

Opera SAN JOSÉ

SEASON 2018 | 2019

Puccini's

Madama Butterfly

APRIL 13-28, 2019

PRESS KIT





Opera San José

Madama Butterfly

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

MUSIC by Giacomo Puccini

LIBRETTO by Luigi Illica *and* Giuseppe Giacosa

First performed February 17, 1904 at La Scala, Milan

SUNG IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUPERTITLES.

Performances of *Madama Butterfly* are made possible in part by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San José and a grant from REYL Overseas.

PERFORMANCE SPONSORS

4/13: Richard and Hannalore Romney

4/14: Josef and Phyllis Bismanovsky

4/21: Jeanne L. McCann

4/28: Andrea Neves

PRESS CONTACT

Chris Jalufka

Communications Manager

Box Office (408) 437-4450

Direct (408) 638-8706

jalufka@operasj.org

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Opera San José

CAST

Cio-Cio-San

Suzuki

Pinkerton

Sharpless

Goro

Yamadori

Bonze

Kate Pinkerton

Imperial Commissioner

Registrar

Mother

Aunt

Cousin

Maria Natale

Renée Rapier

Dane Suarez (4/13, 4/21, and 4/26)

Derek Taylor (4/14, 4/18, and 4/28)

Trevor Neal

Mason Gates

Ben Brady

Philip Skinner

Katherine Sanford

Karl Kaminsky

Brendan Stone

Mayo Tsuzuki

Taylor Dunye

Nicole Cooper

COVERS

Katherine Gunnink, *Cio-Cio-San*

Talin Nalbandian, *Suzuki*

Philip Skinner, *Sharpless*

Kevin Gino, *Goro*

Jason Sarten, *Yamadori*

Jason Sarten, *Bonze*

Nicole Cooper, *Kate Pinkerton*

Brendan Stone, *Imperial Commissioner*

Jason Vincent, *Registrar*

Fallon Nunes, *Mother*

Catherine Williams, *Aunt*

Jessica Williams, *Cousin*

**Casting subject to change without notice*

CHORUS

SOPRANOS

Fallon Nunes
Jessica Williams
Katelyn Wilson
Jannika Dahlfort
Nicole Cooper
Jacqueline Goldgorin
Laura Barragan
Gaby Catipon
Catherine Williams
Jennifer Jensen Hartshorn

ALTOS

Katherine Sanford
Rebecca Bradley
Talin Nalbandian
Taylor Dunye
Mayo Tsuzuki

TENORS

Kevin Gino
Nicolas Gerst
Josh Bongers
Dan Leal
Greg Melton
Dario Jackson

SUPERNUMERARIES

Chris Tucker	Deanna Payne
Peter Kounitski	Joyce Allegro
Samuel Hoffman	

CONDUCTOR

Joseph Marcheso

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Dennis Doubin (*conducts 4/26 & 4/28*)

STAGE DIRECTOR

Brad Dalton

ASSISTANT STAGE DIRECTOR

Tara Branham

SET DESIGNER

Kent Dorsey

COSTUME DESIGNER

Julie Engelbrecht

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Pamila Z. Gray

MOVEMENT/CHOREOGRAPHER

Hanayagi Jumasuga (Marjorie Nakaji)

WIG AND MAKEUP DESIGNER

Christina Martin

PROPERTIES MASTER

Lori Scheper-Kesel

CHORUS MASTER

Dennis Doubin

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Margaret Kayes

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

Emi Komatsu

Phil Jacke

MUSIC STAFF

Veronika Agranov-Dafoe

Victoria Lington



Opera San José

1ST VIOLIN

Cynthia Baehr, Concertmaster
Alice Talbot, Assistant Concertmaster
Matthew Szemela
Valerie Tisdell
Chinh Le
Virginia Smedberg
Rochelle Nguyen
Marie Flexer-Parker

2ND VIOLIN

Claudia Bloom, Principal
Susan Stein, Assistant Principal
Sue-Mi Shin
Elizabeth Corner
Sergi Goldman-Hull
Gulnar Spurlock
Andrew Lan

VIOLA

Chad Kaltinger, Principal
Janet Doughty, Assistant Principal
Melinda Rayne
Ivo Bokulic

