

# Madama Butterfly

by Giacomo Puccini

**Friday, Jan. 27, 2006 – 8 pm**  
**Sunday, Jan. 29, 2006 – 2 pm**  
**Eastman Theatre**



**MERCURY  
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**Mercury Opera Rochester presents**

# Madama Butterfly

**by Giacomo Puccini**

**Benton Hess**  
*Conductor & Artistic Director*

**Adelaide Bishop**  
*Stage Director*

*Accompanied by the*  
**Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**

Scenery designed by Carey Wong  
Original production created for Tacoma Opera  
Lighting designed by Nic Minetor

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This production is given in memory of  
**Haskell Rosenberg**  
(1917 - 2005)

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There will be two intermissions.



# Scene

The city of Nagasaki, Japan, in the early twentieth century.

## Synopsis

Act I: The garden. U.S. Navy Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton has negotiated with a marriage broker, Goro, for the company of a beautiful geisha wife, Cio-Cio-San (known as Madama Butterfly) in a 999-year monthly renewable contract. When the American consul, Sharpless, warns that the girl may not take her vows lightly, Pinkerton brushes aside such scruples, saying he will one day marry a “real” American wife. Cio-Cio-San enters surrounded by friends and relatives. In a quiet moment, Cio-Cio-San tells Pinkerton of her intention to embrace his Christian faith. The Imperial Commissioner performs the wedding ceremony, and the guests toast the couple. The celebration is interrupted by Cio-Cio-San’s uncle, the Bonze, a Buddhist priest, who bursts into the group cursing the girl for having renounced her ancestors’ religion. Pinkerton angrily sends the guests away. Alone in the moonlit garden, they sing of their love and enter the nuptial chambers.

⌋ 15 Minute Intermission ⌋

Act II: Inside the house. Three years later, Cio-Cio-San waits for her husband’s return with her faithful maid, Suzuki. Sharpless brings a letter from the lieutenant, but before he can read it to Cio-Cio-San, Goro comes with a suitor, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. The girl dismisses them, insisting her American husband has not deserted her. Cio-Cio-San proudly brings in her child, Dolore (Sorrow), saying that as soon as Pinkerton knows he has a son, he will surely come back, and if he does not, she would rather die than return to her former life. Cio-Cio-San hears a cannon report and discovers Pinkerton’s ship entering the harbor. Suzuki helps her fill the house with flowers. As night falls, they begin their vigil.

⌋ 10 Minute Intermission ⌋

ACT III: The next day. As dawn breaks, Suzuki insists that Cio-Cio-San rest. Sharpless enters with Pinkerton, followed by Kate, his new American wife. Suzuki agrees to aid in breaking the news to her mistress. Pinkerton, seized with remorse, rushes away. When Cio-Cio-San comes forth expecting to find him, she finds Kate instead. Guessing the truth, Cio-Cio-San agrees to give up her child if his father will return for him. Sending even Suzuki away, she takes out the dagger with which her father committed suicide and bows before a statue of Buddha, choosing to die with honor rather than live in disgrace. As she raises the blade, Suzuki pushes the child into the room. Sobbing farewell, Cio-Cio-San sends him into the garden to play, then stabs herself. As she dies, Pinkerton is heard calling her name.

As a courtesy to the performers and audience, patrons arriving after the performance has started will be seated at intermission.

# Cast

In order of appearance

Goro, a marriage broker.....	Kevin Park
Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton, U.S. Navy.....	Michael Rees Davis
Suzuki, Cio-Cio-San's servant.....	Kathryn Cowdrick
Sharpless, U.S. Consul.....	Jake Gardner
Madama Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San), a geisha.....	Kaori Sato
Her Mother.....	Patricia Fussell
Her Cousin.....	Valerie Estle
Her Aunt.....	Katie Hannigan
Yakusidé, her uncle.....	Chad Rushforth
The Imperial Commissioner.....	Casey Molino Dunn
The Official Registrar.....	Jason Holmes
The Bonze, Cio-Cio-San's uncle.....	Ted Christopher
Prince Yamadori.....	Munenori Sugitani
Sorrow, Cio-Cio-San's child.....	Emily Folan
Kate Pinkerton, Pinkerton's wife.....	Mary Elizabeth Williams

## Cio-Cio-San's Friends and Relatives

Becki Boyanski, Sheila Sullivan Buck, Bill Hearne, Lindsay Holmes, Denise Kless, Erin Matson, Nathan Oakes, James Pike, Lori Romaniw, Lisa Rosenbauer, Dennis Rosenbaum, James Scott, Holley Shafer, Mary Stefanac, Laura Szymanowicz, Michael Valicenti, Lynn Zicari

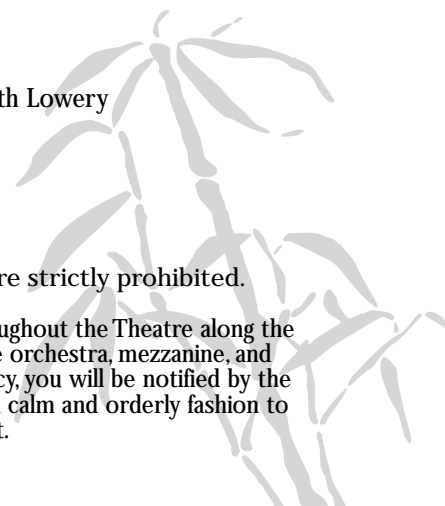
## Servants

Bob Holmes, Mary Beth Lowery



Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited.

