



# Houston Grand Opera

presents

## Puccini's



# *Madame Butterfly* Miller Outdoor Theatre

Friday May 20, Sunday May 22, 2011, 8pm, FREE.

On May 20 and May 22, join HGO for one of Houston's best loved traditions, Opera at Miller Outdoor Theatre. A warm summer night, glorious music and storytelling sets the scene for one of the world's most romantic, moving and tragic operas, *Madame Butterfly*.

A passionate story deserves a passionate cast. Following on from a highly acclaimed debut in the title role, HGO soprano **Ana María Martínez** will title role of Cio-Cio San, the young Geisha girl, who is abandoned by the love of her life, a handsome American lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton, sung by rising star, **Nathaniel Peake**, recently seen in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Martinez is an alumna of HGO's acclaimed studio, where Peake has just completed his second year in the program.

"Singing the title role for the first time, Ana Maria Martinez displayed a sturdy lyric soprano full of warm colors and delicate shadings." - *Associated Press*

Conductor **Craig Kier** will lead a cast of over 85 singers and musicians to bring to life this poignant and heartbreaking story.

HGO's production of *Madame Butterfly*, was originally directed by Tony Award-winning team of director **Michael Grandage**, set/costume designer **Christopher Oram**, and lighting designer **Neil Austin**. It will be directed at the Miller Outdoor Theatre by **Luisa Muller** with lighting done by **Philip Alfano**.

"Breathtakingly beautiful to see and to hear, Houston Grand Opera's new production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* launches the company's 56th season on a note of subtle yet complete triumph." - *Houston Chronicle*

HGO has performed at Miller Outdoor Theatre on a regular basis since 1957. General Director and CEO, Anthony Freud said, "*Madame Butterfly* is all at once extraordinarily popular and heartbreaking, and features some of the most memorable and recognizable moments in music. It is sure to be an evening full of romance, music and singing."

\*\*\*On Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup>, Miller Outdoor Theatre continues its operatic theme with the free screening of the infamous Marx Brothers film, *Night at the Opera*, an hilarious spoof on socialites, young love and the world of opera.

### Performance Details *Madame Butterfly* Free Event

Dates; Friday May 21, Sunday May 22

Time: 8pm - 10.45pm

Venue: Miller Outdoor Theatre,  
6000 Hermann Park Drive

[www.MillerOutdoorTheatre.com](http://www.MillerOutdoorTheatre.com)

Miller Outdoor Theatre is easily accessed by public transportation.

Go to [www.RideMetro.org](http://www.RideMetro.org) for more information.



## Biographies:

### **Craig Kier – Conductor**

Craig Kier makes his Houston Grand Opera conducting debut with these performances of *Madame Butterfly*. He joined the HGO music staff as Associate Conductor and Assistant Chorus Master in August 2010. Mr. Kier spent six seasons as resident assistant conductor and principal coach/accompanist for The Atlanta Opera. He has served on the music staff of Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Colorado, Berkshire Opera, Opera New Jersey, Opera Birmingham and Des Moines Metro Opera. Mr. Kier's conducting credits include *Gianni Schicchi* in a joint project between Seattle Opera and the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Porgy and Bess* for The Atlanta Opera. This summer he returns to Santa Fe Opera to serve as cover conductor for Vivaldi's *Griselda* and chorus master for the children's chorus of *La bohème*. Mr. Kier earned his Master of Music degree in Accompanying from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and his Bachelor of Music Education from the State University of New York College at Fredonia. This fall, he will conduct performances of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* at HGO.

### **Michael Grandage – Original Director**

Tony Award winner Michael Grandage made his American operatic debut with this production in October when it opened HGO's 2010/11 season. His Broadway revival of John Logan's play *Red*, based on the life of Mark Rothko, was recently honored with six Tony Awards including honors for best play and best stage direction, as well as three Drama Desk Awards for outstanding play, outstanding director and outstanding lighting. Grandage made his operatic debut earlier this year directing Britten's *Billy Budd* at Glyndebourne to great acclaim. His other Broadway credits include *Frost / Nixon*, starring Frank Langella and Michael Sheen, and *Hamlet*, starring Jude Law. Mr. Grandage is currently artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse in London where he collaborates frequently with designer Christopher Oram and lighting designer Neil Austin. Mr. Grandage worked with Mr. Oram on a new production of the musical *Evita*, which garnered critical acclaim when it played London's West End in 2006 – the same production will play on Broadway in 2012, starring Ricky Martin.