CELLO

Evan Kahn, Principal
Paul Hale, Assistant Principal
Nancy Kim
Dina Weinshelbaum

BASS

Andrew Butler, Principal
William Everett, Assistant Principal

FLUTE

Mary Hargrove, Principal
Leslie Chin
Laurie Seibold

PICCOLO

Laurie Seibold

OBOE

Pamela Hakl, Principal
Ryan Zwahlen

ENGLISH HORN

Adrienne Malley

CLARINET

Mark Brandenburg, Principal
James Pytko

BASS CLARINET

Jeannie Psomas

BASSOON

Deborah Kramer, Principal
Carolyn Lockhart

FRENCH HORN

Meredith Brown, Principal
Caitlyn Smith-Franklin
Eric Achen
Alex Camphouse

TRUMPET

William B. Harvey, Principal
John Freeman
Owen Miyoshi

TROMBONE

Kathryn Curran, Principal
Bruce Chrisp

BASS TROMBONE

Christian Behrens

TIMPANI

Kumiko Ito

PERCUSSION

James Kassiss

HARP

Karen Thielen

ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Evan Kahn

ORCHESTRA LIBRARIAN

Tim Spears

ACT I

Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton of the U. S. Navy inspects a house overlooking Nagasaki harbor that he is leasing from Goro, a marriage broker. The house comes with three servants and a geisha wife named Cio-Cio-San, known as Madame Butterfly. The lease runs for 999 years, subject to monthly renewal. The American consul, Sharpless, arrives breathless from climbing the hill. Pinkerton describes his philosophy of the fearless Yankee roaming the world in search of limitless pleasure. He is not sure whether his feelings for the young girl are love or a whim, but he intends to marry her anyway. Sharpless warns him that the girl may view the marriage differently, but Pinkerton brushes off such concerns and makes a toast to the day when he will take a real, American wife.

Cio-Cio-San is heard climbing the hill with her friends for the ceremony. In casual conversation, Cio-Cio-San admits her age, 15, and explains that her family was once prominent but lost its position, leading her to earn her living as a geisha. Her relatives arrive and chatter about the marriage. Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her very few possessions, and quietly tells him she has been to the Christian mission and has embraced her husband's religion.

The Imperial Commissioner reads the marriage agreement, and the relatives congratulate the couple. Suddenly, a threatening voice is heard from afar—it is the Bonze, Cio-Cio-San's uncle, a Shinto priest. He curses the girl for going to the Christian mission and rejecting her ancestral religion. Pinkerton orders them to leave and as they go, the Bonze and the shocked relatives denounce Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton tries to console Cio-Cio-San. She is helped by Suzuki into her wedding kimono, and joins Pinkerton in the garden for their wedding night.

Intermission (20 minutes)



ACT II: Part I

Three years have passed, and Cio-Cio-San awaits her husband's return. Suzuki prays to the gods for help, but Cio-Cio-San berates her for believing in lazy Japanese gods rather than in Pinkerton's promise to return one day. Sharpless appears with a letter from Pinkerton, but before he can read it to Cio-Cio-San, Goro arrives with his latest potential husband for Cio-Cio-San, the wealthy Prince Yamadori. Cio-Cio-San insists she is not available for marriage. She is herself an American now, awaiting her husband's return.

She dismisses Goro and Yamadori. Sharpless attempts to read Pinkerton's letter and suggests that perhaps Cio-Cio-San should reconsider Yamadori's offer. Outraged, Cio-Cio-San reveals to the consul that she has a son. Pinkerton's child. Sharpless is too upset to tell her more of the letter's contents. He leaves, promising to tell Pinkerton of the child. A cannon shot is heard in the harbor announcing the arrival of a ship. Cio-Cio-San and Suzuki take a telescope to the terrace and see that it is Pinkerton's ship. Overjoyed, Cio-Cio-San joins Suzuki in decorating the house with flower petals from the garden. Night falls. Cio-Cio-San, Suzuki, and the child settle into a vigil watching over the harbor.

Intermission (15 minutes)

ACT III

Dawn breaks, and Suzuki insists that Cio-Cio-San get some sleep. Sharpless appears with Pinkerton and Kate, Pinkerton's new wife. Suzuki realizes who the American woman is and agrees to help break the news to Cio-Cio-San. Pinkerton is overcome with guilt and runs from the scene, pausing to remember his days in the little house. Cio-Cio-San rushes in hoping to find Pinkerton, but sees Kate instead. Grasping the situation, she agrees to give up the child but insists that Pinkerton return for him. Dismissing everyone, Cio-Cio-San takes out the dagger with which her father committed suicide, unable to allow her son to believe she gave him up. She is interrupted momentarily when the child comes in, but Cio-Cio-San says goodbye to him and sends him to play. She turns the knife on herself as Pinkerton calls her name.



