after the wedding, Cio-Cio-San awaits his return, along with their son, nicknamed "Trouble." When visited by Sharpless, she insists her husband will return, and the consul cannot bring himself to read from a letter received from Pinkerton in which he tells him he has married an American woman. A cannon shot announces the arrival of a ship: it is Pinkerton's. Cio-Cio-San and her companion Suzuki decorate the house, anticipating his return.

The next morning, Pinkerton arrives to the house with his wife Kate, but is suddenly overcome with guilt and leaves. Having heard about the existence of the child, they tell Suzuki they have come to take the child with them. Butterfly tells Kate she will give the child to Pinkerton if he personally comes to get him. After sending the child away, she kills herself with her father's ceremonial dagger; Pinkerton arrives to find her dead.