

PALM BEACH **OPERA**

Stories Told Through Singing



TURANDOT
Giacomo Puccini



OPERA: Stories Told Through Singing

We believe that opera tells stories to which we can all relate, and that's why the operatic art form has thrived for centuries. The education programs at Palm Beach Opera strive to immerse the community directly into these stories, revealing timeless tales of love, passion, and joy. We challenge each person to find his or her own connection to opera's stories, therefore inspiring learners of all ages to explore the world of opera. At Palm Beach Opera, there is something for everyone! **#PBOperaForAll**

TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini

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The Masterminds





TURANDOT

Giacomo Puccini. Opera in Three Acts. 1926.

Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, based on Carlo Gozzi's play *Turandot*. Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

First performance at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy, April 25, 1926.

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Composer Giacomo Puccini (December 22, 1858 – November 29, 1924) was born into a musical family. He studied composition at the Milan Conservatory, writing his first opera in 1884 at the age of 26. A prolific composer, Puccini wrote many operas including several that are still in performance today: *Manon Lescaut*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West*, *La rondine*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Turandot*, and *La bohème*. Although the designation of Puccini as a verismo composer is debated, many of his works can fit in this category. Verismo is derived from the Italian word 'vero' meaning 'true;' the style is distinguished by realistic lines and genuine characters, which *Turandot* veers away from.



FUN FACT: Puccini's full name was Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini. WOW! Try saying that five times fast!

In 1903, Puccini and his family were in a serious car accident. Although his wife Elvira and son Antonio suffered only minor injuries, the car pinned Puccini to the ground causing significant damage. He used a cane for the remainder of his life.

As was common at the time, Puccini was an avid smoker. After suffering from continuous pain in his throat, Puccini's doctors diagnosed him with cancer in 1923. Puccini passed away on November 29th, 1924 from complications of the cancer treatment before he could complete his last opera *Turandot*. The opera was completed by Franco Alfano from Puccini's sketches of the work. When performed at La Scala in 1926, famous conductor Arturo Toscanini paid homage to Puccini by ending *Turandot* at the point Puccini had reached before succumbing to cancer. Toscanini turned to the audience and said, "Here ends the opera, because at this point the maestro laid down his pen." The full version, completed by Alfano, was performed the following evening.



GIUSEPPE ADAMI

Italian librettist, Giuseppe Adami (November 4, 1878—October 12, 1946), became well-known through his contribution as co-librettist of Puccini's final opera *Turandot*. After befriending the famous publisher Giulio Ricordi, Adami also contributed to Puccini's *La rondine*, crafting the Italian text from the full-length libretto and German operetta by Willner and Reichert. Although Giuseppe Adami acquired a law degree, his life's work was that of writer, playwright, and music critic. Notably, he published a collection of Giacomo Puccini's letters, *Epistolario*, and later wrote one of the earliest biographies based on his own personal reflections of the great operatic composer. In the final stages of his career, Adami worked as a publisher for Casa Ricordi.

RENATO SIMONI

Born in Verona, Italy (September 5, 1875—July 5, 1952), Renato Simoni devoted his entire career to theater and worked as a critic. Also an Italian journalist, playwright, and writer, Simoni edited for *l'Adige*, a local Veronese newspaper company in his hometown in 1902. In 1914, Simoni succeeded John Pozza as an author and critic at *Corriere della Sera* newspaper company, where he worked until the end of his life. He also wrote the play on which the 1939 Italian film *La vedova (The Widow)* was based; it tells the tale of an overly possessive mother who treats her daughter-in-law cruelly after the death of her beloved son. In 1952, Simoni donated 40,000 volumes of his writings and reviews to the Museum of La Scala, dedicating them to his mother, Liva, after which the library was named.