Maria Natale

SOPRANO

HOMETOWN: TRABUCO CANYON, CA



Cio-Cio-San – Maria Natale makes her company debut in the 2018-19 season as a member of OSJ’s resident company of principal artists, and appears as Nedda (Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*) and Cio-Cio-San (Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*.) Most recently, Ms. Natale made her Opera Maine début as Violetta in Verdi’s *La traviata* and debuted with Sarasota Opera as Liù in Puccini’s *Turandot*. On the concert stage, she performed the soprano solo in Faure’s *Requiem* and Mozart’s *Missa Solemnis* with MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall.

Ms. Natale is the recipient of many awards and grants from some of the most prestigious vocal competitions nationwide including as a finalist in the Loren L. Zachary Vocal Competition; grant recipient from the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, Giulio Gari International Vocal Competition, and the Gerda Lissner Foundation; and the second prize winner of the Violetta Dupont Competition and the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition. In 2015, Ms. Natale was selected by the Metropolitan Opera Guild to sing in their masterclass with Maestro Plácido Domingo in Bruno Walter Auditorium.

Ms. Natale is a recent graduate from the Manhattan School of Music, where she received a professional studies certificate.

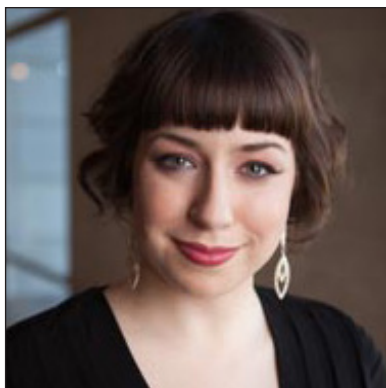
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Renée Rapier

MEZZO-SOPRANO

HOMETOWN: MARION, IA



Suzuki – Renée Rapier returns in the 2018–19 season to perform the role of Suzuki in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Ms. Rapier made her OSJ debut during the 2016–17 season in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, receiving wide-spread critical acclaim for her performance. Recent engagements for Ms. Rapier include a number of recitals and concerts at the Newport Music Festival including a performance with renowned mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade and composer Jake Heggie. She also made her Wagnerian debut as Grimmerde in San Francisco Opera’s visionary *Ring Cycle*, and makes her role debut as Donna Elvira in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* with Opera Steamboat.

Other recent performances featured Ms. Rapier as a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony in Beethoven’s 9th Symphony and Mercédès in Calixto Bieito’s production of *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera. She made her international debut as Olga in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* with the Seoul Philharmonic, Cornelia in Handel’s *Giulio Cesare* with Wolf Trap Opera, and a debut with Opera San Antonio as Mrs. Fox in Tobias Picker’s *Fantastic Mr. Fox*.

In 2011, she was chosen to join LA Opera’s Domingo–Thornton Young Artist Program where she made her professional debut as Stephano in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* under the baton of Plácido Domingo.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Dane Suarez

TENOR

HOMETOWN: PRINCETON, IL



Pinkerton (4/13, 4/21, and 4/26) – Dane Suarez returns as a member of OSJ’s resident ensemble during the 2018–19 season appearing as Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Suarez made his company debut last season as Alfredo in Verdi’s *La traviata*. This season, Suarez debuts Erik in Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer* at Baltimore Concert Opera and reprised his Rodolfo alongside wife Kerriann Otaño in her role debut as Mimì in Puccini’s *La bohème* with Pacific Opera Project.

He sang on the stage of The Metropolitan Opera as a 2014 National Semi-Finalist of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and made his John F. Kennedy Center debut in 2015 with Washington National Opera as Ely Parker in Glass’s *Appomattox*. In 2016, he was pictured on the front page of The Arts section of The New York Times for his “beautiful, soaring, and moving” performance as Cavaradossi in Puccini’s *Tosca* with LoftOpera that “brought down the house.” Last season, Mr. Suarez made his New York City Opera debut in his “completely winning” performance as Joe in *La fanciulla del West* and also lent his “big, heroic voice” to Pacific Opera Project’s remount of *La bohème* as Rodolfo, where the Act I duet was described as “a transfixing moment of sublime beauty”. This past summer, he debuted the title role in Mozart’s *Idomeneo* with Opera NEO and returned to Pacific Opera Project to sing Don José in Bizet’s *Carmen* at Ford Amphitheatre.

