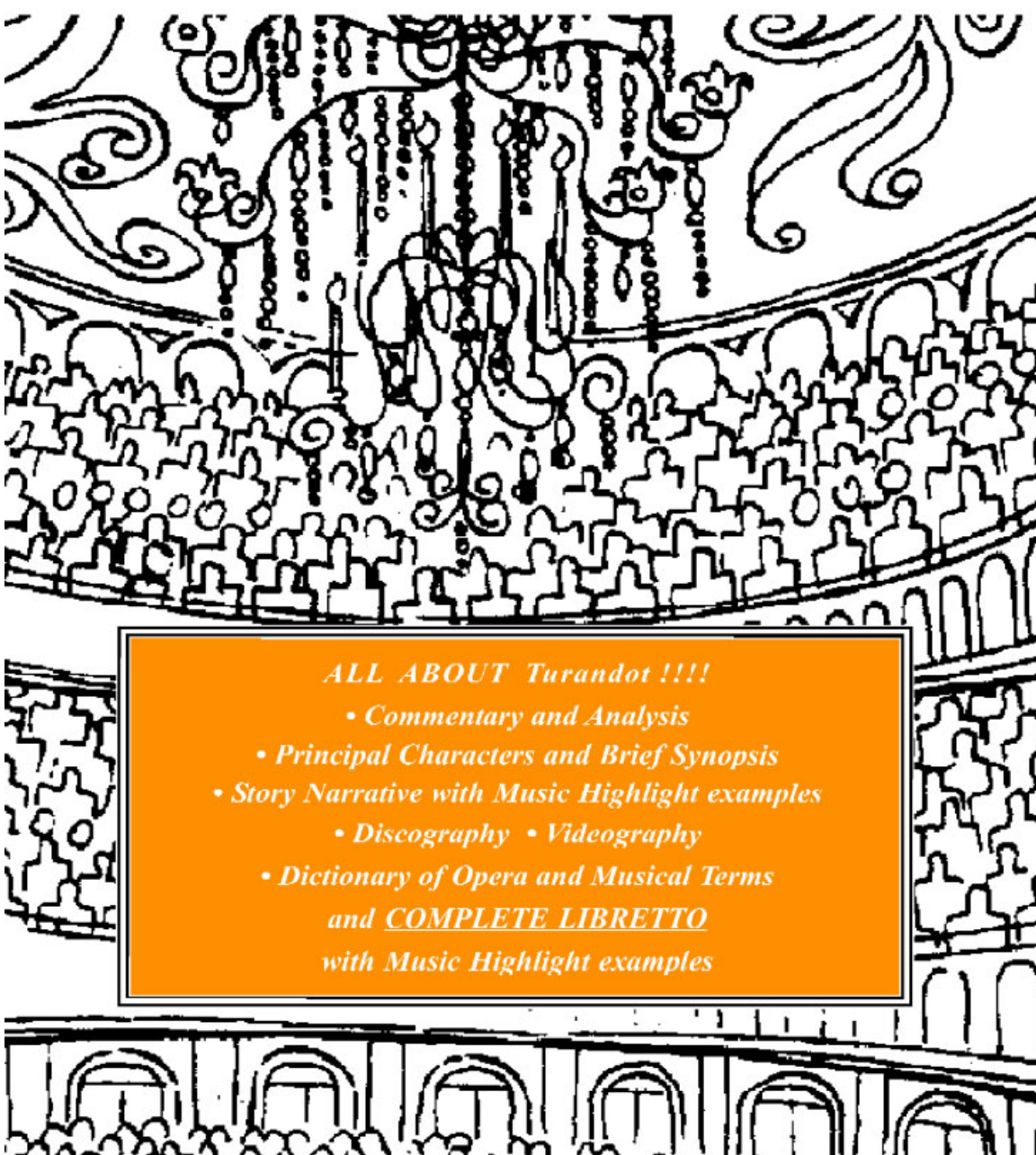

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‘Write for the theater — mind, only for the theater.’
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WEB SITE: www.operajourneys.com E MAIL: operaj@bellsouth.net

Puccini's

Turandot

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Edited by Burton D. Fisher

Principal lecturer, *Opera Journeys Lecture Series*

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a Prelude.....

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY's

Turandot

Turandot is the final opera composed by one of the world's most popular opera composers. To many, it is Puccini's magnum opus, an incredible operatic masterpiece whose story possesses a remarkable blend of heroic grandeur, exoticism, and poignant sentimentalism. These dramatic elements are combined with Puccini's lush musical inventions: arching melodies, rich harmonies, and colorful orchestration.

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY explores the magic of Puccini's *Turandot*. The *Commentary and Analysis* addresses the genesis of the opera, its background, and provides insightful story and character analysis. The text also contains a *Brief Story Synopsis*, *Principal Characters in Turandot*, and a *Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples*, the latter containing original music transcriptions that are interspersed appropriately within the story's dramatic exposition. In addition, the text includes a *Discography*, *Videography*, and a *Dictionary of Opera and Musical Terms*.

The *Libretto* for *Turandot* has been newly translated by the Opera Journeys staff with specific emphasis on retaining a literal translation, but also with the objective to provide a faithful translation in modern and contemporary English; in this way, the substance of the drama becomes more intelligible. To enhance educational and study objectives, the *Libretto* also contains music highlight examples interspersed within the drama.

The opera art form is the sum of many artistic expressions: theatrical drama, music, scenery, poetry, dance, acting and gesture. In opera, it is the composer who is the dramatist, using the emotive power of his music to express intense, human conflicts. Words evoke thought, but music provokes feelings; opera's sublime fusion of words, music and all the theatrical arts provides powerful theater, an impact on one's sensibilities that can reach into the very depths of the human soul.

Turandot is an unprecedented work in Puccini's canon of operatic inventions, an ingenious work with unrivalled beauty and dramatic power; it is unquestionably an overwhelming operatic experience.

Burton D. Fisher

Editor

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Turandot

Opera in Italian in three acts

Music

by

Giacomo Puccini

**Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni,
after *Turandotte*, (1772),
a dramatic fairy tale and play by Carlo Gozzi.**

**Premiere at La Scala, Milan, April 1926,
conducted by Arturo Toscanini**

Turandot was Puccini's 12th and last opera.

