Study Guide

MADAMA BUTTERFLY
An Opera in Three Acts – Brescia Rendition

by

Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by

L. Illica and G. Giacosa

Based on the book by John L. Long and the drama by David Belasco

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The Cast

(In order of appearance)

LT. B.F. PINKERTON, of the U.S. Naval Ship “ABRAHAM LINCOLN”…………………………….Tenor
GORO, a Nakodo (Marriage Broker)………………………………………………………………………..Tenor
SUZUKI, Cio-Cio-San’s servant…………………………………………………………………………………Mezzo-Soprano
MR. SHARPLESS, the U.S. Consul in Nagasaki…………………………………………………………Baritone
CIO-CIO-SAN, a geisha known as Madama Butterfly………………………………………………Soprano
CIO-CIO-SAN’S RELATIVES:
   UNCLE YAKUSIDE……………………………………………………………………………………………Tenor
   HER MOTHER…………………………………………………………………………………………………Soprano
   HER AUNT……………………………………………………………………………………………………Mezzo-Soprano
   HER COUSIN…………………………………………………………………………………………………Soprano
   THE COUSIN’S CHILD………………………………………………………………………………………Soprano
THE IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER………………………………………………………………………………….Bass
THE OFFICIAL REGISTRAR…………………………………………………………………………………………Bass
THE BONZE, a Shinto priest and Cio-Cio-San’s Uncle…………………………………………………………Bass
PRINCE YAMADORI, a wealthy businessman……………………………………………………………..Tenor
   “SORROW,” Cio-Cio-San’s baby
KATE PINKERTON, the American wife……………………………………………………………………..Mezzo-Soprano
Geishas, Relations
The Story

Brescia Version (Puccini’s first revision with new music)

Place:  The terrace and interior of a rented house overlooking the Bay of Nagasaki, Japan
Time:  ACT I: Spring – the early 1900s
       ACT II: Spring – three years later

Seeking diversion during his tour of duty in Japan, Lt. Pinkerton has arranged for a temporary companion with Goro, a marriage broker.  Goro has obliged by providing a secluded house, servants, a beautiful young geisha named Cio-Cio-San, a traditional wedding ceremony, and a convenient contract which stipulates that the marriage is renewable by the husband on a monthly basis.

After inspecting the house, Pinkerton is greeted by Sharpless, the American consul.  The groom marvels at the insubstantial nature of his Japanese wedding.  When Sharpless warns him that the bride may not take her vows so lightly, Pinkerton brushes aside any reservations and looks forward to the day when he will take an American as his true wife.

Cio-Cio-San and her relatives arrive, including her drunken Uncle Yakuside, and Pinkerton is smitten by his young bride.  In a private moment, she shows him the few belongings she has brought with her, including the dagger with which her dishonored father had committed suicide upon the command of the Emperor.  She also reveals that she has converted to Christianity in order to please him, a fact that she has fearfully kept from her family.  The wedding ceremony is interrupted by her uncle the Bonze, a Shinto priest.  Revealing the betrayal of her religion and her ancestors, he orders the family to renounce her and the shaken bride is left alone.  Pinkerton comforts her with words of love and she falls into his arms.

Three years pass, during which time Cio-Cio-San patiently awaits her husband’s return.  Her only companion is her faithful servant, Suzuki.  The Consul arrives bearing a letter from Pinkerton, but the overjoyed Butterfly interrupts and misinterprets its contents.  Foro brings in Prince Yamadori with yet another offer of marriage.  As a good “American” wife, Cio-Cio-San will have only one husband, and she rejects him.  Sharpless suggests that Pinkerton might never return and the distraught geisha proudly brings in her baby, Sorrow.  Butterfly assures the Consul that when Pinkerton hears of his son, he will surely return.  Unable to tell her that Pinkerton has remarried, the Consul leaves her.  Suzuki accuses Goro of spreading rumors questioning the baby’s parentage and his is banished from the house.  Just at the moment of greatest doubt, a cannon shot announces the arrival of Pinkerton’s ship in the harbor.  As the sun sets, Butterfly and Suzuki prepare the house for his return and begin their vigil.