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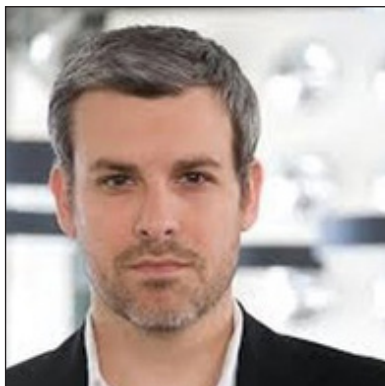
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Derek Taylor

TENOR

HOMETOWN: MILWAUKEE, WI



Pinkerton (4/14, 4/18, and 4/28) – Derek Taylor returns during the 2018–19 season, appearing as Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Taylor made his OSJ debut as Erik in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* during the 2017–18 season. During the 2018–2019 season, Mr. Taylor will make his role debut as the title role in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* with the Hawaii Opera Theatre. He returns to Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland for a role debut as Pollione in Bellini’s *Norma*, and joins the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta*. Concert engagements include Cassio in Verdi’s *Otello* with Austin Lyric Opera, and Don José in Bizet’s *Carmen* with the Plano Symphony Orchestra.

Notable engagements of recent seasons include Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for his house debut with Oper Leipzig, Macduff in *Macbeth* with New Orleans Opera, a return to Theater und Konzert, St. Gallen for Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Walter in Catalani’s *Loreley*, and a role debut as Calaf in *Turandot* with Virginia Opera. Among his numerous performances with Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland, Mr. Taylor appeared there as Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Zamoro in Verdi’s *Alzira*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Des Grieux in Massenet’s *Manon*, Alfredo in *La traviata*, Il Duca in *Rigoletto*, and Don José in *Carmen*, among other leading roles.

NOTES

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Trevor Neal

BARITONE

HOMETOWN: DALLAS, TX



Sharpless – Trevor Neal returns as a member of the resident company in the 2018–19 season, appearing as Gardiner in Heggie and Scheer’s *Moby-Dick* and Sharpless in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. During the 2017–18 season, Mr. Neal appeared as Rambaldo in Puccini’s *La rondine* and Germont in Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other roles performed recently include Killian in *Der Freischütz* with Virginia Opera, Sciarrone in Puccini’s *Tosca* with Opera North, and the Bonze in Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* with Ash Lawn Opera.

He was member of the Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist program at Virginia Opera for the 2015/2016 season, where he covered Mars/Morpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Dutchman in *The Flying Dutchman*. Previously, he was a Young Artist at Opera North where he performed the role of Henry Davis in Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene* and covered the role of Germont in Verdi’s *La traviata*.

On the concert stage, Mr. Neal has appeared in concert with the South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra, Abilene Symphony, and numerous community orchestras performing such works as Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Verdi’s *Requiem*, Durufle’s *Requiem*, and Handel’s *Messiah*.

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Mason Gates

TENOR

HOMETOWN: SAN JOSÉ, CA



Goro – Mason Gates returns as a member of OSJ’s resident company in the 2018-19 season, appearing as Beppe in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*, Flask in the company premiere of Heggie and Scheer’s *Moby-Dick*, and Goro in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Last season, Mr. Gates appeared as Prunier in Puccini’s *La rondine*, the Steersman in Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, and Gastone in Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other OSJ roles performed include Jonathan Dale in Puts and Campbell’s *Silent Night*, and his company debut as Don Curzio in the 2015-16 production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

He received his Bachelor’s of Music from Brigham Young University in Utah, and his Master’s of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. A two-time recipient of the encouragement award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Mr. Gates was named Top 10 in the 2018 Brava! Opera Vocal Competition, as well as a Vocal Fellow at the esteemed Music Academy of the West.

Other roles performed recently include the title role in Albert Herring, El Remendado (*Carmen*), The Man with Old Luggage (*Postcard from Morocco*), Spoletta (*Tosca*), Grigori (*Boris Godunov*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), (Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*), and Edwin the Defendant (*Trial by Jury*).

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Ben Brady

BASS-BARITONE

HOMETOWN: DENVER, CO



Yamadori – Ben Brady makes his company debut during the 2018–19 season, appearing as Prince Yamadori in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Roles performed recently by Mr. Brady include Méphistophélès in Gounod’s *Faust* (2015), Zuniga in Bizet’s *Carmen* (2014) and Hundig in Wagner’s *Die Walküre* (2013), all with Verismo Opera. For the Lamplighters, he appeared as Martin in Bernstein’s *Candide* (2015) and the Pirate King in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance* (2014), and performed the roles of Tonio in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci* (2015) and Nourabad in Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers* (2014) for Pocket Opera.

Award received include Audience Favorite and First Place awards in the Tier II Category of the James Toland Vocal Arts competition in Oakland. In October he was selected as a finalist in the San Francisco District of the Met Opera Council auditions.