Who's Who

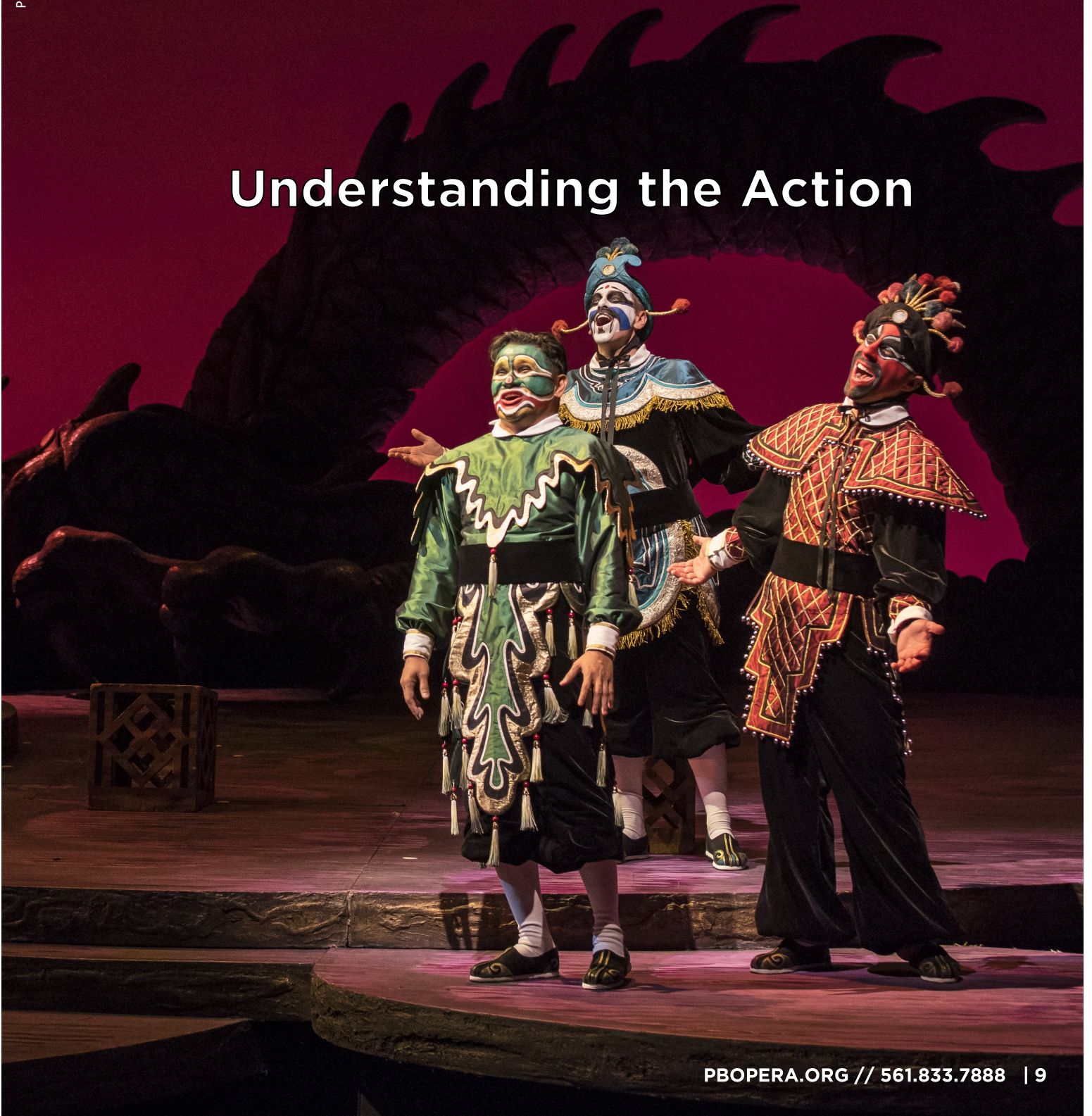


TURANDOT

The Characters

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE
Turandot	Princess of China; refused to wed unless her suitor can solve her three riddles. She is captivating but cold.	too-rahn-DAWT	soprano
Altoum, Emperor of China	Father of Turandot; a powerful leader, he tolerates Turandot's bloodsport although he and his country have tired of it.	ahl-TOOM	bass
Timur	The deposed king of Tartary; in exile, he wanders the countryside in anonymity with his only loyal servant, Liù. Calaf is his long-lost son.	tee-MOOR	bass
Calàf, the unknown prince	Exiled prince of Tartary; wandering in disguise, he falls in love with Turandot at first sight.	kah-LAHF	tenor
Liù	A slave girl; serves the deposed King of Tartary, Timur, but secretly loves his son, Calàf.	LYOO	soprano
Ping, Pang, Pong	Three government officials; weary of watching the princess's suitors die, they urge Calàf to give up his quest.	PING, PAHNG, PAWNG	baritone, tenor, tenor

Understanding the Action



TURANDOT



PG-13: Check out a “Synopsis in Short” of *Turandot* from Opera 5: <https://youtu.be/dP5wD3nJNfY>

Setting

Fictional ancient China. (“Peking, in legendary times”)

The short of it

Turandot is a beautiful and brutal princess, who challenges her many suitors to answer three riddles on pain of death. No one has ever succeeded. Calàf is a brave, selfish prince from a different land, who watches the princess behead a rival suitor and falls instantly in love. Despite the wishes of his exiled father and the pleas of a slave-girl who loves him, he rings the gong and declares his suit to the princess. She presents her riddles, and in triumph, the unknown prince answers. Turandot despairs and the prince takes pity—offering the ice-cold princess a riddle of his own. But Calàf’s riddle risks more than his own life—everyone else’s hangs in the balance.

The long of it

ACT I

Outside the Imperial Palace.

In front of the walls of the imperial palace in Peking, a mandarin reads a proclamation announcing that the princess Turandot will marry only a suitor of royal blood who will answer the three riddles set by her. Suitors who will fail to answer correctly will be beheaded. The prince of Persia has just failed in his attempt and will soon find his death at the gallows. The crowd awaits the execution eagerly while the others call the princess to stop the cruel bloodshed. During the commotion an old man falls to the ground. A younger man rushes to his aid, recognizing that the old man is his father whom he thought dead. The happy reunion between father and son is somewhat quieted as Calàf, the young man, informs his father, Timur the old king of the Tartars, that they are persecuted by enemies. Timur has escaped the enemy with the aid of Liù, his faithful servant.

As the prince of Persia is led to the scaffold, the crowd laments his beauty and his young age. Turandot appears for an instant signaling that the execution can proceed. Calàf, catching her sight for a mere instant, is smitten. He must answer the riddles and marry the princess. Timur entreats his son to run away and save his life, and the three imperial ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong also beg the anonymous man to reconsider. Even Liù, who has secretly loved Calàf for many years, asks him to leave but he consoles

her in a beautiful aria, saying he can not be moved. Calàf has made up his mind. He approaches the palace gates, strikes the gong thrice and calls three times the name of Turandot accepting the challenge that many before him failed and paid for their failure with their own life.

ACT II

Inside the palace.

