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**HOUSTON BALLET REVIVES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR STANTON WELCH AM'S EPIC  
MADAME BUTTERFLY**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS [September 2016]** From September 22 - October 2, Houston Ballet will revive artistic director Stanton Welch AM's signature work **Madame Butterfly** in a program with his one-act ballet **Son of Chamber Symphony**. Set to Puccini's memorable score, in an arrangement by John Lanchbery, **Madame Butterfly** chronicles the love story of the beautiful geisha Cio-Cio San who is betrothed to marry the handsome American, Lieutenant Pinkerton. The production unfolds dramatically on Peter Farmer's picturesque sets, which beautifully evoke the mystery and languor of 19th century Japan. Opening the program is the company premiere of Mr. Welch's **Son of Chamber Symphony**, set to music by John Adams. Houston Ballet will give seven performances of **Madame Butterfly** with **Son of Chamber Symphony** at Wortham Theater Center in downtown Houston. Tickets may be purchased by calling 713-227-2787 or by visiting [www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org).

Houston Ballet's **Son of Chamber Symphony** and **Madame Butterfly** program is generously sponsored by: **The Wortham Foundation, Inc.**

**INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM FOR *MADAME BUTTERFLY***

Premiered by The Australian Ballet in 1995, **Madame Butterfly** was Mr. Welch's first full-length ballet. The two-act work tells the story of the beautiful geisha Cio-Cio San who renounces her faith and her family to wed Lieutenant Pinkerton, the U.S. Naval officer who is betrothed to another woman back in the States. The centerpiece of the work is a ravishing wedding night pas de deux between Pinkerton and Cio-Cio San, which closes the first act.

Since its premiere, **Madame Butterfly** has become Mr. Welch's international signature piece, having entered the repertoires of Houston Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Boston Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet West, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Dance critic Maggie Tonkin of Dance Australia wrote, "This is a rare gem in the ballet repertoire, in which poetic design vividly frames tragic realism" (March 2011).

"**Madame Butterfly** was the first full-length ballet I created for Australia Ballet in 1995," says Mr. Welch. "The tale of Cio-Cio San takes the audience through her emotional journey. She portrays the dizzying glory of being in love, settles in to wait, displaying her loyalty and devotion to Pinkerton for years, only to be cruelly betrayed at the end. It's a stunning tale that is highlighted by the gorgeous score arranged by John Lanchbery and designs by Peter Farmer."

Anna Kisselgoff of The New York Times praised Mr. Welch's production of *Madame Butterfly* testifying, "His virtue is to match emotion in choreography with corresponding opera passages in the ingenious ballet score. . ." (October 19, 1999).

**SON OF CHAMBER SYMPHONY REINTERPRETS CLASSICAL BALLET MOVEMENTS**

Originally created for The Joffrey Ballet, **Son of Chamber Symphony** had its premiere at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in 2012. The inspiration for the three-movement ballet came to Mr. Welch as he searched for music and came across John Adams's **Son of Chamber Symphony**. The way Mr. Adams deconstructed the music reminded Mr. Welch of the inner workings of a clock. Using Adams's **Son of Chamber Symphony** Welch was able to choreograph movements in both expected and unexpected ways by taking traditional classical ballet movements and interpreting them into something new.

On creating the piece Mr. Welch said, "so much of ballet is about hiding the difficulties and seeking to attain seamless movement. Here I want to show the seams."

This theme is continued within the costume designs by Travis Halsey. The costumes are literally turned inside out and show all the inner construction and understructure that makes up a garment. In particular, the women wear tutus that, at first glance, appear traditional but in actuality are striking, stylized versions that suggest they have been flipped upside down.

Sid Smith from the *Chicago Tribune* enthused, ". . . this intelligent three-part piece is a steely but imaginative take on John Adams' score . . . Welch works tirelessly to meet it head on with inventive, exotic ballet and a darkish, driven world" (February 14, 2013).

For more information on Houston Ballet, visit [www.houstonballet.org](http://www.houstonballet.org).

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