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SUPER AUDIO CD

LEONTYNE PRICE
Puccini
**MADAMA
BUTTERFLY**

RICHARD TUCKER
ROSALIND ELIAS • PHILIP MAERO
ERICH LEINSDORF



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MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Opera in three acts Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Based on the story by John Luther Long and the drama by David Belasco

First performed at La Scala, Milan, February 17, 1904



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THE CAST

Madama Butterfly (Cio-Cio-San)	Leontyne Price, <i>soprano</i>
Suzuki, Cio-Cio-San's servant	Rosalind Elias, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
B.F. Pinkerton,	Richard Tucker, <i>tenor</i>
Lieutenant in the United States Navy	
Kate Pinkerton, his American wife	Anna di Stasio, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Sharpless,	Philip Maero, <i>baritone</i>
United States Consul at Nagasaki	
Goro, a marriage broker	Piero de Palma, <i>tenor</i>
Prince Yamadori,	Robert Kerns, <i>baritone</i>
suitor for Cio-Cio-San	
The Bonze, Cio-Cio-San's uncle	Virgilio Carbonari, <i>bass</i>
Imperial Commissioner	Arturo La Porta, <i>baritone</i>
The Registrar	Mario Rinaudo, <i>bass</i>
Yakuside, the uncle	Leo Pudis, <i>bass</i>
Mother of Cio-Cio-San	Fernanda Cadoni, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
The Aunt	Gianna Lollini, <i>soprano</i>
The Cousin	Silvia Bertona, <i>soprano</i>

RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Erich Leinsdorf, *conductor*

Nino Antonellini, *chorus master*

Luigi Ricci, Ugo Catania, Fernando Cavaniglia, *assistant conductors*

Stereophonic Stage Manager: Carl O. von Hoersten

Recorded July 10–20, 1962, RCA Italiana Studios, Rome

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DISC 1

ACT I

- 1 *Orchestral Opening* 1:03
- 2 *E soffitto e pareti* 5:28
- 3 *Dovunque al mondo lo Yankee* 3:54
- 4 *Amore o grillo* 3:26
- 5 *Ancora un passo or via*
(Butterfly's Entrance) 3:01
- 6 *Gran ventura* 3:19
- 7 *L'Imperial Commissario* 3:02
- 8 *Vieni, amor mio!* 2:26
- 9 *Ieri son salita tutta sola* 1:50
- 10 *Tutti zitti!* 1:16
- 11 *Madama Butterfly!* 2:08
- 12 *Cio-Cio-San!* 2:20
- 13 *Bimba, bimba, non piangere*
- 14 *Bimba dagli occhi*
- 15 *Vogliatemi bene*

ACT II

- 16 *E Izaghi ed Izanami* 6:29
- 17 *Un bel dì* 4:26

5:25
Love Duet 4:01
 7:11

DISC 2

- 1 C'è. Entrate 4:03
- 2 Yamadori, ancor le pene 4:43
- 3 Ora a noi 3:00
- 4 Due cose potrei far 2:03
- 5 Ah! M'ha scordata? 4:55
- 6 Io scendo al piano 3:10
- 7 Il cannone del porto! 3:42
- 8 Tutti i fior? (*Flower Duet*) 3:52
- 9 Or vienmi ad adornar 4:45
- 10 *Humming Chorus* 2:55

ACT III

- 11 Oh eh! Oh eh! 7:40
- 12 Già il sole! 4:03
- 13 Io so che alle sue pene 3:43
- 14 Addio, fiorito asil 2:56
- 15 Suzuki, Suzuki! 5:47
- 16 Come una mosca 2:43
- 17 "Con onor muore ...
(*Death of Butterfly*) 4:44

THE FAILURE AND SUCCESS OF BUTTERFLY BY GEORGE R. MAREK (1962)

It seems there was a young girl of good family who made her living as an entertainer. She met and fell in love with a naval officer, a foreigner. She married him. After a brief spell of idyllic happiness, he left her without ever once writing to her or sending word or giving a sign of life or even caring about the little son who was born to her. Yet she still considered herself to be his lawful wedded wife, refused to believe that he had forsaken her, refused all other offers of marriage, being sure that he would return to her one fine day. He did come back, only to tell her that he had remarried a woman of his own country. Thereupon the poor girl killed herself.

