

Puccini: Popularity, Possibilities, Problems

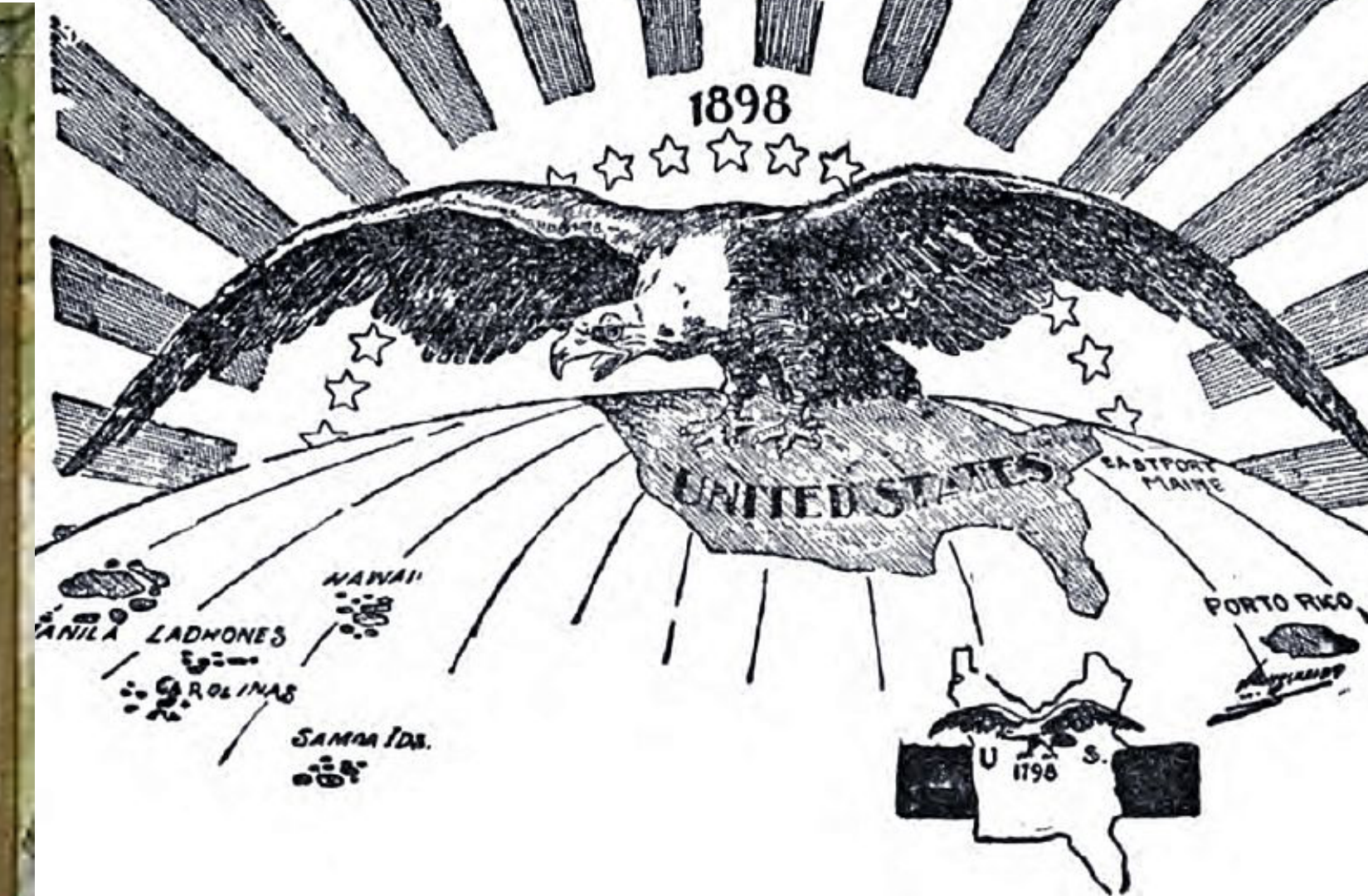
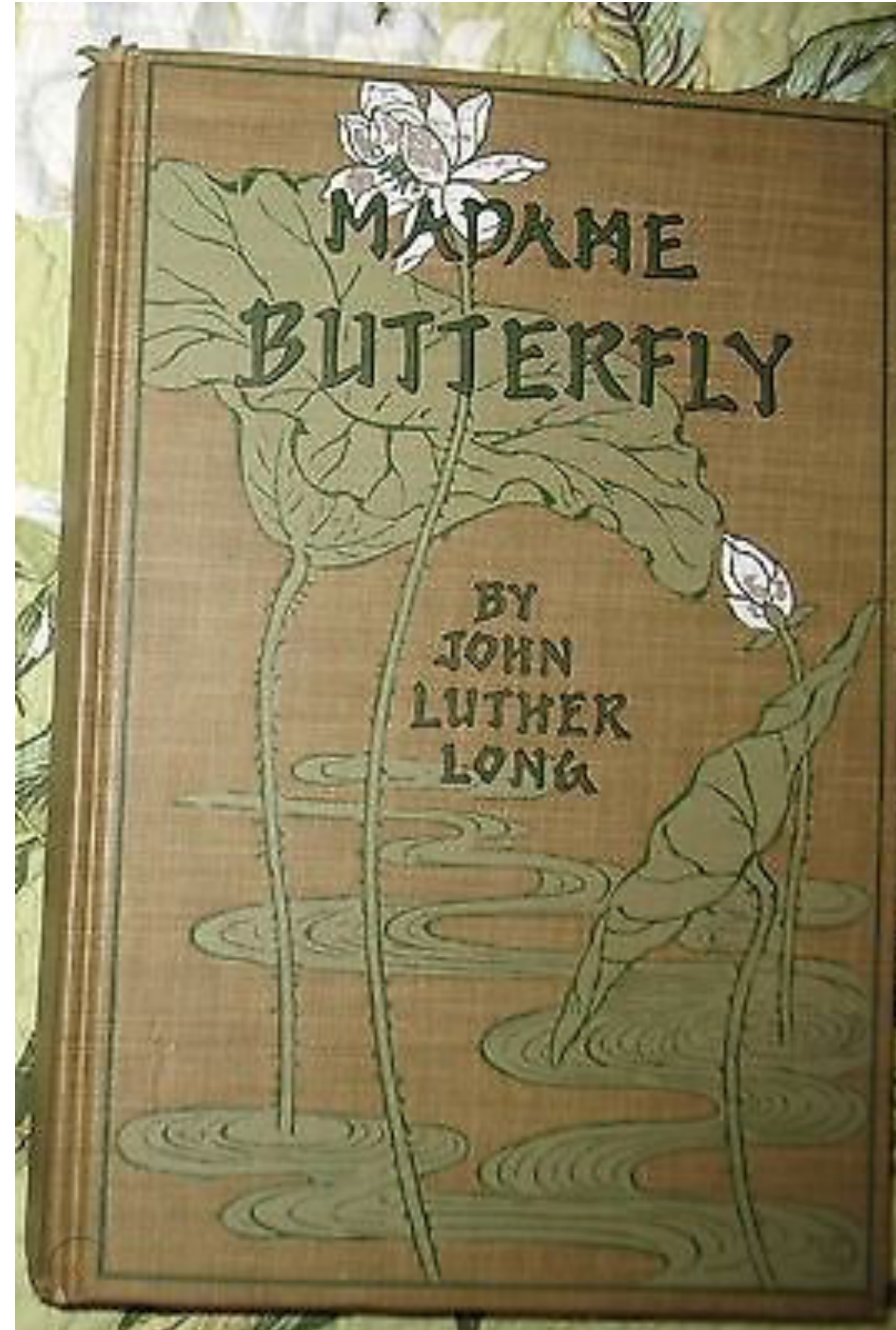
Wednesday Lecture: The case of *Madama Butterfly*