The composer died in 1924, two years before its premiere.

*Act III - Scene 2 was composed posthumously from Puccini's own
drafts by his pupil, Franco Alfano, under the supervision
and direction of Arturo Toscanini.*

Commentary and Analysis

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) was the last superstar of the great Italian opera tradition, a genre whose soul was a magnificent blend of intense lyricism, melodiousness, and excellence of the vocal arts. Modern opera is a definitive element of Italian culture. It began with the Florentine Camerata in the early seventeenth century, and matured, developed, and continually rejuvenated itself over the next 400 years, its cast of ingenious musical architects becoming the foundation of the artform: Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Metastasio, Paisiello, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, and Puccini.

No Italian opera composer since Puccini has been able to sustain Italian opera's glorious heritage, although twentieth century attempts by Italian composers such as Busoni and Menotti were valiant. Puccini composed 12 operas, most of them so beloved by contemporary audiences that they define opera's endurance and survival.

Puccini's operatic epiphany occurred in 1876 when the eighteen year-old attended a performance of Verdi's *Aida* in Pisa; he was immediately inspired to become an opera composer. nevertheless, he was fortunate to have inherited the genes of a musically talented family: five generations of prominent musicians, accomplished church organists, and composers from his native Lucca, Italy, a part of the Tuscany region.

The young Puccini, the first son in a family of seven, followed the family traditions: he was adept at the piano, excelled as an organist, and composed liturgical music. In 1880, at the age of twenty-two, he enrolled in the Milan Conservatory, at the time, Italy's foremost training ground for composers, singers, and instrumentalists: financial support was secured from Queen Margherita of Italy, and supplementary funds from Dr. Nicolao Cerù, first cousin of his mother Albina.

During Puccini's first 2 years at the Milan Conservatory, he studied under Antonio Bazzini, a virtuoso violinist, composer, and teacher, with avid predilections towards Richard Wagner's recent innovations in music and opera. Afterwards, Puccini studied with Amilcare Ponchielli, triumphant with the opera, *La Gioconda* (1876), and an eminent professor of composition. Ponchielli became Puccini's mentor, astutely recognizing his young student's extraordinarily rich orchestral and symphonic imagination, and his harmonic and melodic inventiveness, resources that would become the musical trademarks and prime characteristics of Puccini's mature compositional style.

In July 1883, the twenty-five year-old Puccini received his diploma in composition from the Milan Conservatory; he was awarded a bronze medal for his thesis composition, *Capriccio Sinfonico*, an instrumental work that was performed by a student orchestra led by Franco Faccio, a composer, but also the most prominent conductor in Italy. *Capriccio Sinfonico* was a genuine success, receiving praise from Filippo Filippi, the severe, respected, and authoritative music critic of *La Perseveranza*, who praised the young Puccini's unity of style, rare musical temperament, and symphonic capabilities. *La Gazzetta Musicale*, published by Casa Ricordi, Italy's powerful music publishing company, similarly praised the *Capriccio Sinfonico*, recommending it to the attention of discriminate musicologists. Portions of the *Capriccio*, like so much of Puccini's early music, was recycled into his early operas. With the success of *Capriccio Sinfonico*, Puccini's music composing career was launched.

Most of the nineteenth century was dominated by the Romantic movement in art, an emphasis on the imagination, emotions, and sensibilities. As the century neared its fin de siècle, a period associated with Romantic decadence, Italian audiences tired of

Romanticism's sentiment, artificiality, and idealization: if art was to express profound truths, Romanticism portrayed an unreal world.

Italy was experiencing political upheavals, as well as social and economic turmoil. The Risorgimento (1860-61) liberated Italy from foreign rule, but by the end of the century, chaos and anarchy loomed on the horizon: democracy and political stability had become unattainable dreams.

There was a great economic disparity between north and south, the north thriving and developing industrially, the south lacking the resources for economic development. The south, from Naples to Sicily, was virtually a medieval society; an illiterate peasantry living in grinding poverty with primitive feudal institutions that lacked the infrastructure to execute law and order. There was internal discontent, such as peasant revolts, and disorders provoked by anarchists and the disenchanting. In 1900, King Umberto was assassinated by anarchists; regicide and nihilism had become virtually everyday topics. The seeds of fascism were about to flower.

It was against this chaotic political, social, and economic background that many European artists, poets, composers, and librettists sought new genres for artistic expression: an antidote to Romanticism. Writers such as Émile Zola, Prosper Mérimée, and Giovanni Verga, ignited the sparks of "naturalism," or realism, a genre that embraced a fidelity to nature and real-life situations: a world without idealization, in which credible, earthy people, expressed powerful emotions and vigorous passions in swift, dramatic action.

In naturalist literature and drama, no subject was too mundane; no subject was too harsh; and no subject was too ugly. Primal passions became its underlying subject: it portrayed man's latent and uncivilized barbarian propensities that confirmed Darwin's theory that man evolved from primal beast.

Naturalist plots dealt with intense passions involving sex, seduction, revenge, betrayal, jealousy, murder, and death; like its successors, modernity and film noir, naturalist man was portrayed as irrational, immoral, crazed, brutal, crude, cruel, and demonic: sinister and fatal passions that were irreconcilable.

Naturalism wed the sordid with the sensational: death became the consummation of desire; and good did not necessarily triumph over evil. Enlightenment's reason and Romanticism's freedom and sentimentality were overturned, and man was portrayed as a creature of pure instinct.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Italian opera was poised for rejuvenation and transformation. Groups of intellectuals and artists emerged in an aesthetic movement known as the "scapigliati," literally "the disheveled ones," who condemned the romantic melodramas and grand opera spectacles of Verdi and Meyerbeer as old-fashioned, stale, obsolete, and approaching sterility. They found inspiration in Richard Wagner.

In 1871, Wagner's *Lohengrin* was first performed in Bologna, Italy, a bel canto masterpiece composed by the arch-critic of the bel canto style: when sung in Italian, its roots were indistinguishable; Italians embraced the opera and virtually adopted it as their own.