What a sob-filled, tear-drenched story! It is a little difficult to accept it in these acerbic times. It is a little reminiscent of women's magazine literature of fifty years ago. The heroine

is a bit too good to be true, or too true to be believable. Yet, ingenuous though the story be, it does become believable, it does become moving, it does make a claim on our emotions because a man who was a genius set it to music. Such is the power of music. Such is the power of opera, an art where old-fashioned stories seem timeless, provided that the timelessness resides in the music.

Puccini chose as the source of his libretto a story by John Luther Long which first appeared in an American magazine and was then snapped up by that canny but magisterial magician of the American stage, David Belasco. Both as a story and as a play it enjoyed enormous success. Blanche Bates, who played the original Cho-Cho-San, wrung fountains of tears from her audiences and did it so successfully that Belasco took the play to London, where it was seen by the composer. As

a play *Madame Butterfly* never had much merit and seems today as antiquated as a jewel-studded hairpin. Cho-Cho-San is a pidgin-English creation; this is how she talked in the play:

Kate: Why, you poor little thing ... who in the world could blame you or call you responsible ... you pretty little plaything. (*Takes Madame Butterfly in her arms*)

Madame Butterfly (*softly*): No – plaything ... I am Mrs. Leften – and B. F. – No – no – now I am, only – Cho-Cho-San, but no playthin' ... (*She rises, then impassively*) How long you been marry?

As source material for an opera, *Butterfly* is less worthy than Sardou's *Tosca* and less good than Murger's novel about the life of the Bohemians. Puccini, who was highly sensitive to dramatic and to literary values, chose

the subject because he was moved by the play when he saw it in London, even though he understood almost no English. So he said, but we may safely conjecture that what attracted him was the nature of the little girl who married that cad of a foreigner. She is related to the other female figures who made an appeal to his imagination. Cio-Cio-San is a sister of Liù, a half-sister of Mimi, a cousin of Manon, and a not-too-distantly-removed relative of the more self-assured Tosca. These frail, fragile creatures, these unheroic heroines who, loving wholly, are wholly broken by love, these are the ones who fired Puccini's mind. He was not terribly interested in the men of his operas. The best part of his genius belonged to the little women, all of whom he visualized with love and made come alive.

Puccini did not seek to storm the heavens. His music lives not on a mountaintop but in a small house, in the case of *Butterfly* a very small house with sliding walls, rented for nine hundred and ninety-nine years with the privilege of cancellation at any time. Here the composer was at home, here he could express, in a musical language of incomparable sensitiveness, the romantic pulse of his heart. Though *Butterfly* was composed in our century, Puccini belongs to the romantic movement of the last century (he was not one of the school of verismo as is sometimes claimed). In rendering emotion intimate, in expressing the poignancy of everyday love, in turning sadness sweet, in gently knocking on the door of our hearts, Puccini was the master. To be inspired, he had to, as he himself said, fall in love with his Mimis and Liùs, and we may take him at his word when he

tells us that he loved Cio-Cio-San more than any of his other women.

One other feature of the story made a strong appeal to him and was then and is today responsible for some of *Butterfly*'s popularity: its setting. This setting is a Japan redolent of cherry blossoms, a Japan which perhaps never did exist. Certain is, Puccini was never there.

The literary possibilities of the mysterious East were being discovered at the turn of the century and Puccini was aware of it. To the romancers Japan was a country exclusively inhabited by people of refinement where every man's thoughts were subtle and every woman bowed low in sweet submission. Novels and stories with a Japanese locale abounded and its art was influencing European art, particularly the work of the French impressionists and of Whistler. The public, to quote

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Bunthorne in *Patience*, "longed for all one sees that's Japanese."

In order for us to love *Butterfly* we must accept two conditions (very easy ones!). One is that we must be at home in this dream-Japan – which turns out to be a province of Italy – and the other, that we must grant Puccini the right to be sentimental.

Once we accept these conditions we are in a position to admire this curious opera not only for its emotional pull but for other qualities. Why "curious"? Isn't it curious that the tenor is the villain? Isn't it curious that in an Italian opera the tenor has no set arias to sing, for the two songs the tenor does have are too small to be called "arias"? As a matter of fact, *Butterfly* contains fewer "set pieces" than *Bohème* or *Tosca*, "Un bel dì" being the exception. Even the Flower Duet cannot be lifted from its context and sung in a concert hall.

