



PLÁCIDO DOMINGO, *ELI AND EDYTHE BROAD GENERAL DIRECTOR*
 JAMES CONLON, *RICHARD SEAVER MUSIC DIRECTOR*
 CHRISTOPHER KOELSCH, *PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER*
 PRESENTS

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Madame Butterfly

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica,
 based on works of John Luther Long and David Belasco

CREATIVE TEAM

CONDUCTOR
James Conlon

DIRECTOR
Lee Blakeley

SCENERY DESIGNER
Jean-Marc Puissant*

COSTUME DESIGNER
Brigitte Reiffenstuel*

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Rick Fisher

CHORUS DIRECTOR
Grant Gershon

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR
Nicola Bowie

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Michael Scarola

STAGE MANAGER
Lyla Forlani

FIRST ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Miah Im

MUSICAL PREPARATION
Jeremy Frank
Bryndon Hassman
Susanna Lemberskaya
Renate Rohlfing

PROMPTER
Susanna Lemberskaya

CAST

CIO-CIO-SAN Ana María Martínez

B.F. PINKERTON Stefano Secco

SUZUKI Milena Kitic

SHARPLESS Kihun Yoon[†]

GORO Keith Jameson

PRINCE YAMADORI Daniel Armstrong[‡]

THE BONZE Nicholas Brownlee[‡]

KATE PINKERTON Lacey Jo Benter[†]

THE IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER Patrick Blackwell

THE OFFICIAL REGISTRAR Gabriel Vamvulescu

UNCLE YAKUSIDE Sal Malaki

COUSIN Rebecca Tomlinson

MOTHER Renee Sousa

AUNT Danielle Marcelle Bond

CIO-CIO-SAN'S CHILD Nicholas Cuenca Terry*
(MARCH 12, 23, 31)
Michael Alspaugh*
(MARCH 20, 26, APRIL 3)

SUPPORT

Generous production support from
The Blue Ribbon.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The running time is approximately two hours and fifty minutes, which includes one intermission.

Supertitles written by David Anglin.

Pre-performance talks by James Conlon. Pre-performance talks are generously sponsored by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation and the Opera League of Los Angeles.

Production originally designed for and created by the Santa Fe Opera.

Additional sets and props constructed by Los Angeles Opera. Additional costumes constructed by the Los Angeles Opera Costume Shop. Wigs constructed by the Los Angeles Opera Wig & Make-Up Department.

* *LA Opera debut*

[†] *Member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program*

[‡] *Alumnus of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program*

ARTISTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Please refrain from talking during the performance, and turn off all cell phones, electronic devices and watch alarms. If you are using an assistive hearing device, or are attending with someone who is, please make sure that it is set to an appropriate level to avoid distracting audio feedback. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house management. Members of the audience who leave during the performance will not be shown back into the theater until the next intermission. The use of cameras and recording equipment is strictly prohibited. Your use of a ticket acknowledges your willingness to appear in photographs taken in public areas of the Music Center and releases the Center and its lessees and others from liability resulting from use of such photographs. Any microphones onstage are used for recording or broadcast purposes only; onstage voices are not amplified.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Outside a house in turn-of-the-century Nagasaki, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, an American naval officer, arranges with the marriage broker Goro to lease a residence for himself and his new bride Cio-Cio-San, also known as Butterfly. He is then introduced to Butterfly's servants, one of whom is Suzuki. While talking to Sharpless, the American consul, Pinkerton reveals that he purchased his bride for 100 yen and that he can bow out of the marriage contract whenever he wishes. Sharpless tries to warn the officer that his teenage bride might really love him, but Pinkerton ignores the consul, drinking to the day when he will marry an American woman.

Butterfly arrives with friends and relatives, greeting Pinkerton and showing him her paltry belongings, including the dagger her father used to kill himself. She confides to Pinkerton that she secretly converted to Christianity the day before so that she could worship the same God as her husband, for whom she is willing to forget her own people.