Afterwards, the Wagnerian tide swept across the Italian peninsula, fascinating and influencing the next generation of Italian opera composers. Wagner's hypotheses of music drama seemed a welcome antidote to Italian opera's antiquated traditions and conventions of set-pieces and recitatives. Wagner had provided an alternative to Italian opera's degeneration in his seemingly radical theories: *Art and Revolution* (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future* (1849), and *Opera and Drama* (1851). And in *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), Wagner

innovated the existing harmonic structure, opening new avenues for harmonic and lyrical expansion; and his use of leitmotifs provided the wherewithal for musico-dramatic continuity as well as symphonic expansion.

Avant-garde Italian opera composers, the “giovane scuola” or “young school,” would apply many of Wagner’s musico-dramatic innovations and transformations to a new opera genre based on naturalism: verismo, or realism.

The fountainheads of Italian verismo opera were Pietro Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), and Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci* (1892), opera’s Siamese twins, affectionately called “Cav” and “Pag”: it is said that Cav is the flesh and bones of verismo; Pag is its soul. Among the verists who followed were Alfredo Catalani, Francesco Cilèa, Alberto Franchetti, Umberto Giordano, Alberto Zandonai, and Giacomo Puccini. These composers were intent to portray naturalist subjects in through-composed, seamless music dramas.

Puccini found his inspiration in naturalism, a world of real people in real-life situations without idealization. He peopled his stage with very human characters, not stereotypical cardboard characters of history, myth, or legend. Even the characters of *Turandot*, based on fable, were humanized by adding warmth and personality to the characterization of the commedia dell’arte “masks,” and the invention of the slave-girl Liù provided a character of emotional complexity.

Two of Puccini’s operas are pure examples of the verismo style: *Tosca* (1900) and *Il Tabarro* (1918), the latter perhaps the last of the genre; both dramas contain verismo’s ceaseless violence and explosions of unbridled human passions. *La Fanciulla del West*’s love triangle, and its crude and fiercely violent characters have verismo overtones, but the opera’s redemption-through-love conclusion echoes the idealizations of German Romanticism, far removed from the verismo genre.

Puccini’s operas provide an entire spectrum of diverse yet realistic humanity: the courtesans Manon Lescaut and Magda, the student des Grieux, the painter Cavaradossi, the poet Rodolfo, the flower-embroiderer Mimi, the singers Musetta and Tosca, the geisha Cio-Cio-San, the bar proprietress Minnie, the nun Suor Angelica, and, of course, those carefree bohemians of *La Bohème*, and the miners of *La Fanciulla del West*.

Venues in Puccini’s operas are likewise realistic and identifiable: Paris of *La Bohème* and *Il Tabarro*, the Orient of *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, Rome of *Tosca*, the American West of *La Fanciulla*, Paris and the French Riviera of *La Rondine*, and a convent in *Suor Angelica*.

Puccini maintained a fidelity to real life situations by presenting the problems and conflicts of identifiable humanity, a naturalism that he called “piccole cose,” the little things of life. The *Turandot* story is both fable and legend, but Puccini transformed it by injecting many naturalist elements; plots involving romantic heroism in myth and history were the terrain of Verdi, Meyerbeer, and Wagner, not Puccini, the realist.

Wagner said: “Art brings the unconscious to consciousness.” Freud noted: “Where psychology leaves off, aesthetics and art begin.” The artist’s unconscious filters into his creation. Puccini’s music, so often kindled by agony and despair, is a faithful mirror of his unconscious self. In *Manon Lescaut*, des Grieux agonizes “Ansia eterna crudel” (“Eternal cruel anxiety.”); in *Tosca*, Cavaradossi laments “E muoio disperato” (“I die in desperation.”); both men despair because of the imminent death of love.

Biographer-musicologists- (and lecturers) turned-psychologists have speculated copiously about the underlying causes of Puccini’s personal despair, a melancholy that became the muse that inspired some of his most poignant musical inventions. With the success of *La*

Bohème, the thirty-eight year-old composer had achieved worldwide acclaim. The acknowledged heir to Verdi was en route to riches that would eventually include numerous homes, yachts, and automobiles. Like most artists, he possessed insecurities and self-doubts about his works, fearing failure, or the public's fickleness. As his years advanced, he experienced the typical psychological and physical changes associated with mid-life crisis. And as he aged, he witnessed the deaths of beloved relatives and friends, fearing his own mortality. But success, insecurity, and fears associated with mortality cannot explain the intense sense of hopelessness so prevalent and recurring in Puccini's music.

One theory poses that Puccini unconsciously despaired because he failed to find true love in his lifetime. Biographies of Puccini tend to present a man with numerous conquests, seemingly a Don Giovanni-type character whose romantic and amorous adventures are a manifestation of his pursuit of true or ideal love.

Puccini was a handsome and virile man, but also a sensitive and at times emotionally fragile artist. He of course yearned for love, its fulfillment humanity's greatest aspiration and desire. And some of his greatest musical inspirations involve love: the love duets of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Fanciulla del West*, and *La Rondine*. Despair and an acute sense of hopelessness would be the natural response to failed love.

In *Puccini: A Critical Biography* (1958), Dr. Mosco Carner aptly commented: "While the basis of Verdi's operas is a battle cry; of Puccini it is a mating call": that illusive grail of love is the primary subject of Puccini's entire oeuvre: the sum of many faces of love.

Some Puccini operas deal with the tragic death of love, despair its consequence: Fidelia dies and Edgar despairs (*Edgar*); Manon Lescaut dies, and des Grieux despairs (*Manon Lescaut*); Mimi dies, and Rodolfo despairs (*La Bohème*). The Song-Peddler of *Il Tabarro* provides the sum and substance of Puccini's first 6 operas: "Chi ha vissuto per amore, per amore si morì" ("He who lives for love, dies for love.") In those first 6 operas, the heroines die — and love dies with them: Anna (*Le Villi*), Fidelia (*Edgar*), Manon Lescaut (*Manon Lescaut*), Mimi (*La Bohème*), Tosca (*Tosca*), and Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*). And the tragedy of failed love reappears in Puccini's last opera: the sacrificing slave-girl Liù (*Turandot*). The death of love could very well have been the mirror of Puccini's own failure to find everlasting love: his personal despair. In his art, Puccini may have been unconsciously lamenting that failure in terms of an overpowering sense of hopelessness and despair; in that sense, art and life merged, with no dividing line between them.