What this means is this: the music is marvelously amalgamated with the drama, it is in the best sense of the word theatrical music, it makes the tragedy believable (as I have said), and it charms into life the central character who from her entrance to the end of the work is almost continuously on stage, without our wearying of her. Of course the score abounds in melody, but the melody is consistently held in the service of events and characters.

In preparing himself for the composition, Puccini took the Japanese milieu seriously. He informed himself of Japanese customs, nomenclature, musical instruments, architecture, etc. He studied Japanese music, including the Japanese national anthem, strains of which he worked into the score as he did snatches from *The Star-Spangled Banner*. But these exotic touches really are not very important. For what comes

out is pure Puccini, though, to be sure, with a special *Butterfly* style. No other work of his is so fragrant. How weightless this opera is, how it seems to float in perfumed air! Is this a paradox? *Butterfly* is a realistic story and Cio-Cio-San stabs herself most realistically. Yet after hearing the opera we feel as if we have listened to a fairy tale. Only the snobs can't listen to a fairy tale.

THE FIASCO OF THE PREMIÈRE

The first performance of *Butterfly* was a failure, the causes for which have never been satisfactorily explained. Initial failures of fine works of art are not so rare that the story of this première would be worth retelling were it not for the almost unique intensity of

the venom which the audience spewed out. It is probable that the fiasco was due at least partly to an organized cabal. It is unlikely that this will ever be proved one way or the other.

At the time that *Butterfly* was to be given Puccini was an enormously successful composer. *Manon Lescaut*, *Bohème* and *Tosca* had made their way throughout the world. Many members of Italian musical society looked with envy at this success, particularly since Puccini always kept pretty much to himself and belonged to no group.

In spite of his successes, he was never totally sure of himself and frightfully nervous at the birth of each work. But this time he was confident. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, who had accepted the work for La Scala, was determined to give it the finest possible production. Giovanni Zenatello was Pinkerton,

Giuseppe de Luca Sharpless, the conductor Campanini. And Cio-Cio-San was Rosina Storchio, a superb singer and a beautiful woman, small, delicate, intelligent, sensitive to direction, young, and suffused with artistic sincerity. All who worked with her remember her affectionately and speak of her with smiling admiration. She was one of Toscanini's favorite singers. For once Puccini was confident. He had given of his best, he had worked over every passage, correcting and improving countless times, as the manuscript shows. During the rehearsals at La Scala, over which Tito Ricordi (his publisher) presided, the stagehands, men not easily impressed, walked on tiptoe, often stopped their work altogether, and listened with tears in their eyes. After the dress rehearsal, the orchestra rose to its feet and congratulated the composer. Yes, for once there was no

doubt about it: this was going to be a success. Puccini usually begged his family to stay away from his premières. This was the one and only time that he not only permitted them to come but actually invited his sisters to Milan. At the beginning of the performance, three of them, decorously clad in black, were to be seen ensconced in a box. Expectation was enormous. Admission prices were raised. Twenty-five-thousand lire were taken in at the box office, a record.

On the day of the performance, Puccini sent Rosina Storchio a note:

February 17, 1904

Dearest Rosina: My good wishes are not necessary. So true, so fine, so moving is your wonderful art that the public must succumb to it! I hope that through you I will gain my victory. Until tonight, then – with confidence and much affection.

Night came. The audience assembled. The curtain rose. The beginning of the opera, up to the entrance of Butterfly, was heard in silence. An ominous sign, for Italian audiences do not listen in silence when they like what they are hearing. Just before the entrance of Butterfly – Storchio was standing in the wings with Puccini, her hands cold as ice – a super came by mumbling, "What is the matter with the public?" Storchio broke out into a cold sweat. The assistant conductor pointed: it was her cue. She sang backstage the first phrase of Cio-Cio-San's, that enchanting phrase, "One more step and we have arrived." She was on the stage. Silence. No applause. She continued to sing. And suddenly there was a shout from the balcony, "That is *Bohème*." Immediately the cry was echoed by other voices: "*Bohème! Bohème!*" We've heard that already. Give us

something new!" Then all was quiet again. Quiet during the wedding ceremony. Quiet during the long love duet. At the climax of the duet a few handclaps; so sparse were they that in the darkness of the theater they sounded like an emphasis on silence. The curtain fell. Again a little applause – very little – mixed with hisses.