During the wedding celebration, the Bonze, Butterfly's uncle, the Bonze, arrives. He has heard that Butterfly has renounced her religion, and he calls upon all of her relatives to renounce her. Pinkerton demands that they all leave, then comforts his new bride. As night falls, Butterfly rapturously confesses her love for Pinkerton. He leads her into the house.

ACT II

Three years have passed since Pinkerton sailed away for America. The devoted Butterfly tells Suzuki that one day soon they will see Pinkerton's ship enter the harbor. Sharpless, who has learned that Pinkerton will soon arrive in Nagasaki with a new wife, tries to persuade Butterfly to marry his client Prince Yamadori, who hopes to marry her. She refuses to listen, insisting that she is already married. Furthermore, she shows the American consul the son that she has borne Pinkerton, convinced that her husband would never abandon her or his own child. The harbor cannon announces the arrival of Pinkerton's ship, and an elated

Butterfly prepares for his imminent arrival, waiting and watching for him all night with her son and Suzuki.

Morning comes and still Pinkerton has not returned. When Butterfly carries the sleeping child to bed, Suzuki sees Sharpless, Pinkerton and an American woman—his new wife, Kate—in the garden. Suddenly overwhelmed by remorse, Pinkerton leaves, unable to face the Japanese wife he had abandoned. While Kate asks Suzuki to explain to Butterfly that Pinkerton's son would be better off in America, Butterfly awakens and emerges, seeing the strange woman in her garden. Sharpless tells her that the woman is Pinkerton's wife. Distraught, Butterfly sends them away, telling them that Pinkerton should come for the child in half an hour. She retreats to the house and takes her father's dagger. She is about to stab herself when Suzuki pushes the child into the room. Butterfly parts sorrowfully from her son and sends him outside to play. She takes up the dagger with which her father committed hara-kiri and kills herself, just as Pinkerton is arriving for his son.



Cio-Cio-San faithfully awaits the return of her long absent husband.

In fond memory of Tara Colburn, supertitles are underwritten by Dunard Fund USA.

Butterfly Takes the Stage

David Belasco (1853-1931) was a profoundly influential producer, director and playwright, famous for using dazzling scenic effects. His one-act play *Madame Butterfly*, which premiered on Broadway in 1900, was particularly celebrated for the cutting-edge lighting effects employed in a wordless scene of his heroine's overnight vigil, during which the sun set, the stars came out, then faded, and the sun rose again. Belasco (pictured at right) brought the play to London a few months later, where Puccini saw it. Although he understood little English, the composer was so moved by the experience that he resolved to make *Butterfly* his next opera.



Belasco's Butterfly

The magnetic Broadway actress Blanche Bates (left) had the distinction of creating the title roles in two David Belasco plays that would earn subsequent immortality as Puccini operas: *Madame Butterfly* (1900) and *The Girl of the Golden West* (1907). Bates also took *Madame Butterfly* on a U.S. tour that included 1905 performances in Los Angeles. Belasco thought that her greatest theatrical success was as another Japanese heroine, the leading role in his three-act drama *The Darling of the Gods*. She appeared in a few silent films, none of which survive today.

Butterfly Flops!

It's almost inconceivable today, but the world premiere of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* was a fiasco. It's not entirely clear why audience members at Milan's iconic Teatro alla Scala on February 17, 1904, were so hostile—jeering, laughing and whistling throughout the performance. When a draft billowed the kimono worn by leading soprano Rosina Storchio (pictured below), a heckler shouted "Butterfly is pregnant!" Puccini's publisher, Giulio Ricordi, suspected sabotage by the composer's jealous rivals. Puccini immediately began revising the score. Three months later, *Butterfly* enjoyed a resounding success in nearby Brescia, followed by a series of triumphs around the world.