I. The creation of *Madame Butterfly*

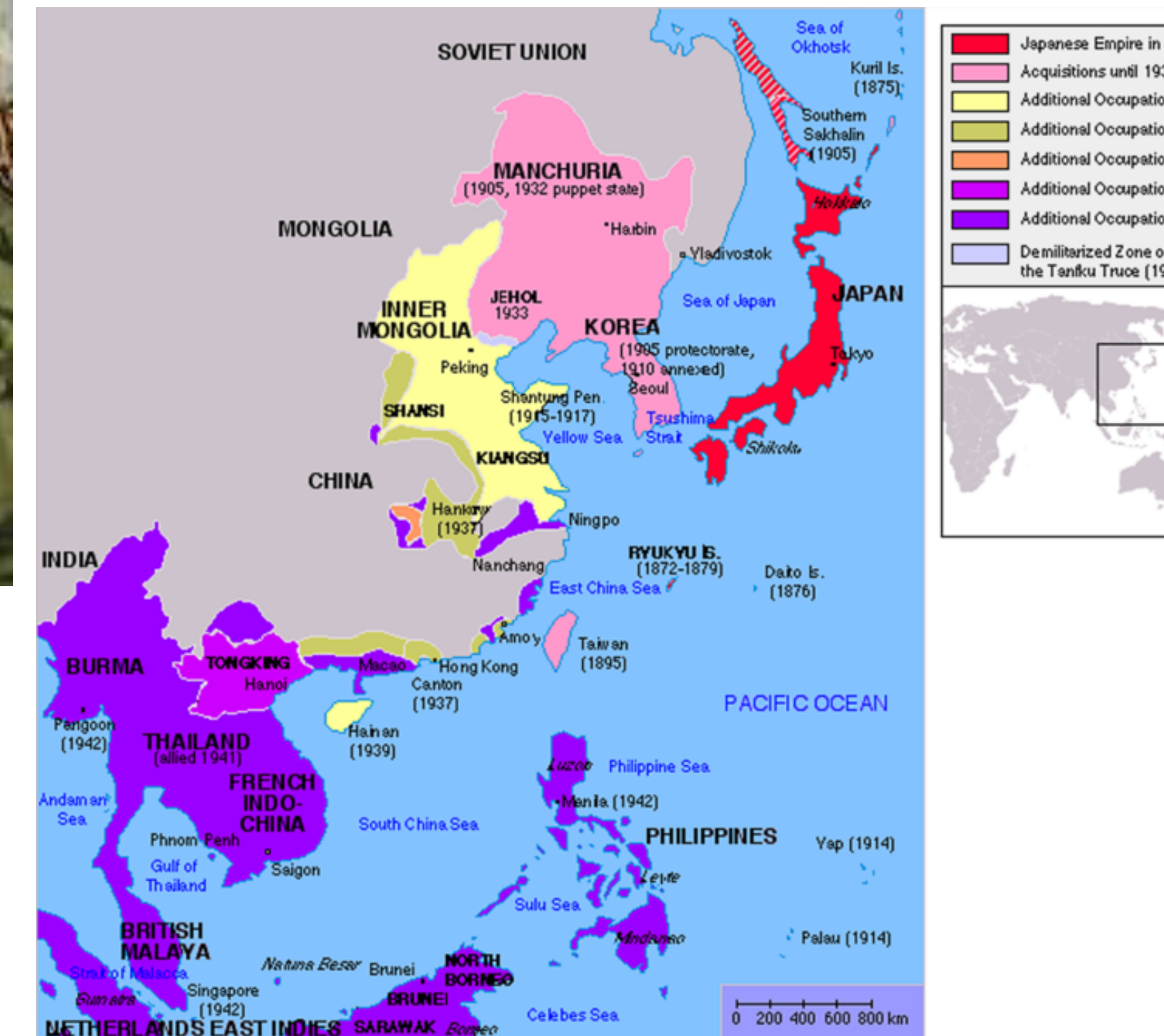
Madame Butterfly

An American story...

- 1898: short story written by American author John Luther Long...somewhat inspired by biographical connections as well as an earlier exoticist play *Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Loti
- Main characters: Lt. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton and Cho-Cho-San, set in Nagasaki
- historical context: Spanish-American war, US conquest of the Philippines, Open Door policy to China
- huge amounts of anti-Japanese racism: anti-voting laws, 1906 San Francisco law requires children of Japanese descent to attend segregated schools; another 1913 California law preventing land ownership by Japanese citizens; 1924 federal law prohibits immigration from Asia....
- Japan expansion of colonial empire: starting in the 1870s and 80s, creation of an empire. Victories in wars against China (1894-95) and Russia (1905), officially annexes Korea in 1910.