Eastman Theatre fire exits are located throughout the Theatre along the right and left sides, and at the back of the orchestra, mezzanine, and balcony levels. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified by the stage manager. If notified, please move in a calm and orderly fashion to the nearest exit.



# Production Staff

Artistic Director & Conductor.....	Benton Hess
Stage Director .....	Adelaide Bishop
Stage Manager .....	Ken Saltzman
Technical Director.....	Gordon Estey
Scenic Design.....	Carey Wong
Lighting Design.....	Nic Minetor
Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master .....	Nathaniel Motta
Assistant Stage Director.....	Stephen Carr
Principal Coach/Accompanist.....	James Myers
Chorus Coaches/Accompanists.....	Jason Holmes, Hyery Hwang
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Jamie Stein
Assistant Production Manager & Props.....	Chris Verschneider
Costume Coordinator.....	Damita Peace
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Assistant Lighting Designer .....	Dan O'Donnell
Props Assistant .....	Robert Holmes
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Many thanks to the Guild of Mercury Opera Rochester and to the many volunteers who have enabled the company to take flight with this production and with our first season.

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Wilfredo Deglans  
Perrin Yang  
Ellen Rathjen  
Janice Macisak  
William Hunt  
Sabina Slepecki  
Kenneth Langley

## Violin II

David Brickman  
Shannon Nance  
John Sullivan  
Nancy Hunt  
Boris Zapesochny  
Christine Hauptly

## Viola

Melissa Matson  
Michael Larco  
Marc Anderson  
Elizabeth Seka

## Cello

Stefan Reuss  
Kathleen Murphy Kemp  
Robert Taylor  
Marjorie Hunsberger

## Bass

Robert Zimmerman  
Michael Griffin  
Jesse Watras

## Flute

Rebecca Gilbert  
Joanna Bassett  
Jan Angus

## Piccolo

Jan Angus

## Oboe

Ariana Ghez  
Monica Fosnaugh  
Jeffrey Stephenson

## English Horn

Monica Fosnaugh

## Clarinet

Kenneth Grant  
Robert DiLutis  
Ramon Ricker

## Bass Clarinet

Ramon Ricker

## Bassoon

Abraham Weiss  
Charles Bailey

## Horn

Matthew Annin  
Jennifer Burch  
David Angus  
Stephanie Zimmerman

## Trumpet

Wesley Nance  
Paul Shewan  
Daniel Davis

## Trombone

Mark Kellogg  
Mark Salatino  
Katie Hickey  
David Richey

## Timpani

Charles Ross

## Percussion

Jim Tiller  
Brian Stotz  
John McNeill

## Harp

Grace Wong

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Joseph Werner

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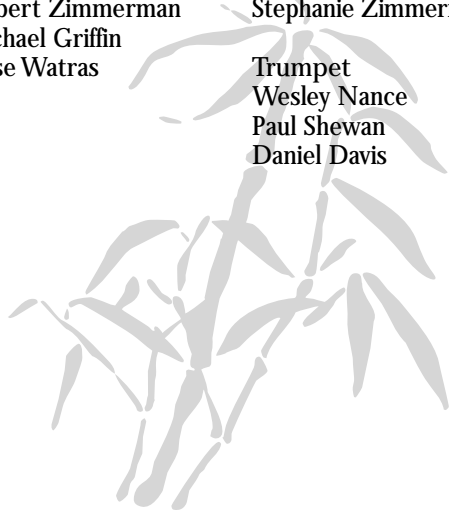
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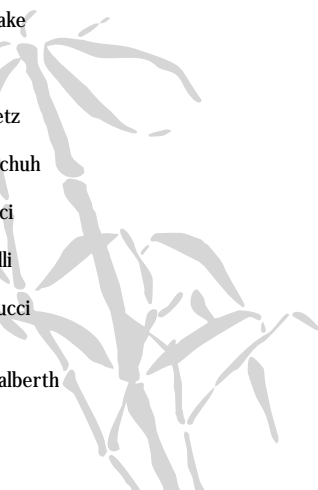
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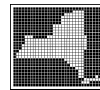


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# Program Notes

Giacomo Puccini was accustomed to attending his premieres by himself. It must have been very lonely leaving the triumphs of the openings of *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème* and *Tosca* without the company of family and friends, but Puccini wanted it that way. He didn't want to risk subjecting his loved ones to a possible failure of one of his "experiments," as he called them. But *Madama Butterfly* was different. So confident was the composer of the success of his new opera, he invited his sisters and his eighteen-year-old son to attend, never expecting the fracas of whistles, boos, and cat-calls that interrupted that first performance, February 17, 1904 at La Scala in Milan.

