

HONORING JAPANESE CULTURE

Backstage: Madama Butterfly – Costumes, Betrayals, Geishas (Video)

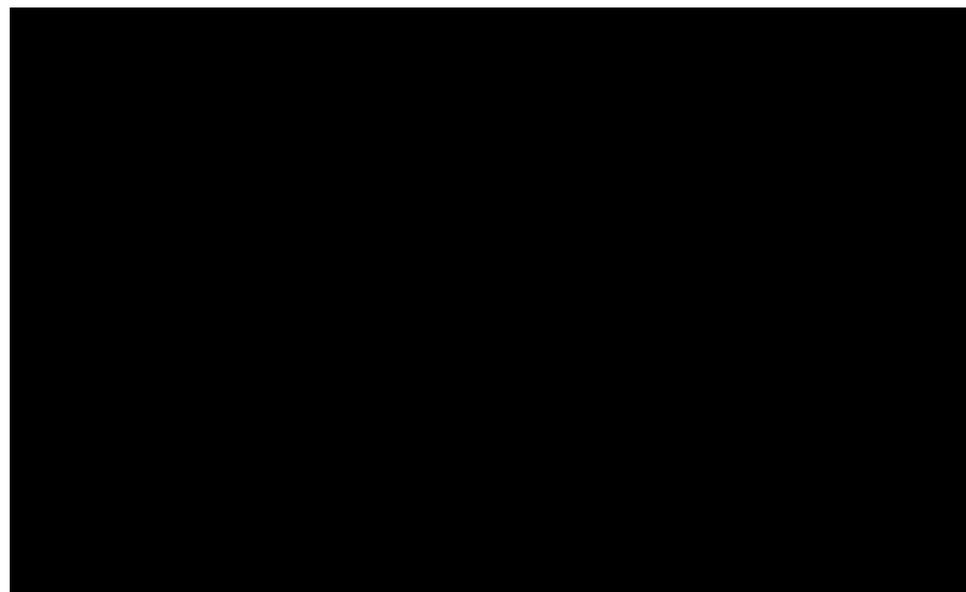
I go backstage at the stunning California Theatre where I discover the magic of Puccini’s most famous opera. Plus: how not to walk in a kimono.



LONI STARK

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02.12.2014 | Comments



There’s a trick to walking properly in a Japanese kimono without falling over. You turn

Do you have these symptoms?



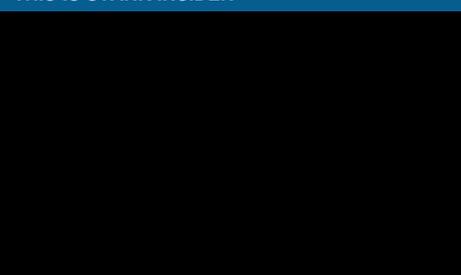
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BAY AREA STAGE

your feet in slightly. And bend at the knees. Mezzo-soprano Nicole Birkland, who stars as Suzuki in Opera San Jose's *Madama Butterfly*, demonstrated the technique. I watched carefully. Later, though, I couldn't quite the hang of it. So I had to—violating I'm quite certain every cultural norm— quickly improvise. As you'll see in this video of my backstage adventure at the California Theatre the results were ... mixed (to put it politely).

Madama Butterfly (Madame Butterfly) is, of course, one of the most famous stories of all time. Puccini didn't hold back one iota. The resulting three act opera has everything worthy of a colorful stage production: love, betrayal, sacrifice. And, those costumes! Alyssa Oania's pieces are smashingly, gloriously beautiful.

Stage director Brad Dalton tells me he's changed up the ending a bit. He refused to give an inch when I asked him to do tell. He would only say it would give the piece a "sharp punctuation point."



And, since we talk about tech from time to time on Stark Insider, I had to ask Brad if he was still playing his favorite iPhone game. Last time we spoke, he was in town to direct the lavish *Anna Karina*. He spoke enthusiastically about the show with me. And also about that little game known as *Angry Birds*. Watch to find out what's on his iPhone these days, and what he does between demanding opera schedules to relax.



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SILICON VALLEY ARTS



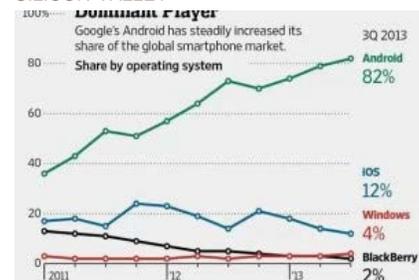
San Jose Repertory Theatre announces 2014-2015 season