The three *comedia dell'arte* type ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong, discuss the funeral rites of the victory parade for the unknown prince. They lament Turandot's ongoing bloodshed and long for the good old days of the quiet past, hoping they will be able to enjoy the joys of nature. They day dream about the time in which peace will come and some suitor will conquer the ice princess. But soon enough they are brought back to reality and proceed to the royal palace to attend, yet again, one more riddle ceremony.

Many have gathered at the palace where the old emperor Altoum implores Calàf once more to save his life. But no one can change Calàf's mind, not even Turandot herself who appears and in her aria explains why she is so cruel to her suitors. A long time ago, she says, a foreign king has ravished her ancestress and Turandot has vowed to avenge the horrible deed. Calàf is ready and provides the answer for the first riddle with ease. It is hope which is born anew every night he says. The second riddle is tougher for Calàf but again he provides the right answer: blood kindles like a flame. Turandot is somewhat agitated. Her third question seems to beat the prince: "Which ice gives fire?" she asks and eventually Calàf does claim his victory. The answer of course is Turandot herself. The people hail the victorious prince but Turandot begs her father: she does not want to marry the prince. Altoum cannot help his daughter, but Calàf comes with a proposal: he will ask the princess one riddle. If she can guess his name by dawn, he will be ready to die. Turandot accepts the challenge.

ACT III

In the Imperial Gardens.

Turandot sends her messengers through the city to find out the prince's name. No one shall sleep tonight, comes the decree, until the name is found out. In the palace garden Calàf awaits the morning, singing one of the famous arias in operatic history (*Nessun dorma*). The three mandarins ask him to run away and offer him money and other women. But Calàf, as we all know, is very stubborn. He will not give up Turandot.

Torturers drag in Timur and Liù. They have been seen speaking with the prince and it is hoped that they can provide the name all the city is searching for. Turandot commands them to speak, but Liù, in order to save her master's life, says only she knows the name but will never disclose it because of her love to Calàf. Snatching a dagger from one of the guards, Liù stabs herself and dies. Calàf and Turandot remain alone on stage. He tears the veil off her face and kisses her passionately. The kiss melts the ice princess. She confesses that from the beginning, she has feared and loved the unknown prince. She hopes Calàf is happy to know she loves him and asks him to leave. But Calàf simply reveals his true identity to Turandot putting his life in her hands. She again assumes her former attitude, rushing to summon the Emperor and the people, announcing that she has revealed the stranger's name: it is "Amore" — love. Turandot and Calàf kiss and the crowd is overjoyed.

Turandot's Riddles

In transforming Gozzi's play into an opera, Puccini and his librettists made a number of changes to the source material: they simplified the plot, eliminated the reshaped characters, and transformed what was originally a lighthearted, comic fairy tale into a large-scale, passionate drama.

They also gave new significance to a key element in the plot: the three riddles that the suitor must answer. In the original play and in Fredrich Schiller's darker German adaptation, the riddles carry little meaning beyond the simple puzzles they present. The answers are either generic—sun, eye, plough—or topical—the Lion of St. Mark, a symbol of Gazzi's home town, Venice.

Puccini, Adami, and Simoni chose riddles that reflect key themes of the opera. The first answer, hope, speaks to Calàf's indomitable spirit. The second, blood, is a central image in the opera—from the beheading of the suitors to the torture of Liù to the earthy humanity that Calàf seeks to provoke from Turandot. The answer to the final riddle—"Ice that sets you on fire and by your own fire is made more icy" - of course if Turandot herself, embodying the paradox of her nature: cold yet inspiring (and eventually capable of) great passion.

For comparison, the riddles and answers to two of Puccini's predecessors as well as his opera are provided on the following page.

Turandot's Riddles

Gozzi's Turandot

Riddle Number One

We notice her presence in lands high
and low,
In cities, the country -wherever we go...
In war, as in peace, she is safe in her
place
And everyone living has looked on her
face.
She is friendly to all and she strives for
our gain,
Yet her unequalled splendor can drive
men insane.
You know who she is, but don't know
that you do—
Now answer me, stranger—my riddle is
through.

Answer: The Sun

Riddle Number Two

The tree in which the hours
of human life are told
Is as young as a newborn infant,
Yet infinitely old.
Its leaves are white on one side,
On the other, black as sable.
Tell me what this tree is,
Prince, if you are able.

Answer: A Year

Riddle Number Three

Tell me the name of the kingly beast
Who makes the world tremble and
ruins his foes,
Still mighty today as he was in the past,
Winged and four-footed, in active
repose.
His hindquarters rest on the restless
seas,
His breast and his forepaws cover the
sand.
His untiring wings will never cease
To cast their protection over the land.

Answer: The Lion of St. Mark

Schiller's Turandot

Riddle Number One

A tree on which men grow and fade;
Old as the world, yet ever new;
Its leaves, on one side, live in shade,
On th' other bears the sun's bright
show.
Each time it blooms a ring it wears,
It tells the age of each event.
Upon its bark men's names it bears,
Forgotten e'er its life be spent.
What is this tree, so young, so old,
So sunny warm, so icy cold?

Answer: A Year

Riddle Number Two

Canst thou the fragile mirror name,
Reflecting all creation on its limpid
face;
'Tis closed within a narrow frame,
Yet compasses high heav'n's blue vault
of endless space.
This crystal is of priceless worth,
But yet the poor possess it, nor
possession pay;
It is the brightest gem on earth,
It gives and yet receives its heaven-
born brilliant ray.
What is this mirror bright and clear,
Free given to all, to all so dear?