We know now that the reason for such noisy disapproval was an organized clique of Milanese musicians, jealous of Puccini's previous successes, but it must have been devastating! Puccini immediately withdrew the work, returned the royalty to the theater, and began making revisions.

There were, indeed, problems that needed fixing. First of all, the length: Puccini's original plan was to have the opera performed in only two acts, the second of which was more than an hour and a half long. Also, in his effort to create an authentic Japanese atmosphere, Puccini had written quite a lot of music for Cio-Cio-San's wedding retinue that only slowed the action and lengthened the evening.

A second production was hastily arranged in a smaller theater in Brescia only three months later. The response could not have been more different. The Brescia audience, which included many of the Milanese musical elite that had been present at the La Scala debacle, voiced general approval of the work in its revisions, yet Puccini still wasn't satisfied.

A lengthy tour of North America had been arranged for *Madama Butterfly* for which Puccini made changes. For the Paris premiere in 1906, still more musical cuts were made, and the composer continued to make changes, sharpening and perfecting his psychological portrait of our beautiful geisha Cio-Cio-San on her three year journey from happy child bride to self-annihilation, until a final "definitive" score was printed in 1912. Puccini would have continued to revise *Madama Butterfly* even after that had his publisher, Ricordi, not put his foot down and said, "Enough, already."

Much has been written about Puccini and his love affair with each of his heroines, yet it seems pretty apparent (to me, at least) that he loved his Cio-Cio-San more than any of the others. Lovable as most of them are, each of them, with the exception of *Butterfly*, has a major flaw. *Manon* is perfidious; *Tosca* is jealous; *Turandot*... well, does *Turandot* really have any redeeming features save a voluminous high C? Even poor *Mimi*, except for a brief moment in Act I of *La Bohème*, is either terribly sick, or terribly depressed, or both. But *Butterfly* is perfect... as long as we disregard her appallingly bad taste in men.

Written by Benton Hess, January 2006

# Biographies



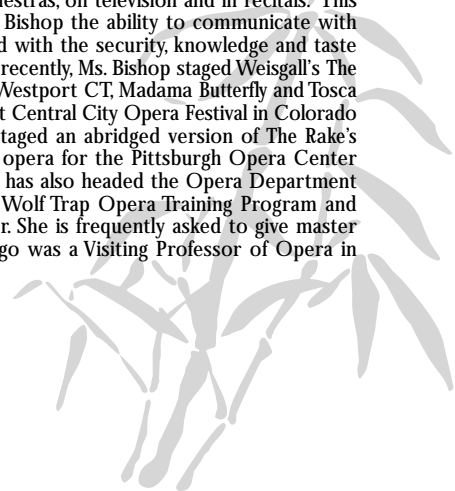
## Benton Hess – Artistic Director/Conductor

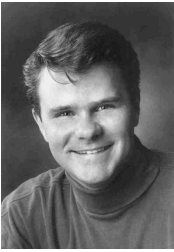
After training at the New England Conservatory as a pianist, Benton Hess served as assistant conductor for several regional opera companies before taking the podium himself in 1970 for a Boston production of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, replacing conductor James Levine on a week's notice. Since then he has conducted hundreds of performances for dozens of opera companies in America, Europe, and the Middle East. Local audiences will remember his work with the Opera Theatre of Rochester from the middle 1970s through the 1980s.

Hess has presided over many world and important regional operatic premieres and has assisted numerous composers in presenting their works: David Amram, Carlisle Floyd, Lee Hoiby, Karel Husa, Libby Larsen, Daniel Pinkham, Greg Sandow, and Conrad Susa, to name but a few. Benton Hess has also served on the faculties of several prestigious institutions, Boston University, Boston Conservatory, the New England Conservatory, Mannes College of Music in New York City, the Hartt School of Music, Rutgers University, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro among them. Since 2001 he has been Distinguished Professor of Voice and Musical Director of Eastman Opera Theatre. As one of New York City's most respected and sought-after vocal coaches for more than twenty years, Benton Hess's clientele reads like a "Who's Who" in opera, from Nicolai Gedda and Eleanor Steber at the ends of their careers to Renée Fleming at the beginning of hers. Besides his responsibilities at Eastman and with Mercury Opera, Hess is Musical Director of Tacoma (WA) Opera and a member of the faculties of both the Centro Studi Italiani Opera Festival in Urbania, Italy and the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel.

