

MADAMA BUTTERFLY 2009 BACKSTAGE INFO

Staff/Running crew:	(19) stagehands (carpenters, electricians, av tech, prop men, fly men) (18) wardrobe (wardrobe master, dressers, stitchers, launderers) (11) wig and make-up crew (3) artistic team (conductor, director, designer) (11) music and production staff (incl. asst. designer, titles, stage mgrs, etc.)
Cast:	(9) principals (29) chorus (9 m, 20 f) (35) supers (including 11 children)
Orchestra:	(60) (32 strings, 11 winds, 11 brass, 3 timps/percussion, 1 harp, & 2 librarians)
Total Budget:	\$1,509,176 (for artists, crews, sets, costumes, everything else . . .) (costs for this production in previous years for comparison: \$1,130,540 – 2003; \$1,033,378 -- 1998)

Orchestra In addition to normal instrumentation, you will hear bird whistles, chimes, and a gong (or tom tom) played live, as well as a cannon sound produced by the computer set up backstage left.

Scenery This production is co-owned by SDO, Houston, Geneva, and Dallas. The scenery was designed by Michael Yeagan who has designed several shows for SDO including *Aida* and *Cold Sassy Tree*. It was built at SDO Scenic Studio in 1997. There are a series of Japanese inspired screens that are operated by computer controlled motors. The consulate wall is actually a scrim. This means that is opaque or translucent depending on whether it is lit from the front or rear. The red silk drop is called a Kabuki drop and takes its name from a technique used in that style of theatre. You'll notice that it falls in and then drops completely to the floor. The scenery is not a traditional *Butterfly* design, but is a stylized set that highlights the cultural differences in the opera. The director Garnett Bruce has been with the production from the initial meetings (as has the lighting designer). Their experience with this production as well as ours (this is our third mounting of this production), has enabled us to dramatically reduce the time needed to mount the show.

A note about the Pledge of Allegiance on the wall of the consulate: the text of the "Pledge of Allegiance" reads as it would have in 1904. The words "under God" were not added until after the second world war.

Props There are tissue paper "cherry blossom petals" (in 4 colors) that are dropped from two bags that are the width of the stage. Red "petals" also fall when the red silk drops in. Approximately 3 million "petals" will be needed for the dress and technical rehearsals as well as the 5 performances. The petals need to be hand torn, put in a hamper, and then are separated by using the air from a compressor so that they will drift and fall from the sky like petals. This project has been a labor of love for the company. Volunteers, staff, stagehands, supers, chorus, even principals and the general director have been spotted tearing "petals" in their spare moments. We have held contests to see who can tear the fastest.

Lighting The lighting is designed by Alan Burrett who is in residence for the focusing of the lights and cueing during the technical rehearsals. He also lit the show in '03 and '98. Alan was a part of the original design team and has been involved in the project from the earliest design meetings. The computerized lighting console (or "board") has a total of 85 cues or "looks" in the show. There are 3 front of house follow spots. 48 instruments are on rolling stands for the low sidelight. There are 353 instruments with 236,510 watts which would power 21,500 11 watt fluorescents or 197 1200watt hair dryers. There are 6 different blues and 8 ambers used as color medium throughout the show. The sun rising effect is accomplished with a 5000w light fitted with a color changer. The fly crew slowly lifts the pipe with the light from 4' to 15'. As the pipe is rising, the color changer slowly scrolls from a red to successively lighter shades of amber. About one quarter of the lighting equipment is used to light the cyc. The light plot (a technical drawing noting where the lights are hung and focused) and the cues (when the lights go on and how bright) are essentially the same as 2003. Because the look of the show is similar to last time (with some variations due to different singers), we were able to mount the show in record time.

Costumes Costumes were designed by Anita Yavich and were built in Geneva for the co-production. The kimono textiles used in the production are genuine Japanese fabrics. Butterfly's red kimono is hand painted. Most of the obis used in the production are actually tied each night with real Japanese style knots (as opposed to pretied or rigged). There are photos in the dressing room hallway of the tying process to help the dressers. Obis are "one size fits all." Kimono hems are not adjusted by hemming. Instead, the length of kimonos is adjusted in the tying of the obi. The style of dress is circa 1904. From this period, you will notice several western style hats (made in NY) on the chorus ladies. These are rather elaborate and include many feathers. During this period, the feathered hat as a fashion accessory became very popular and led to near extinction of many bird species. It is no coincidence then that the Audubon Society was formed around 1917.

Wigs/Make-up Principal makeup and wigs are applied in a room at the end of the dressing room hallway or in individual dressing rooms by 4 M/U artists including the designer – Steven Bryant. The chorus and supers have their wigs and makeup applied by 7 more artists in the rehearsal hall downstairs. There are approximately 60 wigs used in the production. Eight of the supers have bald pates with partial wigs over them. The wig for Butterfly was built for this production – it was hand tied or "ventilated" by the wig designer. It took him about 40 hours to construct it. This is about one and a half times as long as most wigs because there is so much hair in it. Many of the male choristers were also in *Peter Grimes* and went from a "Grimes" look to a "Butterfly" look with a shave and a haircut.