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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

**World-renowned Conductor and Internationally-Acclaimed
Soprano to perform in Ball State Opera *Madame Butterfly***

MUNCIE, Ind. – January 2007 – World-renowned special guest conductor Fiora Contino and internationally acclaimed soprano, Joan Gibbons will present the heart-wrenching love story *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini at Emens Auditorium on Feb. 2 and 3.

Fiora Contino has conducted operas all over the United States and in different parts of the world including France, the West Indies and Jamaica and was also the subject of a PBS television hour-long special.

Joan Gibbons has performed in more than 30 operas in locations including France and United States cities such as Chicago, Saint Louis, New York City, Boston and more.

The Ball State Symphony Orchestra, along with students and faculty members, will be performing in *Madame Butterfly*.

WHO: Ball State University Opera Department

WHAT: Presenting *Madame Butterfly* starring world-renowned conductor, Fiora Contino, the internationally acclaimed soprano, Joan Gibbons; and also featuring talent from Ball State University.

WHERE: Emens Auditorium
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

WHEN: February 2 and 3, 2007 - 7:30 pm

THE PLAY: *Madame Butterfly* is set in 20th century Japan and is sung in Italian with English super titles. An arranged marriage between Japanese geisha, Cio-Cio-San to brash American Naval Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton leads the young woman to renounce her family and religion in her blind devotion to the American lieutenant. Unfortunately she takes the marriage too seriously and dire consequences follow.

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For more information:

To set up and interview with our special guests call:

- Fiora Contino (212) 203-2057
- Joseph Levitt (317) 919-1741
- Joan Gibbons (832) 755-7375

Previews, Interviews and Pictures are available anytime before the performance:

For Monday 1/22 – Friday 1/26 the cast will be rehearsing in MU123

(Go through the back doors of Emens Auditorium on Ball State University's campus and then through a set of double doors, MU123 is one of the first doors on the right)

Monday 1/22: 6-9 p.m. (MU123)

Tuesday 1/23: 5-8 p.m. (MU123)

Wednesday 1/24: 6-9 p.m. (MU123)

Thursday 1/25: 5-7 p.m. (MU123)

Friday 1/26: 3-6 p.m. (MU123)

Saturday 1/27: 9-10:30 p.m. Sursa Hall (across from Emens Auditorium)

For Monday 1/29- Thursday 2/1 the cast will be rehearsing in Emens Auditorium (Emens Auditorium is on the corner of McKinley and Riverside on Ball State's Campus)

Sunday 1/28: 12-3 p.m. Emens Auditorium

Monday 1/29: 6 p.m. Emens Auditorium

*Tuesday 1/30: 6-10 p.m. Emens Auditorium

*Wednesday 1/31: 6-10 p.m. Emens Auditorium

*Thursday 2/1: 6-10 p.m. Emens Auditorium

*Full Dress Rehearsal

For reviews of *Madame Butterfly*:

Please attend the performances on:

Friday, February 2 at 7:30 p.m. in Emens Auditorium

Saturday, February 3 at 7:30 p.m. in Emens Auditorium

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 22, 2007

World-renowned Conductor and Acclaimed Soprano to Perform in Ball State Opera “Madame Butterfly”

MUNCIE, Ind. --- World-renown conductor Fiora Contino and acclaimed soprano Joan Gibbons perform with the Ball State University Orchestra in Giacomo Puccini's heart-wrenching opera “Madame Butterfly.”

Contino is a graduate of Indiana University who has conducted operas in France, England and all over the United States. According to Opera Illinois, her performance of Puccini's “Madame Butterfly” at the Ambler Festival in July, 1973, was greeted by the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin as "...magnificent, moving and of the very first order." She has come to Ball State to bring that same highly-praised performance to Muncie. Contino is not the only star in “Madame Butterfly.”

All the way from New York City, internationally acclaimed soprano Gibbons who played the title role of “Madame Butterfly” in the Dallas Opera, Colorado Opera Festival and Opera Carolina will play the title role, Cio-Cio-San in “Madame Butterfly.”

“Madame Butterfly” will be presented by The Ball State University Opera Department 7:30 p.m. Feb. 2 and 3 in Emens Auditorium.

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About the Opera:

“Madame Butterfly” is a love story set in the early 1900s of a Japanese geisha, Cio-Cio-San who sacrifices her religion and family in blind and innocent devotion for her American husband Benjamin F. Pinkerton

About the Ball State Symphony Orchestra:

The Ball State Symphony Orchestra will be accompanying these special guests as well as Ball State students and faculty. The BSSO is an all-student orchestra with an assortment of undergraduate music majors, minors and non-majors and graduate students.

About Ticket Reservation:

Tickets cost \$12 for adults and \$5 for Ball State students. Tickets can be purchased at the Emens Auditorium Box Office at (765) 285-1539, all Ticketmaster outlets, charge-by-phone at (765) 644-3131 or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

For more detailed information about the opera, cast and crew visit: <http://opera.iweb.bsu.edu/media.html>

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*Full Dress Rehearsal

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Please attend the performances on:

Friday, February 2 at 7:30 p.m. in Emens Auditorium

Saturday, February 3 at 7:30 p.m. in Emens Auditorium

Madame Butterfly – Case Study

Research:

Cardinal Communications worked with the Ball State University Opera Department to promote the opera *Madame Butterfly* through an online media kit Web site, advertisements, online social networks and media placement. World-renowned conductor, internationally acclaimed soprano, BSU vocal students and BSU Symphony Orchestra presented the opera *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini at Emens Auditorium on Feb. 2 and 3, 2007.

