Great Performances at the Met: Madama Butterfly

Premieres nationwide Sunday, February 2 at 12 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

Synopsis
Season 14 of Great Performances at the Met continues Sunday, February 2 at 12 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) with Puccini’s tragic love story Madama Butterfly. Soprano Hui He stars as the young geisha Cio-Cio-San alongside tenor Bruce Sledge as her husband Lt. Benjamin Pinkerton. Baritone Paulo Szot as Sharpless and mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong as Suzuki complete the cast. Pier Giorgio Morandi conducts.

Anthony Minghella’s production is set in Japan at the turn of the 20th century. Lt. Benjamin Pinkerton of the U.S. Navy inspects a house overlooking the Nagasaki harbor. The house comes with three servants and a geisha wife named Cio-Cio-San, also known as Madam Butterfly. When Sharpless, the American consul, arrives, Pinkerton tells him about his interest in Butterfly and his intentions to marry her, despite not knowing whether his feelings for Butterfly are love or a whim. Sharpless warns Pinkerton that the girl may view the marriage differently, but Pinkerton brushes off his concerns and says that someday he will take a real American wife. Butterfly admits she’s 15 and tells Pinkerton that she has been to the Christian mission and will embrace his religion. Butterfly’s uncle, a priest known as the Bonze, arrives and curses her for going to the mission and rejecting her ancestral religion. Pinkerton orders that the Bonze and his relatives leave. As they go, they denounce Butterfly. Despite this, Pinkerton and Butterfly marry.

Three years pass and Butterfly awaits her husband’s return home. Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it, Goro, a marriage broker, arrives with a suitor for Butterfly. Goro introduces a wealthy prince named Yamadori. Butterfly responds that she’s not available for marriage and that Pinkerton has not deserted her. Pinkerton’s ship arrives back in town, but his return isn’t the reunion she expected.

Christine Goerke hosts.
Short Listing
Watch Hui He in the title role of Puccini’s masterpiece conducted by Pier Giorgio Morandi.

Long Listing
Soprano Hui He plays the tragic title role with tenor Bruce Sledge as the naval officer who abandons her in Puccini’s classic masterpiece. Pier Giorgio Morandi conducts Anthony Minghella’s sweeping production of this tragic love story.

Airdates
National and New York metro area: Sunday, February 2 at 12 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

Notable Talent
- Hui He – Cio-Cio-San
- Elizabeth DeShong – Suzuki
- Bruce Sledge – Lt. Benjamin Pinkerton
- Paulo Szot – U.S. Consul Sharpless
- Raymond Aceto – The Bonze
- Tony Stevenson – Goro
- Jeongcheol Cha – Yamadori
- Pier Giorgio Morandi – Conductor
- Christine Goerke – Host

Run time: 3 hours

Production Credits
- Pier Giorgio Morandi – Conductor
- Anthony Minghella – Production
- Carolyn Choa – Director and Choreographer
- Michael Levine – Set Designer
- Han Feng – Costume Designer
- Peter Mumford – Lighting Designer
- Blind Summit Theatre – Puppetry
- Paula Williams – Revival Stage Director

For the Met, Habib Azar directs the telecast. Tim Martyn is Music Producer. Mia Bongiovanni and Elena Park are Supervising Producers, and Louisa Briccetti and Victoria Warironchik are Producers. Peter Gelb is Executive Producer. For Great Performances, Bill O’Donnell is Series Producer; David Horn is Executive Producer.
Underwriters
Corporate support for Great Performances at the Met is provided by Toll Brothers, America’s luxury home builder®. This Great Performances at the Met presentation is funded by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Arts Fund, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation and public television viewers.

Series Overview
Great Performances at the Met is a presentation of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET, bringing the best of the Metropolitan Opera into the homes of classical music fans across the United States.


About WNET
WNET is America’s flagship PBS station: parent company of New York’s THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new ALL ARTS multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend, and the nightly interview program Amanpour and Company. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

About The Met
Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, The Metropolitan Opera is one of America’s leading performing arts organizations and a vibrant home for the world’s most creative and talented artists, including singers, conductors, composers, orchestra musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers. The company presents more than 200 performances each season of a wide variety of operas, ranging from early masterpieces to contemporary works. In recent years, the Met has launched many initiatives designed to make opera more accessible, most prominently the Live in HD series of cinema transmissions, which dramatically expands the Met audience by allowing select performances to be seen in more than 2,200 theaters in more than 70 countries around the world.