As the dawn arrives, the exhausted Butterfly puts the baby to bed.  Sharpless arrives with Pinkerton and his new wife Kate, who has come to ask to take the child back to America.  Suzuki instantly understands the situation.  Pinkerton is overcome by self-recrimination and leaves.  Cio-Cio-San searches for Pinkerton, but finds Kate instead.  Realizing who the stranger is, Butterfly promises to give the child to Pinkerton if he will come in person.  Left alone, she finds the only honorable solution to her plight.
Libretto & Source

“As is the case of many operas, the libretto for Madama Butterfly comes from a number of different sources. The official librettists, Guiseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, worked from the David Belasco play, Madame Butterfly, which Puccini saw in London on one of his frequent trips abroad. The play was based upon a short story by John Luther Long which was also, in part, based upon the story Madama Chrysanthême by Pierre Loti. This article traces some of these sources of the opera.” - NMR

The theme of women being deserted by foreign men is universal. There have been many 'Butterflies' in both fiction and real life.

One story from Okinawa tells of Minamoto Tametomo, a twelfth century Japanese samurai warrior who sailed to Okinawa to avoid trouble at home. He became notorious, his wild ways annoying the king and nobles. They sought to rid themselves of him, but one of the lords, Takimini took Tametomo in as his guest. Takimini had a beautiful daughter whom Temetomo wooed and won. Soon they had a son, Shunten. After a while, Tametomo tired of domestic tranquility on Okinawa, and decided to return to Japan. With many promises to return, he sailed away, leaving wife and child behind. For the rest of her life, the faithful woman kept a daily vigil on the beach in vain. Word of her plight soon spread throughout Okinawa and the place she waited became known as Machiminato, the Waiting Port. It is still known by that name today. Her story has been told in Japan and Okinawa for 800 years. When he grew up, the son, Shunten, overthrew the king, in the so-called Ryukuan revolution and brought law and order among the island's feuding lords. The chain of which Okinawa is a part still bears the name 'Ryuku Islands'.

The first extant novel to record a foreigner's affair with a Japanese woman is the 1887 Madame Chrysanthême by Pierre Loti, a French naval officer who served in the Far East. His real name was Julien Marie Viaud, and he wrote some forty novels. The narrator of Madame Chrysanthême has two ambitions, first to find a Japanese temporary wife to live with in "a little paper house" and second, a tattoo. (The marriage brokers was Kangourou which would become Goro in later stories.) He gets his first wish, an eighteen-year-old temporary bride, O-Kiku-san, for the two and a half months he is in Nagasaki. Their house on a hill had paper walls and a splendid view of Nagasaki harbor. The wife is a purely business transaction, but she acts the part; during his five-day absence, she watches for his ship and decorates the house for his return. The story is extremely racist; the Japanese are "monkeys" and "toys" and he desires "a little yellow-skinned woman with black hair and cat's eyes". Soon the narrator finds his wife tiresome and longs to get rid of her. When his ship leaves she goes through the appropriate sighs and wailings of farewell, but she has known all along that the arrangement was temporary and carefully tests the money he gives her to make sure it is genuine.

Loti was in Nagasaki in 1885 and while there married a 17 year-old girl name O-Kane-san whom he left without regret. He kept a diary and used it to create his novel. He carefully notes that the girls who entered these temporary marriages were neither geishas nor prostitutes. His book was
very popular, with 23 editions in five years, and it was translated into several languages, including English. Messager turned it into an opera which opened in Paris in 1893. He wrote most of the music while staying at the Villa d'Este near Como, Italy. One of the guests at the time was Puccini who most probably knew of it.

In the late nineteenth century, Mrs. Sarah Jane Correll, the wife of a missionary, lived for a while in Nagasaki. Across the street from her lived a sweet and delicate tea-house girl named Cho-san, Miss Butterfly. She had a lover, a nice, but moody young man. He left Cho-san and her baby, promising to come back, even arranging a signal so she would know when his ship returned. She waited for hours every night, but he never returned. Mrs. Correll told the story to her brother, John Luther Long, who worked all night writing the short story which was published in 1898.

In Long's version, Pinkerton and his friend Sayre discuss the Japanese marriages. With the help of the marriage broker, Goro, he marries Cho-Cho-san, but he does not allow her relatives to come to the house which he has rented for 999 years. The relatives, who had originally approved of the marriage, then disowned her. The bride understood the contract and its provisions, including the price. After Pinkerton leaves, she has her baby and she, Suzuki and Trouble live in the house but with little money. She refuses Prince Yamadori and consorts Sharpless who informs Pinkerton of his child. When the ship returns Cho-Cho-san and Suzuki prepare the house, then wait days in vain. She sees Pinkerton with a blond woman, and after his ship leaves, Adelaide, Pinkerton's wife, comes and tries to take the baby. Cho-Cho-san starts to commit suicide, but Suzuki interrupts her and binds up her wounds. When Mrs Pinkerton comes to collect the child, the house is empty. Butterfly has fled with her son and her end is not known. Suzuki marries the consul.