The problem surrounding the promotion of Ball State Opera, *Madame Butterfly* is that past operas have had very little attendance and almost no promotion. An active short-term media relations program was necessary because they did not have adequate funds to support paid advertising, did not have sponsorship, and did not have the experience or resources to successfully gain media support.

The target publics can be divided as follows:

1. The first target public is the publication and broadcast news media. These people are important because they relay information to other publics and the mass audience. It is important that they have facts about the opera so that they can accurately relay information to the public.
2. Music publications are another important target public. These people are important because they would take a special interest in this opera because of the music value as well as the prominence of the lead role and conductor.
3. Ball State students are an important target public because they make up the student media who is responsible for distributing campus information. Also the students make up the general school population and are inclined to attend this event because of its proximity.

Our account team researched past successful promotions for musical theatre at Ball State and other productions in surrounding areas. We researched online media kits and advertisement ideas.

Planning:

To counter past years of poor attendance and low promotion Cardinal Communications focused on the goal to issue newsworthy materials to the media to reach mass audiences in surrounding areas, as well as more specific target audiences. We also wanted to use advertising to reiterate our key messages to buy tickets to see *Madame Butterfly*. Our target audience was everyone, but we did segment our audiences by demographics. Also to counter the issue of low funding, Cardinal Communications utilized free online social communities to advertise to Ball State students and took advantage of free advertising granted by Pepsi Cola America in the form of a banner. The Ball State Opera department was not charged for our services due to the fact that they are an on-campus client.

The basic objectives of the promotion of the opera were:

1. To promote the prominence of the distinguished conductor Fiora Contino and soprano Joan Gibbons as the media strategy for print, broadcast and radio.
2. To inform patrons that they can easily purchase tickets to the opera through several mediums including the Ball State Web site, a Web site created by Cardinal Communications for the opera and ticket master.
3. To promote the proximity factor to Ball State students as well as surrounding communities

Execution:

Our objective was to increase awareness of *Madame Butterfly* to our publics using the media as well as campus resources.

Cardinal Communications used multiple resources to help implement the tactic for the active short-term plan.

The campus advertisements included:

1. Mass emails to students and professors using the university computing services website.
2. A banner was hung in the center of campus advertising the event utilizing the Ball State Facility Scheduling Center in the Student Center room 114.
3. Team members handed out fliers created by Cardinal Communications production team at a high traffic area on campus, and reservations were made with the Ball State Facility Scheduling Center in the Student Center room 114.
4. An advertisement was run on the Ball State's Movie Channel 55 from Jan. 26, 2007 to Feb. 4, 2007 promoting the event.
5. An article was written and published on Ball State's News Center Website

Also Cardinal Communications targeted the surrounding areas by contacting local media.

We developed an online media kit, issued media advisories and news releases to radio, television, Internet, universities and print.

All written media advisories, news releases, as well all of the content for the online media kit was created by account team one in Cardinal Communications. The development of the *Madame Butterfly* Web site was created by the production team of Cardinal Communications.

One major advantage of this plan was the prominence of the lead soprano and conductor that was used as an angle for stories as well as the online media kit made available to the media for *Madame Butterfly* located at (<http://opera.iweb.bsu.edu/media.html>)

This online media kit included the following:

1. A home page with general info about the opera.
2. A link to purchase tickets with Emens Box office.
3. A link to purchase tickets with ticket master.
4. A *imedia resources* page including a feature story, news release and media advisory written for media, as well as information for interviews, previews and pictures of the opera prior to performance.
5. A backgrounder on the Ball State University opera department.
6. A backgrounder on the opera *Madame Butterfly*.
7. A profiles page including 30 cast/crew pictures and biographies.

Evaluation

The achievements of the objectives, all centered task management goal, were measured in ticket sales and media hits. The media relations conducted by Cardinal Communications resulted in more than 10 media hits, and the Ball State University Opera ticket sales for *Madame Butterfly* increased nearly 50 percent or more than in previous years.

1. On February 2 and 3, 2007 *Madame Butterfly* sold 1,072 tickets and gave away 388 complimentary tickets.

2. On January 27 and 29, 2006 "Magic Flute" sold 549 tickets, gave away 451 complimentary tickets and gave away 828 free Ball State student tickets.
3. On January 28 and 29, 2005 "One Act & Scenes" sold 161 tickets, gave away 517 complimentary tickets and gave away 265 free Ball State student tickets.

Below is a list of all our media hits.

Radio:

"Morning Musicale" Indiana Public Radio (Jan. 31, 2007) Interview

Television:

"Ball State Movie Channel" Channel 55 (Jan. 26, 2007 - Feb. 4, 2007) Advertisement

Print:

- ✓ "Classical Music - Madama Butterfly" Indy Star (Sunday, Jan. 28, 2007)
- ✓ "Madame Butterfly at Emens Feb. 2-3" Muncie Star Press (Thursday, Jan. 25, 2007)
- ✓ "5 Things You Need to Know About Madame Butterfly" Muncie Star Press (Thursday, Feb. 1, 2007)
- ✓ "Madama Butterfly - Students, Faculty and Professionals to Perform in Tragic Romantic Opera" Ball State Daily News (Friday, Feb. 2, 2007)
- ✓ "BSU opera made for memorable evening" Muncie Star Press (Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2007)

Internet:

- ✓ "Events Calendar" Chronicle-Tribune (Jan. 2007)
- ✓ "Indianapolis Community Calendar" Around Indy.com (Jan. 2007)
- ✓ "Best Bets" thestarpress.com (Jan. 2007) events calendar

The campaign was clearly successful due to a dramatic increase in ticket sales as well as the media hits. However, time and money were not on our side as Cardinal Communications had three weeks to complete and execute a media relations plan. In the future our plan will start much sooner, which will allow for more coverage and advertising for the production.

