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Puccini's Beloved *Madama Butterfly* Returns to Close 2009 Season

*American soprano Patricia Racette performs signature role Cio-Cio-San
Tenor Carlo Ventre returns as Pinkerton*

“Patricia Racette has owned the role of Cio-Cio-San for many years... she started pouring forth a golden sound of great beauty... Racette then kept building and building the role, in a seemingly impossible feat, having started from the highest plateau...”

- *The Examiner*

“Racette sang with an easy, speech-like delivery and a vibrato that added natural sweetness. Here and everywhere, her sound was ravishing...”

- *Opera News*

“[Ventre's] voice was strong; his high notes, secure. And he poured out his passion...”

- *The San Diego Union-Tribune*

San Diego, CA – San Diego Opera is proud to present Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* as the fifth and final opera of the 2009 season which opens on **Saturday, May 9, 2009** at 7 PM for five performances. Returning to San Diego Opera in the title role is American soprano **Patricia Racette** who has made Cio-Cio-San her signature role, performing it to critical and popular acclaim in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and in New York at the Metropolitan Opera. Also returning to San Diego Opera is Uruguayan tenor **Carlo Ventre** who dazzled audiences last season as Radames in *Aida*. Returning to San Diego Opera to round out the cast is American baritone **Malcolm MacKenzie** as Sharpless, Chinese mezzo-soprano **Zhen Cao** as Suzuki, Taiwanese tenor **Joseph Hu** as Goro, American bass **Scott Sikon** as The Bonze and American soprano **Crystal Jarrell** as Kate Pinkerton. **Edoardo Müller** conducts the performances and American **Garnett Bruce** will stage the production.

In Puccini's tragic opera, *Madama Butterfly*, the American naval officer Pinkerton marries a Japanese geisha named Cio-Cio-San (who is also known as Butterfly). Pinkerton takes the relationship lightly despite the warnings of the American consul, Sharpless. Pinkerton returns to America, and Butterfly gives birth to their child whom she names Trouble while she waits for her husband to return. When Pinkerton does return he brings with him his American wife and Cio-

Cio-San must choose to live in disgrace or die with her honor intact. With the famous aria “Un bel di” and the haunting “Humming Chorus” *Madama Butterfly* is full of beautiful music that will stay with the audience long after they have left the theatre.

Madama Butterfly was last performed by San Diego Opera in 2003. This production is owned by San Diego Opera with sets by **Michael Yeargan** and costumes by **Anita Yavich**.

Pre-production photos can be found online at:

<http://www.sdopera.com/pressphotos/09Overview.aspx>

Electronic Press Kits for this opera, including multimedia content, can be found online at:

<http://www.sdopera.com/epk/Default.aspx>

The Cast

Patricia Racette, Cio-Cio-San

American soprano Patricia Racette made her San Diego Opera debut in 1995 as Mimì in *La bohème*, returned in 2001 as Love Simpson in *Cold Sassy Tree* (a role she created for the world premiere at Houston Grand Opera), and in 2004 for the title role of *Katya Kabanova*. Racette recently performed the role of Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met, which was a part of *The Met: Live in HD* series broadcast in movie theatres worldwide. She has developed strong relationships, not only with the Metropolitan Opera, but also San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Santa Fe Opera. Seen regularly at these houses, her many roles include Violetta in *La traviata*, Mimì and Musetta in *La bohème*, Magda in *La Rondine* the title role in *Jenufa*, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the title role of *Katya Kabanova*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Micaela in *Carmen*, the title role in *Luisa Miller*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*, Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, Mathilde in *Guillaume Tell*, Margherita in Boito's *Mefistofele*, and Fosca in *Passion among many others*. Racette has also appeared at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Vienna Staatsoper, La Scala in Milan, the Welsh National Opera, l'Opera National de Paris, the Saito Kinen Festival and the Grand Théâtre de Genève. A supporter of new works by today's leading composers, she created the title role in Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*, appeared in the Metropolitan Opera's world premiere of *An American Tragedy* and, in July of this year, creates the role of Leslie Crosbie in the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *The Letter* with Santa Fe Opera.

Carlo Ventre, Pinkerton

Uruguayan tenor Carlo Ventre made his San Diego Opera debut in 2005 as Gabriele in *Simon Boccanegra* and returned in 2008 as Radames in *Aida*. For his La Scala debut, he sang the Duke in *Rigoletto* and also appeared there as Ismaele in *Nabucco*. Roles for Welsh National Opera include Rodolfo in *La bohème* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. Other roles include Don José in *Carmen*, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Pollione in *Norma*, and the title role of *Andrea Chénier*. He has sung in opera houses in Berlin, Rome, San Francisco, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Washington, Verona, Chicago, Genoa and Cologne.