### **Ana María Martínez – Cio-Cio-San**

*Lynn Wyatt Great Artist*

Grammy Award-winning soprano Ana María Martínez made her role debut as Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* at HGO last fall, and will return to HGO next season as Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. Additional engagements during the current season include Cio-Cio-San with Washington National Opera and Mimi in *La Bohème* with the Santa Fe Opera, as well as concert performances with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and tours with both Andrea Bocelli and Plácido Domingo. Notable performances include her house debut as the title role in *Rusalka* at the Glyndebourne Festival, Marguerite in *Faust* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci* both with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Liù in *Turandot* at Netherlands Opera, the title role of *Luisa Miller* with Bayerische Staatsoper, Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* with San Francisco Opera, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* at Dallas Opera, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at the Royal Opera House. The Houston Grand Opera Studio alumna's numerous HGO credits include the Puccini roles Liù (*Turandot*) and Mimi (*La bohème*), Nedda in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, and Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo and Juliette*. She created the role of Lucero in *Salsipuedes* by Daniel Catán and sang the role of Rosalba in that composer's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Recordings include her solo CD, *Ana Maria Martinez - Soprano Songs and Arias* (Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice) and *Rusalka* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (nominated for CD of the Year by BBC Magazine).

### **Nathaniel Peake – Pinkerton**

*Dr. Ellen R. Gritz and Mr. Milton D. Rosenau, Jr. Fellow*

Nathaniel Peake appeared at Houston Grand Opera earlier this season as Pinkerton in performances of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Arturo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Last year, he won the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, received a George London Award and won the Zarzuela prize at the Plácido Domingo Operalia competition. On April 10, he made his New York City recital debut in a program with renowned mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, on the George London recital series at Morgan Library. A second-year Studio Artist, Mr. Peake won the Audience Choice Award at the 2009 Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers, and made his HGO debut as Nemorino in performances of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* last season. Mr. Peake was a Filene Young Artist at Wolf Trap Opera and is an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera. He also holds awards from the Dallas Opera Guild and the National Opera Association.

### **Michael Sumuel – Sharpless**

*Mr. and Mrs. James W. Crownover Fellow*

Houston Grand Opera Studio Artist Michael Sumuel appeared at HGO this spring as Antonio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and as a Lackey in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He appeared earlier this season as Sharpless in performances of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and as both the Motorcycle Cop and a Prison Guard in *Dead Man Walking* (Heggie / McNally). He also sang Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Houston Grand Opera Studio. Last season, his HGO credits included Doctor Dulcamara in performances of *The Elixir of Love*. Mr. Sumuel won the 2010 Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation. An alumnus of the 2009 Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera Center, he placed third in the 2009 Eleanor McCollum Competition. This summer will be his second season as a Filene Young Artist at Wolf Trap Opera.

**Catherine Martin – Suzuki**

*Dr. and Mrs. Thomas D. Barrow Fellow*

Mezzo-soprano Catherine Martin sang Suzuki in performances of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall, and Dorabella in the HGO Studio production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. A second-year Studio Artist, she won second place in the 2009 Eleanor McCollum Competition and appeared last season at HGO as Gianetta in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and the Governess in Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*. Ms. Martin won the 2011 National Opera Association Competition, held in her native San Antonio. She was also a 2010 recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant and the Catherine Shouse Grant. She holds a bachelor's degree in music from the University of North Texas, and a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). This summer is her second season as a Filene Young Artist at Wolf Trap Opera, where she will appear as Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

**Brendan Tuohy – Goro**

*Michelle Beale and Dick Anderson Fellow*

Tenor Brendan Tuohy appears this spring at HGO as Don Curzio in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Brighella in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He appeared earlier this season as Goro in performances of *Madame Butterfly* and as Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the HGO Studio. A former member of the Portland Opera Studio, he appeared there in the title role of Britten's *Albert Herring* and in productions of Bizet's *Carmen*, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Cavalli's *La Calisto* and Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Mr. Tuohy holds a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He was a semifinalist in the 2008 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in New York.

