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**HOUSTON GRAND OPERA'S *OPENING NIGHT DINNER*
KICKS OFF 56th SEASON**

HOUSTON, TX – Houston Grand Opera kicked off its 56th season with the *Opening Night Dinner Celebration* following the season-opening production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* on October 22, 2010. The event, chaired by **Margaret Alkek Williams**, honored **Franci and Jim Crane** for their many contributions to the Opera, and was underwritten by **Donna and Robert Bruni**.

Following the conclusion of *Madame Butterfly*, guests were greeted by General Director and CEO **Anthony Freud** as they gathered for champagne in the butterfly-inspired party tent on Fish Plaza. **The Events Company** transformed the party tent into an elegant dinner setting with lavishly decorated tables, large butterfly murals and ornate butterfly chandeliers overhead. The Asian-inspired cuisine was artfully crafted by **Tony's** and finished with a delightful array of sushi made of chocolate.

Principal artists from *Madame Butterfly* joined the guests for dinner, including the production's leading lady, soprano **Ana María Martínez** (Cio-Cio San) and Maltese tenor **Joseph Calleja** (Pinkerton). HGO Music Director and *Madame Butterfly* conductor **Patrick Summers**, Tony-Award winning British director **Michael Grandage** and designer **Christopher Oram** were also present.

Other guests included **Philip and Denise Bahr, Dr. Barbara Bass, Pat and Dan Breen, Gracie Cavnar, Anne and Albert Chao, Bobby-Vee and Jerry Cooney, Molly and Jim Crownover, Isabel and Danny David, Marianne and David Duthu, Diane Lokey Farb with Cerón, Anna and Steve Fulgham, Lynn Guggolz, Michelle and Frank Hevrdejs, Mindy and Jeff Hildebrand, Susan Krohn with fiancé Patrick Gehm, Shaista Khan and Shahzad Bashir, Cornelia and Meredith Long, Beth Madison and Ralph Burch, Sara and Bill Morgan, Gloria Portela and Dick Evans, Glen Rosenbaum, Dian and Harlan Stai, John Turner and Jerry Fischer, Sheridan and John Eddie Williams, and Lynn Wyatt.**

Madame Butterfly is supported in part by

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Mr. Jerry G. Fischer

Margaret Alkek Williams

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