Malcolm MacKenzie, Sharpless

American baritone Malcolm MacKenzie first performed with San Diego Opera as Marullo in *Rigoletto* in 2002, returned in 2005 as Escamillo in *Carmen*, as Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers* in 2008 and earlier this season as Marullo in *Rigoletto*. He was a finalist in Plácido Domingo's Operalia competition, and a winner of the Metropolitan Opera Western Regional Auditions.

MacKenzie began his professional career in 1994 as Harlequin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Glimmerglass Opera and has since performed with Washington National Opera, Madison Opera, l'Opéra National de Paris, Los Angeles Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Sacramento Opera and Opera Pacific. His roles include Donald in *Billy Budd*, Masetto and the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème* and Albert in *Werther*. He has also appeared with the San Diego Symphony, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Los Angeles Mozart Orchestra, Pacific Chorale and Savannah Symphony.

Suzanna Guzmán, Suzuki

American mezzo-soprano Suzanna Guzmán made her operatic debut at San Diego Opera in 1986 as Emilia in *Otello* and returned in 2006 as Cornelia in *Julius Caesar in Egypt*. Other appearances here include Maddelena in *Rigoletto* in 1987, 1994 and 2002, Eunice Hubble in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2000, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* in 1991 and the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* in 2001. Recent engagements include Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro* with The Dallas Opera, Mariana in *Luisa Fernanda*, the Mother in *Amahl and The Night Visitors* and the title role of *Carmen* with Washington National Opera (a role also sung with Houston Grand Opera). Contemporary performances include appearances in *Fantastic Mr. Fox* for Los Angeles Opera, *Goya* in Spoleto, Italy and *Four Scenes in Three Acts* with Houston Grand Opera. She has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra Montpellier, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Théâtre de l'Opéra de Nice and Dresden Musikfestspiele. She can be heard on the Grammy nominated CD *Carlos Chavez: Volume III* and on DVD in the role of Flora in *La traviata* with Renee Fleming.

Joseph Hu, Goro

Taiwanese tenor Joseph Hu made his San Diego Opera debut as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1995. His many performances here include Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, the Steersman in *The Flying Dutchman*, Roderigo in *Otello*, Pong in *Turandot*, Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Count Lerma in *Don Carlo*, the Messenger in *Samson and Delilah*, Ruiz and the Messenger in *Il trovatore*, Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro* and earlier this season as Spoletta in *Tosca* and Borsa in *Rigoletto*. Among other companies with which he has sung are The Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, Nashville Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Dayton Opera.

Scott Sikon, The Bonze

Since his San Diego Opera debut in 1991 as Superintendent Budd in *Albert Herring*, American bass-baritone Scott Sikon has sung more than twenty roles here including Schaunard in *La bohème*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Dikoi in *Kátya Kabanová*, Steve Hubble in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Montano in *Otello*, Morales in *Carmen*, Curio in *Julius Caesar in Egypt*, the Second Philistine in *Samson and Delilah*, the First Journeyman in *Wozzeck*, Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Reinmar von Zweter in *Tannhäuser* and earlier this season as Sacristan in *Tosca* and Count Monterone in *Rigoletto*. He has performed throughout the United States with Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, The Dallas Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Cincinnati Opera and Cleveland Opera. His European debut was at the Vienna Volksoper in the premiere of *The Number 11 Bus*. An active concert artist, Scott Sikon has performed with the Spoleto Festival USA, the San Antonio Symphony and the Arkansas Symphony.

Joe Pechota, Imperial Commissioner

Japanese tenor Joe Pechota was made his stage debut in 1982 as the eunuch *Il Corsaro*. His many roles with the Company include the Prince of Persia and a Mandarin in *Turandot*, a courtier in

Henry VIII, the Registrar in *Madama Butterfly*, the Gravedigger in *Hamlet*, Paris in *Romeo and Juliet* and the Sergeant in *La bohème*. He is a member of the San Diego Opera chorus and appears regularly with Lyric Opera of San Diego as well as with the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus.

Jason Detwiler, Prince Yamadori

San Diego Opera debut. Baritone Jason Detwiler has sung Marcello in *La bohème* for Opera Idaho, the title role of Eugene Onegin for Virginia Opera, Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* with Rimrock Opera, the title role in *Pilgrim's Progress* with Trinity Lyric Opera, title role in *Macbeth* and Yeletsky in *Pikovaya Dama* for West Bay Opera, and Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* with Shreveport Opera. He has performed with Apollo Sierra Opera, Sacramento Opera, West Bay Opera, Opera Idaho and Festival Opera of Walnut Creek in roles such as Valentin in *Faust*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Alfio in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Marcello in *La bohème*, John Proctor in *The Crucible*, Germont in *La traviata* and the title roles in *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Flying Dutchman*, among others.

