

Madama Butterfly

1947

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MADAMA BUTTERFLY



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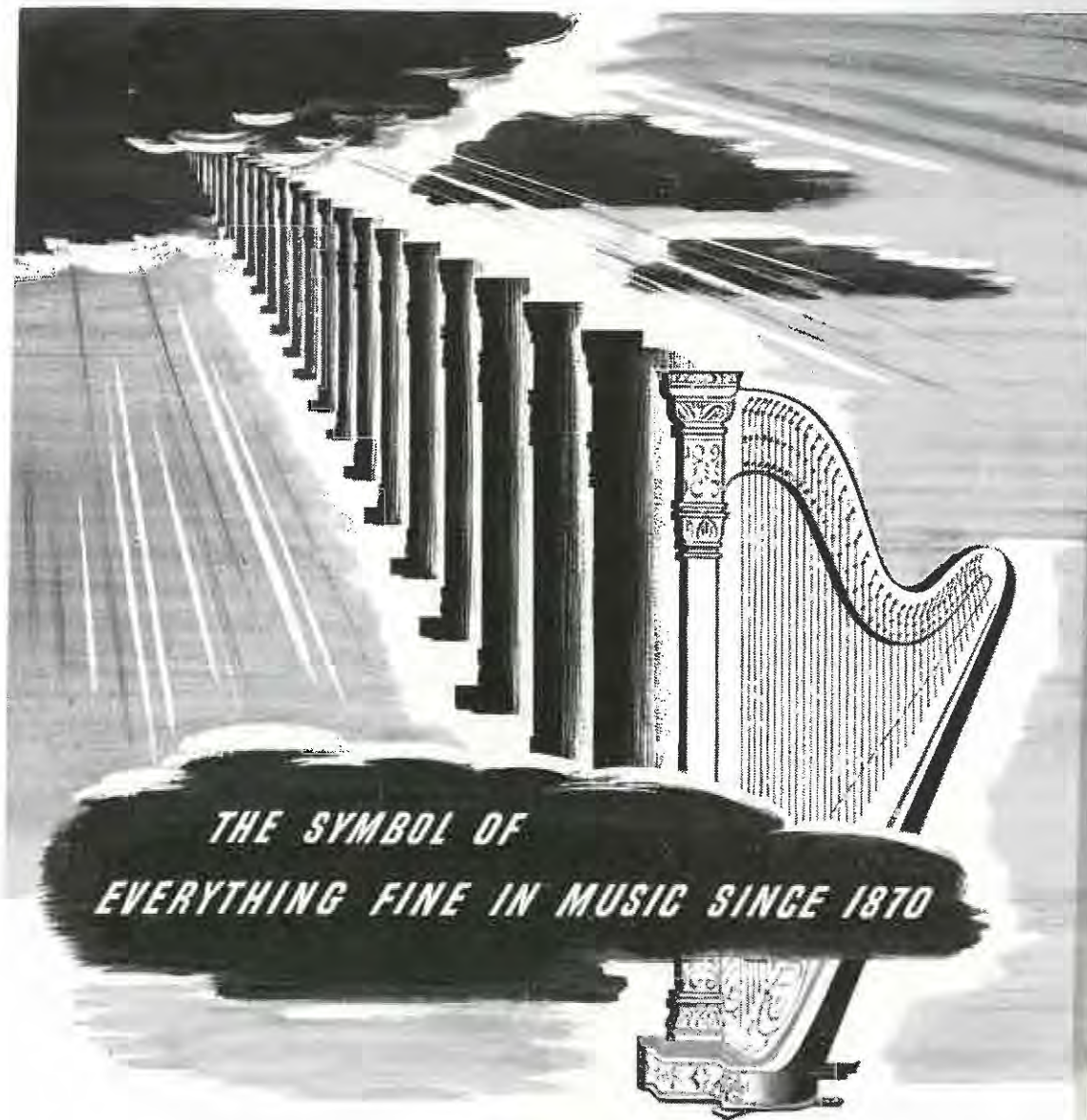
San Francisco
OPERA COMPANY

Verdi's AIDA • Puccini's MADAMA BUTTERFLY • Gounod's FAUST

PORTLAND AUDITORIUM, SEPTEMBER 11, 12, 13



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under its founder
and guiding spirit,
Maestro Gaetano Merola



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THE PORTLAND OPERA ASSOCIATION acknowledges with sincere gratitude the contributions and pledges of its Guarantors which made this engagement of the San Francisco Opera Company possible. For the first time, this great company appears here under the sort of broad civic sponsorship that it deserves, and which will place regular appearances in the future on a sound artistic and financial basis. The Association is also indebted to the cooperation of local merchants, members of the Portland Retail Trade Bureau, and many others who have freely donated space and facilities to the publicizing of this event.