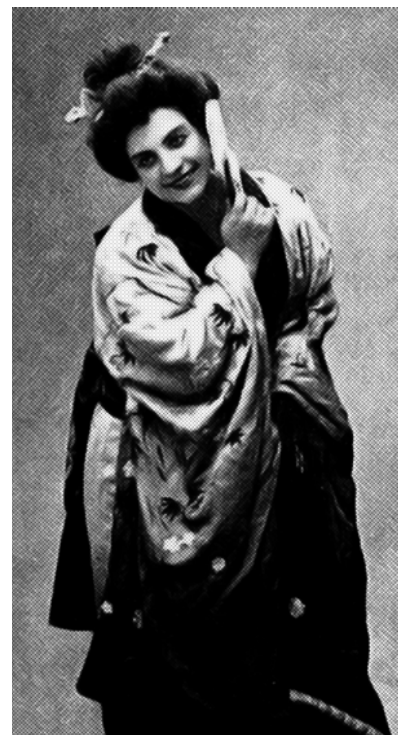
The Met's First Butterfly

The glamorous soprano Geraldine Farrar (below) starred in the 1907 Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Butterfly*. Her preparation was meticulous. "I read everything I could find about the Japanese. I tried to imbue myself with their spirit." She studied with a Japanese actress to make her physical interpretation as authentic as possible. Puccini, who supervised the production, wasn't entirely convinced about his leading lady—he had different ideas about how the role should be performed—but Farrar had a huge success as Cio-Cio-San. She would perform the role 95 times at the Met and 39 times on tour.



Butterfly Comes to L.A.

The local premiere of *Butterfly* took place in 1908 at the Mason Opera House (demolished in 1955) on Broadway near First. Sung in English, it was presented by the touring English Grand Opera Company, which had given the work's U.S. premiere in Washington DC in 1906. The leading roles were sung by Phoebe Strakosch and Vernon Stiles (above). *Los Angeles Times* reviewer Julian Johnson praised the score, the orchestra, the visual presentation and the "unusually good acting."



Chi ha vissuto per amore, per amore si morì.

(Who has lived for love, dies for love.)

—Giacomo Puccini/Giuseppe Adami (*Il Tabarro*)

Puccini, Melodrama and the Ubiquitous Feminine

It is hard to name another composer whose entire creative force so rarely deviated from a single focal point. Giacomo Puccini's fascination with "Woman in Love" was the alpha and omega of his life's work. And not only his operas; his life was also dominated by his attraction and absorption with women and eroticism.

As a composer, he embraced the theater and eschews absolute music. As a dramatist, he chose the "sufferings of little souls" (his words) over the great, tragic, grandiose or transcendent. He writes about one theme: love, death and erotic/romantic desperation. As a man, he was melancholic by character and pessimistic by philosophy.

His inexhaustible genius repeatedly dressed up his obsession in exotic garb, creating an apparent distance from the immediacy of his fixation and the plight of contemporary woman.

The woman is his protagonist—the love, passion, devotion, desire, jealousy, nostalgia, yearning and disappointment she feels and inspires. He writes in the third person, sympathizing with her as she makes her way to her various tragic ends. He himself, however, is a secondary protagonist, infusing every drama with his psychological projections onto his women. Scratching the surface, plumbing the depths, seeking the hidden source, the wrestling within himself is revealed over and over again.

Love and life, lived and lost together, are the elements of melodrama. This common theme is not his exclusive property. But in his 12 operas (eight of which are either named for their female protagonists or have titles referring to women), Puccini filters and distills it in a very personal way, almost exclusively through the agency of the maltreated woman.

Taken from a Freudian point of view, Puccini, the man, is enmeshed in a complex web of obsession, dependence and hostility. Ambivalent feelings of love and hate,

tenderness and cruelty toward his female protagonists, are dramatized in the arena of his operas. These conflicts are played out repeatedly, but never resolved. That his psyche and art were so female-dominated should come as no surprise. He had grown up in a predominantly feminine environment, strongly attached to his mother, who was widowed when young Giacomo was five years old. He had five sisters and only one younger brother.