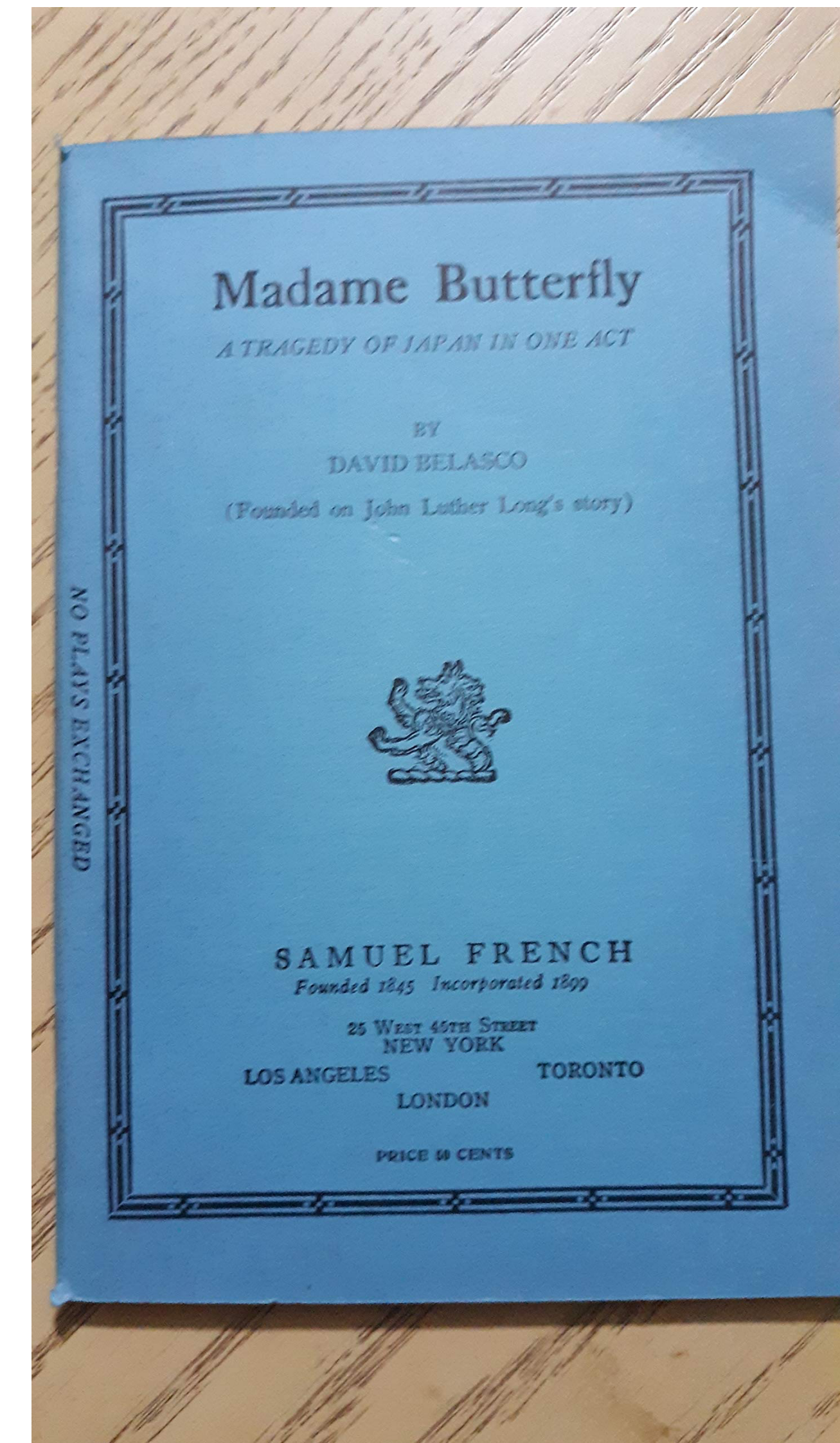
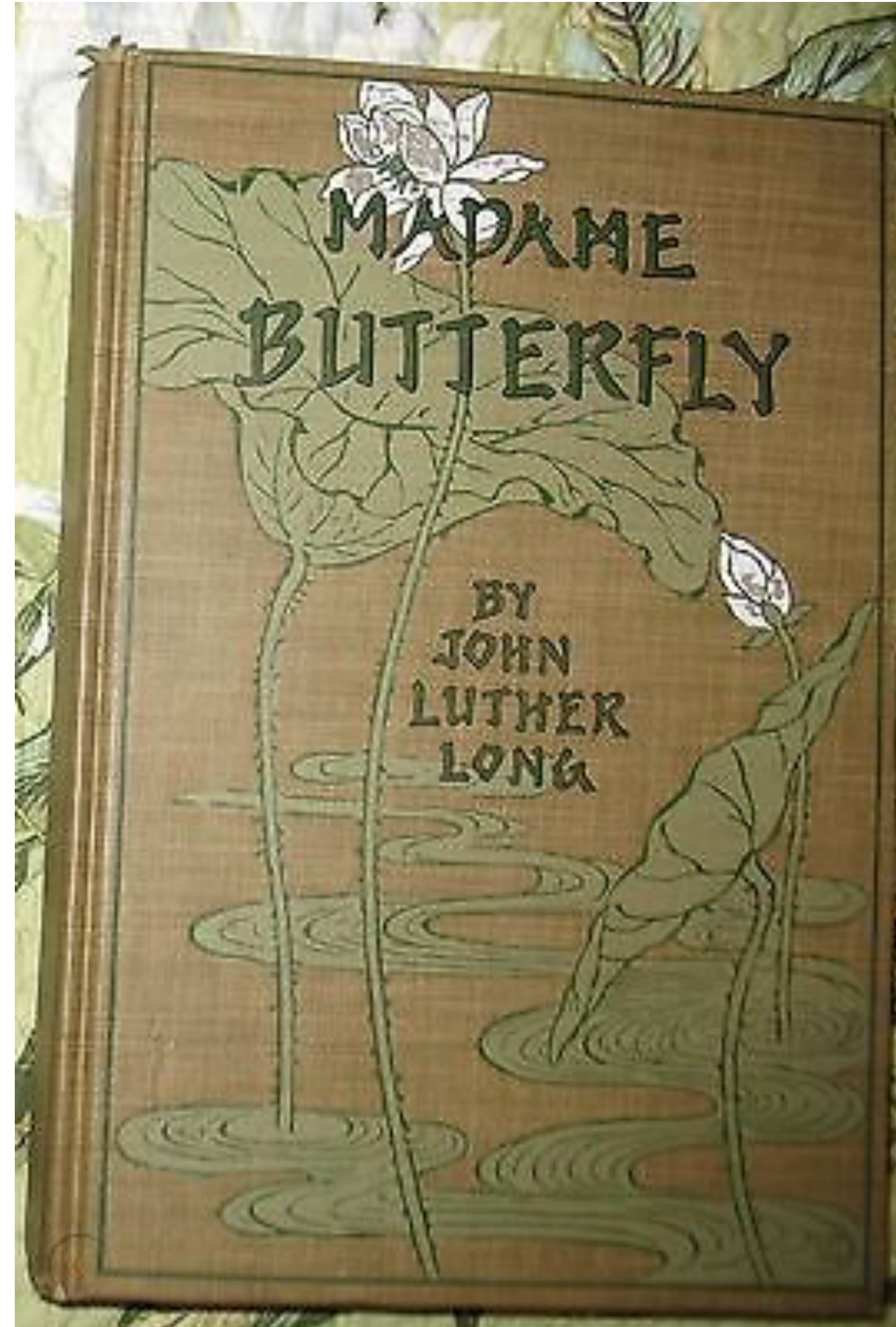
Ten thousand miles from tip to tip.—Philadelphia Press.