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Madama Butterfly

Opera in three acts. Music by Giacomo Puccini.
Text by Giacosa and Illica. Founded on the book of John L. Long
and on the drama of David Belasco.

THE CAST

Madama Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San) LICIA ALBANESE
 Pinkerton, Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy JAN PEERCE
 Suzuki, Cio-Cio-San's servant HERTA GLAZ
 Sharpless, U. S. Consul at Nagasaki GIUSEPPE VALDENGIO
 Goro, a marriage broker ALESSIO DE PAOLIS
 The Bonze, Cio-Cio-San's uncle LORENZO ALVARY
 Prince Yamadori GEORGE CEHANOVSKY
 Kate Pinkerton ELMA HELTMAN
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<i>Stage Director</i>	<i>Conductor</i>	<i>Chorus Director</i>
ARMANDO AGNINI	PIETRO CIMARA	KURT HERBERT ADLER

Time and Place: About 1900; Nagasaki, Japan
 Act I: Exterior of Pinkerton's House
 Act II: Interior of Butterfly's Home
 Act III: Same as Act II

Because of copyright the story of the opera cannot be printed.

Encores not permitted.

FINAL PERFORMANCE:

FAUST, Saturday, September 13; 8:00 PM

(over)

(5)

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GIACOMO PUCCINI—Composer of "MADAMA BUTTERFLY"

Born in Lucca, Italy in 1858, Puccini was slow to gain notable success as a composer. It was not until he was 37 years old that he composed his first real operatic triumph "Manon Lescaut."

Puccini was the son of a family which already had produced professional musicians for four successive generations. Though he showed no great musical aptitude as a child, he was given a thorough-going musical education, and became a church organist at the age of 17. It was at this time that he began first to show signs of more than ordinary musical talent, and he was awarded a scholarship to study at the Milan Conservatory. This scholarship was one awarded by the Queen of Italy to an outstanding young composer.

In Milan, Puccini studied with Amilcar Ponchielli, composer of "La Gioconda," who was among Italian composers more sympathetic than most to the innovations of Richard Wagner.

Although his teacher never succeeded completely in grafting the symphonic music-drama style of Wagner onto more formal succession of arias that was characteristic of Italian opera, Puccini's musical style might be termed a somewhat simplified Italian version of the Wagnerian idiom. This is to be found first in his use of leading motifs which have a dramatic significance in their recurrence, much as in the case of Wagner which are not used in such profusion and complexity.

The second feature of Puccini's style which reflects his indebtedness to Wagner, either directly or via Ponchielli, is the over-all chromatic coloring of Puccini's harmony and orchestration. Like Wagner, Puccini's operas seem to be one continuous and unbroken web of melody, in which the harmony is characterized by the rather exotic effect of diminished chords.

Chromaticism and a mild dissonance, so characteristic of Puccini, are employed in MADAMA BUTTERFLY to give an Oriental atmosphere. So intent was Puccini upon the musical unity and unbroken continuity in this opera that he originally composed it to be performed in one unbroken act. An unfavorable reception led to its division into two acts and eventually into three.

(Continued on page 10)



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Of the three operas for which Puccini is best known, MADAMA BUTTERFLY is the last in order of composition. It was composed in 1904, following the success of "La Boheme" in 1896 and "Tosca" in 1900. The opera aroused a great deal of interest in America, because of its basis in a play by David Belasco, which had already enjoyed a great deal of popularity in this country. The first American performance was in Washington, D.C., late in 1906, and it was first produced at the Metropolitan February 11, 1907. This probably marked the high point of Puccini's popularity in this country, and the success of MADAMA BUTTERFLY preceded as it was by "La Boheme" and "Tosca," prompted the Metropolitan management to commission from Puccini another opera, based on an American play, "The Girl of the Golden West," which, unfortunately, did not come up to its predecessors, either in musical quality or in popular appeal.