During the intermission, no one came backstage, not a friend, not a journalist. An actor once told me that failure could always be recognized after the first act. If no one appeared to make a fuss over you, you were ready to look for another job. There were two hectic spots on Puccini's face as he walked up and down, smoking one cigarette after another, unmindful of the two firemen stationed backstage. Tito was cold and composed. He went over to Storchio and said, "At the second act the reaction will set in. I swear to you that it will be a success."

The second act began. At one moment Storchio turned around quickly. A draft caught her kimono and it ballooned up. At that a hoarse voice in the audience shouted, "Butterfly is pregnant." Storchio began to weep. She finished "*Un bel dì*" in a voice thickened by tears. There was again scattered applause. But when she introduced the child to Sharpless, pandemonium broke loose. Grunts, growls, groans, laughter, ironic cries of "*Bis!*," obscene remarks, and hisses hailed down on the performers. From then on hardly a note was heard in silence. The derogatory noises reached their climax during the Intermezzo. (We must remember that *Butterfly* in the original version was given in two acts, the Intermezzo connecting Scenes 1 and 2 of Act II.) As the gentle chirping of birds was heard, the audience answered: they barked like dogs, burst

into cock-a-doodle-does of roosters, brayed like asses, and mooed like cows as if – Storchio said – dawn in Japan were taking place in Noah's Ark. Nothing after that failed to strike the audience as funny. The final scene, the preparation for the suicide and the suicide itself, was heard in comparative quiet, but when the curtain fell, *Butterfly* ended amidst laughter and derogatory shouts. There were no curtain calls, not a single one.

Puccini slunk home. He had not far to go: his apartment in the Via Verdi was across the street from La Scala. Even these few steps were painful: he hid himself against the walls as if – he said – he had been a man who had committed a dirty crime. He could not understand what had happened and why. But once the first humiliation had passed and the noise of the night abated, Puccini decided to save the

opera. The following morning he held a meeting at his apartment at which were present Tito and Giulio Ricordi, Illica and Giacosa (the librettists), and Rosina Storchio. The following decisions were taken: 1. The opera was to be withdrawn immediately. The second performance, already announced, was to be canceled. 2. The composer's, the librettists', and Ricordi's shares in the proceeds of the performance were to be restituted to the management of La Scala. (This was a heroic gesture.) 3. Puccini was to withdraw the score from general circulation, canceling also a projected performance in Rome, and he was to revise it. 4. The revisions completed, the opera was to be given in its new version not in Milan but in a smaller theater, as a tryout.

Puccini returned to his villa at Torre del Lago to make the corrections. He recast the work into three acts, shortened

it – particularly the wedding scene in the first act – and made several other improvements. The little town of Brescia was chosen for the premiere of the revised version. There it was given on the 28th of May, 1904. But the curious could hardly have been prevented from coming from Milan to Brescia to find out what new sensation was in store. What happened was astonishing. The pendulum had swung. From the outset the mood of the audience was different. At the very opening of the curtain the scenery was applauded, the first tenor solo was greeted with shouts of approval, and from then on the enthusiasm mounted and mounted. At the end of the first act the audience broke loose and nothing would do but that the curtain had again to be raised and the entire love duet repeated. At the end of the opera the audience stood, screamed and waved while over

and over again Puccini bowed. In the same spring Toscanini took *Butterfly* to Buenos Aires. There, with Rosina Storchio in the part, it enjoyed as great a triumph as in Brescia.

Never again did *Butterfly* fail. No other first performance proved short of a triumph. Within a few years it rivaled *Bohème* in popularity.

But like a father who cannot forget that his child had been a sickly infant, however sturdy he proves to be when he grows up, Puccini continued to regard the opera with sentimental anxiety. Rosina Storchio gave Puccini a painting of herself in the role. He hung this above his desk in the Via Verdi apartment. He looked at it often, and quoted the line from the opera, "*Rinnegata e felice*" – "Renounced but happy."

Vice-President and General Manager of the RCA Victor Record Division, Mr. Marek is a well-known authority on the opera. Among his books are *A Front Seat at the Opera*, *Puccini*, a biography of the composer, and most recently, *Opera As Theater*. He is also the editor of an anthology, *The World Treasury of Grand Opera*.

THE RECORDING BY RICHARD MOHR (1962)

This recording of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is the first complete opera to be made in the new RCA Italiana studios in Rome. It was recorded in July 1962, following three preparatory orchestra and chorus rehearsals, in a total of ten three-hour sessions.

