



MARTINEZ OPERA CONTRA COSTA 2008 NEWS LETTER

"If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him." John F. Kennedy

We are honored to present to our family of patrons, corporate sponsors and foundations our 2008 Annual Report. What an exciting year of to share with all who value and support the opera in the city of Martinez. Our programming has touched so many people and we look forward to growing even a larger family of patrons in 2009.



Chernisheva and Holmes "Madama Butterfly" with chorus

2008 was a significant year for Martinez Opera Contra Costa presenting the highly acclaimed production of "Madama Butterfly". Reviews from as far as San Francisco hailed the production as "exceeding reasonable standard for a local, regional opera company"... *San Francisco Classical Voice*, "a gem of a

production"... *Contra Costa Times*, "Madama Butterfly", at the Alhambra Performing Arts Center, this May provided a soaring musical experience at a level rarely equaled in this area, the sort of experience that welds a community together", *Bay Area News Group Saturday Extra*.

Our huge success can be attributed to the very talented and committed staff of MTZO. Our Artistic Director Cesare Curzi brought to life one of the most compelling production of Madama Butterfly in Contra Costa County. His unique sensitivity to the artists and his commitment to honoring the original work of Puccini, resonated a magical experience for the audience.

Alex Katsman, conductor, and superb orchestra, though challenged by venue limitations, delivered a commendable performance.

Most notably, Executive Director Maria Billingsley, Artistic Director Cesare Curzi, Music Director Alex Katsman, Costume Director Nancy Peacock and Stage Manager Kira Keeney successfully launched the much

anticipated “Pro-Production in 2008. This program partners with our local alternative high school providing arts access to, at-risk youth in the city. Youth had the opportunity to produce the highly acclaimed production of “Madama Butterfly” performed at the Alhambra Performing Arts Center.



Pro-Production

Other triumphs include the first annual “Swan Day” Support Women Artist Now, a national event sponsored by “The Fund for Women Artists”. MTZO partnered with the Martinez Arts Association where the two organizations showcased local artists from as far as Napa. This event will be an annual collaboration with the Arts Association and we hope to grow to over 200 artists from the Bay Area.

We are also excited about our new bi-monthly “Dine with a Diva” hosted opera event. This series provides the opera with on-going revenue while we enjoy wonderful food and wine. Last year over 80 opera lovers came to the Schultz home for a fabulous time with friends and our diva for the evening Angela Caldalero.



Martinez City Council Member Mike Menisini with Maria

2009 brings us into our 7th season of opera programming. Though we face tough economic times, we are confident that with our strong support from our many patrons, 2009 will be a rewarding year of opera outreach and a wonderful main stage production.

We want to thank all our donors in 2008 who made our season possible. We especially thank our volunteers who worked so hard to make MTZO one of the finest opera company’s in Contra Costa County.

We hope you enjoyed reading about MTZO 2008 and we look forward to seeing you at our next production in 2009.

MTZO
Martinez Opera