Madame Butterfly

An American story...

- 1898: short story written by American author John Luther Long...somewhat inspired by biographical connections as well as an earlier exoticist play *Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Loti
- Main characters: Lt. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton and Cho-Cho-San, set in Nagasaki
- 1900: American playwright David Belasco collaborates with Long to create a 1-act play *Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan* (the play opens to full houses in both NYC and seven weeks later in London)

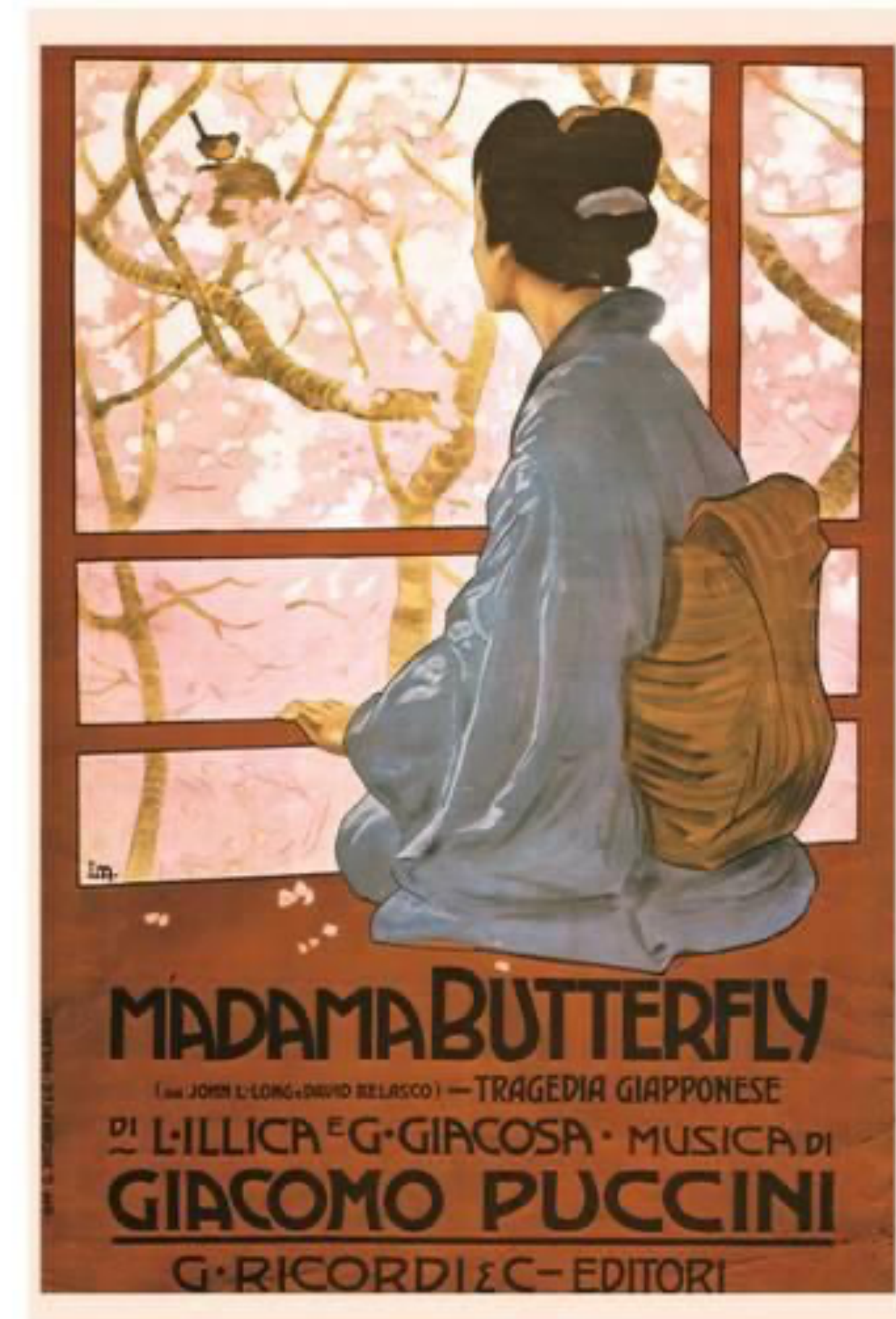


II. Giacomo Puccini and *Madame Butterfly*

Giacomo Puccini

Composing *Madama Butterfly*

- “tragedia giapponese” in 2 acts
- libretto by Giacosa and Illica, based on Belasco’s play (itself based on John Luther Long’s short story)
- Puccini saw Belasco’s play performed in London in June 1900 and immediately asked for the rights—he saw the play in English, which he did not understand well...
- Libretto not complete until 1902: lots of tension about what to change...
- Score completed December 1903
- February 1904 premiere in Milan is a disaster: La Scala audience hisses, Puccini accused of plagiarism etc
- Puccini withdraws the opera, makes revisions
- May 1904: new version premieres in Brescia, this time a huge success
- Upon further revisions, major successes in 1906 in Paris and thereafter