Dr. Mosco Carner advanced the hypothesis that Puccini suffered from an unresolved, raging mother complex that unconsciously confounded his understanding of love: subconsciously no woman could attain the exalted image of his mother; he searched for that ideal but failed, his consequent despair. Carner further theorized that Puccini's heroines were guilty of mundane love, not saintly or exalted love. As such, those heroines were sinners who the composer subconsciously punished in agonizing and cruel deaths: Manon, Mimi, Tosca, and Butterfly. In that sense, Puccini's supposed raging mother complex was a conflict of the sacred versus the profane. Nevertheless, it is a hypothesis that cannot be applied to Puccini's entire oeuvre.

Puccini indeed possessed a strong bond with Albina, his mother, a mother-son relationship that seems classic. Puccini was her first son, following five older sisters, and he was the family's scion designated to continue its musical traditions. Albina was Puccini's guiding light and mentor, and they were remarkably close and affectionate. In July 1884, she died of cancer at the age of 54, just after the triumph of Puccini's first opera, *Le Villi*. The twenty-six-year-old Puccini became deeply affected by her death: it was a love that failed, a death that was attributable to God's will, or uncontrollable, deterministic forces. After her death,

Puccini grieved and despaired, a response that seems quite natural when one copes with the loss of a beloved mother.

Shortly after his mother's death, Puccini fell madly in love with his piano student, Elvira Gemignani, the wife of Narciso Gemignani, a grocer and traveling wine-salesman.

Elvira was an impressive and strikingly attractive young woman: tall, a fine figure, dark eyes, and swept back dark-blond hair. Puccini was tall and handsome, his eyes bearing that melancholy aura so often associated with Tuscans.

Puccini's relationship with the married Elvira became scandalous. Gossip quickly spread, and the provincial townspeople of Lucca erupted into a frenzy of outrage. Likewise, Puccini's family and relatives became duly offended, accusing him of bringing shame and disgrace to the honorable Puccini name.

Puccini had difficulty coping with his family's animosity and criticism. He was reproached and admonished harshly by his married sisters and their husbands, and his sister Iginia, a nun. His sensitivity to their attacks transformed into despondency, a depression that impeded his progress on his second opera, *Edgar*.

He also feared the cuckolded Gemignani: Would he confront him publicly? Would he challenge him to a physical confrontation, or even a duel? Would he be arrested or sued for alienating Gemignani's wife's affections?

In 1885, Elvira became pregnant with Puccini's child, Antonio. The next year Elvira left her husband and eloped to Milan with Puccini, bringing along one of her young daughters, Fosca, the other remaining with her husband. Puccini was 27 years-old; Elvira was 25. In the eyes of Puccini's friends in Lucca, his sisters, and Ricordi, his publisher, Elvira was an immoral woman, an adulteress who abandoned her husband and children.

Gemignani died in 1903. Almost simultaneously, Puccini was nearly killed in a car crash, immobilized for ten months. Elvira and Puccini married on January 4, 1904, just before the premiere of *Madama Butterfly*.

As the years passed, the fires of their youthful love began to subside, and eventually the passions died completely, the marriage becoming loveless. Elvira had changed: her physical beauty faded. She also began to experience severe mood swings, most of them bordering on depression. Puccini claimed that she failed to provide him love and inspiration. And Elvira complained of her isolated life in Torre del Lago, yearning to return to city life in Milan. Life with Elvira became grim and depressing, and Puccini began to suffocate, the catalyst that led to his numerous love affairs. He was always actively involved with rehearsals and preparations for productions of his operas: a convenient excuse to escape from what he now considered his imprisoned life with Elvira. For Puccini, the fulfillment of their love had turned to personal despair.

When Puccini's eye was fixed on the sight of his hunting rifle, his other eye was seeking good librettos — and women. He desperately needed women in his life to fuel his passions of love, for intimacy, and for erotic needs. Many women found him irresistible: a handsome, gentle and charming world-famous man. As his wealth and success grew, he began to dress elegantly, his manner so dignified and aristocratic that his publisher Ricordi jokingly nicknamed him the "Doge."

Biographers have done well in accumulating Puccini's voluminous catalogue of affairs: there was Corinna, a young law student in her twenties; an apparent affair with Lina Cavalieri, one of his early Toscas; an intimate relationship with Blanke Lendvai, the sister of Ervin Lendvai, a young Hungarian composer and conductor whose career Puccini helped foster; the Hungarian writer, Margit Vészi, who became both friend and confidant; an intensive

intimacy with the soprano Rose Ader; and a long and impassioned affair with Baroness Josephine von Stängel, a beautiful and wealthy German aristocrat.

In England, there was Sybil Seligman, the wife of a successful banker. She was a woman of elegance, beauty, and intelligence, as well as a singer, theatrical enthusiast, and opera lover. Sybil remained Puccini's most trusted friend and confidant throughout his entire life; no doubt the Seligman's were instrumental in fostering the large number of productions of Puccini's operas in England.

Puccini's notorious philandering and escapades provoked Elvira to become consumed with jealousy, at times valid, and at times imagined, but nevertheless a monomania of explosive potentiality. She was volatile, and any visit of an attractive woman to their home aroused her suspicions. Puccini called her his "policeman," the monitor of all of his incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Elvira's fierce jealousy climaxed in the catastrophic scandal of the Doria Manfredi affair. Doria was a twenty-one year-old servant with over five years of service to the Puccini's: a nurse, housemaid, and cook. Elvira swore that she caught Puccini and Doria in flagrante. She fired Doria immediately, but became vengeful, determined to slander, defame, and even physically harm her. Doria's relatives, convinced of Puccini's reputation as a serial womanizer, believed Elvira's accusations.