**Robert Pomakov – The Bonze**

Bass Robert Pomakov sang the Bonze in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Hobson in Britten's *Peter Grimes* at HGO last fall. He was last seen at Houston Grand Opera as Quince in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and has also appeared here as Shchelkalov and Varlaam in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. Recent engagements include Raimondo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Opera Lyra Ottawa, Chamberlain in *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* with the Brooklyn Academy of Music in conjunction with the Canadian Opera Company (COC), and Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Maestro William Lacey at COC. Mr. Pomakov recently made a critically acclaimed Washington National Opera debut as Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* under the musical direction of Plácido Domingo. Notable European credits include Nikitch in *Boris Godunov* at the Teatro Real in Madrid, Varlaam at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie and productions with Opéra de Montpellier and Opéra de Marseille. An alumnus of the Curtis Institute of Music, Mr. Pomakov holds both a Simeon medal and an honorary diploma from the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria.

**Rachel Willis-Sørensen – Kate Pinkerton**

*Mr. and Mrs. Harlan C. Stai, Terrell Tone Owen Endowed Fund at the Abilene Community Foundation Fellow*

Soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen made her HGO debut last season as Mascha in Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* and appeared earlier this season as Kate Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. She also appeared this winter as Alisa in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and as Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the HGO Studio. Ms. Willis-Sørensen won first place in the 2009 Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers and was a winner of the 2010 Metropolitan National Council Auditions. She recently sang the High Priestess in Verdi's *Aida* at Utah Opera and the First Lady in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Santa Fe Opera. The soprano is an alumna of Brigham Young University, where she earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in music.

**Boris Dyakov – Prince Yamadori**

*Andrew C. Schirrmeister III Fellow*

First-year Studio Artist Boris Dyakov made his mainstage debut as Prince Yamadori in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall, and returned as a Prison Guard in *Dead Man Walking* by Jake Heggie and Terrence McNally, and as Harlequin in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The baritone sang Guglielmo in the Houston Grand Opera Studio production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, and he will appear in Verdi's *Don Carlos* and *La Traviata* at HGO next season. A native of Moscow, he began his musical studies as a violinist. Winner of both the Bella Voce and Ippolitov-Ivanov competitions, he was the principal soloist in the Russian Army's Red Army Ensemble from 2006 to 2009, with which he appeared in concert in China, Poland, Morocco, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Turkey, Germany, Slovakia, Belgium, India and Canada. He placed third in the 2010 Eleanor McCollum Competition.

**Tommy Ajai George –The Imperial Commissioner**

Bass-baritone Tommy Ajai George sang the Imperial Commissioner in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall. Mr. George was last heard with Houston Grand Opera as Monterone in the Miller Outdoor Theatre production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* in 2009. He has sung an array of other roles at HGO including the Second Mate in Britten's *Billy Budd*, the Sergeant in both Puccini's *La bohème* and *Manon Lescaut*, Mitykha in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, the Usher in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and roles in Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* and Verdi's *Il trovatore*. The Houston native has sung the roles of Escamillo in *Carmen* and Michele in Puccini's *Il tabarro* with Opera in the Heights and has also performed with Fort Worth Opera. At Baylor University, he appeared as Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff* and Frank in Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*.

**Louisa Muller –Director**

Louisa Muller is now in her sixth season at HGO, where she has served as assistant director on ten productions including performances of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall. She has also directed both Puccini's *Tosca* and *The Refuge* by Christopher

Theofanidis at Miller Outdoor Theatre, and prepared alternate cast performances of Puccini's *La bohème* and Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict* for Houston Grand Opera. Ms. Muller is on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera, where she made her debut in 2009 assistant directing Mary Zimmermann's production of Bellini's *La sonnambula* and returned last season for *Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas. She has been a directing staff member of Lyric Opera of Chicago, Wolf Trap Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera. Last summer she was assistant director of the world premiere of Lewis Spratlan's *Life is a Dream* at the Santa Fe Opera. This season she returns to the Metropolitan Opera to assist both Giancarlo del Monaco on Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* and Bartlett Sher on a new production of Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*. Next season she will assist Michael Grandage on his new production of *Don Giovanni* at the Met.