Crystal Jarrell, Kate Pinkerton

American mezzo-soprano Crystal Jarrell made her Company debut earlier this season as Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*. She recently performed Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Stephano in *Romeo and Juliet* with Nashville Opera, Olga in *The Merry Widow* with Indianapolis Opera and as The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with San Antonio Opera. Other roles in her repertoire include Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Emily in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Mary Stone in *The Devil and Daniel Webster* and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. She has performed the music of Bizet and J. Strauss in concert with the Indianapolis Arts Chorale and Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and has appeared in concert at the Indianapolis Film Festival performing highlight of *Carmen*. Jarrell is an alumna of the young artist program of Nashville Opera, Utah Festival Opera and Indianapolis Opera. She is currently a second year member of the San Diego Opera Ensemble.

Edoardo Müller, Conductor

Italian conductor Edoardo Müller, has led more than 30 productions in San Diego, beginning in 1980 with *Giovanna d'Arco*. Last season he conducted *Mary, Queen of Scots* and *Cavalleria rusticana / Pagliacci* and earlier this season he conducted *Tosca* and *Rigoletto*. Known worldwide for his mastery of the Italian operatic repertoire, he has enjoyed a long association with the Teatro alla Scala in Milan where he conducted *Aida*, *I due Foscari*, *Il trovatore*, *I masnadieri*, *La forza del destino*, *Ernani*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Anna Bolena*, among others. His career has taken him to the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Seattle Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera as well as companies in Paris, Rome and Tokyo.

Garnett Bruce, Director

This production of *Madama Butterfly* marks the third occasion that American director Garnett Bruce has directed this opera for the Company, including his Company debut in 1998 and a revival in 2003. For the Company he also directed *Cold Sassy Tree* in 2001, *Vanessa* in 2005 and *Aida* in 2008. He has directed *Street Scene* and *La Clemenza di Tito* with Wolf Trapp Opera, *La bohème* for Lyric Opera Kansas City and The Dallas Opera, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera, *Carmen* for Palm Beach Opera and *Jenufa* for The Dallas Opera. Garnett Bruce has served on the staffs of San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera and Washington National Opera over the past years.

Michael Yeargan, Scenic Designer

American scenic designer, Michael Yeorgan made his debut with San Diego Opera with *Aida*, first seen in 1996 and repeated in 2001 and 2008. For San Diego Opera he also designed *Madama Butterfly* in 1998 and 2003, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 2000, *Cold Sassy Tree* in 2001 and *Carmen* in 2006. Michael won a Tony Award© for Best Scenic Design for his work on *The Light in the Piazza* in 2005 and for *South Pacific* in 2008. He is a professor of stage design at the Yale School of Drama and the resident designer for the Yale Repertory Theatre, where he has designed more than 50 productions. His opera credits include set design for Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* for Metropolitan Opera, Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Simon Boccanegra* and *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera. He has also designed productions for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera, Frankfurt Opera, Opera Australia and the Scottish Opera.

Anita Yavich, Costume Designer

Chinese Costume Designer Anita Yavich made her San Diego Opera debut designing costumes for *Madama Butterfly* in 1998. Other designs for opera include *Cyrano* at Milan's La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera and Royal Opera, Covent Garden, *Les Troyens* for the Metropolitan Opera, Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* for Tanglewood, *The Gambler* for Opera Zuid, *A Measure of Joy* for Chanticleer, *Three Tales* for Vienna Festival and international tour, *Fidelio*, *Die Walkure* and *Das Rheingold* for Washington National Opera, *Arsace II* at San Francisco Opera, *Madame Butterfly* at Houston Grand Opera and Grande Théâtre de Genève, *The Flying Dutchman* at Spoleto Festival and *The Silver River* at Spoleto and Lincoln Center Festival. She has designed costumes for productions at Seattle Rep, Classic Stage, Philadelphia Theater Company, The Signature, The Public, Ballet Hispanico and was the puppet and costume designer for *The Sound of Music* at Salzburger Marionetten Theater and international tour.