Even since its first presentation, MADAMA BUTTERFLY has been one of the most popular of all Italian operas, and its leading role has been the vehicle for most of our great lyric sopranos. In recent years, the interpretation of Licia Albanese has been especially valued. During the recent war, because of its sympathetic treatment of a Japanese woman in contrast to an American naval officer, MADAMA BUTTERFLY was dropped from the repertory of all American Opera Companies. Its restoration to the Metropolitan stage in the 1945-46 season immediately reestablished it in popular favor, and demonstrated that Puccini's music could override any sensitivity on a political score. This is the second season since the war that MADAMA BUTTERFLY has been again featured by the San Francisco Opera Company.



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OUR ARTISTS

MAESTRO GAETANO MEROLA this week opens his twenty-fifth successive year at the helm of the great opera company which he founded in 1923, and which he has led to a pre-eminent position in the operatic world today. This is a record equalled by no other impresario, and only the Metropolitan in this country has a longer record of uninterrupted operatic service.

Reared in the grand tradition of Italian opera, Maestro Merola has established an enviable standard of musicianship and splendor of production. In re-creating Grand Opera in San Francisco he has adapted traditional methods to the modern techniques available on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House.

During his twenty-five years as General Director of the San Francisco Opera, Maestro Merola has built his company into a major cultural asset on the Pacific Coast, and opera-goers of Portland share with those of San Francisco the glories of his operatic achievement.

PAUL BREISACH, conductor of "Aida", again opens the San Francisco Opera season in Portland, as he did last year with "Carmen". Viennese by birth, he was well-known in European opera-houses prior to coming to this country in 1939. Since that time he has been prominent with the Chicago Civic, the Metropolitan, and San Francisco Opera companies. He recently conducted the American premiere of Benjamin Britten's new opera, "The Rape of Lucrece".

PIETRO CIMARA, who conducts "Madama Butterfly", is another conductor who appeared here last year with the San Francisco Opera last season. He has been on the staff of the Metropolitan Opera since 1928, and in San Francisco since 1939. Prior to this he conducted extensively in his native Italy and spent four years as Toscanini's assistant in Milan.

LICIA ALBANESE made both her American and European debuts in "Madama Butterfly", the former at the Metropolitan Opera in February 1940, following engagements at La Scala, Covent Garden, and in Paris and Madrid. Last year she made her Portland debut as Violetta in Verdi's "La Traviata" with the San Francisco Opera.

NADINE CONNER, our charming Marguerite on Saturday evening, is one of the most highly valued of the younger opera stars. A native of California, she was singing light opera when Bruno Walter, eminent Mozart interpreter, selected her for his New York production of "The Magic Flute" and thus introduced her to the Metropolitan. She appeared here last season as Micaela in "Carmen".

STELLA ROMAN made her first appearance with the San Francisco Opera in Portland, when she sang in "Tannhauser" here in 1941, shortly after her arrival in this country. A native of Romania, she had already established herself as a leading dramatic soprano in Europe, and later joined the Metropolitan, of which she is still a valued member.

EZIO PINZA, whose all too brief appearance in "La Boheme" last year was a highlight of the season, now returns to sing one of his greatest roles, Mephistopheles in "Faust". Hailed as "the greatest singing actor of this generation", he has been with the San Francisco Opera every year since 1927.

CLARAMAE TURNER is a native Californian and product of the San Francisco Opera Company, having studied under Chorus Director, Kurt Herbert Adler and singing seven seasons with Maestro Merola's great company. Last season Miss Turner made a brilliant debut with the Metropolitan Opera as Martha in "Faust"—the same role she sings here. Another high point in her ever-increasing fame was her appearance in the world premiere of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "The Medium."

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JAN PEERCE, the Pinkerton of Friday's "Madama Butterfly", is well-known to Portland audiences, both for his concerts and for a previous appearance here in 1941 in "Rigoletto". Popular as a radio tenor long before joining the Metropolitan Opera, Peerce is ranked high by such great conductors as Arturo Toscanini who has assigned him the leading tenor roles in each of his memorable opera broadcasts.

RAOUL JOBIN, our Faust, returns for the third time with the San Francisco company, having sung here in "Manon" in 1941 and "Carmen" last season. A leading star of both Paris opera houses before the last war, Jobin has been singing in this country since 1939.

KURT BAUM, making his first appearance here as Rhadames, turned from his medical studies at the University of Prague to join that city's noted opera company. The leading male role of "Aida" which he sings here, was also the vehicle of his American debut in Chicago in 1939. His other roles include "Carmen", "Tosca", "Lohengrin", "La Gioconda", "Der Rosenkavalier", and "Il Trovatore".

