

**MADAM
BUTTERFLY: OPERA
IN THREE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649457595

Madam Butterfly: Opera in Three Acts by G. Puccini

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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G. PUCCINI

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BUTTERFLY: OPERA
IN THREE ACTS**

MADAM BUTTERFLY

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

*Founded on the book by John L. Long
and
the drama by David Belasco*

ITALIAN LIBRETTO BY
L. ILLICA AND G. GIACOSA

English Version by R. H. ELKIN

MUSIC BY
G. PUCCINI

Price 50 Cents

G. RICORDI & CO.
12 WEST 45th STREET, NEW YORK

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

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MI 50
P 411
1919

CHARACTERS

MADAM BUTTERFLY (<i>Cho-Cho-San</i>)	<i>Soprano</i>	
SUZUKI (<i>Cho-Cho-San's Servant</i>)	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	
KATE PINKERTON	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	
B. F. PINKERTON (<i>Lieutenant in the United States Navy</i>)	<i>Tenor</i>	
SHARPLESS (<i>United States Consul at Nagasaki</i>)	<i>Baritone</i>	
GORO (<i>a Marriage Broker</i>)	<i>Tenor</i>	
PRINCE YAMADORI	<i>Baritone</i>	
THE BONZE (<i>Cho-Cho-San's Uncle</i>)	<i>Bass</i>	
YAKUSIDE	<i>Baritone</i>	
THE IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER	<i>Bass</i>	
THE OFFICIAL REGISTRAR	<i>Baritone</i>	} <i>Members of the Court</i>
CHO-CHO-SAN'S MOTHER	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	
THE AUNT	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>	
THE COUSIN	<i>Soprano</i>	
TROUBLE (<i>Cho-Cho-San's Child</i>)	—	

Cho-Cho-San's Relations and Friends — Servants

AT NAGASAKI — PRESENT DAY

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ARGUMENT

ACT I

LIEUTENANT B. F. PINKERTON, of the United States Navy, is about to contract a "Japanese Marriage" with Cho-Cho-San, known among her friends as BUTTERFLY. When the curtain rises he is being shown over the little house on the hill, which he has leased at Nagasaki and is about to occupy with his Japanese wife. GORO, the nakodo or marriage broker, who has arranged the match, has also found him the house and is enjoying PINKERTON's surprise and pleasure at the ingenious contrivances of the building. PINKERTON is then introduced to the three Japanese servants, one of whom is SUZUKI, BUTTERFLY's faithful maid. His friend SHARPLESS, the American Consul, arrives, and the two men settle down to an intimate chat. SHARPLESS looks upon PINKERTON's projected alliance with disfavour, and begs him to reflect before taking the step. He urges that what is a mere pastime to PINKERTON may be a very serious matter — a matter of life or death — to the Japanese girl. PINKERTON laughs at his friend's apprehensions, and their discussion is interrupted by the arrival of the bride and her friends. Greetings are interchanged; SHARPLESS takes the opportunity of getting into conversation with BUTTERFLY and is more than ever convinced that she is taking her marriage very seriously. That his misgivings are not groundless is soon proved, for in a pretty interview with PINKERTON, BUTTERFLY confides to him that she has, secretly and quite unknown to her relations, renounced her faith, the faith of her forefathers, before entering on her new life with him; a step which means cutting herself adrift from all her old associations and belongings, and entrusting her future entirely to her husband.

The relations arrive, together with the Japanese officials, and the marriage contract is signed with due ceremony. While the guests are joyfully drinking the newly-wedded pair's health, a weird figure suddenly appears on the scene, shouting and cursing wildly. It is BUTTERFLY's uncle, the Bonze (Japanese priest), who has discovered her renunciation of faith and has come to curse her for it. He insists on all her relations, including her mother, renouncing her for ever; whereupon PINKERTON, annoyed at the disturbance, turns the whole lot out of his house, and they depart, shaking the air with their imprecations. BUTTERFLY is left weeping bitterly, and PINKERTON proceeds to comfort his poor little Japanese wife. He soon woos her back to smiles and happiness, and a passionate love scene follows. And so we leave this strangely-assorted pair on the threshold of their life together.

ACT II

Three years have passed. PINKERTON has long since been recalled to America, promising his little wife to return to her "when the robins nest." The curtain rises on a sadder and wiser SUZUKI, praying against all conviction for PINKERTON's return, and on a faithful, ever-trusting, never-doubting BUTTERFLY. She declines to listen to SUZUKI's misgivings: "'Tis *faith* you are lacking!" she says, and in most touching language she draws a vivid picture of PINKERTON's speedy return: "This will all come to pass just as I tell you. Banish your idle fears, for he'll return, I know it!"

