The Opera Company of Boston has started its 1979/80 season with Sarah Caldwell's stunning production of Madame Butterfly, this original version of the opera being premiered in Boston, in English. The new production heightens Pinkerton's insensitiv- ity to a different culture — and Joseph Frawe is superb in bringing out the cool arrogance of the man.

To him, Japanese ways are absurd rather than charming, and he has no respect for them. He finds ridiculous the delightful nicknames of the servants, and has no quibbles about replacing local symbols with the American flag.

Events shows Pinkerton as little better than a whore-hunter, he's marrying Butterfly for a night's entertainment rather than because he is capable of establishing a true and lasting love for her. Joseph Frawe does a fine job here. Hurtful during the marriage, he declares 'I own your fluttering wings now' as if he has purchased the services of a prostitute for the night. Perhaps he was just a little too determined and lacking in pers- uasion, for I doubt Puccini wished to show him in such a light. Nonetheless, the result is dramatic, even horrific.

Butterfly, by contrast, is sung by Sung Sook Lee as an ardently devoted of Pinkerton. Her rejection of Japanese culture for his love is poignant, and her voice, full of emotion, produces a stag- gering effect as she stands waiting for his return all night, in loving anticipation.

The beauty of the performance so far causes all the more thrum- choking when she finds out Pinkerton has an American wife. There is a brief moment of knowledge, when naivete is lost, and disillusion and reality gained. And Butterfly has so hesitation in knowing what she must do — her death is premeditated, she must die with honor when she can no longer live with honor. Lee creates such an atmosphere of calm as she puts her child to play, her beloved son who will now be apart from this world for good. The tension becomes virtu- ally intolerable up to the climax of her death. The orchestra under William Frawe and the percussion create an un- worldly, erotic but deathly effect, all the more terrifying because of its leaned down urgency, holding the audience fixed in expectation until the moment of death when Pinkerton suddenly arrives to see what he has wrought.

A magnificent production — please do and see it on or before November 11.

Another recent event is unfor- tunate, but not unhappy. Hub Opera was formed earlier this year with a policy of making good opera available cheaply, using local singers wherever possible. The first production was put together quickly — a mistake, for the result Don Giovanni was a discouraging success. John Maddelena as Giovanni did try — he certainly took on a magnetic personality as well as singing, but surely none he conquered his women. But Eric Broughton as Don Ottavio sung Il mio renomewith the eloquence of a chicken slaughterer — has he really sung before, I asked myself. To save money, it seems that Hub Opera built a robot to sing Masetto — or so it seemed from Robert Honeysucker's performance. But Deborah Pliszczak as Zerlina was as charming as his Masetto was stupid — her sweet and fresh voice shone through the inadequacies of the production.

Butterfly and Cunning Man are charming

Keith Kibler as Leporello, however, simply failed to give the role any credence. Susan Larson and Kerry McCarthy as Donna Anna and Donna Elvira were just plain dull.

The one moment of glory came mercifully towards the end. Jonathan Freeburg was powerful as the Commendatore, and for a short passage the production came together for Giovanni's climactic descent into Hell. But apart from this there was no feel- ing of ensemble either on stage, or evidenced by the fifth-rate perfor- mance of the orchestra under (?) Charles Ellis. I really do hope that more time and care will be put into Hub's next production. With luck their first failure might prompt them into doing better next time.

According to John Gibbons, harpsichordist in the first concert of an Early Music Series organized by the Musical Instruments Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, "Boston is THE ear- ly music capital". And to judge by the Calendar of Events in and around Boston (available from the Museum), one would not doubt his word.

For the second event of the Series, Charles Burney's adapta- tion of Rousseau's 1752 comic opera Le Dran du Village, retitled The Cunning Man, was given by the Friends of Dr. Burney, director Charlotte Kaufman and what more proof could be re- quired that opera can be produced at relatively low cost, while giving immense pleasure? The story is simple: Phoebe is

BUTTERFLY AND CUNNING MAN

A career in engineering. You took the first step when you enrolled in college.

The notion of seeing your ideas become reality was probably a major factor in your decision to become an engineer.

Now comes the second step. Deciding where you're going to put your ideas and training to work.

Ten years ago, Advanced Micro Devices had no products, zero sales and eight of the best people in the business.

Today, Advanced Micro Devices has more than 600 products, $200 million in sales and 8,000 of the best people in the business.

We want more.

If you're an engineering degree candidate with a solid state physics background, we want you.

You'll work for the fastest growing integrated circuit pro- ducer in the nation. You'll work with engineers whose ideas have become reality.

Step to the head of the class. Join Advanced Micro Devices.