#### **Christopher Oram — Original Set and Costume Designer**

Tony Award-winning designer Christopher Oram made his Houston Grand Opera debut with Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall—his first operatic endeavor was the well-known film version of *The Magic Flute*, directed by Kenneth Branagh, for which he designed the costumes. Mr. Oram collaborates frequently with director Michael Grandage and lighting designer Neil Austin: the trio's recent Broadway revival of John Logan's *Red* garnered six Tony Awards, including honors for best scenic design and best play, as well as three Drama Desk Awards. His new designs for Britten's *Billy Budd* at the Glyndebourne Festival were met with great acclaim last May. Oram won an Evening Standard Award for his design of Camus' *Caligula* at the Donmar Warehouse, where his numerous other credits include the musicals *Guys and Dolls*, *Parade*, and *Grand Hotel*; as well as William's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Othello*. Mr. Oram's Donmar productions of *Frost / Nixon* and *Hamlet* were both revived with great success on Broadway. His production of *Evita* at the Adelphi — another collaboration with Michael Grandage — will be revived on Broadway in 2012.

#### **Michael James Clark — Lighting Designer**

Michael James Clark is in his fourth season as lighting supervisor at Houston Grand Opera, and has been a member of the lighting department at the Santa Fe Opera since 2006. Earlier this season he designed lighting for *The Marriage of Figaro*, as well as for the HGO world premiere of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna / To Cross the Face of the Moon*, and he lit the HGO Studio Showcase in 2008 and 2009. Mr. Clark's other past HGO credits include realizing the lighting for both Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* and Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, and designing the lighting for Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Puccini's *Tosca* at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Last year he lit Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Mr. Clark holds a bachelor's degree in lighting design from North Carolina School of the Arts.

#### **Nicole Tongue — Movement Director**

Nicole Tongue made her Houston Grand Opera debut as Movement Director for Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* last fall. Over the past eighteen years she has choreographed for ballet, opera, theater and film. Ms. Tongue began her choreographic career at the Royal Ballet School in London and as a member of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, created a number of works for that company. She went on to study at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has since gone on to work in mainstream entertainment including the BBC's live-broadcast "Strictly Dance Night Fever" series. She created two full-length ballets: *Unlock the Magic*, which had its premiere at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia featuring 200 dancers, and *Jane Eyre* for London Children's Ballet. Her operatic credits include Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at Geneva Opera and in Garsington, a production that was broadcast live across Europe and is now available on DVD. She also worked on productions for Opera North, Grange Park Opera, the Buxton Festival and Santa Fe Opera. Her upcoming engagements include Verdi's *Rigoletto* at Los Angeles Opera and Puccini's *La bohème* for Glyndebourne.

#### **Richard Bado — Chorus Master**

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Richard Bado made his professional conducting debut in 1989 leading Houston Grand Opera's acclaimed production of *Show Boat* at the newly restored Cairo Opera House in Egypt. Since then, Mr. Bado has conducted at Teatro alla Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera, the Tulsa Opera and Wolf Trap Opera. He has appeared regularly in recital with Renée Fleming and has also accompanied Cecilia Bartoli, Frederica von Stade, Denyce Graves, Susan Graham, Marcello Giordani, Ramon Vargas, Samuel Ramey and Nathan Gunn. Mr. Bado holds music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where he received the 2000 Alumni Achievement Award, and West Virginia University. Mr. Bado has served as Houston Grand Opera's Chorus Master since 1988. This season marks his sixth year as Director of the Opera Studies Program at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Mr. Bado regularly judges for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and served as Houston Grand Opera's Head of Music Staff for fourteen seasons.

### **Guarantors**

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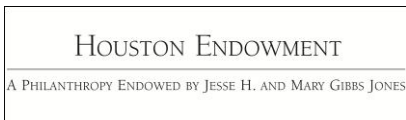
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The original production of *Madame Butterfly*, on which this production is based, was made possible through the leadership support of: **The Brown Foundation, Inc.**; **Beth Madison**; **Margaret Alkek Williams**; **Kinder Foundation**; and **Mr. John G. Turner** and **Mr. Jerry G. Fischer**.

The NEXUS Initiative

These performances are part of HGO's NEXUS Initiative, which is also generously supported by **The Honorable Peter and Anne S. Brown** through **Anchorage Foundation of Texas** and **BBVA Compass**. The NEXUS Initiative also receives lead support from:

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