Long's Butterfly is not very bright and is easily misled, but she has firm opinions. She knows she is being paid for her services but assumes Pinkerton knows she loves him. After all, he did not divorce her and has promised to come back. She toys with the idea of Christianity but in the end reverts to her Japanese traditions. Pinkerton's role in the story is very short. He appears on only four of the thirty-two pages. Many of the details are borrowed from Loti. Only Adelaide and Yamadori are original with Long.

Long's knowledge of Japan was extensive. Details such as the 999 years and the description of the suicide attempt are very accurate. He knew that neglect of the rites for ancestors would provoke their anger. For this reason Butterfly considered converting to protect herself.

'Treaty-port marriages' had existed for centuries on the artificial island of Dejima in Nagasaki Bay where there was a Dutch trading post as early as 1630. Families could not be brought there so the marriage business started. Some men left money for their 'wives' and children when they returned home and remained responsible for the rest of their lives. One month treaty-port marriages were common, especially in Nagasaki. They cost $4 for a license plus $15-$25 for a house and $10 for a servant. For some women it became a way of life, a career of serial 'marriages'. At the same time, there were also many regular interracial marriages.
Such temporary marriages still exist in some parts of the world. Called *sigheh* in Iran, a couple signs a contract for as long as ninety-nine years or as short as a few minutes. This contract can specify a dowry and how much time they will spend together.

Not all of the men were sailors. There was a German medical doctor, Philip Franz von Siebold, who arrived in 1823, gave lessons in western medicine and performed the first cataract surgery in Japan. He "married" Kusumoto Taki, whom he called O-Taki-san and they had a daughter. As an amateur botanist he named a hydrangea after her: *Hydrangea otaksa*. After returning to Europe he wrote several books about his experiences. Commodore Perry learned from them before sailing in 1853 to demand opening of the country. Von Siebold continued to correspond with Taki, returned in 1859, and met his Japanese family. His 'wife' had remarried twice, their daughter was 32 years old and a midwife. He arranged for her to study medicine, and she became the first female doctor in Japan.

Attempts have been made to identify the real-life Pinkerton in Long's story. One candidate is William B. Franklin who, as an Ensign, entered Nagasaki harbor at the time Correll was there and stayed three weeks the first time and six and one-half the second. Many of the details of his visit fit the story. However, in Nagasaki temporary marriage registrations were periodically discarded; any pertinent records are long gone.

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A Look Back at a Look Forward

MADAMA BUTTERFLY: The Brescia Version

The premiere of MADAMA BUTTERFLY at La Scala on February 17, 1904, was one of those famous disasters that fill the books of operatic lore. This historic fiasco clearly had less to do with the opera itself and more with the anti-Puccini forces at work in the audience that night. Puccini was successful enough to have enemies who wished to ensure the failure of the composer’s creation. Tito Ricordi, Puccini’s publisher, later wrote, “The performance in the auditorium seemed just as carefully organized as that on stage.” Ironically, most of the music with which modern audiences are familiar appeared in the La Scala version.

Giacosa and Illica, Puccini’s librettists, fashioned a text based on the successful short story by John Luther Long. It was a strong indictment of the treatment of the fragile and naïve Butterfly by the imperialistic Pinkerton. Even though Puccini spoke little English, when he saw the London production of David Belasco’s popular stage adaptation, he was extremely moved by the plight of its fragile heroine.

Puccini had been so sure of his new opera’s success that he was devastated by the catcalls and whistling during the premiere and by the negative reviews which followed. Determined to save his beloved geisha from oblivion, the composer immediately withdrew the score. So began a series of revisions which changed the nature of MADAMA BUTTERFLY from a darkly original music drama to a beautiful but conventional piece of operatic theatre.