Apart from the challenge inherent in any new recording of a familiar staple of the operatic repertoire, there was also an additional excitement occasioned by this new "hall," this still unfamiliar surrounding in which we were to realize all the emotional quality of Puccini's score. True, orchestral sessions of symphonic music had been held with unqualified success the preceding December, but large as some of those orchestrations were, we felt the studio's full capacity was yet to be assayed. There is, after all, a sound difference (in both senses of the word) between an orchestra of one hundred players and the same

force joined by a chorus of fifty and as many as eight soloists performing simultaneously at maximum strength.

Studio A, in which the sessions were held, is the largest of the four studios in the RCA Italiana building at Via Tiburtina km 12. It measures eighty by one hundred and twenty feet with a forty foot height, a total volume of nearly four hundred thousand cubic feet. Its air-conditioned vastness is designed to accommodate a maximum of two hundred and fifty people, far more than *Butterfly* required, although in its largest and most complex sections it did employ one hundred and eighty artists and artisans. At one end of the studio is a stage area of forty by eighty feet, and it was upon this field, further extended by the now familiar marked "checkerboard" of numbered squares, that chorus and soloists were maneuvered.

Being faced with this huge box, this empty volume of captured air provides

one of life's greatest thrills for recording director and technical staff. Well in advance of the first session, RCA Victor's engineers had arrived from New York. For two weeks prior to the first rehearsal, John F. Pfeiffer, Red Seal Sound Administrator; Albert A. Pulley, Administrator of Red Seal Engineering; and Lewis W. Layton, Red Seal Recording Engineer, had tested and retested microphones, recording console, reproducing speakers in the control room and all the additional mechanical apparatus which must, sometimes reluctantly, be made to conform, to serve as handmaiden to the art to be reproduced.

A hand-picked orchestra, drawn from the best players in Rome, had been auditioned by RCA Italiana staff members two months in advance. Chorus personnel were individually auditioned and selected with the same care.

Three rehearsals were scheduled. The first was held July 6 for orchestra only. On July 7 they were joined by chorus, and on July 9 (the eighth being Sunday and a day of rest) the final "dress" was held. For that, soloists were added, and the artistic roster was complete. It would be patently untrue to say that with the first downbeat on July 6, we had exactly what we wanted. But we did know from that first downbeat that what we wanted was there awaiting capture on tape, and that this would be the finest operatic recording we had yet made.

It is difficult to convey in words the excitement, enthusiasm and even occasional heartbreak involved in such preparatory work. There is a basic, all-embracing drive on the part of everyone concerned to outdo all his previous accomplishment, to realize a sound quality so beautifully natural that

the stigma of "mechanical reproduction" will vanish. Invaluable in providing this ideal "sound envelope" was George R. Marek, whose objective opinions and great love for Puccini's music acted as a guiding directive for us all.

With this combination in the control room, we were equally fortunate on the artistic side. A better cast, conductor, orchestra and chorus could not have been assembled. After nine hours of sound experimentation, replete with alternate defeat and triumph, all of us felt the ideal had been achieved, the long-sought-for quality of sound that would enable Maestro Leinsdorf, Leontyne Price, Richard Tucker, Rosalind Elias, Philip Maero and their colleagues to re-create Puccini's musical drama relatively unaware of recording's technical demands and restrictions.

For *Madama Butterfly* those technical problems are not always immediately

solvable. The opera is in one way a hybrid child, combining as it does Oriental delicacy of orchestration with full-blooded, surgingly Italianate melodies. In percussion alone, Puccini writes for Japanese bells, the customary orchestral bells, Japanese tam-tam, regular tam-tam, bird calls and the usual assortment of timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals and triangle. None of this is capricious on his part. Each has its role to play, sometimes so delicate a one that its end contribution is more an orchestral color than a distinct note, but without that color, what a difference there would be! For the Japanese bells, impossible to find in Europe, we borrowed from the Metropolitan Opera the set made specifically for its first *Butterfly* performance in 1907. The off-stage cannon shot in Act II, announcing the arrival of Pinkerton's ship, presented a

different problem. For two days explosive charges as well as real cannon shots reverberated through the outskirts of Rome during the most peaceful siesta hours before the exact illusion of a port cannon was realized. The bird calls in the Act III orchestral introduction occasioned sufficient rehearsal to provide a perpetual aviary of sound.