## Adelaide Bishop – Stage Director

Adelaide Bishop is that rare director who believes in the score as the final word on dramatic and lyric expression, allowing her imagination to be used in the service of music, yet without fear of innovation. With this credo and her outstanding history as a lyric/coloratura, "a splendid singing actress in her time," Ms. Bishop has for the past twenty years staged a vast range of operas from Cavalli and Mozart to Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, Strauss, Donizetti and Massenet. She has directed modern works by Bartok, Schoenberg, Britten and Stravinsky and contemporary American works by Ward, Hoiby, Weisgall, Amram, and Pasatieri. Audiences have seen her work with San Diego Opera, Baltimore Opera, Opera Co. of Philadelphia, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Central City Opera Festival, Hawaii Opera Theatre and many others, and critics have uniformly praised her "tremendous skill, her sensitivity to the emotional and physical relationships of the characters and her truthful, sensitive craftsmanship." (Uptown Publications) Ms. Bishop's long and illustrious singing career included roles such as Violetta, Blondchen, Susanna, Sophie, Olympia, Marguerite and Juliet; such world premieres as *Griffelkin* by Lukas Foss, *The Stronger* by Hugo Weisgall; as well as many operettas. She has appeared with many leading orchestras, on television and in recitals. This wide range of performing experience has given Ms. Bishop the ability to communicate with performers she directs in a sympathetic manner and with the security, knowledge and taste that have characterized her work as an artist. More recently, Ms. Bishop staged Weisgall's *The Stronger* at the Lucille Lortel White Barn Theatre in Westport CT, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca* at Indianapolis Opera, *Rigoletto* and *Madama Butterfly* at Central City Opera Festival in Colorado and *Madama Butterfly* at Portland Opera, and she staged an abridged version of *The Rake's Progress* and a program of contemporary American opera for the Pittsburgh Opera Center and also for Carnegie Mellon University. Ms. Bishop has also headed the Opera Department at Boston University, was Artistic Director of the Wolf Trap Opera Training Program and Artistic Director of Hartford's Hartt Opera Theater. She is frequently asked to give master classes at American Universities and a few years ago was a Visiting Professor of Opera in Beijing, China.





## Ted Christopher – The Bonze (Baritone)

Ted Christopher has appeared throughout the US, Canada, and Europe in opera and concert. Trained at the Curtis Institute of Music, he supplemented his studies as a member of the Juilliard Opera Center and the Merola Program of San Francisco Opera. In opera, Ted has appeared as Figaro (both Mozart's and Rossini's), Don Giovanni, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Ford in *Falstaff*, and Morales in *Carmen* with companies such as Cleveland Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Vancouver Opera, Anchorage Opera, and Skylight Opera Theater. In concert, he has appeared with ensembles such as the Seattle Symphony, the Czech Philharmonic, the Berlin Rundfunksinfonie Orchester, and

the BBC Singers in venues such as the Kennedy Center, the Rudolfinum (Prague), the Schauspielhaus (Berlin), and Carnegie Hall. Over the past nine summers, Ted has been a featured member of the Ohio Light Opera, appearing in over 45 productions of both standard and obscure operetta, including the complete Gilbert and Sullivan canon. Currently, he is Assistant Professor of Opera and Associate Director of Eastman Opera Theatre at the Eastman School of Music.

## Kathryn Cowdrick – Suzuki

For the last 30 years, mezzo-soprano Kathryn Cowdrick has appeared with companies that include Scottish Opera, Washington Opera, Wexford Festival Ireland and New York City Opera. She can be heard on the 1984 Grammy-winning recording of Antony and Cleopatra recorded at the Spoleto Festival, and Jenufa recorded live from Carnegie Hall on Gramophone Bis. Best known for her portrayals of Rossini heroines, she made her European debut at the Netherlands Opera in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Trained as a speech pathologist, Ms. Cowdrick began her opera career as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera where she recently appeared as a Walkyrie in their Ring Cycle. She is in demand as one of today's foremost character singers, recently performing roles that include Mrs.



Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* (The Princeton Festival), Filipyevna in *Eugene Onegin* (Tulsa Opera) and Aunt March in *Little Women* (Fort Worth Opera). Appearances in 2006 include the premiere of Ned Rorem's *Our Town* for Lake George Opera, *Nozze di Figaro* for Arizona Opera, and *Bon Appetit*, a tribute to Julia Child in Kilbourn Hall. Ms. Cowdrick is a member of the voice faculty at the Eastman School of Music.