Answer: The Eye

Riddle Number Three

What is that thing, held cheap as dust,
Yet honor'd by the Emperor's hand?
'Tis made to pierce, with sword's keen
thrust,
But sheds no blood, tho' wounds like
sand,
In number deep inflicts; robs none;
Enriches thousands; rules the earth;
Makes life with ease and smoothness
run;
Has founded kingdoms; ended dearth;
Most ancient cities it has built,
But ne'er caused war, nor war's sad
guilt.

Answer: A Plough

Puccini's Turandot

Riddle Number One

In the gloomy night
an iridescent phantom flies.
It spreads its wings and rises
over dark, infinite humanity!
Everyone invokes it, everyone implores
it!
But the phantom disappears at dawn
to be reborn in the heart!
And every night it's born
and every day it dies!

Answer: Hope

Riddle Number Two

It flickers like flame,
and is not flame!
Sometimes it rages!
It's feverish, impetuous, burning!
But idleness changes it to languor!
If you're defeated or lost, it grows cold!
If you dream of winning, if flames!
Its voice is faint, but you listen;
it gleams as bright as the sunset!"

Answer: Blood

Riddle Number Three

Ice that sets you on fire
and by your own fire
is made more icy!
Perfectly pure and dark!
If it sets you free, it makes you a slave!
If it accepts you as a slave,
it makes you a King.

Answer: Turandot



TURANDOT

Beyond the score

The struggle is real! For Puccini, the writing of *Turandot* was an extremely drawn out process. Being a very exact composer, he spent four years before his death concerned about the number of acts, whether or not to turn the plot back towards something less serious, and a final love duet that was to be the ultimate culmination of the entire performance. Puccini wrote to a friend in March 1924, “I have placed, in this opera, all my soul.”

Deep roots. This powerful and occasionally disturbing opera was born in the world of a fairy tale. Often used as childhood entertainment in its historical form, the genre can be surprisingly sinister and bloody. The ultimate source of *Turandot’s* story is an epic romance from 12th-century Persia. 600 years later, Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi adapted it into a drama with a lighter edge and comic relief characters. Puccini’s opera returns to the darker tone of the original source—his aim was to write “something that will make the world weep.”

Turandot in China. Until the end of the 20th century, *Turandot* was not performed in the People’s Republic of China because authorities were offended by the opera’s historical inaccuracies and unflattering representation of its rulers. That ended in 1998 when an epic performance was given in the Forbidden City, the home of actual Chinese emperors until 1912. This production was conducted by Zubin Mehta and staged by Chinese film director Zhang Yimou, who later directed the opening and closing ceremonies for the Beijing Olympics.

Artistic license. *Nessun dorma* is arguably the most famous aria in all of opera. At the end of the aria, the second syllable of *vincerò*, “I will be victorious,” is a high B, near the top of most tenors’ ranges and a nice note for them to show off. The score shows that the B is really only a brief sixteenth note. The final syllable sung on an A is the long whole note, which is often also held for an event greater amount of time than written by the large-lunged tenors of today. One of the few tenors to end the aria the way Puccini wrote it was Francesco Merli in 1938. Luciano Pavarotti, on the other hand, is popularly credited with basking for long periods of time in high-B land.



HISTORICAL EVENTS HAPPENING WHEN PUCCINI WROTE TURANDOT (up to his death in 1924)

Jan 15	Winter Olympic Games open in Chamonix, France
Jan 29	Ice cream cone rolling machine patented by Carl Taylor, Cleveland, OH
March 4	“Happy Birthday To You” published by Claydon Sunny
April 15	Rand McNally publishes its first road atlas
April 17	Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures, and Louis B Mayer Co merged to form Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM)
April 18	First crossword puzzle book published by Simon & Schuster
May 10	J. Edgar Hoover appointed first director of the FBI
June 2	US President Calvin Coolidge signs the Indian Citizen Act declaring all Native Americans to be American citizens
June 15	Ford Motor Company manufactures its 10 millionth automobile
Aug 5	“Little Orphan Annie” comic strip by Harold Gray is first published in the New York Daily News
Oct 15	US President Calvin Coolidge declares Statue of Liberty a national monument
Nov 27	The first Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade is held in New York City

FUN FACT: Every Christmas, Puccini would have a panettone, the traditional Italian holiday fruitcake, sent to each of his friends as a gift. One year—just before the holiday—he had a quarrel with the hot-tempered conductor Arturo Toscanini—who later led the premiere of *Turandot*—and tried to cancel the delivery. When he learned that the cake had already been delivered, Puccini telegraphed the conductor: “Panettone sent by mistake.” Toscanini telegraphed back: “Panettone eaten by mistake.”



Engage Your Mind

TURANDOT

Curriculum for further study

The following pages contain Lesson Plans and accompanying materials for grades 6-12. Lesson Plans were crafted according to curriculum standards set forth and approved by the state of Florida. Palm Beach Opera's curriculum is approved by The School District of Palm Beach County.

For questions about the Lesson Plans, or for more information about how Palm Beach Opera can serve your classroom, email education@pbopera.org.





PALM
BEACH
OPERA

TURANDOT
OPERA REHEARSAL 101

68

LESSON PLAN & MATERIALS

Audience Guidebook Project

PALM BEACH OPERA

Opera Rehearsal 101: TURANDOT Curriculum (68)

SCHOOL NAME:

DATE:

LESSON PLAN

Audience Guidebook Project (68)

UNIT LESSON

Students use their own creative language and ideas to create informative pieces about expected audience behavior at a live theatrical event (particularly an opera).