Do not think, however, our prime concern was only for these touches of realism stipulated by Puccini. Before each of the ten sessions, additional piano rehearsals were held to prepare again the music to be recorded that day. Three television relays synchronized the off-stage entrance of Butterfly in Act I and the distant sailors' calls of Act III with Maestro Leinsdorf's beat, while the stage manager communicated by walkie-talkie with the control room, correcting by minute proportions the position of one singer versus another.

It was within this framework of re-created sound-drama that the cast and conductor labored. What they have achieved is, in my possibly suspect opinion, a performance of *Madama Butterfly* that can merit only that much-maligned adjective "definitive." It is to their credit that always they wanted to "do it just once more," to repeat, to refine, to pursue as long as humanly possible the elusive charm of this beguiling story in music of one who "loved not wisely but too well." The result of their combined efforts becomes art in the most fundamental sense of the word.

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

The action takes place at Nagasaki, Japan, in the early 1900s

ACT I

United States Navy Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton is being shown the little house on the hill at Nagasaki which he has leased and is about to occupy with his Japanese wife. Goro, the marriage broker, who arranged the match and found the house, is enjoying Pinkerton's delight at the ingenious contrivances of the building. Suzuki and two other servants enter and are introduced to the new master of the house. Presently Sharpless, the United States Consul, arrives, and Pinkerton tells him of Cio-Cio-San, the beautiful Japanese girl who has captivated him and of the marriage he is about to enter into – for

nine hundred and ninety-nine years, but subject to monthly renewal! Sharpless warns that the girl may not regard her vows as lightly as Pinkerton regards his, but the lieutenant laughs at his friend's apprehension and proposes a toast – to America and the American girl who will someday be his "real" wife.

Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Cio-Cio-San and her girl friends. After everyone is introduced, Sharpless asks Cio-Cio-San about herself, and she tells him that since the death of her father she has had to support herself and her mother as a geisha. Soon her relatives arrive and noisily comment on the bridegroom and the marriage. When she finds a quiet moment, Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her few earthly possessions and then tells him that she has, secretly and unknown to her relatives, renounced her faith in favor of Christianity.

The Imperial Commissioner arrives and the marriage ceremony takes place. Sharpless, after a final word of caution to Pinkerton, leaves with the Japanese officials. The gay festivities are suddenly interrupted when Cio-Cio-San's uncle, The Bonze, rushes in shouting wildly. A priest, he has discovered her renunciation of the faith of her fathers and has come to denounce her. He insists that all of her relatives renounce her forever. When Pinkerton, annoyed, threatens him with bodily assault, the Bonze and all of the guests quickly leave. Butterfly is left weeping bitterly. Pinkerton gently consoles her, and in the thought of his love, she is happy once again. Night falls over the garden and a long passionate love duet is sung by the couple.

ACT II

Three years have elapsed and Pinkerton has long since left Nagasaki, promising his wife that he will "return when the robins nest." As the curtain rises, Suzuki is seen praying before an image of Buddha. She implores the gods for aid, as the money that Pinkerton left is almost gone. Butterfly stands gazing toward the harbor. She has complete confidence that Pinkerton will return – one fine day his ship will appear on the horizon. She bids Suzuki to have faith, and goes on to describe the events that will take place that wonderful day.

Butterfly's happy reverie is interrupted by the arrival of Sharpless and Goro. The Consul goes into the house and is welcomed graciously by Butterfly who engages him in all kinds of small talk.

Sharpless tries several times unsuccessfully to explain the reason for his visit – the letter he has received from Pinkerton in which he tells of his marriage to an American girl and asks Sharpless to break the news to Butterfly. Before he can try again they are interrupted by Goro and Prince Yamadori, whom Goro is urging Butterfly to marry. Butterfly greets the Prince with dignity but reminds him that she is already wed. Goro declares that desertion is grounds for divorce, but Butterfly replies that this does not apply in her country – America. Further, she insists that she has not been deserted.

Yamadori leaves with Goro and finally Sharpless manages to tell Butterfly of the letter he has received. He starts to read; every phrase is interpreted by Butterfly as some happy assurance that her husband will return. Finally the Consul makes her realize

the true meaning of the letter. She recoils as if struck. After a moment she recovers, rushes into the other room and returns with her baby. As soon as Pinkerton knows of his son, she insists, he will return to them. Deeply moved, Sharpless leaves, fearful for the future but unable to tell Butterfly of the lieutenant's remarriage.