WINE COUNTRY



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SILICON VALLEY



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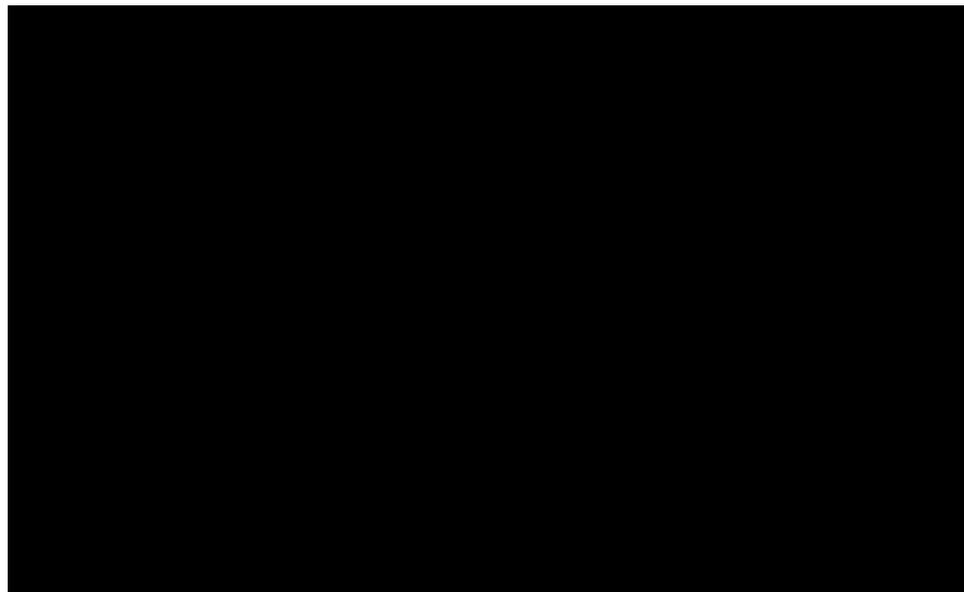
TROUBLE ON THE STREETS OF LONDON



There are eight performances of *Madama Butterfly* at the California in downtown San Jose, with opening night on February 15th. Take a look at this Stark Insider TV episode for a glimpse of what to expect, and also a backstage tour. And, if you do by chance find herself wrapped in a lovely kimono, you'll want to pay close attention how to walk without toppling over (tip: don't do what I do!).

Butterfly! Butterfly!

STARK INSIDER TV: Backstage at Madama Butterfly – Costumes, Betrayals, Geishas



A very special thanks to the cast and crew of Opera San Jose for being so generous with their time to speak with us. And for giving us time on stage in that beautiful kimono with full lighting. Thank you so much.

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LONI STARK



Putting San Jose on the map with 'Threepenny Opera'



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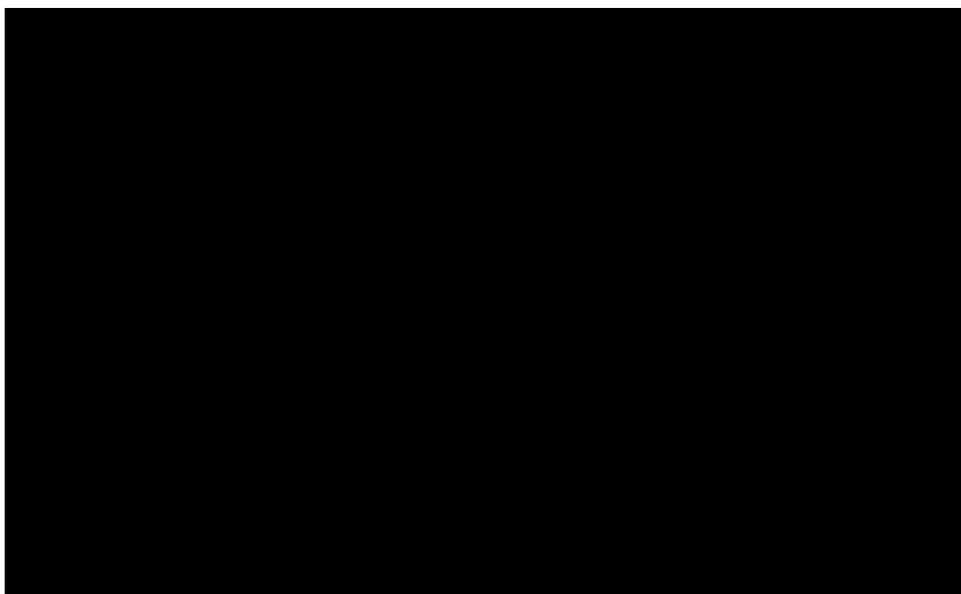


Loni Stark is a self-professed foodie, adventure travel seeker and passionate about technology's impact on business and creativity. She's also the host of **Stark Insider TV**. It's been said her laugh can be heard from San Jose all the way to the Golden Gate Bridge. She makes no claims to super powers, although sushi is definitely her Kryptonite. As director, product and industry marketing at Adobe, Loni oversees global product positioning, and go-to-market strategy and operations for Adobe's web experience management business. [Loni's story...](#)

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