Suggested time frame: 1 class period, at home work required

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What audience etiquette is expected at a live theatrical event?

Why is etiquette important?

How can one relay information in a meaningful and artistic way?

CORE CONTENT LEARNING GOAL

Students will write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events.

CORE STANDARD(S)

LAFS.68.WHST.1.2

ART CONTENT LEARNING GOAL

Students will discuss how a performer responds to different audiences, and describe the responsibilities of audience members, to the actors and each other, at live and recorded performances and demonstrate appropriate behavior.

ART STANDARD(S)

TH.68.H.1.6

TH.68.S.1.1

I CAN STATEMENTS

- Define audience etiquette.
- Create an informative piece on audience etiquette which showcases my personal artistic choices.
- Contemplate another person's point of view and integrate their thoughts and feelings into my own understanding.

VOCABULARY

Audience etiquette, live performance, informative piece, opera

TECHNOLOGY & MATERIALS

Palm Beach Opera's "What to Expect at the Opera" page

LESSON

Step 1	<p>Ask students if they have ever been to a live theatrical event. Students may need to discuss and identify the nature of a live event (i.e. a play or a concert vs. a movie theater experience).</p> <p>Challenge students to think of as many different types of live theatrical events as possible and keep a visible list. Examples could include an opera, a musical, the circus, a Disney show, a play, a rock concert, a symphony, a sporting event, etc.</p>
Step 2	<p>Once a list has been created, ask students to discuss expected audience etiquette at a number of the events on the list. Etiquette may need to be defined (<i>accepted behavior for a particular situation</i>). The last event to discuss should be an opera.</p>
Step 3	<p>Hand out Palm Beach Opera's "What to Expect" sheet. Read through the expectations, then discuss the parallels and differences between expected etiquette at an opera and other theatrical events.</p>
Step 4	<p>Using Palm Beach Opera's "What to Expect" sheet as a guide, challenge students to create an informative audience guidebook for a trip to the opera.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Students should select at least four expectations to include.– Students can add and/or remove expectations provided by Palm Beach Opera; the intent is that the students include concepts discussed in class in a way that is meaningful to them and expresses their artistic voice.– While students should include written text in the information guidebook, consistent visual or textual elements should be used throughout (i.e. use of bullet points, prose, small phrases, pictograms, etc.).– Students should choose their target audience. Is the guidebook for elementary, middle, high school, or college-aged students? Or is the guidebook for first time opera goers? Perhaps the guidebook is intended for families with a differently abled child or children.– The guidebook should include the name of an opera company (real or fictional).– The guidebook should include at least three pictures.– The guidebook can come in the form of the student's choosing: one-page flyer, vertical trifold brochure, horizontal bi-fold brochure, multipage, etc.– Encourage students to create a product that looks professional and visually attractive

Step 5	Once completed according to your deadline, ask students to present their creative information guidebooks to their peers.
Step 6	If you would like, student work may be sent to Palm Beach Opera. We'd love to see their work!

ASSESSMENT

4

Student met all goals as provided and presented a highly informative piece that was well organized, professional, and visually attractive.

3

Student met most goals but lacked consistency.

2

Student did not follow the instructions but did complete the project.

1

Student did participate in the exercise.

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Following instructions, analyzing information, time management, organizing information, written communication

ESOL STRATEGIES

Using visuals

Examples of brochure formats can be found at <http://www.designer-daily.com/the-elements-of-a-good-brochure-design-24048>.

PALM BEACH OPERA

Opera Rehearsal 101: TURANDOT

AUDIENCE GUIDEBOOK PROJECT | WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA

ARRIVE EARLY

Operas start on time, and we typically do not let people into the theater until there is a hold (a big scene change) or an intermission. Recommendation: arrive at least 30 minutes before curtain to ensure you find parking, make it through the crowd, and find your seat. Some opera companies even offer special events beforehand, like a pre-curtain talk about the production, like Palm Beach Opera does, free of charge. So always do your research to make sure you're taking advantage of every opportunity available.

WHAT TO WEAR

A night at the opera can be as elegant or relaxed as you want it to be. Business attire is the norm for opera, but anything goes, from jeans to your favorite evening gown. You'll often see more formal attire on opening night and more casual dress on Sunday matinees.

APPLAUSE

We hope that you will be clapping throughout most of your trip to the opera. People will applaud when the conductor takes the podium. Even if you are unable to see him or her, the orchestra will often begin to clap, tap their bows, or stomp their feet to acknowledge that the maestro has entered the pit. It is also acceptable to applaud after an overture (the opening orchestral number). Applauding at the end of a great scene or aria (solo number) is welcomed. You'll probably even hear some people shout "Bravo" or "Brava"! Not sure when to clap? Follow the lead of other opera-goers.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Turn off your phones, pagers, and wrist watch alarms - anything that makes noise. You don't want to be that person who people glare at in the theater because you have interrupted the performance.

TALKING INSIDE THE THEATER

Enjoy meeting new people, talking about the show, and connecting with friends before the opera, during intermission, and after the show. But when the orchestra is playing or singers are on the stage, please don't talk.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

The following points are worth remembering when as you consider audience etiquette.