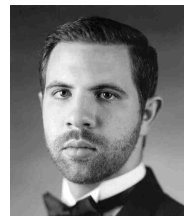
## Michael Rees Davis – Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton

American tenor Michael Rees Davis has won recognition as a renowned artist, singing in many of the world's leading opera houses. Mr. Davis made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Romeo in *Romeo et Juliette* where he subsequently returned to perform the role. At New York City Opera, Mr. Davis appeared as Mephistopheles in the new Frank Corsaro production of Busoni's *Doktor Faust* conducted by Christopher Keene. Additional NYCO performances have included Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *Die Soldaten* and Ezra Laderman's world premiere performance of *Marilyn*. Mr. Davis made his debut with Dallas Opera as *Rinuccio* in *Gianni Schicchi*, where he also performed as Anatol

in Barber's *Vanessa*. Recent engagements have included Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Cleveland Opera, Don Jose in *Carmen* with Opera Illinois, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Opera Memphis, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Festival Lyrique en Mer and the title role in *Samson et Dalila* with Indianapolis Opera. Mr. Davis was a member of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program and the Houston Grand Opera Studio, where he studied voice with Elena Nikolaidi.

## Casey Molino Dunn – Imperial Commissioner

A native of Kunkletown, PA, Mr. Dunn recently graduated with highest distinction from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Actively involved with UNC Opera, he played lead roles in works by Britten, Floyd, *Jacquet de la Guerre*, and the East Coast premiere of Robert Moran and Michael John LaChuisa's *From the Towers of the Moon*. Concerts with orchestra have also included the Faure *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*,



and the Monteverdi Vespers. Mr. Dunn is currently a candidate for the Masters of Music degree at the Eastman School of Music.

### Valerie Estle – Cio-Cio-San's Cousin

Enjoying her first year of graduate study at the Eastman School of Music, Ms. Estle is glad to make her professional opera debut with Mercury Opera Rochester. A native Californian, Ms. Estle received her Bachelor of Music degree from Chapman University in Orange, CA. While at Chapman, her opera credits included Belinda in Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, and Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. This spring, Ms. Estle will appear once again on the Eastman Theatre stage in Eastman's production of Massenet's *Cendrillon*.

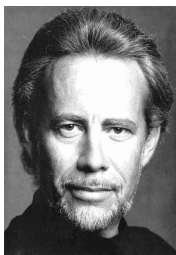


### Emily Folan – Sorrow, Cio-Cio-San's Child

a first grader at Webster's Plank South Elementary School. She sings in her church children's choir and takes piano lessons. She loves to dance, act, and sing and also loves art. As both parents are performing musicians, Emily has an impressive history of attending and enjoying recitals, concerts, theater performances, and even operas. Her favorite is *Pirates of Penzance* and her rendition of "Poor Wandering One" is a source of delight to her voice-teacher mother.

### Patricia Fussell – Cio-Cio-San's Mother

Mezzo-soprano Patricia Fussell is a longtime resident of LeRoy and has done extensive solo work for 30 years. She is a frequent soloist with the Genesee Chorale and Genesee Symphony Orchestra, where, she appeared as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and as soloist in Handel's oratorio *Messiah*. She has also performed with the choruses of Opera Rochester, Rochester Opera Factory, and Eastman Rochester Chorus. For four years she performed in *Daniel: The Musical*. Ms. Fussell has studied extensively with Michelle Murphy and she currently studies with Andrea Folan.



### Jake Gardner – Sharpless

appeared with major opera companies and orchestras throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Known for the diversity of his repertoire, Mr. Gardner was for many seasons principal baritone with the Cologne Opera, where he appeared in a vast and varied number of operas, including Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, and the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*; Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* and *La Traviata*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Finta Giardiniera*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Bizet's *Carmen*; Handel's *Agrippina*; Rossini's *L'Occasione Fa il Ladro* and *La Scala di Seta*; Donizetti's *L'Elisir*

*d'Amore*; Britten's *Billy Budd* and Peter Grimes; Janacek's *From the House of the Dead*, Lortzing's *Zar und Zimmermann*; Shostakovich's *The Nose* in a new production directed by Harry Kupfer; Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*; Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. In Germany, he is most closely associated with the title role of *Don Giovanni* which he performed in Dresden, Bonn, and Cologne. Throughout the United States and Canada, he has frequently performed with the opera companies of Washington DC, New Orleans, Houston, Michigan, Boston, Montreal, Winnipeg, Central City, Omaha, Virginia, Utah, Grand Rapids, New York City, and many others. Born in Oneonta, New York, Mr. Gardner is a successful voice teacher and is co-founder of A Singing Actor's Studio in Binghamton, NY.

### Katie Hannigan – Cio-Cio-San's Aunt

Katie Hannigan is a first year graduate student at Eastman School of Music. Originally from Newburgh, NY, Ms. Hannigan recently completed a Bachelor of Music Degree from SUNY Purchase. During her studies there, she participated in the Crittenden Opera Workshop and the Westchester Vocal Institute. She has performed the Old Prioress in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Sandmann in *Hansel und Gretel*, Mercedes in *Carmen*, and Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, as well as various other opera scenes. Ms. Holmes was the recipient of this year's Civic Morning Madrigals Award in Syracuse.