Women have always been central to the work of male artists over the centuries. But there is a collection of factors, a syndrome, peculiar and specific to the dynamics of Puccini's melodramas. Each soprano wins our sympathy with her beauty (inner, outer or both) and her ardent and (almost always) faithful love. And each one characteristically suffers, at the hands of men, society or fate. The perpetrators vary but not their psychological function: a Roman chief of police (Scarpia in *Tosca*), a thoughtless American naval officer (Pinkerton in *Butterfly*), a sheriff of the Wild West (Jack Rance in *The Girl of the Golden West*) and a jealous husband (Michele in *Il Tabarro*). Death almost always triumphs over love, reversed only by Minnie, the Girl of the Golden West, and by Princess Turandot (though *Turandot's* other heroine, the sympathetic Liù, is sacrificed on the altar of love). Puccini loves each one of his heroines with great tenderness and deep empathy, justifying, or at least rationalizing, whatever faults, they may have. And yet, paradoxically, his muse is their suffering. The crueler their misfortunes, the more intensely that muse is stimulated.

His operas stem from drama, to which his music adapts. The music is the means, rather than an end in itself. Puccini chose ("was chosen," in his words) to write exclusively for the theater. He wrote, "I am a man of the theater... I see the characters, the colors and [their] gestures. If, alone at home, I don't

succeed to see the stage planted in front of me, I don't write, I can't write a note."

The emotional underpinnings of his entire output have clear and consistent characteristics. The repetitive and obsessive turbulence of melancholy, desire, psychological cruelty and romantic catastrophe is the soul of this theater. The "psychic" similarity is masked by Puccini's compositional and theatrical genius, which is to be found in the inspired and varied portrayal of exotic and distant subjects. Significantly, he was, in contrast to Verdi, an internationalist in his absorption of foreign influences into his music. He seemed to distance the immediacy of his dramas by placing them at a temporal and geographic distance from his audiences. Was he also disguising a virtual sameness of the psychological foundations of inspiration?

In an apparent contradiction to the spirit of the time, in which the *verismo* movement encouraged exploring the lives of common people in art, he set not a single drama in contemporary Italy, choosing in its stead the Black Forest, Flanders, Paris (three times), Italy in the past (Florence in 1299, an unidentified 17th-century convent and Rome in 1800), the American West, Japan and China.

As the 19th century yielded to the 20th, and Europe saw the gradual decline of the social and political order, the dissolution of the *belle époque* and the convulsions of the First World War, Puccini though, through his music and melodramas, continued to live and write about love. He insisted upon the supremacy of love and personal tragedies in an age that was gradually turning away from it. He embodied the melodrama and was its most prominent and last great advocate. It virtually passed from the operatic stage with him, the bar perhaps having been raised too high to be equaled. Had the form exhausted itself, having lived its life and perished from its love?

James Conlon

CONDUCTOR



From: New York.

LA Opera: debut conducting *La Traviata* (2006); 48 different operas and over 350 total performances to date. This season's productions also include *Moby-Dick*, *Norma* and *The Magic Flute*. He has been Richard Seaver Music Director since 2006.

Career highlights: He has led virtually every major North American and European orchestra and over 270 performances

at the Metropolitan Opera. He has been music director of the Cincinnati May Festival since 1979. Next season, he will become principal conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of the RAI in Torino. He previously was music director of the Ravinia Festival, summer home of the Chicago Symphony (2005-2015), principal conductor of the Paris National Opera (1995-2004), general music director of the City of Cologne (1989-2002) and music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic (1983-91). He has two Grammy Awards and was awarded France's Légion d'Honneur. (JamesConlon.com)

Jean-Marc Puissant

SET DESIGNER



From: Grenoble, France.

LA Opera: debut.

Career highlights: Credits includes *Aida* at London's Royal Opera (also Valencia and Oslo); *The Pearl Fishers* and *Madame Butterfly* at Santa Fe Opera; *Riccardo Primo* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; *A Night at the Chinese Opera* at Scottish Opera; *The Coronation of Poppea* at Royal Academy Opera; and *The King and I* for

the Châtelet in Paris. He regularly designs for most leading ballet and contemporary dance companies around the world, such as London's Royal Ballet, New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet and Australian Ballet. He is on the board of directors of Dance Umbrella, London's international contemporary dance festival. A finalist of World Stage Design 2013, he has designed UK productions that have won several Olivier, National Dance Critics and South Bank Show Awards. He is nominated for Best Designer at the International Benois de la Danse 2016. (JeanMarcPuissant.com)

Lee Blakeley

DIRECTOR



From: West Yorkshire, England.