Ask yourself:

- How much courage does it take for a person to stand in front of a group of people and deliver a presentation?
- How do you feel when you are trying to be heard and someone continuously interrupts you?
- How do you feel when someone disregards something you believe in wholeheartedly or doesn't take your work seriously?
- How much work is required of you to complete a semester-long project? Or a school play? Or a championship game?
- Do you recall the feeling of accomplishment after successfully completing a project or meeting a goal?

It's a tough business for singers to get on stage and sing for you. Give them the respect that they deserve and give yourself the best opportunity to fully experience the artistic moment.



PALM BEACH OPERA

TURANDOT
OPERA REHEARSAL 101

912

LESSON PLAN & MATERIALS

Set Designer Challenge: Creating a Design Concept for
Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot*

PALM BEACH OPERA

Opera Rehearsal 101: TURANDOT Curriculum (912)

SCHOOL NAME:

DATE:

LESSON PLAN

SET DESIGNER CHALLENGE: Creating a Design Concept for Puccini's *Turandot* (912)

UNIT LESSON

Students use the descriptive plot of an opera to design an appropriate set.

Suggested time frame: 3 to 4 class periods

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we translate given ideas into visual expressions of our own thoughts?

CORE CONTENT LEARNING GOAL

Students will use digital media elements to enhance understanding and effectively translate ideas.

CORE STANDARD(S)

LAFS.910.WHST.3.7
LAFS.910.WHST.3.8
LAFS.910.SL.2.5
LAFS.1112.WHST.3.7
LAFS.1112.WHST.3.8
LAFS.1112.SL.2.5

ART CONTENT LEARNING GOAL

Students will imagine production needs to design an innovative and creative set design.

ART STANDARD(S)

TH.912.F.1.4

I CAN STATEMENTS

- Understand the plot of an opera.
- Create a visual representation of a written description of a place.
- Make personal creative choices and defend them.

VOCABULARY

Opera, Plot, Synopsis, Set design

TECHNOLOGY & MATERIALS

Synopsis, Stage Design Options, Computer, Printer, Additional Art Supplies to be determined by teacher

LESSON

Step 1	Ask students to identify elements of plot: introduction/exposition, conflict/rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, as well as the setting and characters.
Step 2	Ask students to keep plot elements in mind as they read through the synopsis of the opera <i>Turandot</i> . Hand out the synopsis and read through it together. Identify/discuss the plot elements of Puccini's <i>Turandot</i> as a class. (More detailed versions of the synopsis can be found online by other reputable opera companies, historians, and higher education institutions.)
Step 3	Next, ask your class to brainstorm up to ten decades in time. These could be past, present or future decades (1100, 1920, 1750, 1560, 2230, etc.). Write the decades on a whiteboard/chalkboard.
Step 4	Once completed, ask students to select one decade from the list that seems interesting to them. Create a sign up list and have students sign up for their desired decade. Suggestion: limit the number of students assigned to each time period so that the class will learn about a range of time periods at the completion of the project.
Step 5	Task students with a small fact-finding mission. They are to use online resources and/or printed materials from the school library to research and answer this question: What did/do buildings look like in your time period? (For those that have selected a future time, they can search for "buildings of the future" or use on-screen depictions of places in movies set in the future).
Step 6	As students do their research, ask them to select and print out four to six images that show defining architectural characteristics of their decade, both indoors and outdoors (please mind Copyright laws). Students should also identify the characteristics in prose form.
Step 7	Once images are selected, each student will select a scene/moment from the <i>Turandot</i> synopsis. They are to imagine this scene unfolding before them on a stage and answer the following questions from the perspective of an audience member looking at the stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Does this scene take place indoors or outdoors?– How large is the space?– Are multiple rooms/areas visible in the scene?– Is the scene location intended to meet the needs of an upper/middle/lower class person?– How can the look or design of the set help tell the story? (Suggestion: students may choose the stage layout they would like to use for their set. Stage layout options are provided for you.)

Step 8	Armed with their time period, synopsis, printed images, answers, and stage shape, task students with the creation of a set concept. They are encouraged to use their imagination and create the set design in any medium that effectively conveys their ideas (i.e. shadow box, design board, hand drawing, computer generated layout, etc.)
Step 9	Students should present their set design concepts along with a one page paper explaining their selected scene and detailing their design choices.

ASSESSMENT

4

Student completed a thorough design concept accompanied by an equally thorough description of choices and communicated his or her ideas effectively in presentation.

3

Student executed a complete design concept that enhanced the story and provided a short description; effectively communicated his or her ideas in presentation.

2

Presented an incomplete concept and did not meet the full one-page requirement; briefly explained choices, but showed a lack of interest.

1

Student did not complete the assignment.

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Following instructions, analyzing information, time management, organizing information, written communication

ESOL STRATEGIES

Using visuals and group discussion

PALM BEACH OPERA

Opera Rehearsal 101: TURADOT

SET DESIGNER CHALLENGE: TURANDOT SYNOPSIS

Setting

Fictional ancient China. (“Peking, in legendary times.”)

ACT I

Outside the Imperial Palace.

In front of the walls of the imperial palace in Peking, a mandarin reads a proclamation announcing that the princess Turandot will marry only a suitor of royal blood who will answer the three riddles set by her. Suitors who will fail to answer correctly will be beheaded. The prince of Persia has just failed in his attempt and will soon find his death at the gallows. The crowd awaits the execution eagerly while the others call the princess to stop the cruel bloodshed. During the commotion an old man falls to the ground. A younger man rushes to his aid, recognizing that the old man is his father whom he thought dead. The happy reunion between father and son is somewhat quieted as Calàf, the young man, informs his father, Timur the old king of the Tartars, that they are persecuted by enemies. Timur has escaped the enemy with the aid of Liù, his faithful servant.