These are the four versions with the composer’s major dramatic changes:

LA SCALA – This opening night version was performed in two acts. Act I contained extended exposition for Cio-Cio-San’s family at the wedding and a long drunk scene for Uncle Yakuside. Lt. Pinkerton was clearly depicted as the “ugly American,” a very untypical tenor anti-hero. Kate Pinkerton had an extended scene with Cio-Cio-San. This version had only one performance.

BRESCIA – Puccini’s first revision opened three months later (May, 1904). The principal melody of Cio-Cio-San’s entrance was revised. A number of deletions were made in the Act I wedding scene. Act II was divided into two shorter acts. Pinkerton received an aria of remorse in Act III to make him more sympathetic. The opera was an unqualified success and a vocal score was published.

WASHINGTON – (October, 1906) For BUTTERFLY’s first performances in English, some further cuts were made, mostly small ones. The English translation was made by R.H. Elkin. Puccini seemed pleased with this “final” version. The version is still available in the Kalmus vocal score.

PARIS – (December 1906) More cuts were made in the wedding scene. Pinkerton’s caustic references to the Japanese were eliminated. Many of Cio-Cio-San’s dramatically telling lines, including references to the possibly temporary nature of her marriage, were excised and new, less ironic text was give to her Act II aria “Che tua madre.” Kate’s part was almost completely cut and many of her lines were reassigned to Sharpless. This is the version performed in most opera houses today.

Though Puccini was pleased with his work and assured of BUTTERFLY’s success after the Washington version, the general manager of the Paris Opera was able to convince him that what was most original and
unconventional about the earlier versions of the opera would never be acceptable to the conservative Parisian audience. Could the fact that the general manager’s wife was singing the title role have a bearing on these decisions? Above all, Puccini was practical and did not want to risk another failure. So what had started out as daring and unconventional, especially in the characterizations of its protagonists and the social message it put forth, became more predictable, sentimental and less complex.

I have felt for a long time now that something was missing dramatically in the “traditional” version of Butterfly. It seemed hard to believe that Puccini would have completely ignored the tone and bite of the original materials upon which he based his opera. In the past few years, more and more productions are using bits and pieces of material from earlier scores of MADAMA BUTTERFLY. By performing the Brescia version, we get a clearer look at the unedited intentions of BUTTERFLY’s composer. In order to be faithful to Puccini’s original plan, we are returning to his earliest two-act structure. In this light, Cio-Cio-San seems less a victim, and more a tragic figure – a strong branch which incapable of bending in the storm, must surely break.

Jay Lesenger – Stage Director
The Music of Madama Butterfly

Like all other Puccini operas, *Madama Butterfly* is filled with excellent examples of his brilliant approach to orchestration, his sensitivity to the theatrical, his extraordinary ability to build immediately accessible (and recognizable) melodies and his remarkable gift for creating just the right aural atmosphere for every dramatic moment. *Butterfly* has a number of instances of exquisite tone-painting because the locale and the text offer the composer so many opportunities to do so, and as we've seen in *La bohème* and *Tosca*, Puccini takes wonderful advantage of these opportunities. One case in point is how Puccini deals with Butterfly's vigil and the appearance of dawn over Nagasaki in the transition in Act II. Just as with the case of the opening of Act III of *Tosca*, an atmosphere is created that is as much about lighting and stage design as it is about the story. Puccini is creating a 'sonic environment' within which the denouement can naturally unfold.

There is, too, something magical about the 'humming chorus' and its connection to the very specific stage directions that Puccini has placed in the score: Suzuki closes the *shosi*...the night grows darker...Butterfly leads the baby to the *shosi*...she makes three holes in it for herself, Suzuki and the baby...it is night...the rays of the moon light up the *shosi* from without. The music accompanying these actions is not so much specific as it allows for all of the above actions to take place in the proper environment. The lengthy orchestra prelude to the second scene of Act II is like a splash of water on one's face; it's not the dawn described in *Tosca* or at the *barrier d'enfers* in *La bohème* (in both cases a misty dawn which manages to be tinged with both hope and darkness), but the cold light of the day in which Butterfly must give up her dream of happiness, her son and ultimately her life.

Other touches of tone-painting involve some kind of expression of the Oriental, the exotic, like the Japanese 'band' that appears at the end of Butterfly's entrance. Puccini had no time for such authenticity as the use of true Japanese instruments, but he gives his audience the next best thing by recreating the effect of such a band by reducing the instrumentation to flute, piccolo, harp and glockenspiel. After the climax of the choral entrance and Butterfly's high note, this sudden reduction is indeed dramatic. The closest Puccini gets to using authentic instrumentation is the use of *campanelli giapponese*, Japanese bells, which make their appearance during the wedding scene.