A cannon booms in the harbor. Seizing a telescope, Butterfly discovers that it is Pinkerton's ship coming into port. Butterfly's happiness knows no bounds. She has proved herself right! Her husband is returning to her! Quickly she orders Suzuki to help her decorate the house with blossoms. Then as night falls, she dons her wedding gown and, with her son and Suzuki, waits by the door for her husband's arrival.

ACT III

The long night of waiting has passed. The gray light of dawn finds Suzuki and the baby asleep, Butterfly still standing, watching, waiting. The sunshine finally awakens Suzuki, and she persuades Butterfly to take the baby and go and rest. Before long Sharpless, Pinkerton and Kate, his new wife, come to the house. When Suzuki realizes who the strange woman is, she breaks down in despair. Out of consideration for her mistress, however, Suzuki agrees, reluctantly, to aid in breaking the news to her. Pinkerton, surrounded by proofs of Butterfly's devotion and unbroken faith, now at last realizes the truth of Sharpless's warnings. He bids an anguished farewell to the scene of his former happiness, then rushes away leaving Sharpless to arrange things as

best he can. He has no sooner gone than Butterfly eagerly approaches the room. Suzuki tries vainly to keep her from entering, but Butterfly bursts in and anxiously looks around for Pinkerton. She sees Kate, and the terrible truth begins to dawn upon her. She bears the blow with a gentle dignity that is more touching than any lamentation. She wishes "the real American wife" happiness and sends Pinkerton a message that she herself will "find peace," and that he may have the child if he will return for him in half an hour. Kate leaves sadly with Sharpless.

Butterfly orders Suzuki to close the doors and draw the curtains, and then bids the sobbing maid to join the child in the garden. Butterfly goes to the shrine and takes the dagger from its sheath; dramatically, she reads the inscription: "To die with honor when one can no longer live with honor."

Just as she raises the blade to her throat, Suzuki pushes the child into the room. Butterfly drops the knife, seizes the child and smothers him with kisses. Then she seats him on a stool, puts an American flag and a doll in his hands and gently blindfolds him. Again she takes the dagger and goes behind the screen. A moment later the knife falls to the ground; Butterfly staggers toward the child and collapses at his feet. She dies as Pinkerton is heard calling her name.

TECHNICAL NOTES

JOHN NEWTON, *SOUNDMIRROR INC.*

Since the earliest days of recording, engineers have strived to make recorded sound as immediate and thrilling as natural sound. The earliest electrical recordings were made with a single microphone positioned in the hall for optimum balance. The signal was fed to a cutting lathe, and with the advent of magnetic recording, to a monaural tape recorder; a copy of that tape was used to produce the LPs which consumers listened to at home.

With stereo, two microphones were placed in the hall. Signals were fed to a stereo tape recorder and consumers, listening back on two speakers, heard a new "depth" of sound. By placing microphones in the left, center, and right of the hall, engineers progressed to 3-channel recordings, which afforded them greater control over the musical balances that ended up in the

stereo mix. Even as CDs replaced LPs, this same process was often followed.

Today, with the advent of Super Audio CD and multi-channel playback, the listener can hear the left, center, and right channels exactly as the engineers heard them at the original recording sessions. In this series of Living Stereo reissues on hybrid Super Audio CDs, we have used the 3-channel original tapes whenever they existed; when the material was recorded only in stereo, we used that tape. Some of the Super Audio CDs will therefore contain 2-channel, or a combination of 2- and 3-channel material. We used only two or three of the available six channels on the Super Audio CD disc because that was the vision of the original producers.

In remastering these tapes, we kept the signal path as short as possible. A Studer-Aria analog tape recorder was

connected with premium Siltech cabling directly to specifically chosen dCS converters. This DSD data is directly encoded on the Super Audio CD. Thus the listener is able to hear the output of these converters exactly as we heard it in the studio. The DSD program is essentially identical to the analog tape. What you hear are faithful copies of each historic recording — the pure performance, presented in its original splendor. No signal processing was necessary to "improve" these extraordinary tapes.

Throughout this very exciting project, history came alive as we heard the voices of legendary engineers verbally slating the tapes with the location and date of each session. We were greatly impressed not only with how little the original tapes were edited, but how skillfully engineers edited with their high-tech tool of the day, namely, a

razor blade! Applying the best in 21st-century remastering technology, we believe we have done justice to the best in 20th-century recording technology for a new generation of listeners.