As the prince of Persia is led to the scaffold the crowd laments his beauty and his young age. Turandot appears for an instant signaling that the execution can proceed. Calàf, catching her sight for a mere instant, is smitten. He must answer the riddles and marry the princess. Timur entreats his son to run away and save his life, and the three imperial ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong also beg the anonymous man to reconsider. Even Liù, who has secretly loved Calàf for many years, asks him to leave but he consoles her in a beautiful aria, saying he cannot be moved. Calàf has made up his mind. He approaches the palace gates, strikes the gong thrice and calls three times the name of Turandot accepting the challenge that many before him failed and paid for their failure with their own life.

ACT II

Inside the palace.

The three *comedia dell'arte* type ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong, discuss the funeral rites of the victory parade for the unknown prince. They lament Turandot's ongoing bloodshed and long for the good old days of the quiet past, hoping they will be able to enjoy the joys of nature. They day dream about the time in which peace will come and some suitor will conquer the ice princess. But soon enough they are brought back to reality and proceed to the royal palace to attend, yet again, one more riddle ceremony.

Many have gathered at the palace where the old emperor Altoum implores Calàf once more to save his life. But no one can change Calàf's mind, not even Turandot herself who appears and in her aria explains why she

is so cruel to her suitors. A long time ago, she says, a foreign king has ravished her ancestress and Turandot has vowed to avenge the horrible deed. Calàf is ready and provides the answer for the first riddle with ease. It is hope which is born anew every night he says. The second riddle is tougher for Calàf but again he provides the right answer: blood kindles like a flame. Turandot is somewhat agitated. Her third question seems to beat the prince: "Which ice gives fire?" she asks and eventually Calàf does claim his victory. The answer of course is Turandot herself. The people hail the victorious prince but Turandot begs her father: she does not want to marry the prince. Altoum cannot help his daughter, but Calàf comes with a proposal: he will ask the princess one riddle. If she can guess his name by dawn he will be ready to die. Turandot accepts the challenge.

ACT III

In the Imperial Gardens.

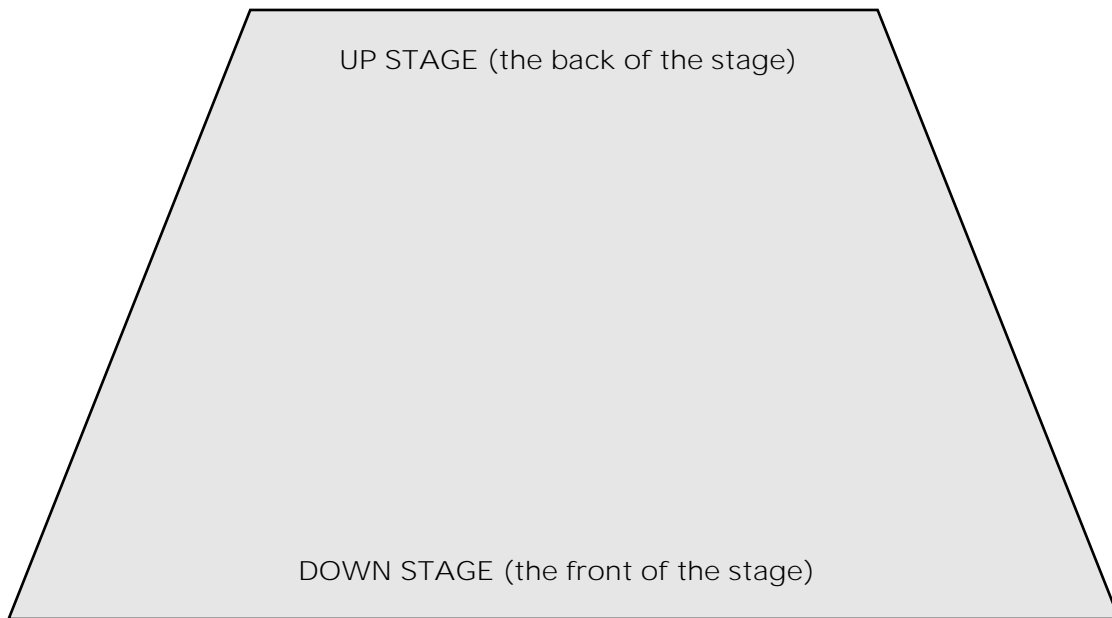
Turandot sends her messengers through the city to find out the prince's name. No one shall sleep tonight, comes the decree, until the name is found out. In the palace garden Calàf awaits the morning, singing one of the famous arias in operatic history (*Nessun dorma*). The three mandarins ask him to run away and offer him money and other women. But Calàf, as we all know, is very stubborn. He will not give up Turandot. Torturers drag in Timur and Liù. They have been seen speaking with the prince and it is hoped that they can provide the name all the city is searching for. Turandot commands them to speak, but Liù, in order to save her master's life, says only she knows the name but will never disclose it because of her love to Calàf. Snatching a dagger from one of the guards, Liù stabs herself and dies. Calàf and Turandot remain alone on stage. He tears the veil off her face and kisses her passionately. The kiss melts in the ice princess. She confesses that from the beginning she has feared and loved the unknown prince. She hopes Calàf is happy to know she loves him and asks him to leave. But Calàf simply reveals his true identity to Turandot putting his life in her hands. She again assumes her former attitude, rushing to summon the Emperor and the people, announcing that she has revealed the stranger's name: it is "Amore" — love. Turandot and Calàf kiss and the crowd is overjoyed.