### Jason Holmes – Official Registrar & Chorus Coach/Accompanist

Jason Holmes, baritone, is currently a junior at the Eastman School of Music, where he studies voice with Dr. Constance Haas. Noted for a musicianship that is at once intelligent and raw, Mr. Holmes is also known for his skill as an accompanist and conductor. This is his first operatic role. His prior performances have been in recital, concert, and musical theater. Mr. Holmes



will appear this spring in Massenet's Cendrillon and in the Opera Scenes program at Eastman.

### **Kevin Park – Goro**

senior vocal performance major at the Eastman School of Music, where he is a student of Robert McIver and Linda DiFiore. He was a recipient of the Ornest Award of Vocal Excellence, Arthur Assum Voice Departmental Award, and Friends of Eastman Opera Opportunity Award in spring 2005. After coming to the United States in 1998, he began study with Thomas Hrynskiw, world renowned accompanist and voice teacher. Since his arrival at Eastman, he has served as voice teaching fellow at

the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary (PA) and faculty member at the Eastman Summer Program (preparatory division.) Mr. Park has portrayed important operatic roles: Chevalier in Dialogues of the Carmelites, Elder Hayes in Susannah, Death in East and West (world premiere,) and Ruggro in La Rondine at the Eastman Opera Theatre. He recently performed as Fritz in Mascagni's L'Amico Fritz at Centro Studi Italiani Opera Festival with director Edward Crafts. This appearance as Goro in Madama Butterfly is Mr. Park's professional debut.

### **Chad Rushforth – Yakusidé**

Rochester where he earned a degree in Vocal Performance from Roberts Wesleyan College. Chad has performed several roles with Inwood Opera and Dicapo Opera Theater's Young Artist Program. His operatic credits include Sarastro in The Magic Flute, Captain von Trapp in The Sound of Music, the title role in Gianni Schicchi, Pish-Tush in The Mikado, and Hanezò in L'Amico Fritz with Mercury Opera Rochester.



### **Kaori Sato – Cio-Cio-San**

The Washington Post describes soprano Kaori Sato as "a Madama Butterfly to contend with, singing the demanding role with subtlety and considerable beauty." Indeed, she has sung the title role of Cio-Cio-San with opera companies such as Cleveland, Virginia, Palm Beach and Tacoma. She has also sung Liu in Turandot with Opera Memphis, Nashville Opera and Teatro Lirico d'Europa in Italy, and Micaela in Carmen with Dallas Opera. Her performances include Mimi in La Bohème, Gilda in Rigoletto and La Contessa in Le Nozze di Figaro. She is also an active concert performer, appearing with symphonies across the country as

well as Europe and Asia. Ms. Sato is a first prize winner of the Liederkrantz Foundation Award, a winner of the Tokyo International Voice Competition, and the Licia Albanese-Puccini International Competition, among others. She received a B.M. from Miyagi-gakuin College in Japan and earned a M.M. from the Mannes College of Music. Ms. Sato has been on the voice faculty at SUNY Purchase Conservatory since 1998.

### **Munenori Sugitani – Prince Yamadori**

Mune Sugitani was born in Tokyo, Japan. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in voice performance from the University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music in Stockton, California, and his Master of Music degree in voice performance from the University of Arizona. He has performed several operatic roles, including Death in Savitri, Pandolfe in Cendrillon, Leporello in Don Giovanni, Vicar in Albert Herring, Schicchi in Gianni Schicchi, Marcello in La Bohème, Don Geronio in Il Turco in Italia, and with Rochester Opera Factory, Tonio in I Pagliacci. In summer 2002, he gave a debut recital in Tokyo, Japan. Mr. Sugitani is currently pursuing his doctorate at the Eastman School of Music.



### **Mary Elizabeth Williams – Kate Pinkerton**

A Philadelphia native and promising young singer, Mary Elizabeth Williams recently won a grant from the Georg Solti Foundation of Belgium, and was a finalist in the Concours Reine Elisabeth Competition in 2004. In November of 2005, Ms. Williams made her debut with Atlanta Opera as Serena in Porgy and Bess. Ms. Williams was a member of the prestigious Centre de Formation Lyrique at the Opera National de Paris. During her first year in Paris, Ms. Williams was invited by Thomas Hampson to sing in concert with him at the Theatre du Chatelet. In the summer of

2003, just after winning the Lyric Artist prize given every year by the Bastille's Cercle Carpeaux, she made her professional debut as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in a production that toured France and Belgium. In 2001, she was a semi-finalist in the National Metropolitan Opera auditions and was invited to New York by the Metropolitan Opera to study and was given scholarship grants to audition in other regions. She has recently won the Met district competition in Philadelphia and will compete in early February at the regional level in Washington, DC. In addition to performing operatic roles in *The Telephone*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Show Boat*, Ms. Williams has been an active recitalist in Portugal, France and the U.S.