Puccini and the Music Boxes

W. ANTHONY SHEPPARD

IN the long history of operatic exoticism, Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* (1904/6) and *Turandot* (1924/6) occupy particularly prominent positions.¹ These two works have been commonly viewed as late exemplars of orientalist opera and as marking the end of that tradition. Some scholars have emphasized the ways in which these operas allegedly diverged from the nineteenth-century model of operatic exoticism and in which Puccini achieved new forms of ‘exotic authenticity’. These operas have even been hailed as having transcended orientalist representation entirely.² However, rather than signalling an end to operatic orientalism or a break with that tradition, these operas have proved to be two of the most influential in this lineage, and they continue to inspire numerous other works of exotic representation in myriad genres across the globe. Furthermore, the scholarship that these two operas have prompted – particularly quests to identify exotic melodic sources and to prove

Music Box as Muse to Puccini’s ‘Butterfly’



A tune sheet from an 1877 Swiss music box with Chinese tunes that Puccini might have listened to, at the Morris Museum in Morristown, N.J. Morris Museum, Morristown, N.J.

By W. Anthony Sheppard

June 15, 2012

MORRISTOWN, N.J.

THE [Murtogh D. Guinness Collection](#) of mechanical musical

Music Box as Muse

Puccini's Borrowed Tunes



An 1877 Swiss music box with Chinese tunes that Puccini might have listened to, at the Morris Museum in Morristown, N.J.
Credit...Morris Museum, Morristown, N.J.

Music Box as Muse

Puccini’s Borrowed Tunes

“Shiba Mo” (十八摸)

Example 2. ‘Shiba mo’ transcription from the Guinness music box.

The image shows a musical transcription of the 'Shiba mo' melody. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the first eight notes of the melody, and the second staff contains the next eight notes, ending with a double bar line. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune with a mix of eighth and quarter notes.

The poster is for the Teatro de la Opera Gran Compania Lirica Italiana, featuring Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. The poster is ornate with green floral borders. On the left, there is an advertisement for 'PERBIOTINA MALESCI' medicine. On the right, there is an advertisement for 'Chan' photography. The main text in the center reads: 'Teatro de la Opera', 'Gran Compania Lirica Italiana', 'Maestro Concertador y Director de Orquesta ARTURO TOSCANINI', 'SÁBADO 9 DE JUNIO', '11.ª FUNCIÓN DE FIBONO', 'Se representará la ópera en 3 actos del Maestro PUCCINI', 'Madama Butterfly', 'REPARTO', and a list of cast members and their roles. At the bottom, it says 'COMPañía NACIONAL DE CALEFACCIÓN'.

Empresa Rardi y Bonetti Temporada de 1906

GRAN COMPANÍA LÍRICA ITALIANA

MAESTRO CONCERTADOR Y DIRECTOR DE ORQUESTA
ARTURO TOSCANINI

SÁBADO 9 DE JUNIO

11.ª FUNCIÓN DE FIBONO

Se representará la ópera en 3 actos del Maestro PUCCINI

Madama Butterfly

REPARTO

Madama Butterfly (<i>Cio-Cio-San</i>)	R. STORCHIO	Goro, <i>Nakodo</i>	V. MONTANARI
Suzuki, <i>serviente de Cio-Cio-San</i>	L. GARIBALDI	Il Principe Yamadori.....	L. BALDASSARI
Kate Pinkerton.....	L. GARAVAGLIA	Lo Zio Bonzo.....	R. ERCOLANI
I. B. Pinkerton, <i>Teniente della Marina degli S. U. A.</i>	E. GARBIN	Yakusidé.....	L. BALDASSARI
Sharpless, <i>Consule degli S. U. A. a Nagasaki</i>	G. DE LUCA	Il Commisario Imperiale.....	C. THOS
		L'Ufficiale del Registro.....	C. THOS
		La Madre di Cio-Cio-San...	R. GARAVAGLIA
		La Cugina di Cio-Cio-San.....	L. GARAVAGLIA

Parenti, amici ed amiche di Cio-Cio-San - Servi. A Nagasaki, época presente

PROXIMAMENTE se abrirá el ABONO á 25 FUNCIONES de TINA DI LORENZO, á los precios siguientes: Palcos Bajos y Balcón, sin entradas ps. 500, Tertulias de Platea, con entrada ps. 100. DEBUT en la segunda quincena de Agosto.

COMPañía NACIONAL DE CALEFACCIÓN

Music Box Borrowings: *Madama Butterfly*

“Shiba Mo” (十八摸)

Example 2. ‘Shiba mo’ transcription from the Guinness music box.

Example 2 shows a transcription of the 'Shiba mo' melody from the Guinness music box. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, featuring a simple, repetitive melody with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Butterfly’s Entrance, Act I:

- Butterfly’s entrance marks her in the world of operatic exoticism as an “other-worldly exotic heroine.”
- We hear her friends singing bell-like ah’s and her voice floating from afar as they gradually enter from offstage.
- Disembodied voices and floating pulse=mystery and appeal.
- Entrance music climaxes with first half of “Shiba Mo.”
- Puccini orchestrates this with staccato flute, piccolo, glockenspiel, and octave grace notes

Example 3. The climax of Butterfly’s entrance, *Madama Butterfly*, Act 1.