Doria became humiliated and was unable to cope with the scandal; she took an overdose of pills and died five days later. An autopsy revealed that she was a virgin. Her outraged family launched a criminal prosecution against Elvira, alleging that Elvira was directly responsible for Doria's suicide. Elvira was found guilty, fined, and sentenced to five months and five days in prison. While attorneys prepared to appeal, Puccini made a substantial financial settlement with Doria's family, and the suit was withdrawn.

The scandal became a sensation in the press. Puccini was racked with guilt and shame. He became emotionally drained, bitter, and unhappy; and he even considered divorce. Years later art and life united: Elvira shares the persona of the brutal Princess-Aunt in *Suor Angelica*, and Doria's victimization parallels the tortured slave-girl Liù in *Turandot*.

Nevertheless, the Manfredi affair took a heavy toll on Puccini's creative processes, severely delaying the completion of *La Fanciulla del West*. It was a scar that remained with him until his death. But at the time, it was the signal that the emotional curtain had decisively fallen on his marriage, the death of love, and no doubt a sense of intense despair and hopelessness.

Puccini's hometown of Lucca was renowned for presenting an endless succession of important dramatic plays by distinguished playwrights. In his youth, Puccini was fortunate to have been exposed to works by the Italian dramatists Vittorio Alfieri and Carlo Goldoni, the French writers Alexandre Dumas, father and son, and plays of the extremely popular late nineteenth-century realist, Victorien Sardou.

Those early theatrical experiences instilled and nurtured what eventually became his acute sense of drama, a theatrical talent that he expressed with brilliance in his operatic works. He ultimately became a master stage-craftsman who combined a consummate knowledge of the demands of the stage with extraordinary dramatic instincts.

Often, Puccini's demands for dramatic perfection caused friction with his librettists, at times, driving them to despair: they claimed that he vacillated excessively; that he was vague about his requirements and unable to explain himself clearly; that he demanded countless unnecessary revisions; that at times he would write the music first, and then seek words to fit the music; that he composed too slowly; and that he wasted too much time

indulging his hobbies of hunting, cycles, autos, boats — and women. He was often accused of laziness, but that could be excused by his diabetic condition, at the time, awaiting the discovery of scientific advances such as insulin.

With the exception of *Turandot* and *La Fanciulla*, Puccini did not compose ambitious works or grand opera stage spectacles in the manner of Meyerbeer or Verdi. He commented that he was inspired by “cosettine” or little things, an acknowledgement that his talent and temperament were not suited to works of large design, spectacle, or portrayals of romantic heroism. In effect, Puccini was a naturalist, his inspiration emerging from real-life, ordinary people and their conflicts and tensions.

Puccini expanded his harmonic horizons with each succeeding opera. In his early operas, his harmonic language was diatonic, but beginning with *Madama Butterfly*, whole-tone scale harmonies began to appear, no doubt influenced by Debussy’s harmonic adventurism. Those harmonic advancements became more complex in *La Fanciulla*, and flowered in his final *Turandot*. Dissonance and suspensions are more often than not exceptions rather than the rule, most often applied for specific dramatic effects: the bi-tonal chord structure at the opening of *Turandot* that suggests the executioner’s axe falling.

Puccini integrated his music, words, and gestures into a single conceptual and organic unity, seamless music dramas that were remote from the old-fashioned “numbers-operas” with recitative that typified the operas of his predecessors; but all of Puccini’s operas are distinctly Italian in character, emphasizing the supremacy of melody and voice.

Puccini often repeats melodic blocks or passages: like leitmotifs they are employed to provide reminiscence of an idea, person, object, situation, or identify a character’s thoughts to the audience: the music identified with the well in *Tosca*, or the music associated with his heroines that is usually heard before they appear. Puccini was a master symphonist, and his scores are saturated with rich and sumptuous orchestral coloration, but he never developed and integrated his leitmotifs or melodic passages into the symphonic complexity, grandeur, or systematic manner of Wagner.

Puccini was a quintessential melodist who possessed a unique musical signature and personal style that the noted critic Harold Schonberg called “an inimitable style that stands out among the Italian operas of his time like the song of a nightingale in a flock of starlings.” He possessed a supreme talent — if not magic — to invent lush and sumptuous melodies, a writing for both voice and orchestra that is rich, tender, and elegant, and at times possesses a suppleness and gentleness, as well as a profound poignancy. Puccini’s personal lyricism has had few rivals; it is a musical signature that is so individual that it is recognized immediately. And to some, his music is endlessly haunting: music that seems to resound in one’s mind even after leaving a Puccini opera performance.

It is a rare Puccini opera that does not have its special assortment of hit tunes: *La Bohème*’s “Che gelida manina”, “Si! Mi chiamano Mimi,” and the showstopper, Musetta’s Waltz; *Tosca*’s “Vissi d’arte”; *Madama Butterfly*’s “Un bel dì vedremo”; *La Fanciulla del West*’s “Ch’ella mi creda”; *La Rondine*’s “Il sogno di Doretta”; *Gianni Schicchi*’s “O mio babbino caro”; and *Turandot*’s “Nessun dorma.”

But Puccini’s muse was tragic: when his musical inventions exploited pain, suffering, and despair, they kindled his fundamentally tragic imagination, and he translated that heightened emotion and passion into quintessential moments of music drama: the Torture Scene of *Tosca*; or the suicides of *Madama Butterfly*, Liù, or Suor Angelica.

Puccini endowed his love duets with a sensual lyricism, an almost erotic mysticism that has been called pornophony: *Manon Lescaut*’s second act, “Tu, tu, Amore tu!; *La Bohème*’s “O soave fanciulla”; *Tosca*’s “Qual occhio mondo”; *Madama Butterfly*’s “Viene la sera”; and *La Fanciulla*’s love duet ending Act I.

Puccini's ensembles reflect his ingenious craftsmanship, "concertatos" or ensembles that are knitted together with exceptional brilliance: the "Roll Call of the Prostitutes" in *Manon Lescaut*; the Café Momus scene of *La Bohème*; *Tosca*'s "Te Deum"; the miner's ensembles in *La Fanciulla del West*; the second act at Bullier's in *La Rondine*; and virtually all of the choral scenes of *Turandot*.