## Ken Saltzman – Stage Manager

Ken Saltzman's first opera was *Madama Butterfly* with Opera Theatre of Rochester, conducted by Maestro Benton Hess. His last opera in Rochester was *Madama Butterfly* as well, and he is delighted to return to his home town for a third. Most recently, Ken stage managed his 6th Yuletide Celebration with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and is in his 5th season with Michigan Opera Theatre, where last season he stage managed their world premiere, *Margaret Garner*, written by Toni Morrison, and starring Denyce Graves. Ken has worked with opera companies in cities that include Philadelphia, Atlanta, Honolulu, Tucson/Phoenix, Indianapolis, Dayton and Memphis. Upcoming engagements include *Salome* and a new production of *Aida* at Michigan Opera Theatre, and this summer will mark his 25th season as Production Manager of the Springfield (Ohio) Summer Arts Festival. Ken and his partner, Duane Prill, now make their new home on Lamoka Lake in the Finger Lakes region.



## Gordon Estey – Technical Director

Gordon Estey, also the Theatre Operations Manager for the Academy Theatre in Canandaigua, comes from a background in professional summer stock, having worked with Maureen O'Sullivan, Cyril Ritchard, Vivian Vance, Dody Goodman, Mickey Rooney, Leonard Nimoy and Elaine Stritch. Mr. Estey has designed sets and lighting for the Downstairs Cabaret Theatre of Rochester, and the Academy Players since 1991, where he received critical acclaim for his 2003 set and lighting design of *Les Miserables*. He is resident lighting designer and technical director for the Rochester City Ballet and received critical acclaim for his lighting of the *Nutcracker* performances with RCB and the RPO at the Eastman

Theatre and for *Cinderella* 2004 at the Auditorium Theatre. Mr. Estey designed the set, lighting and sound for the National Women's Hall of Fame Induction in 1998 and 2000. He has studied with designers such as Jules Fisher, Peggy Eisenhauer, Mike Baldassari, Wendell Harrington, Beverly Emmons, and Richard Pilbrow. This is Mr. Estey's first opera, and he is happy to be working with Mercury Opera Rochester.

## Nathaniel Motta – Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master

Nathaniel Motta was the founding music director of the Sanctuary Concert Series (Pittsburgh) where he conducted performances of Fauré's *Requiem*, Mozart *Symphony No. 25*, Schubert's *Mass in G*, and the *Mozart Requiem*. Nathaniel acted as Assistant Conductor to Robert Page and Marvin Hamlisch for the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops performances of "A Tribute to the Music of Richard Rodgers." He has also acted as vocal coach and ensemble conductor at the Civic Light Opera and Mercury Opera Rochester, has conducted in master classes at the Julliard Complete Choral Musician Workshop, the Westminster Choir College Advanced Conducting Seminar, and was selected as a conducting fellow for the Dennis Keene Choral Festival. He was also a private conducting student of Robert Page for five years. He holds a Bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Carnegie Mellon University and will graduate in May with a Master's degree in conducting from the Eastman School of Music.





## Stephen Carr – Assistant Stage Director

After enjoying success as a vocalist, Stephen Carr is shifting the focus of his career onto stage direction. He is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Stage Directing at the Eastman School of Music, where he was the assistant director for the fall production of *Claudia Legare* and teaches the Lyric Theater class, and will be assisting and directing future productions. Performance credits include engagements with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Choral Arts Society, Baltimore Opera Company, Annapolis Opera Company, College Light Opera Company, and Ohio Light Opera. Mr. Carr graduated from the Eastman School of Music and has completed post-graduate studies in musical theater at the Royal

Academy of Music in London. A winner of the Rosa Ponselle Vocal Competition's Silver Rose Award (laureates concert Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, May 1996,) he has participated in master classes with Ralph Fiennes, Denyce Graves, Jeremy Sams, Philip Quast, and Julia McKenzie.

His recordings include *Naughty Marietta* and *Utopia Limited* for Newport Classics. New York, regional, and international musical theatre performance credits include *Jesus Christ Superstar* (European Tour), *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *Ragtime*.

## James Myers – Principal Coach/Accompanist

Raised in a musical family in Portland, Oregon, James Myers began piano studies at age four, cello at eight, and composition at age ten. Mr. Myers made his orchestral debut with the Oregon Symphony at age 17, and has since performed as piano soloist with orchestras in the United States and Europe. Concert venues have included the Beethovensaal of Hannover, Germany; the Eurozentrum of Cologne; King's College in Cambridge, England; and Benaroya Hall in Seattle. Enthusiastic audiences have welcomed him to the Czech Republic, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, and Switzerland. In the summer of 2002, he joined the Oberlin Conservatory Opera Festival team as Opera Pianist at the Centro Studi Italiani in Urbana, Italy, with a touring production of *La Traviata* with Maestro Benton Hess. Mr. Myers earned a Bachelor of Music with honors in Piano Performance from the Eastman School of Music, where he is currently completing the Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Accompanying. Mr. Myers resides in Los Angeles, where he is on faculty at Chapman University School of Music.