Originally from Denver, Colorado, Mr. Brady graduated from University of Michigan where he studied Vocal Performance. He currently resides in Oakland, California where he actively sings opera and musical theatre, performs in the rock band Suits of Steel, and teaches private voice lessons.

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Philip Skinner

BASS-BARITONE

HOMETOWN: JACKSONVILLE, FL



The Bonze –Philip Skinner return to OSJ during the 2018–19 season, appearing as The Bonze in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Most recently, Mr. Skinner was seen as Baron Douphol in the company’s 2017–18 production of Verdi’s *La traviata*. Other recent performances include a performance with Opera Parallèle as the Immigration Officer in *Dove’s Flight*, the Pacific Symphony as the King in Verdi’s *Aida*, and Charlottesville Opera as Casaubon in Shearer and Steven’s *Middlemarch in Spring*.

In 2015, Mr. Skinner appeared in leading roles in two world premiere operas. First, he portrayed Fray Luis in Lisa Scola Prosek’s *The Lariat* (Winner of the NY Center for Contemporary Opera “Atelier” Award) in San Francisco. Next, he was Casaubon in Allen Shearer’s *Middlemarch in Spring* (Composers, Inc./Operasmiths) also in San Francisco. Additionally that year, he played George Benton in Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* with Opera Parallèle, Priam in Berlioz’s *Les Troyens* with San Francisco Opera, Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in Berg’s *Lulu* with West Edge Opera, and Sparafucile in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* with West Bay Opera. He also sang the bass solos in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Santa Rosa Symphony and was the special guest soloist in a concert with the Adler Fellows of San Francisco Opera.

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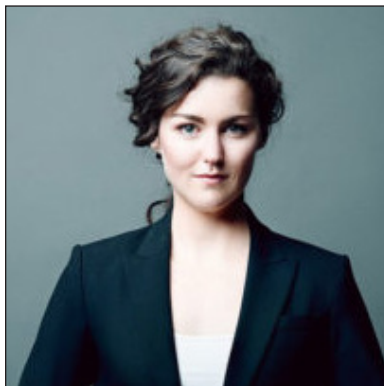
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Katherine Sanford

MEZZO-SOPRANO

HOMETOWN: ANNAPOLIS, MD



Kate Pinkerton – Katharine Sanford makes her company debut with OSJ during the 2018–19 season, appearing as Kate Pinkerton in Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. Recent engagements for Ms. Sanford include appearing with Nashville Opera as Dorabella in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* and Prince Orlofsky in Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*. For Opera Colorado, she performed the role of Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and the Second Lady in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. In the autumn of 2017 she made her joint role and company debut as Nicklausse in Pacific Northwest Opera’s production of Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffmann*. She immediately followed that with her New York debut on a concert program devoted to operatic trouser role characters under the aegis of the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

Ms. Sanford has fulfilled young artist residencies with such prestigious regional companies as Nashville Opera, Opera Colorado, and Des Moines Metro Opera. She earned her Masters degree at the University of Michigan and her undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland.

[illegible]



Karl Kaminsky

BASS-BARITONE

HOMETOWN: ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA



Imperial Commissioner – Karl Kaminsky makes his company debut in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, appearing as the Imperial Commissioner. A theater and film actor, in addition to opera singer, Mr. Kaminsky has performed over 35 roles in theaters around the world, including Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Real (Madrid), Royal Swedish Opera, Mariinsky Opera, Tokyo Opera, Salzburg Festival, Rotterdam Festival, Royal Festival Hall, Mikkeli Festival, Kiel Festival, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and Opera Baden-Baden among others. Active also as an oratorio singer, he recently performed Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* with the San Francisco Choral Society; *Carmina Burana* (Orff) with the Sacramento Choral Society and *Zigeunerlieder* (Brahms) with the New England Classical Singers.

Highlights of his operatic appearances include de Beausset (*War and Peace* – Prokofiev) with Royal Swedish Opera; Prince Mikhail Ivanov (*War and Peace*) at the Salzburg Festival; a muscovite (*War and Peace*) at the Tokyo Opera and at the Teatro Real and Teatro alla Scala; Truffaldino (*The Love for Three Oranges* – Prokofiev) at the Festival Aix en Provence; and a number of roles at the Mariinsky Theater, including Shuysky (*Boris Godunov*); Tinca (*Il tabarro*); Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*); Pong (*Turandot*); Arturo (*Lucia*); and Goro (*Madama Butterfly*).

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Opera San José

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