Example 3 shows the climax of Butterfly's entrance, Act 1. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is marked *rit.* (ritardando) and *a tempo*. The lyrics are in Italian: (Appaiono in scena – hanno tutte grandi ombrelli aperti a vivi colori.)

BUTTERFLY

son ve - nu - ta al ri - chia - mo d'a - mor!

- die - tro e mi - ra le co - se tut - te che ti son si ca

- die - tro, dol - ce a - mi - ca, e mi

41 Largo

- re!

- ra!

Example 3 (continued)

Example 3 (continued) shows the continuation of the climax of Butterfly's entrance, Act 1. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is marked *molto stentato* (molto staccato). The lyrics are in Italian: (alle amiche) Siam giun - te.

(Vede il gruppo dei tre uomini e riconosce Pinkerton. Chiude subito l'ombrello e pronta lo addita alle amiche.)

molto stentato (Si genuflette.)

F. B. Pin - ker - ton. Giù.

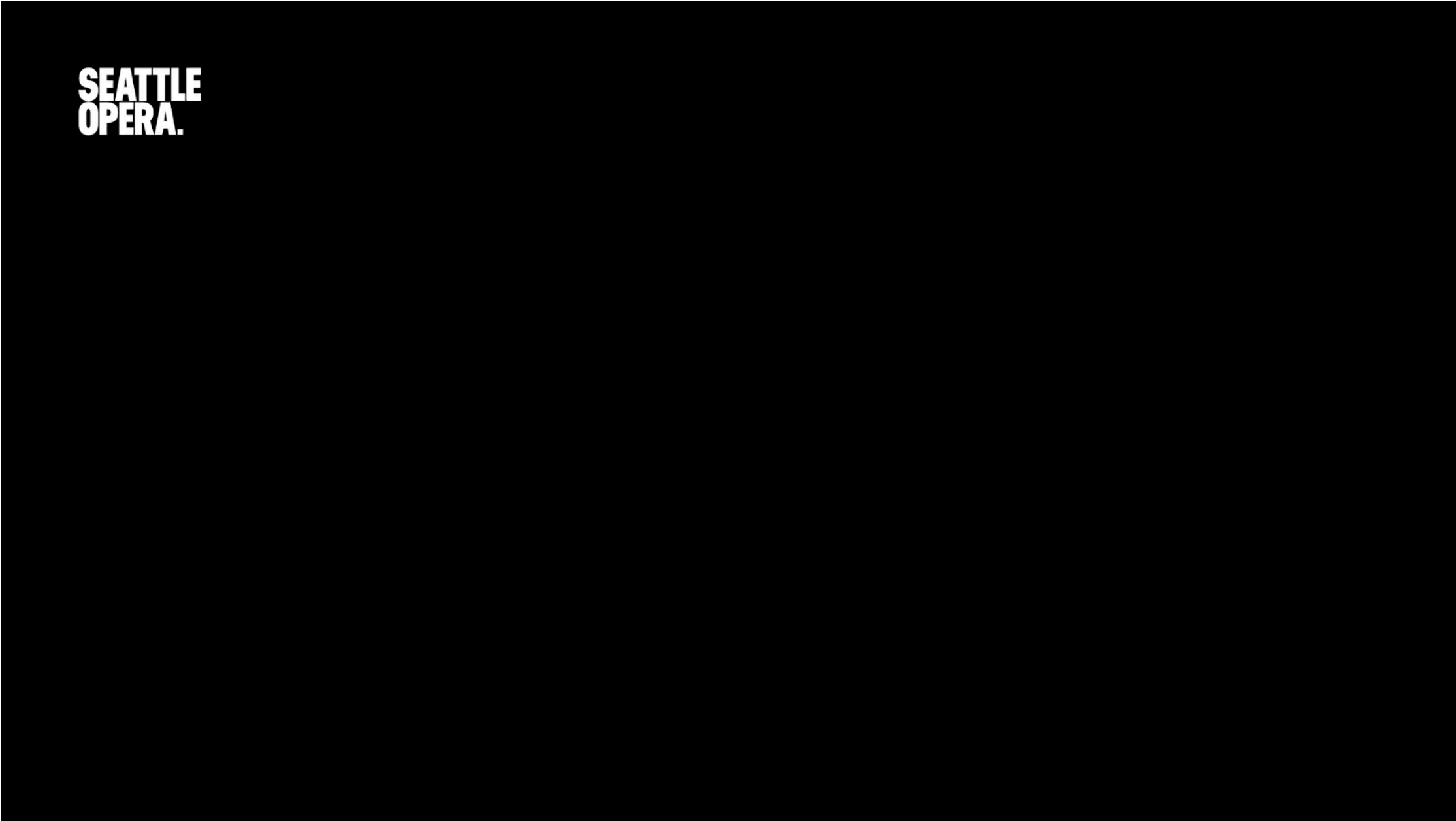
(Chiudono gli ombrelli e si genuflettono.)

Giù.

molto stentato

Giù.

Music Box Borrowings: *Madama Butterfly*



Example 2. ‘Shiba mo’ transcription from the Guinness music box.

The image displays a musical transcription of the 'Shiba mo' piece. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody is written in eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the melody, also in eighth and sixteenth notes, and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

I follow my destiny
and, filled with humility,
I kneel before
Mr. Pinkerton's God.
It is my fate.

In the same little church,
beside you on my knees,
I will pray to the same God,
and to please you I may perhaps be able
to forget my own people.
My dearest love!

Puccini: Madama Butterfly 99

BUTTERFLY (con paura)

This image shows the musical score for page 99 of Puccini's Madama Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly, marked "(con paura)". The lyrics are "Lo zio Bon - zo noi sa, nè i miei lo san - no. Io". The piano accompaniment is shown in the lower staves.

BUTTERFLY

se - guo il mio de - sti - no

80

pp dolcissimo

This image shows the musical score for page 80 of Puccini's Madama Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly. The lyrics are "se - guo il mio de - sti - no". The piano accompaniment is marked "*pp dolcissimo*".

BUTTERFLY

e pie - na d'u - mil - tà

This image shows a portion of the musical score for Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly. The lyrics are "e pie - na d'u - mil - tà".