GIUSEPPE VALDENGO is a busy young man this week singing four performances, his first with the San Francisco Company, in Portland and Seattle this week. Though only 28, he was already a star in Italy at the outbreak of the war, much of which he spent playing English Horn in a radio orchestra. He made his American debut last season with the New York Civic Opera as Sharpless in "Madama Butterfly", one of his two roles here.

HERTA GLAZ is another busy singer this week with appearances in two operas in each of two cities, a feat which she also performed last season during the Northwest tour of the San Francisco Opera. A native of Vienna, she had a distinguished career in Europe before her Metropolitan debut in 1942. Though in extraordinary demand by opera companies, she is also greatly in demand by orchestras and for solo concert appearances.

ROBERT WEEDE, the Amonasro in "Aida", made his Metropolitan debut ten years ago in "Pagliacci". Long popular on the Radio City Music Hall broadcasts, which he shared with Jan Peerce, he has also followed a very active career with American opera companies.

NICOLA MOSCONA is a native of Greece, but much of his career has been in Italy, England, and this country. Like Jan Peerce he is a favorite of Arturo Toscanini who has engaged him both for opera and for the notable broadcast of Berlioz' "Romeo et Juliette". He has been a member of the Metropolitan since 1937, and of the San Francisco Opera since last season.

BLANCHE THEBOM, lovely young American contralto who sings Amneris in "Aida", made her Metropolitan debut in 1944. She was an immediate success and continues to be a favorite in concert, radio and screen, as well as opera. This is her first season with the San Francisco Opera Co., with whom she is scheduled to sing leading contralto roles.

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THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA COMPANY was established in 1923 following a successful outdoor presentation of grand opera at Stanford University under Maestro Merola's direction. The first productions by the Company itself were given in the Municipal Auditorium in San Francisco, and the season was financed by contributions from a large group of San Franciscans, which was returned in full at the close of the first season. Subsequent seasons were financed in the same self-supporting manner. Later, after the opening of the War Memorial Opera House, the Company was assured against deficit by a group of guarantors, who received preference in seating assignment in return for their pledges to help meet any deficits incurred.

The early seasons of the San Francisco Opera Company required extensive renovation of the vast Municipal Auditorium, in which a special stage and equipment were installed especially for the opera each year. The flat floor of the hall was also supplanted with a sloping incline, and a box tier was added to the complete transformation of the auditorium.

During the Depression years, a method of guaranteeing each season was worked out in a manner that gave guarantors seats in a limited special section. In recent seasons this list of guarantors has grown to the point that all except the highest balcony seats must be reserved for guarantors. Fortunately no call has been made on these guarantors recently, for the San Francisco Opera Company has been self-sustaining for several past seasons.



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Presented in Portland by
PORTLAND OPERA ASSOCIATION

Roster of the Company

Pacific Northwest Tour, 1947

SINGERS

Licia Albanese	Nicola Moscona
Lorenzo Alvary	Walter Olitzki
Kurt Baum	Jan Peerce
George Cehanovsky	Ezio Pinza
Leslie Chabay	Florence Quartararo
Nadine Conner	Stella Roman
Alessio De Paolis	Blanche Thebom
Herta Glaz	Claramae Turner
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The future of the Portland Opera Association depends upon the maintenance and expansion of this Guarantor support. Guarantors have preference in the selection of seats for the operatic performances. The Association will shortly announce its plans for next year, and additional Guarantors will be welcomed. The attached coupon will bring you full details.

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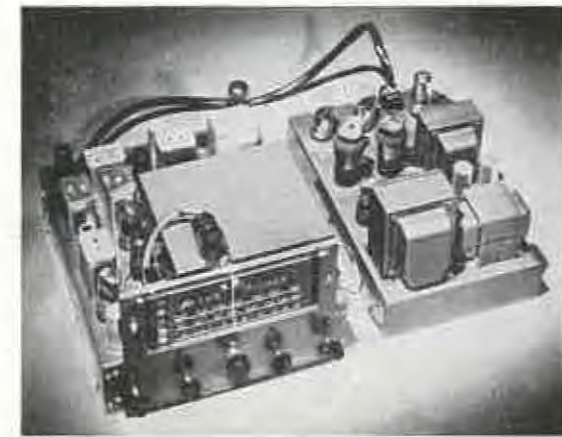
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