## Damita Peace – Costume Coordinator

Damita Peace is a freelance costume designer in the Rochester area. Currently she spends most of her time with Eastman School of Music's Opera Theatre program. She has also designed for the Jewish Community Center, Rochester Institute of Technology's film program, SUNY Brockport, Interborough Repertory Theater (OOBR Award Winner - *Emperor Jones*) and Fitchburg State College. Ms. Peace has previously worked as an Assistant Professor at Cameron College, Designer and Instructor at University of Central Oklahoma and as Artist in Residence at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Ms. Peace holds a BFA in Theatre from Stephens College and an MFA in Theatrical Design from Ohio State University.

## Anne Ford-Coates – Wig Dressing & Makeup Design

Anne Ford-Coates represents Elsen Associates, Inc., resident hair and makeup designers for numerous opera companies in North America, including Des Moines Metro Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Syracuse Opera, Utah Opera, Washington National Opera, and Wolf Trap Opera. Broadway productions include *The Merchant of Venice*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Two Trains Running*, *Angels in America*, *The Wild Party*, and *Caroline, or Change* and Off-Broadway productions include *Twelfth Night* (NYSF Central Park), *Sondheim Celebration* (Kennedy Center), *Ainadamar* (Tanglewood), and *Oedipus Plays* (Athens Festival). Educational affiliations include Yale University, Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, and Carnegie Mellon University. Website: [www.elsenassociates.com](http://www.elsenassociates.com).

## Nic Minetor – Lighting Design

Lighting designer/director for theater, film and TV, Nic Minetor has been resident designer for more than 40 productions of Eastman Opera Theatre, including *Candide*, *La Bohème*, *The Medium*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and *Sweeney Todd*, and many Opera Theatre of Rochester and Geva Theatre productions, including *A Christmas Carol*. This is his second production with Mercury Opera Rochester, having designed the lighting for *L'Amico Fritz* in October. His work is also seen at NTID, SUNY Brockport, Elmira and Nazareth Colleges.







Mercury Opera Rochester is a new artistic endeavor which is the merger of Rochester Opera Factory, Opera Rochester, and the Opera Theatre Guild of Rochester, with the support of the Rochester Fund for Opera, the Eastman School of Music, Eastman Opera Theatre, and Friends of Eastman Opera. All of these groups consist of people who love opera and are willing to do what it takes to get more opera and better opera in Rochester. This consolidation of missions and organizations is unique among American opera companies.

The primary mission of Mercury Opera Rochester is to produce professional opera for a growing, appreciative audience, utilizing the following principles:

- Uphold high artistic standards in all endeavors.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility.
- Educate present and future audiences. We want people to enjoy and appreciate opera. This includes adult education and fun events as well as structured programs in schools and colleges.
- Provide performance opportunities for local singers, both professional and amateur.
- Collaborate with other like-minded organizations in the area.

For more information about Mercury Opera Rochester and any of our upcoming performances, call 585-473-6567 or check our website at [www.mercuryoperarochester.org](http://www.mercuryoperarochester.org). We keep patrons informed of our projects via mail and email. If you would like to be added to our private mailing list or would like to receive our newsletter, please let us know.

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# The Future of Mercury Opera Rochester

We need your help to make the vision of Mercury Opera Rochester a reality. We are asking for financial support to help establish the company and keep great opera coming your way. With your support, professional opera can flourish and grow in Rochester. If you like our performance and our philosophy, please support our future. Consider a donation to help more people understand and enjoy opera. Tax-deductible donations are gratefully accepted by Mercury Opera Rochester, 300 Winton Road South, Rochester, NY, 14610.

## Upcoming Events

L'Elisir d'Amore by Gaetano Donizetti

Thursday & Saturday, May 11 & 13 at 8 PM, Mercy High School

Tickets are \$25 and \$10 for students, available from the RPO Box Office, 454-2100, online at [www.rpo.org](http://www.rpo.org), and at all Wegman's video locations

The Guild of Mercury Opera Rochester presents:

"Beat the Blahs" DVD Showing & Talk on Verdi's La Forza del Destino  
Sunday, February 5, 1 PM, Temple Brith Kodesh, 334-2323 for information

Opera Lecture on Puccini, the Bohemian Composer  
Tuesday, January 31, 7 PM, 784-5300 for information & registration

Bus Tour to Syracuse Opera – Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro  
Sunday, April 30, 586-2274 for information

Annual Guild Recital & Reception for Mercury Opera Rochester Donors  
Sunday, May 21, 2 PM, 334-2323 for information & registration

## Announcing Mercury Opera Rochester's 2006-2007 Season!

September 29 & 31, 2006:

Mozart's The Abduction from the Seraglio

January 26 & 28, 2007:

Bellini's Norma (with the RPO)

May 2007:

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