In line with the touches of exoticism found in the orchestral score are the attempts made by the composer to identify authentic Japanese melodies that could be woven into the fabric of the work. There is the Japanese national anthem, a tune which Puccini uses to announce the Imperial Commissioner just prior to the wedding ceremony in Act I. A tune called the "Cherry-Blossom Song" can be found in the oboe part as Butterfly takes her personal possessions out of her sleeves and gives them to Suzuki for safe keeping.

The *Nihon Bashi*, another Japanese traditional melody, can be heard soaring in the violins immediately after the marriage ceremony is complete in Act I, just before Cio-Cio-San corrects
her friends and relations and refers to herself as "Madama B. F. Pinkerton". The song My Prince can be heard in association with the arrival of Prince Yamadori in Act II. Another tune is associated with Suzuki's prayer at the beginning of Act II. The original Japanese tune is Suzuki's vocal line E Izaghi ed Izanami, Sarundasico e Kami.

Each character in Madama Butterfly has his or her own 'music', something that occurs in Puccini's earlier operas. Lieutenant Pinkerton, for instance, is identified by the theme that runs through Dovunque al mondo. He is also identified by the 'head-motive' of the Star-Spangled Banner which is heard as an introduction to Dovunque. Sharpless, the American consul, is introduced by a broad, optimistic musical figure that begins as an octave leap and successfully describes him bounding up the hill just before his first appearance in the opera. Butterfly has two thematic ideas attached to her, both of which come into play during her entrance with the relatives. The first can be heard at the beginning of her entrance played by solo violin and viola, then by various other combinations of instruments as the motive goes up and up through various keys. The second idea is an immediate outgrowth of the earlier tune, on Butterfly's line D'amor venni alle soglie...(I have come to the threshold of love). Puccini separates these two tunes and uses them interchangeably in identifying Butterfly at various points in the opera.

But we can't leave the world of Butterfly without spending a little time with Cio-Cio-San's second act aria, Un bel di (One fine day). This all-too-often-performed aria needs to be looked at afresh because it is truly one of the most wonderful 'character' arias in the operatic repertoire; it reflects Cio-Cio-San's state at a particular moment in the drama, is as structurally perfect as a piece of music can be, and gives us a sub-text of emotion that is not readily apparent unless we're listening for it. The beginning of the aria is simple and straightforward, describing how she will see that thin 'thread of smoke rising over the horizon", sung to one of those typical Puccini melodies that seem to turn in on themselves. This is all sung to the most basic accompaniment in the orchestra: clarinet, harp and solo violin doubling the voice pp and ppp, muted violins and woodwinds providing a transparent harmonic wash. Notice that in this opening section there is essentially one note per syllable, one syllable per note in the melody. This is about to change radically.

In the second section a Puccini thematic hallmark reappears: the arched melody based on rising and falling scale passages (Poi la nave bianca — Then the white ship). In the next few lines we can observe little touches of excitement on Butterfly's part, evinced by the occasional rapid note values (...e aspetto gran tempo e non mi pesa — and wait a long time but I won't mind). The winds in the orchestra now pulse off the beat, a kind of syncopated 'heart beat' as she grows more excited about picking him out of the crowd (È uscito dalla folla cittadina un uomo — It is a man coming from the city crowd); and then she sees the tiny speck, a man "who makes his way toward the hill" to another slightly arched melody describing in musical form the 'hill' itself.

The next section is eerily accompanied by three trumpets played with mutes emphasizing both her excitement and the distance from which she 'sees' him. His calling out to her from that distance (Chiamerà "Butterfly" dalla lontana— He will call "Butterfly" from a distance) is expressed by two solo violins with mutes. The note values in these sections become shorter and
shorter, perfectly expressing her excitement. But it is at the return of the 'big tune' where the true genius of Puccini's musical characterization is revealed. Think about the aria's sub-text: Butterfly is not only getting more and more excited about imagining her sailor's return, she is also deeply troubled about the possibility that he might not return at all. No longer do we have one syllable for one note of the melody. We have many notes superimposed over the melody. Why is Butterfly becoming so 'chatty' in the penultimate section of this aria? Her insecurity is beginning to show: she's trying to cover it up with words, words and more words! This insecurity is only banished in the final section of the aria when she finally convinces herself (if not Suzuki) that he will return, and that with 'unshakeable faith', she will wait for him.