LA Opera: *Falstaff* (2013, debut).

Career highlights: He trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Most recently he directed *Kiss Me, Kate*, his sixth production at Paris' Théâtre du Châtelet in as many seasons, following *A Little Night Music* (with Leslie Caron, Greta Scacchi and Lambert Wilson), *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods* and *The*

King and I (with Susan Graham). Earlier this season, his production of *Sweeney Todd*, starring Stephanie Blythe, was part of San Francisco Opera's opening weekend. Last season he directed Handel's *Richard the Lionheart (Riccardo Primo)* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and *Rigoletto* at Santa Fe Opera, his fourth production there. He has directed productions for the Vlaamse Opera, Canadian Opera, Scottish Opera, Minnesota Opera, Wexford Opera Festival, Grand Théâtre Luxembourg, Macedonian National Opera, ENO and Angers Nantes Opera. In 2007 he was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship. (LeeBlakeley.com)

Brigitte Reiffenstuel

COSTUME DESIGNER



From: Munich, Germany.

LA Opera: debut.

Career highlights: She studied at the London College of Fashion and at St. Martin's School of Art. Since 1993, she has worked internationally as a costume designer. She has designed costumes for Metropolitan Opera productions of *Falstaff*, *Il Trovatore*, *Giulio Cesare* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She has also designed for the

Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*Falstaff*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Faust*, *Elektra*), English National Opera (*Lucrezia Borgia*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tosca*, *The Damnation of Faust*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Boris Godunov*), Deutsche Oper Berlin (*Peter Grimes*), Frankfurt Opera (*Don Carlo*), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (*Giulio Cesare*), La Scala (*Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*), Opéra National de Paris (*Adriana Lecouvreur*), Zurich Opera (*The Queen of Spades*), Bavarian State Opera (*Lulu*), Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Il Trovatore*, *The Makropulos Case*) and Hamburg Opera (*I Lombardi*, *The Two Foscari*, *La Battaglia di Legnano*).

ARTISTS

Rick Fisher

LIGHTING DESIGNER



From: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

LA Opera: *Albert Herring* (2012, debut), *Falstaff* (2013).

Career highlights: In 2009, he won Tony and Drama Desk Awards for *Billy Elliot* on Broadway; he also lit the West End, Australian and new UK touring productions. He has been a regular at Santa Fe Opera since 2001, designing three productions there in 2015: *Salome*, *Rigoletto* and *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Earlier

this season, he designed *Sweeney Todd* for the San Francisco Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Previous opera credits include Theodore Morrison's *Oscar* in Santa Fe and Philadelphia, and *The Fiery Angel* and *Turandot* at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. He has spent most of his career in Great Britain where he has served as chairman of the Association of Lighting Designers. Other recent projects include *The Audience* for the West End and Broadway, *Waste* at the National Theatre, *Sunny Afternoon* in the West End, *The King and I* and the French premiere of *Sweeney Todd* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*.

Nicola Bowie

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR



From: London, England.

LA Opera: *Fidelio* (2007, debut), *Falstaff* (2013).

Career highlights: She danced professionally with English National Ballet before joining English National Opera as Head of Movement and Dance (1980-1998). In that capacity, she choreographed more than 40 productions there. Since 1998 she has worked as a director and choreographer at New York City

Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Virginia Opera, Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, Eugene Opera, Arizona Opera, San Diego Opera, Graz Oper, Oper Bonn, Semper Oper in Dresden, Bavarian State Opera in Munich, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Scottish Opera, Korean National Opera, National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, Teatro Real Madrid, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon, Opera Zuid in Maastricht, San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Opera McGill in Montreal, USC and Cal State Long Beach. (NicolaBowie.com)

Grant Gershon

CHORUS DIRECTOR



From: Alhambra, California.