Puccini: Madama Butterfly 100

BUTTERFLY

This image shows the musical score for page 100 of Puccini's Madama Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly. The lyrics are "al Dio del si - gnor Pin - kerton m' inchi - no.".

BUTTERFLY

È mio de - sti - no. Nel - la

f pp

This image shows a portion of the musical score for Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly. The lyrics are "È mio de - sti - no. Nel - la". The piano accompaniment is marked "*f pp*".

BUTTERFLY

stes - sa chie - set - ta in gi -

This image shows a portion of the musical score for Butterfly. It features the vocal line for Butterfly. The lyrics are "stes - sa chie - set - ta in gi -".



An image supplied to the costume designer Palanti by Ricordi, published in *Uniforms and Equipments for Officers U.S.N.*, New York, undated

Pinkerton, Act 1, costume design by Giuseppe Palanti, world premiere, La Scala, 17 February 1904

PINKERTON

Everywhere in the world
the roving Yankee
takes his pleasure and his profit,
indifferent to all risks.
He drops anchor
at random...
(He breaks off to offer a drink to Sharpless.)
Milk punch or whisky?
...He drops anchor
at random
till a sudden squall wrecks
the ship, hawsers rigging and all...
He's not satisfied with life
unless he makes his own
the flowers of every shore...

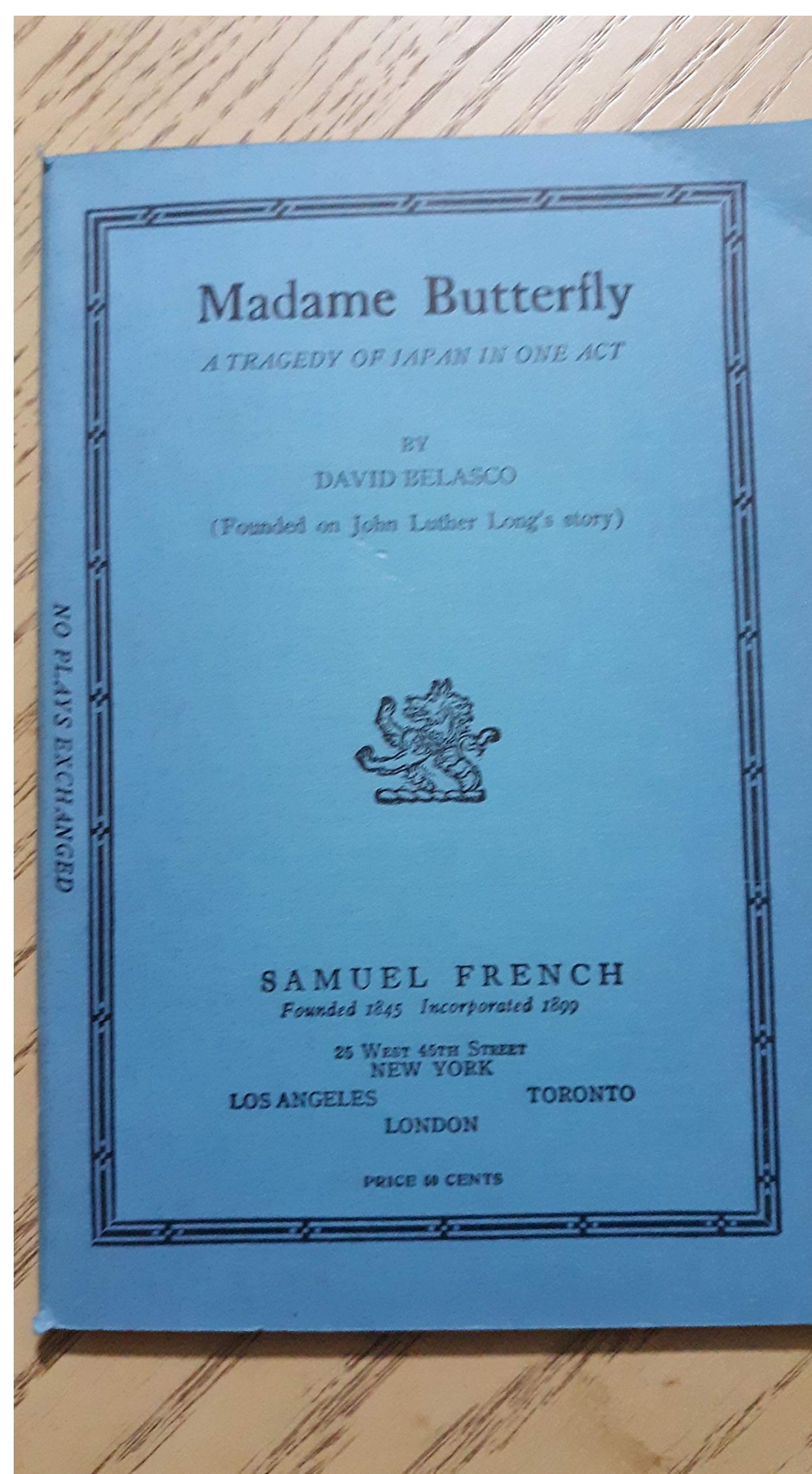


III. Performing *Madama Butterfly*: Geraldine Farrar and American Women

Madame Butterfly

An American story...

