

# ART AND ENTERTAIN ME

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2014

## Jennifer Forni Shines as Madama Butterfly at Opera San Jose

By Emma Krasov



Making her debut with **Opera San Jose** in Falstaff at the beginning of the current 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, soprano **Jennifer Forni** showed her amazing singing talent and dramatic flair as fragile Cio-Cio-san in Puccini's classic **Madama Butterfly**.



A beloved tragic tale of a pure-hearted Japanese geisha and her callous American husband, written by an Italian composer and librettists (Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa) more than a century ago, and revised for the French tastes of Opera-Comique, continues to captivate audiences around the globe

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ABOUT ME



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long after it's scandalously disastrous premiere in La Scala in 1904.



Portraying a 15-year-old bride and her transformation into a worn straw widow set on her devotion – only to be brutally betrayed and ultimately pushed to her demise – is not an easy task. Adding to it the authenticity of costume and movement, meticulously reproduced onstage, makes the performer's job even more demanding. Ms. Forni as Madama Butterfly is at the top of game, shaping a highly believable character and never losing the strength of her beautiful vocal delivery.



Opera SJ resident mezzo-soprano Nicole Birkland is equally skillful and deeply touching in her role of Butterfly's maid Suzuki.

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Christopher Bengochea is great as BF Pinkerton, while Evan Brummel (Sharpless) and Robert Norman (Goro) excellently perform their character roles. The rest of the cast lives up to the same high standards – Silas Elash (Commissioner), Matthew Anchel (The Bonze), Toflef Borsting (Prince Yamadori), Carin Gilfry (Kate Pinkerton), and the youngest and most adorable actor in his company debut, Owen Nevendorffer (Trouble).



Madama Butterfly runs through March 2 at Opera San Jose at the California Theatre, 345 S. First St., San Jose, California.

Call for tickets: 408-437-4450 or visit: [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org).

Press images by Pat Kirk.

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