LA Opera: Resident Conductor since 2012, he made his LAO conducting debut with *La Traviata* in 2009, followed by the world premiere of *Il Postino* in 2010. He has conducted nine productions to date, including, most recently, *Gianni Schicchi* (2015). Next season he will conduct *Wonderful Town* and *Tosca*.

Career highlights: *La Traviata*, *Carmen* and *Madame Butterfly*

at Wolf Trap Opera with the National Symphony Orchestra, John Adams' *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* at the Ravinia Festival, Vivaldi's *Griselda* at the Santa Fe Opera, many appearances with the LA Philharmonic. He is artistic director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, where he is now in his 15th season. He has led world premieres by John Adams, Steve Reich and Esa-Pekka Salonen, among others. His discography includes multiple CDs with the Master Chorale on Nonesuch and Decca Records, as well as the DVD of *Il Postino* on Sony Classical.

Ana María Martínez

CIO-CIO-SAN

SOPRANO



From: San Juan, Puerto Rico.

LA Opera: Mimi in *La Bohème* (1997, debut; 2004); Violetta in *La Traviata* (2001); Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* (2012); Nedda in *Pagliacci* (2015).

Career highlights: A Grammy Award winner, she has sung Cio-Cio-San to acclaim with the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, Munich Opera Festival, Houston Grand Opera and Washington National

Opera. A 1995 Operalia winner, she appeared this season as Cio-Cio-San and as Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Met and the title role of *Rusalka* in Houston, and she will make her role debut as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in San Francisco. Other recent engagements include Donna Elvira in Chicago, Mimi in Paris and Dallas, and Paolina in *Poliuto* at the Glyndebourne Festival. Other highlights include *Rusalka* in Chicago and at Glyndebourne, and *Carmen* in Houston and Santa Fe. Next season, she will perform Donna Elvira in San Francisco, Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* in Chicago and Marguerite in *Faust* in Houston. (AnaMariaMartinez.com)

Stefano Secco

PINKERTON

TENOR



PHOTO BY JOHN VICTORY

From: Milan, Italy.
LA Opera: Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* (2012, debut).
Career highlights: After summer performances as Pinkerton with the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago, he began the current season as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and the title role of *Stiffelio* at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, and as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love* at the Vienna State Opera. Upcoming

engagements include the title role of *Werther* at the Royal Opera House of Muscat, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Savonlinna Opera Festival, Hoffmann in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Opéra National de Paris and Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Seattle Opera. Highlights of recent seasons include Pinkerton in Hamburg, Toronto, Florence, Dresden, Chicago, Barcelona, Berlin and San Francisco; Macduff in *Macbeth* at La Scala and in Madrid; Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Paris, Salerno, Bilbao, Zurich, Torre del Lago, Rome and Munich; and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in Venice and Bologna. (StefanoSecco.com)

Kihun Yoon

SHARPLESS

BARITONE



From: Seoul, South Korea.
LA Opera: Servant in *Thaïs* (debut, 2014), Hercules in *Hercules vs. Vampires* (2015), Ser Amantio di Nicolao in *Gianni Schicchi* (2015). Now in his third season as a member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, he will return later this season as Schounard in *La Bohème*. Next season, he will return to the company as Sciarrone in *Tosca*.

Career highlights: In 2015, he sang the leading role of Figaro in Paisiello's rarely performed adaptation of *The Barber of Seville*, under the baton of James Conlon with the USC Thornton School of Music Orchestra. He also performed the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* with the Merola Opera Program. He performed several roles in Unsub Chin's new opera *Alice in Wonderland* with the LA Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 2014, he made his role debut as Escamillo in *Carmen* with the Aspen Opera Theater.