PALM BEACH OPERA

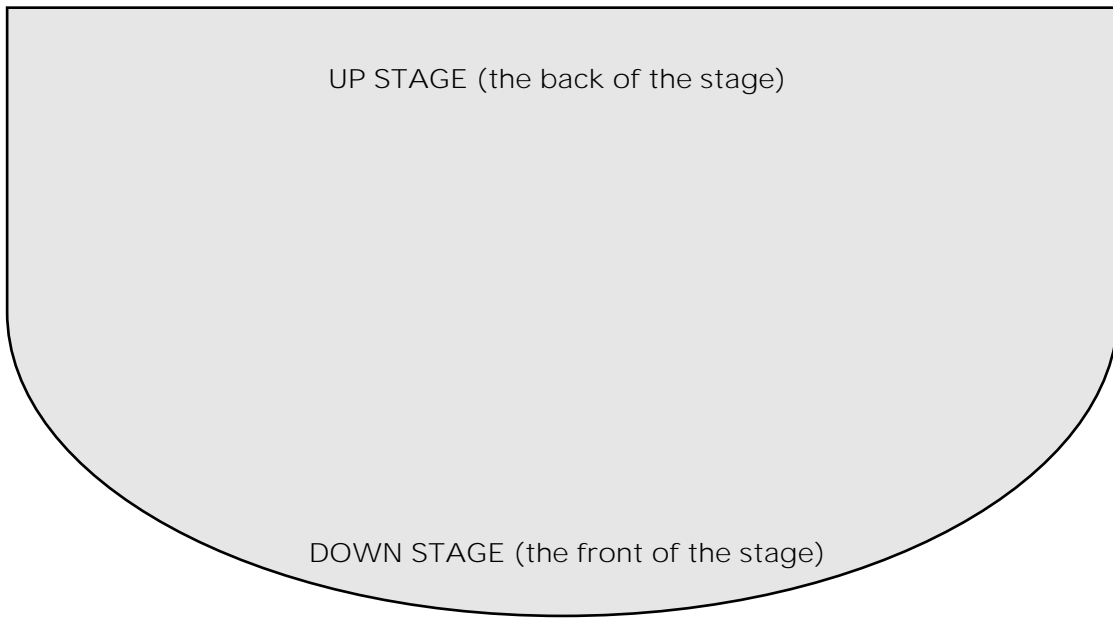
Opera Rehearsal 101: TURANDOT

SET DESIGNER CHALLENGE: STAGE DESIGN OPTIONS

Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

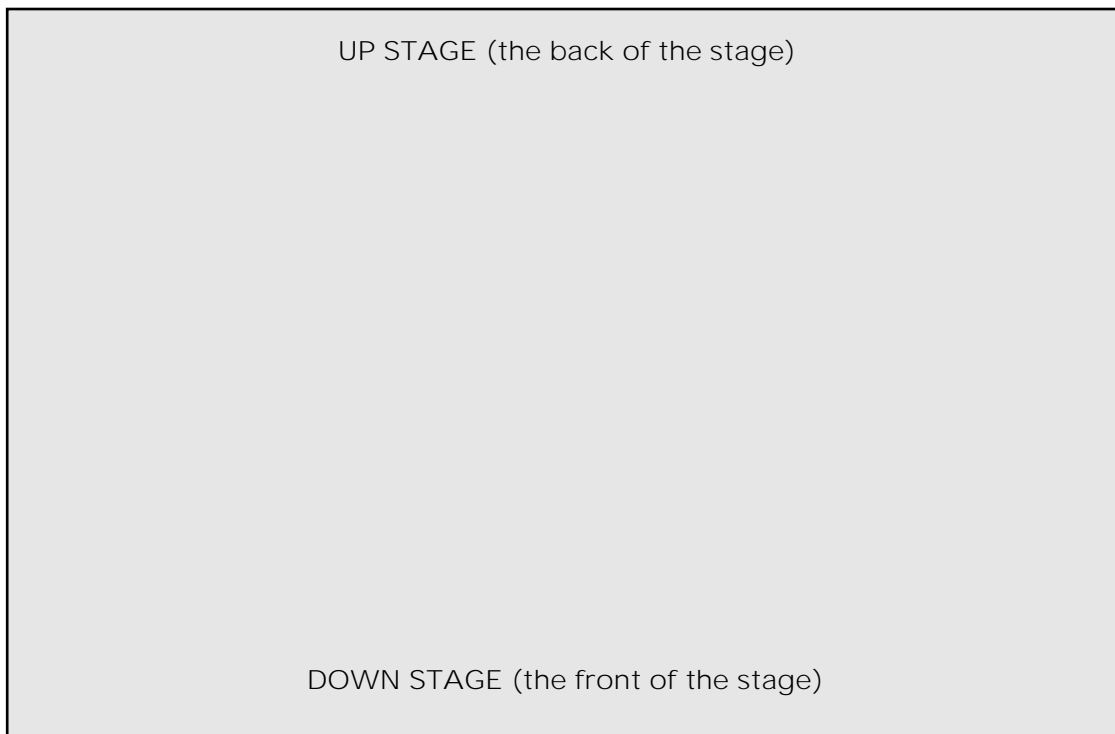




PHOTO: Coastal Click Photography

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