Puccini was a skilful musical impressionist, and he was meticulous in using his music to evoke ambience: in *La Bohème*, the music dutifully conveys the fire crackling as Rodolfo's manuscript burns in the stove, or Colline falls down the stairs, or the snow falls in Act III; in *Tosca* the exact pitch of St. Peter's bells awakens Rome in Act III; and in *Il Tabarro*, there are boat and automobile horns that realistically capture ambience.

In sum, Puccini was a quintessential musico-dramatist, his music and words unified coherently, the dramatic whole of each opera equal to the sum of its many meticulously constructed elements.

Puccini has many detractors, a host of critics who delight in condemning his operas and his compositional style. He has been denounced as the "Bohemian epicure," a composer whose entire oeuvre recycles the music of his masterpiece, *La Bohème*; a plagiarist of other composers; a composer of banal café music; and a composer of inauthentic exoticism in operas such as *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*.

That said, it is necessary to invoke Mark Twain's opinion of critics: "Damn the critics, it's the public that counts."

To many, Puccini's name is synonymous with opera: the catalyst for their love of opera, and to some, the beginning of an adventure into a sublime world of music of unrivalled beauty and unbridled dramatic power.

Words performed through music can express what language alone has exhausted; opera is an art form in which words are realized through music.

Puccini's musical language has many facets. At times his music speaks powerfully of suffering, despair, grief, tragedy, and death, the inspiration for some of his finest music that is plaintive, heartrending, and extremely poignant. But Puccini's music also speaks of love, his music possessing an unabashed sensuality, or erotic mysticism that is incomprehensible to reason, but fully understood by the subconscious; it is music that speaks of love's glorious fulfillment, and warns of its dreadful failure, a tension between Eros and Thanatos.

Each of Puccini's 12 operas is a masterpiece of artistic invention, each unique, and each exploring a different facet of love: its success or failure. But Puccini's operas are the sum total of the expression of a musical genius who bared his soul in his art: music that more often than not has the power to reach into the very depths of the human soul.

As early as 1919, Puccini became interested in what would become his last opera, *Turandot*, based on the German dramatist Friedrich von Schiller's (1759-1805) adaptation of a dramatized fairy tale by the eighteenth-century Italian playwright, Carlo Gozzi (1720-1806).

Gozzi was at the vanguard in reviving the old Renaissance theatrical tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*, literally "art plays," that were improvisations of standardized situations with stock characterizations: comedies, satires, parodies, and lampoons of life, politics, and social situations that actors performed in streets; because actors wore masks to avoid recognition, the art form was also called "comedy of masks."

Gozzi argued vociferously with detractors who considered the old *commedia dell'arte* a combination of monotonous and stereotyped subjects: trivial intrigues, crude farces, rigid and inhuman characterizations, and inane dialogue. Among the detractors was Carlo Goldoni, a

fellow Venetian, who created more realistic comedies about the lives of everyday people. But Gozzi perceived the old *commedia dell'arte* as the most vital expression of the Italian comic spirit, a glorious two hundred year-old art form that linked contemporary theater with its splendid and glorious past.

Gozzi single-handedly revived the *commedia dell'arte* and effectively gave it a blood transfusion, his most significant theatrical achievement was the dramatized five-act fairy-tale, *Turandotte* (1762), the prominence of its three satirical “mask” characters defining its *commedia dell'arte* roots. The original legend dealing with a man winning a woman by answering her riddles most probably derived from late seventeenth and early eighteenth century translations of *The Arabian Nights*: the heroine’s name seems to have Persian roots; “Turan” is the Persian name for Turkestan.

But there were other stories sharing similarities of plot: Molière’s *La Princesse d’Elide*; Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Portia’s three caskets mirror Turandot’s three riddles; and later, the Grimm fairy tale *Der Rätsel* (“The Riddle”), that reversed the riddle challenge by compelling the suitors to propose their own riddles to the heroine.

Turandotte relates a war between the sexes, a perennial theme that underlies many myths, legends, and fairy-tales. But Gozzi’s specific intention was to illustrate the righteousness and power of all-conquering true love; in the pursuit of love, Gozzi exalted the virtues of courage, loyalty, fortitude in suffering, and self-sacrifice.

Gozzi’s *Turandotte* caught the imagination of Friedrich von Schiller, who adapted it in 1804 for presentation at the newly conceived German National Theatre at Weimar, a theater whose purpose was to present the best German as well as foreign plays; Schiller’s play was translated back into Italian by Andrea Maffei, the librettist for Verdi’s *I Masnadieri* (1847) and collaborator on the revised *Macbeth* (1865). *Turandotte* would later become the subject of operas by Antonio Bassini, Puccini’s first teacher at the Milan Conservatory, who composed *Turanda* (1867); Busoni (1917); and of course Puccini (1926). Earlier, Carl Maria von Weber composed an overture and incidental music titled *Turandot* (1809). Another popular Gozzi dramatic fable, *La Donna Serpente*, became Wagner’s inspiration for his first opera, *Die Feen* (1833) (“The Fairies”), and Prokofiev’s opera, *The Love of Three Oranges* (1921).

Puccini, unlike Wagner and the German Romanticists, had never tackled myths, fairy-tales, or the fantastic, even though his first opera, *Le Villi*, contained abundant phantasmagoria. Nevertheless, his main problem with the *Turandotte* story concerned the proper dramatic treatment of the play’s satirical elements: the three “masks,” its traditional *commedia dell'arte* roles. He considered them clowns, or old-style cardboard characters, who did not directly affect the action, but instead indulged in cynical, satirical, and at times, obscene and vulgar commentary. Puccini seriously considered eliminating these *commedia dell'arte* characters.

Nevertheless, Puccini persevered. He admonished his librettists, Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, that the Three Ministers, or “masks,” had to be transformed. Ultimately, they became ambivalent characters: a combination of philosophers and clowns, who would occasionally lighten the dramatic tension of the story with their humor, but would also become humanized characters. In the end, those farcical and satirical “mask” characters became Turandot’s Grand Chancellor (Ping), the General Purveyor (Pang), and the Chief Cook (Pong), characters possessing a magnificent blend of both humane as well as inhumane attributes.