Milena Kitic

SUZUKI

MEZZO-SOPRANO



From: Belgrade, Serbia.
LA Opera: Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* (debut, 2002), *A Concert of Passion & Poetry* (2003), Carmen (2004, 2013), Meg Page in *Falstaff* (2005), Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* (2012), Albine in *Thaïs* (2014), Mrs. Noah in *Noah's Flood* (2015).
Career highlights: She has sung Carmen more than 200 times throughout Europe and the U.S., including at the Metropolitan

Opera. She earned the German music critics' award as "Performer of the Season" for her Carmen in Essen. Recent appearances include recitals in Houston and many local universities, as well as Carmen and Beethoven's 9th with the Pacific Symphony. She has performed Maddalena in *Rigoletto* in Berlin and Salzburg; Emilia in *Otello* at Ravinia, Carnegie Hall and Mexico City; and Laura in *La Gioconda* at Dorset Festival and Carnegie Hall. Opera Pacific appearances include Carmen, Dalila, Herodias and Amneris. An adjunct professor and inaugural Artist-in-Residence at Chapman University, she holds a private opera studio. (MilenaKitic.com)

Keith Jameson

GORO

TENOR



PHOTO BY SIMON PAULY

From: Greenwood, South Carolina.
LA Opera: Valletto in *The Coronation of Poppea* (debut, 2006), Goro in *Madame Butterfly* (2008), Pietro in *The Stigmatized* (2010), Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* (2011); Remendado in *Carmen* (2013), Novice in *Billy Budd* (2014).
Career highlights: He recently performed Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro* at Lyric

Opera of Chicago. He also returned to the Dallas Opera as Yab the Elf in the world premiere of Mark Adamo's *Becoming Santa Claus*, filmed for DVD. He sang the title role of *Candide* with Opera di Firenze, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 he performed Alméric in *Iolanta* (seen in "Live from the Met Opera" in HD in movie theaters worldwide) and Remendado in *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera. Last season he sang Bardolfo in *Falstaff* at the Saito Kinen Festival and debuted with the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo in Brazil as Candide. (KeithJameson.org)

ARTISTS



Nicholas Brownlee

BONZE *BASS-BARITONE*

From: Mobile, Alabama. **LA Opera:** Several roles in *The Ghosts of Versailles* (2015, debut), Lycos in *Hercules vs Vampires* (2015); Captain Gardiner in *Moby-Dick* (2015); Speaker /

Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*. A member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, he will return as Colline in *La Bohème* and Angelotti in *Tosca*. **Career highlights:** A 2015 winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, he will make his Met debut next season as the First Soldier in *Salome*. He recently made his Atlanta Opera debut as Colline in *La Bohème* and appeared as the Physician in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the LA Philharmonic. He has appeared with Santa Fe Opera as Don Fernando in *Fidelio* and the First Soldier in *Salome*. He performed in Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* with the LA Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.



Patrick Blackwell

IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER
BASS-BARITONE

From: New York. **LA Opera:** Lt. Ratcliffe in *Billy Budd* (2014, debut); Ghost Quartet in *The Ghosts of Versailles* (2015). **Career highlights:**

Recent appearances include Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* at Knoxville Opera, a European tour as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* and Scarpia in *Tosca* with Pacific Opera Project. He has appeared in *Salome* with Utah Opera and as Porgy at the Castleton Festival and with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in Anthony Davis' *Amistad*. New York City Opera appearances included Dr. Grenvil in *La Traviata* and Colline in *La Bohème*. Future engagements include Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Utah Opera and Porgy with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House.



Daniel Armstrong

YAMADORI *BARITONE*

From: Houston, Texas. **LA Opera:** Captain in *Luisa Fernanda* (debut, 2007), 16 mainstage appearances including, most recently, Starbuck in *Moby-Dick* and Pinellino in *Gianni Schicchi*

(2015) and Marquis d'Obigny in *La Traviata* (2014). He is an alumnus of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program. **Career highlights:** He performed the leading role of the Jester in the west coast premiere of Ernst Krenek's *The Secret Kingdom* with the Colburn Orchestra, conducted by James Conlon. He was also the baritone soloist for Bach's *Magnificat* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, under the baton of music director Jeffrey Kahane. In 2013, he performed the leading role of Tarquinius in Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* with the Colburn Orchestra under the baton of James Conlon.