- 1900: returning for a moment to American playwright David Belasco's collaboration with Long to create a 1-act play *Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan* in NYC
- The character of Butterfly was performed by White actress Blanche Bates
- Bates: a complicated story in that she included mannerisms and speech and biographical details from her hired Japanese maid Suki
- Reception: audience knowledge that Bates was *costumed* as Cho-Cho-San
- Reception tended to emphasize "theatrical skill" of Bates's performance as opposed to "authenticity"



Geraldine Farrar (1882-1967)

- American singer: born in Melrose, Massachusetts
- studies voice in NYC, Paris, Berlin
- sang in Berlin, Monte Carlo, makes Met debut in 1906
- foremost American opera singer of the first two decades of the 20th century—only Enrico Caruso was paid more at the Met than Farrar
- one of the “singing actors” of the early 20th century: placed a huge emphasis on acting and drama as opposed to “just” singing



A YOUNG GIRL WITH A PHENOMENAL SOPRANO VOICE





Geraldine Farrar (1882-1967)

- interesting generational appeal: had a *huge* number of fans, including a set of young female fans who referred to themselves as “Gerry Flappers” — we really see Farrar connected with American modernity, female suffrage, youth, glamour
- New Women: connected with theater, 1890s and 1920s, challenging Victorian gender norms and the ideology of separate spheres by participating in women’s suffrage and other political movements
- immense media popularity: was an early recording star for Victor Talking Machine.
- 1908: Farrar’s recording of “Un bel di vedremo” (aria from *Madama Butterfly*) sells 4,663 copies in one year
- immense media popularity: the first crossover opera/film star — makes silent films such as *Carmen* (1915) with Cecil B. DeMille
- played the role of Cio-Cio-San for the Met in the first two decades of the opera’s production in the United States



Geraldine Farrar (1882-1967)

As Butterfly

- Again, obsessed with “research”: Farrar read about Japanese culture, designed her own costumes from various prints. Therefore her conception inherited and perpetuated existing Orientalist discourse.
- Like Blanche Bates, she hired a Japanese “maid” in order to observe her personality and manners. For weeks she worked with a Japanese actress Madame Fu-ji-Ko and incorporated into her portrayal of Cio-Cio-San much of her Japanese Teacher’s counsel.
- Reception of Farrar’s performance: very much based on American audience’s **notions** of Japanese women.
- Reception: The discussions say as much about Farrar’s identity and role as performing white American womanhood—particularly this role of a “New Woman” in America—as they do about her performance of Japanese femininity.

multilayered context of white women’s performances of Japanese femininity:

- actual politics of US-Japanese relations
- the producer’s (author, playwright, composer, actress/singer) construction of Japanese identity
- the American audience’s assumptions about Japanese femininity
- the singer’s identity as white American women
- the audience’s notions of American womanhood
- the audience’s understanding of this performance as an act of racial crossing



Text from Mari Yoshihara,
“The Flight of the Japanese Butterfly: Orientalism, Nationalism, and Performances of
Japanese Womanhood”
American Quarterly 2004

IV. Performing *Madama Butterfly*: Tamaki Miura and Exoticism

Butterfly in Japan?

- Yet *Butterfly* was not just a White female performance of White male Orientalist fantasy.
 - The Japanese themselves entered their stage and created their own *Butterfly*—Japan pursued modernity and sought recognition from its Western peers in part through the adoption of Western arts and culture, but there was also growing disenchantment with the West.
 - The Japanese *Butterfly* was thus much more than a Japanese female singer playing the character created by Western men.
 - The *Butterfly* played and claimed by the Japanese was also a performance of the Japanese nation-state as a modern, civilized peer of the Western powers, a performance of Japanese women's newly gendered identity in multiple publics, and a performance of Japanese people abroad intent on proving their status to their neighbors.
 - Not a simplistic binary between “resistance” and “complicity”—multiple forms of agency.
 - It also sheds light on why, despite such agency and resistance on the part of the Japanese, Orientalist performances continue to have strong appeal not only for Western audiences but also for those represented in such productions: the performance functions as a powerful political, cultural, and artistic tool for asserting their racial, national, and cultural identities.
- Western music had a lot of meaning in Japan: long story, but deliberate decisions of authorities and carefully planned policy rather than pressure from European colonizing powers
 - Western music programmatically introduced through establishment of state-sponsored Tokyo School of Music (though opera comes relatively late....it's expensive and “morally questionable” due to the plots...obvious *Butterfly*'s plot is particularly complex in this way)
 - F.P. of *Butterfly* excerpts in Japan in 1914: conducted by Takaori Shūichi and his wife Sumiko playing role of Cio-Cio San—they were among the first Japanese musicians to study music in US at turn of the century. Sumiko Shuichi studied with Farrar in NYC.
 - Touring companies from Russia and Japan do *Butterfly* in Japan in 1910s and 1920s

Tamaki Miura (1884-1946)

- born to bourgeois family in Tokyo in 1884
- Enrolls in new Tokyo School of Music against her family's wishes
- Rides a bicycle to school, becomes symbol of “modern girl.”
- performs in earliest staging of Western opera by a Japanese cast
- Leaves Japan to study in Germany and then makes successful debut in London in 1915 when invited to play Cio-Cio-San
- After this performance, becomes only Japanese singer who attained international acclaim in prewar period.
- Made a name as “Japanese Butterfly” —toured extensively around the world, performing *Butterfly* in NY, Boston, Chicago, LA, San Francisco, Portland, Baltimore, Honolulu, Havana, San Juan, Caracas, Milan, Rome, Monte Carlo, Lisbon etc etc
- After more or less seventeen years of touring, returns to Japan in 1932.

Giacomo Puccini
**Madama
Butterfly**
ATTO SECONDO



Tamaki Miura (1884-1946)

- In 1912 she edited and published a collection of 70 opera plots to Japanese readers. She said of *Butterfly*:

"Seen from our Japanese eyes, the Japanese culture and customs that appear in this opera are not merely extremely strange but rather infuriating. However, judging in terms of its musical value, it seems rather understandable that the piece received unprecedented acclaim in Europe and America.....this first act is almost thoroughly absurd to the Japanese, and one can see this as an unfiltered expression of the fantasies of the foreigners who have no understanding of Japan."

- She skillfully enacted Cio-Cio San to appeal to Western audiences. She said:

"After all, this story was first written by a foreigner based on his imagination; and then a foreign genius composed the music out of his own head by incorporating melodies of Japanese music here and there. Therefore, no matter how hard I try to perform in an authentically Japanese fashion, such a performance would not fit neatly within the opera as a whole. One has to harmonize Japanese emotions and manners into the opera."

- While she understood *Butterfly*'s distorted representation of Japanese culture and Orientalism of the Western audience, Miura did not refrain from performing her role in ways that were intended by the opera's creators and expected from its non-Japanese audience. There is an acute awareness about how Western Orientalism worked and the skillful way she capitalized on her Japanese identity in dealing with her Western audience.