Alan Burrett, Lighting Designer

English Lighting Designer Alan Burrett made his San Diego Opera debut in *Madama Butterfly* in 1998 and returned in 2003. His internationally acclaimed work for theatre, dance and opera has been seen in over 30 countries. He began his career as the resident designer with Bejart ballet in Brussels designing sets, costumes and lights for many productions and did the same as Technical Director for the Ballet Opera of Lyon. He continued his lighting career in the UK and Europe designing at the Royal Shakespeare Company, The Royal National Theater, Royal Opera Covent Garden, The Paris Opera, Munich Opera and the Burgtheater Vienna. He lit large-scale arena productions of the operas *Carmen* and *Tosca* in London, Germany, Australia and Japan and the complete works of Beckett for the Gate Theatre in Dublin, New York and London. He has also served as the head of lighting at the English National Opera and, in 1995, began collaborations with Los Angeles Opera becoming their first resident lighting designer and designed twenty-five productions. Other projects include the 300th Anniversary of Moliere at the Comedie Francaise, productions for the Paris Opera Ballet and French television, the 1992 World's Fair Spanish Pavilion and lighting for the U.S. tour of Duran Duran. In 2008, Burrett became Professor and head of the Lighting Design program at the University of California San Diego.

About the Producers' Circle Sponsors

These performances of *Madama Butterfly* are made possible by **Peter Farrell/Farrell Family Foundation (Co-Title Sponsors)** and **Charles and Tanya Brandes (Co-Title Sponsors)**.

Performance Schedule

Saturday	May 9, 2009	7 PM
Tuesday	May 12, 2009	7 PM
Friday	May 15, 2009	8 PM

Sunday	May 17, 2009	2 PM
Wednesday	May 20, 2009	7 PM

Educational Events Surrounding *Madama Butterfly*

Artists' Roundtable

Meet the singers, conductor and director of *Madama Butterfly* in this free and informal panel discussion on **Thursday, April 30, 2009 at 5:30 PM** in the Beverly Sills Salon, Civic Theatre. Free.

Pre- Opera Lectures

These 30-minute informative lectures take place in the Civic Theatre one-hour prior to every performance and offer wonderful insight into the production audience members are about to see. These lectures are free to all ticket holders and are generously sponsored by *The San Diego Union-Tribune*.

San Diego OperaTalk! with Nick Reveles

Join Dr. Nicolas Reveles, San Diego Opera's Geisel Director of Education, for a fascinating half-hour television program on *Madama Butterfly*. Viewers will learn about the story, music and history of each opera and will pick up rich insight into the structure and composition of the music. *OperaTalk! with Nick Reveles* airs on UCSD-TV. For a complete listing of schedules and where to view it visit: <http://www.sdopera.com/education/operatalk.aspx>

San Diego Opera Spotlight

Produced by San Diego Opera and UCSD-TV, the award-winning *San Diego Opera Spotlight* gives viewers a unique and entertaining look behind-the-scenes of each of San Diego Opera's five main-stage productions. Viewers will see how the singers, directors, conductor and crew work together to create each opera, get a sneak peak at rehearsal footage and hear exclusive interviews with the stars. *San Diego Opera Spotlight Madama Butterfly* airs on **Friday, May 8 at 9:00 PM on UCSD-TV** and repeats daily throughout the run of the production. For a complete listing of schedules and where to view it visit: <http://www.sdopera.com/education/spotlight.aspx>

Purchasing Tickets

Three, four or five-opera subscriptions for the 2009 International Season range from \$87 - \$850 (some Saturday subscriptions slightly higher) and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com.

Weekday Super Savings Subscription Packages are also available which offer a full series of five operas for the price of four and can be purchased by calling (619) 533-7000 or online at www.sdopera.com.

For information about single tickets please visit www.sdopera.com or call (619) 533-7000 to speak to an opera representative.

\$20 rush tickets, subject to availability, are available 2-hours prior to performances. There is a one-ticket per person limit. Cash only.

The 2009 International Season

<i>Tosca</i>	Giacomo Puccini	January 24, 27, 30 February 1 (mat) and 4, 2009
<i>Don Quixote</i>	Jules Massenet	February 14, 17, 20 and 22 (mat), 2009
<i>Rigoletto</i>	Giuseppe Verdi	March 28, 31, April 3, 5 (mat) and 8, 2009
<i>Peter Grimes</i>	Benjamin Britten	April 18, 21, 24 and 26 (mat), 2009
<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	Giacomo Puccini	May 9, 12, 15, 17 (mat) and 20, 2009

General Information

A widely respected member of the international opera community, *San Diego Opera* brings the world's finest artists to San Diego. Founded in 1965, and led for the last 25 years by General Director and Artistic Director Ian D. Campbell,

San Diego Opera produces performances of the highest artistic quality while remaining financially stable. San Diego Opera is also home to one of the most extensive, diverse opera education and outreach programs in North America, reaching over 70,000 schoolchildren and 20,000 adults in San Diego County and Baja California.

www.sdopera.com