Lacey Jo Benter

KATE PINKERTON *MEZZO-SOPRANO*

From: Cedar Rapids, Iowa. **LA Opera:** Ghost Quartet in *The Ghosts of Versailles* (2015, debut); Persephone in *Hercules vs Vampires* (2015); Clotilde in *Norma* (2015). She is a

member of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program.

Career highlights: Earlier this season, she was a soloist in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels with Plácido Domingo. She has appeared with the LA Philharmonic in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with Gustavo Dudamel, returning for several roles in Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland*, which she reprised for her Barbican Hall debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Next season, she returns to the LA Philharmonic in *Nixon in China*. She received a master's of music in opera performance and an artist diploma in opera from The Juilliard School.



Gabriel Vamvulescu

OFFICIAL REGISTRAR *BASS*

From: Timisoara, Romania. **LA Opera:** Youth's Friend/Servant in *The Stigmatized* (2010), Imperial Commissioner in *Madame Butterfly* (2012), several roles in *The Ghosts of Versailles*

(2015); Guccio in *Gianni Schicchi* (2015). **Career highlights:** He studied at the Enescu National Conservatory in Bucharest, and then joined the Romanian National Opera apprentice program. He subsequently studied at the University of Maryland with Francois Loup.



Nicholas Cuenca Terry

CIO-CIO-SAN'S CHILD (MAR 12, 23, 31)

From: Los Angeles. **LA Opera:** debut. **Career highlights:** Five-year-old Nicholas is currently finishing his last year at Beach Babies in El Segundo before starting kindergarten in the

fall. A consummate performer, he is never one to shy from cracking a joke, singing a song, or entertaining his family and friends. In his spare time, Nicholas stars in his own YouTube cooking series called Macaroni Kitchen.



Michael Alspaugh

CIO-CIO-SAN'S CHILD (MAR 20, 26, APR 3)

From: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. **LA Opera:**

debut. **Career highlights:** Michael is five years old and attends pre-K at Christ the King school in Oklahoma City. He began performing at

Hickman's Music School at the age of three. His first role was Tiny Tim at the Pollard Theatre in Guthrie, Oklahoma. He would like to dedicate this role to his great-grandmother Lucia, who loved opera.

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Lisa Crave*
Nicole Fernandes
Virenia Lind**

Renee Sousa*
Courtney Taylor
Rebecca Tomlinson*
Sunjoo Yeo

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Aleta Braxton**
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Adriana Manfredi

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Bonnie Snell Schindler
Melissa Treinkman

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Omar Crook
Steven Harms
John Kimberling*
Charles Lane*

Francis Lucaric**
Sal Malaki**
Mark David Miller**
George Sterne**

* Has appeared in 50 or more productions

** Has appeared in 100 or more productions

SUPERNUMERARIES

Marwence Agustin
Chris Capizzi
Brinklee Kallyn King
Nathan Lee
Jian Leonardo

Joshua Olkowski
Callula Sawyer
Ottavio Taddei
Jeff Wang

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THE DOMINGO-COLBURN-STEIN YOUNG ARTIST PROGRAM

Identifying and encouraging talented young artists with enormous potential is essential to the future of opera. Since the company's inception, LA Opera has been committed to nurturing a resident ensemble of young singers who would benefit from long-term professional development. The Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, which builds on the success of the company's earlier, highly respected Resident Artist Program, has the goal of developing the talents of exceptionally gifted young artists to become performers of potentially international stature, whose first loyalty would be to LA Opera.

The Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program is generously underwritten by the **Colburn Foundation** and **Eugene and Marilyn Stein**. Special support for young artist stipends is graciously provided by **The Lenore and Richard Wayne Young Artist Fellowship**. The program was created with funding from the **Flora L. Thornton Foundation**.

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Frederick Ballentine
TENOR

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SOPRANO

Lacey Jo Benter
MEZZO-SOPRANO

Nicholas Brownlee
BASS-BARITONE

Summer Hassan
SOPRANO

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