Underlying the *Turandot* story is the classic mythological battle of the sexes, that tension and conflict in which the male (the hero Calaf) relentlessly pursues his female quest (the heroine Turandot), a woman unknown to Calaf, but whose physical beauty has infatuated and mesmerized him. Although he becomes appalled by Turandot’s inhumanity and cruelty, nothing

can dissuade him from his zealous passion: Calaf becomes a victim of emotions overpowering reason.

Calaf is determined to transform Turandot's obsessive male-hatred into a yearning for his love. As such, Calaf is an archetype representing the nobility of love. Turandot, equally archetypal, is his opposite: the woman who fears love. Calaf becomes the victor and Turandot finally capitulates with fervid passion, her transformation a powerful statement about humanity's yearning and desire for the fulfillment of love.

Turandot is consumed by a passionate hatred and fear of men that has evolved into an uncompromising monomania for revenge. To resist conquest and subjugation by the male, she has erected three riddles, impregnable obstacles that she believes will not only protect her, but will also provide the instrument for her revenge against the male sex. Until her final transformation, Turandot is brutal and harsh, a grotesque and warped character who terrorizes with impunity. Nevertheless, until her final capitulation, Turandot is an archetypal villainess, duly qualified to be admitted into opera's Rogues Gallery of female monsters: Richard Strauss's *Salome* and *Elektra*, and Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

The psychiatrist Carl Jung and the mythologist Joseph Campbell hypothesized that myths yield inner secrets arising from the collective unconscious: eternal truths that are uncorrupted by history, and incidences and events that occurred long ago, but are recalled from the subconscious through dreams.

In the traditional myth, the male embarks on an initiation rite in order to break from the mother's bond (nature); he seeks the father (wisdom) in a progressive adventure toward maturity and reasoning power. Ultimately, he is elevated to awareness and consciousness, which enables him to overcome the threatening female.

Conversely, there are many myths that portray the maturing female realizing her vulnerability in a male-dominated world, and struggling against the male with unyielding ferocity. In traditional Amazon myths a vanquished female is forced to marry a conquering male. Ultimately, she becomes combative and belligerent, developing an unrelenting hatred of the overpowering male that transforms into an obsession for revenge.

Gozzi's *Turandotte* provided no explanation for the heroine's male hatred; it is a fait accompli that is never explained. Puccini's acute dramatic instincts demanded that his story provide a more explicit justification for his heroine's animosity and obsessive passion for revenge against males. Puccini, together with librettists Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, resolved the issue by inventing Turandot's ancestress, Lo-u-ling, a character not mentioned in Gozzi's *Turandotte*, or in Schiller's adaptation of the play.

In Turandot's Act II monologue, "In questa reggia" ("In this realm"), she provides an impassioned reference to her ancestress Lo-u-ling that justifies her hatred of men: that her ancestress was raped and murdered during a Tatar invasion, and that it has become her sacred duty to avenge the cruelty exacted upon her ancestress by men.

But there is indeed another factor underlying Turandot's resentment and hatred of men: in ancient eastern cultural traditions, the male-dominated society considered women inferior beings, at times slaves, and at times merely a means for the gratification of man's sensual pleasure. Turandot does not address that abuse of women in her monologue, but it would be logical to deduce that she is defending her gender against their historical exploitation by men.

Nevertheless, Gozzi's *Turandotte* elevates the eternal battle between the sexes to a high intellectual plane: in many myths and legends, the desired female avoids conquest by vowing to yield only to the man who proves himself superior to her in a physical battle. But Gozzi's tale becomes a contest of wits rather than physical power: Turandot's three riddles.

Opera achieves its most profound dramatic power when it exploits zealous passions, an expression of heightened passions in a magnificent blend of prose that is realized through the emotive power of music. *Turandot* is saturated with fierce explosions of the passions of both love and hate, contradictions that are expressed with equal intensity.

Until Calaf's "kiss" in Act III, the opera story is a tension between Turandot's obsessive male-hatred that fiercely opposes Calaf's relentless aspirations for love: Calaf remains undaunted in his desire to bring life — through love — to Turandot, to raise her consciousness to the sublime bliss of fulfilled love. Gozzi ennobled love: an exalted virtue that represented the manifestation of humanity's most revered aspiration: as such, the pursuit of love requires courage, fortitude, and self-sacrifice; lofty virtues that Calaf embodies.

But Turandot also fears giving love as well as receiving love; she fears surrendering her soul to those essential human sensibilities of warmth and affection. Both protagonists are unrelenting, and even fanatic in their individual passions of love or hate. And Puccini's music expresses that tension with heroic grandeur and enormous power.

After Calaf succeeds in solving Turandot's three riddles, Turandot pleads with her father, the Emperor Altoum, to reverse the sacred laws and not cast his daughter to the victor as if she were a slave. Calaf responds to Turandot's fear and defeat with fervent passion, a noble expression of his desire to convert her: "No, no Principessa altera! Ti voglio ardente d'amor!" ("No, no, proud Princess! I want your love to be ardent!"), an incomparable operatic climax if the tenor opts for a heroic high C.

Calaf is magnanimous in victory and offers Turandot her freedom if she can learn his name by dawn, prompting the cruel Turandot to terrorize Peking, and later torture Liù to learn his name. But it is in the final scene of the opera in which Turandot is transformed from inhumanity to humanity: Calaf's kiss becomes a sublime, transforming magic. Turandot discovers her true soul, her seething passions of hate immediately dissolving into yearning for the glory of love.

Hate has transformed into love. Turandot proclaims to the Emperor and her people that she is happily vanquished. Indeed, she has learned the name of the Unknown Prince: "Il suo nome è Amor!" ("His name is Love!")

The original *Turandotte* was not the typical Puccini opera subject. Essentially, Puccini's muse was tragic, music that exploited pain, suffering, and despair, and the story lacked the human pathos of a tragic heroine that in the past had kindled some of his greatest musical inventions. Puccini's challenge was to transform the *Turandotte* fairy tale into a real "Puccinian" opera, a story with elements that could kindle his tragic imagination.