She is interrupted by a visit from the Consul SHARPLESS, who has been entrusted by PINKERTON with a very cruel task, viz., to break to BUTTERFLY the news that he is returning to Nagasaki, but that he is now married — really married this time! — to an American wife. But with the best intentions, SHARPLESS is unable to deliver his message. The very sight of a letter from PINKERTON throws BUTTERFLY into such a transport of excitement and joy that she is unable to listen to its contents. He has written, he has remembered her, and of course he must be returning! Then they are disturbed

by a visit from YAMADORI, a wealthy Japanese suitor, whom Goro is urging BUTTERFLY to marry. She is very indignant. "How can I marry him?" she protests, "when I am already married?" And when GORO and SHARPLESS, appalled at her blindness, suggests that PINKERTON's desertion of her constitutes divorce, she proudly tells them: "That may be Japanese law, but not the law of my country, America!" It is a hopeless task to try and undeceive a faith such as hers. After YAMADORI has taken his departure, SHARPLESS makes one more attempt to open her eyes to the truth, but she silences him once for all by fetching in her baby boy, a blue-eyed, fair-haired replica of PINKERTON. "Look," she says, with maternal pride, "can such as *this* well be forgotten? When PINKERTON hears what a fine son is waiting for him, will he not hasten back to Japan?" And the poor Consul has reluctantly to take his leave without having achieved his mission.

He has hardly gone before the harbour canons announce the arrival of a man-of-war. Their eyes dim with happy tears, their hands shaking with excitement so that they can hardly hold the telescope, BUTTERFLY and SUZUKI discover it is PINKERTON's ship, the *Abraham Lincoln*! Now BUTTERFLY's transports know no bounds. She has proved herself right! Her faith is rewarded! Her husband is returning to her! She and SUZUKI decorate the little home with flowers until it is a very bower. She and the baby are adorned in their very best, and then she stations herself, SUZUKI and the baby in front of three holes she has pierced in the *Shoji*, there to watch for PINKERTON's arrival. As night falls, SUZUKI and the baby drop off to sleep. The curtain falls on the pathetic picture of BUTTERFLY, rigid and motionless, waiting and watching in unshaken faith for the return of the husband who has forsaken her. . . .

ACT III

The weary night has passed, and the breaking dawn discovers SUZUKI and the baby fast asleep while BUTTERFLY still stands waiting, watching. The sunshine awakes SUZUKI, who persuades BUTTERFLY to go and rest, promising to call her as soon as PINKERTON arrives. Hardly has BUTTERFLY gone up with her baby than PINKERTON and SHARPLESS appear on the scene. SUZUKI's joyful surprise is soon changed to consternation when she finds that PINKERTON is accompanied by a strange lady — his wife! PINKERTON, surrounded by proofs of BUTTERFLY's unbroken faith and devotion, now at last realizes the truth of the Consul's warnings and the heartlessness of his own conduct. Overcome by remorse and the anguish of the situation, he rushes away, leaving SHARPLESS to arrange things as best he can. The Consul has hard work to pacify SUZUKI. At last he persuades her to break the news to her poor little mistress and to try and induce her to give up her baby to Mrs. PINKERTON, who will bestow a mother's care on it. Before SUZUKI has time to prevent her, BUTTERFLY comes down, radiantly expecting to find her husband, and in a scene, the pathos of which cannot well be surpassed, she learns the terrible truth. She bears the blow with a gentle dignity more touching than any lamentation. She even wishes the "real American wife" every happiness, and sends PINKERTON a message that she herself will "find peace," and that he shall have his son if he will come and fetch him himself in half an hour's time. And then SHARPLESS and Mrs. PINKERTON withdraw and leave the poor little girl alone with her broken heart.

But when, in half an hour's time, PINKERTON and SHARPLESS return to keep their appointment, the faithful little broken heart has ceased to beat. BUTTERFLY has killed herself with her father's sword, the blade of which bears the inscription:

"To die with honour
When one can no longer live with honour."

R. H. ELKIN

ATTO PRIMO

Colina presso Nagasaki

Casa giapponese, terrazza e giardino. In fondo, al basso, la rada, il porto, la città di Nagasaki.

Pinkerton e Goro

GORO fa visitare la casa a PINKERTON, che passa di sorpresa in sorpresa.

Pinkerton

E soffitto... e pareti...

Goro

(godendo della sorpresa)

Vanno e vengono a prova
a norma che vi giova
nello stesso locale
alternar nuovi aspetti ai consueti.

Pinkerton

(cercando intorno)

Il nido nuziale
dov'è?

Goro

(accennando a due locati)

Qui, o là!... secondo...

ACT I

Hill Near Nagasaki

A Japanese house, terrace and garden. Below, in the background, the bay, the harbour and the town of Nagasaki.

Pinkerton and Goro

GORO is showing PINKERTON over the house. PINKERTON passes from one surprise to another.

Pinkerton

And the walls — and the ceiling —

Goro

(enjoying his surprise)

They will come and will go,
Just as it may suit your fancy
To exchange or to vary
New and old in the same surroundings.

Pinkerton

(looking around)

The marriage-chamber,
Where is it?

Goro

(pointing in two directions)

Here, or there! — according —