Puccini's grasp of human emotion and psychology in this aria is nothing short of extraordinary. The music describes exactly how we react not only emotionally but physically in such a situation, imagining that the more we stutter, shuffle and 'chat' when confronted with heartache, the easier it will be to stave off the pain that must inevitably come.
Student and Class Activities

Before the Opera

Choir Classes

• Listen to a portion of the “Humming Chorus” from Madama Butterfly. How is emotion conveyed in a musical scene without having any words? For link, click here.

Music/History Classes

• Research lifestyle in Japan during the early 1900s. Are there any stereotypes that you associate with Japan that might have originated from this time period? What are they?

Class Discussion after the Opera

1. Is the story of Madama Butterfly like any other story you have read or seen on a movie/tv show? Which one?
2. Did you have strong feelings as you experienced the opera? Discuss one or two of your feelings how the music, the acting, the story or the staging made you feel that way.
3. Does the opera end the way that you expected it to end? If yes, how did the events or the music prepare you for this ending? If no, how did you think it would end?
4. How would you summarize the opera if you were recommending that a friend go to see it?
5. Madama Butterfly is an opera written by an Italian man about the story of a young Japanese girl and her relationship with an American man. Are there any facets of this opera that would be different if a Japanese man wrote it? An American woman? A Japanese girl? Please list a few examples and explain your reasoning.
What is Opera?

In many ways an opera is like a play or a movie. Actors tell an audience a story by pretending to be characters in a situation, often with costumes, props, and scenery to help define the time and place of what is happening. The big difference is in an opera the words are sung, often accompanied by one or more instruments, like a piano or even a whole orchestra.

What’s the difference between opera and musicals?

There are two big differences between opera and musicals. Firstly, in musicals actors frequently have scenes without singing where lines are spoken. In opera, however, nearly all the lines are sung. Secondly, the style of singing is different. In a musical, singers work with microphones and speakers to amplify or make their voices louder so they can be heard easily in large theaters, like they do in pop recordings or in church. But in an opera, singers have to fill large theaters with their voices without amplification, and they often have to singing louder, over large group of instruments, and for longer periods of time in one breath than would be required in a musical. As a result, opera singers tend to sing louder, and with a different tone, or sound, than you’re used to hearing or could do yourself without years of special training. Despite these differences, operas and musical theater shows have a lot in common, and the two art forms have existed side-by-side throughout history.

How is an opera made?

Creating operas is done through lots of teamwork, with many people working hard to create one work of art.

The Composer and Librettist

First, a librettist will identify a story he or she wants to tell, and write a libretto (Italian for “little book”), like the script in a play, containing all the words that will be sung in the opera. Often this libretto will adapt a story that is very popular among audiences in another genre, like a play, a book, a piece of mythology, or a historical event. Just like adapting a book to a movie, the librettist has to make choices about what to include and what to leave out so that the story will work well in a theater. Most importantly, however, he or she has to come up with words that work as lyrics, not just as sentences. This includes devices like rhyming, alliteration, and lines with similar numbers of syllables.
A composer will then take the words and start setting them to music, deciding what notes the singers will sing and what the instrumentalists will play, using the music to enhance the drama of the words and situation. Once the score (a book containing all the musical notes and words together) is finished it gets handed off to a creative team that make the composer and librettists’ ideas a reality.

The Theatre Team

A director, set, costume, lighting, and makeup designers decide how the action will happen across the stage, what the scenery and costumes will be, what colors and types of lights to use in different scenes, and how the appearance of the actors will be altered to make them look like their characters, all to draw the audience into the story. Carpenters, painters, seamstresses build the sets and costumes, electricians hang and connect lights above and on the sides of the stage.

The Performers and Audience

Finally, all these elements come together with singers (who have to memorize their parts, just like actors), a conductor, and instrumentalists working together to present the opera. The team rehearses for weeks, making sure all the actors know their parts individually and together, coordinating and balancing the sound from the singers and the instrumentalists, and practicing the changes of scenery, costumes, and lighting. Finally, after much work, the opera gets enjoyed by an audience who may find themselves rapt with attention or cheering.