Puccini and his librettists created the character of Liù, a gentle, kind, selfless, and self-sacrificing slave-girl. With Liù, Puccini appreciably enlarged both the emotional and musical scope of *Turandot*, the inspiration for what became some of his most heartfelt music, and the introduction of pathos into an ostensibly fairy-tale story.

Liù secretly loves Calaf because in the past he smiled upon her: she has dedicated and sacrificed her entire life to Calaf's father Timur in the hope that one day she would see the Prince again.

The faithful Liù dies by her own hand, fearing that under Turandot's torture she will reveal Calaf's name. Liù's unbounded love and loyalty, and the sacrifice of her life for the love of Calaf becomes the most poignant — if not dramatic — moment in the opera: a Puccinian moment. If Liù revealed Calaf's name, the brutal Turandot would surely behead Calaf. With Liù suicide, Calaf's name remains secret. As such, Liù died so that the man she loved could love another woman: so that Calaf can win Turandot.

Liù's sacrificing death endeared Puccini's *Turandot* to German Romanticists, the reason that the opera became extremely popular in Germany before it achieved worldwide acclaim. In that context, Liù was considered a soul-sister of Wagner's sacrificing "women of the future," or Goethe's "femme eterne," women whose love was so profound that they would sacrifice their lives to redeem the men they love: *The Flying Dutchman*'s Senta; *Tannhäuser*'s Elisabeth.

Nevertheless, Liù's tragic death at the conclusion of Act III, Scene 1, became anticlimactic for Puccini, frustrating and exhausting his creative imagination; her agonizing death was a dramatic finality itself. But *Turandot* concludes with an additional scene: the proclamation of the jubilant triumph of love. This was not a typical Puccinian conclusion, and the composer pondered, struggling desperately for musical inspirations. Ironically, Puccini himself died after completing the music for Liù's death. The opera was unfinished, but Puccini left musical sketches that facilitated the completion of the opera's final scene posthumously.

Casa Ricordi initiated a search for a composer to complete the opera. Francesco Zandonai was considered, but Tonio, Puccini's son, most probably rejected him because he was Tito Ricordi's protégé. Pietro Mascagni was mentioned, as well as Vincenzo Tommasini, who worked with Toscanini to complete *Nerone* (1924) after Boito's death.

Ricordi turned to Franco Alfano, a distinguished teacher and composer, whose opera *La Leggenda di Sakùntala* (1921), based on an Indian play, resembled much of *Turandot*'s oriental setting and heavy orchestration. Under Toscanini's direction, Alfano finished *Turandot*, basing the music on Puccini's sketches. Other versions of Act III, Scene 2 have appeared since *Turandot*'s premiere in 1926: by the American conductor Steven Mercurio, and more recently, by the composer Luciano Berio.

For the *Turandot* premiere in 1926, Casa Ricordi decided to end the performance after Liù's death in Act III, Scene 2: the last music Puccini completed for the opera. At the premiere, Toscanini stopped the orchestra, put down his baton, and addressed the audience: "Here the opera ends, because at this point the Maestro died."

In terms of the musico-dramatic structure, *Turandot* is undoubtedly a work of the largest design Puccini had ever attempted. It is truly grand opera, a genre at that time that Italian opera composers shunned, but not Puccini; the most popular Italian opera composer in the world heroically returned to an opera genre that some considered dated.

The opening scene is sheer spectacle. A frenzied crowd awaits the execution of the recently failed Turandot suitor, the Prince of Persia. The savage crowd is bloodthirsty and ferocious, urging the Executioner's servants to sharpen their blades. Puccini relieves tension with welcome moments of seeming tranquility: the invocation of the pale moon, a metaphor for the ashen heads of Turandot's failed suitors; the crowd's compassion for the Prince of Persia as he marches off to execution; Turandot's maids urging silence; and the eerie chorus of the dead suitors.

Calaf has seen the beautiful Princess Turandot and has become intoxicated by her beauty. Timur, the old deposed Tatar king, admonishes his impetuous son, urging him to abandon his reckless desire to challenge Turandot's Riddles. Likewise, Turandot's Three Ministers are unsuccessful in dissuading the young Prince.

Liù's plaintive plea to Calaf possesses Puccini's vintage lyricism: "Signor, ascolta!" ("Sir, Please listen!") Calaf's responds to Liù with equal passion: "Non piangere, Liù!" ("Don't cry, Liù!"), which merges seamlessly into a dramatic and savage ensemble with the bloodthirsty crowd. Calaf, undaunted and confident of victory, challenges Turandot's riddles by striking the gong three times. Turandot appears, gesturing in seeming delight that another victim awaits her. The crowd erupts into frenzied agitation, crying out "La Morte!" (Death!)

Act II, Scene 1, is the Pavilion scene featuring Turandot's Three Ministers, ostensibly a relief of the heightened, frenzied tension that closed Act I. In Puccini's characterization, the Three Ministers are humanized, their personalities alternating from mysterious to serious to gay. Ultimately, the "masks" unmask themselves: they nostalgically dream of returning to the pastoral bliss and rural solitude of home, far away from Turandot's cruel court; Ping yearns for his bamboo-surrounded house in Honan by a blue lake, Pang for his forest near Tsiang, and Pong for his garden near Kiù.

Act II, Scene 2 is the "Riddle Scene," a grand opera stage spectacle peopled by an enormous crowd. The aged Emperor makes a vain attempt to dissuade the impetuous Unknown Prince from his reckless resolve, his urging seemingly that of a father displaying compassion for a son; Turandot is apparently his only sibling.

The Mandarin reads Turandot's decree, and then Turandot arrives to pose her riddles. (In the Gozzi play, there were 91 unfortunate suitors who failed to solve Turandot's riddles.)

Turandot rises to address the crowd. "In questa reggia" is a grand and somber monologue that concludes with a test of ferocious wills between Turandot and Calaf; Turandot proclaims that the Riddles mean death; Calaf proclaims that they signify life, both voices exerting almost superhuman power in order to rise above an equally powerful orchestration.

Each of Turandot's Riddles is set to the same music, a monotony that strangely serves to dramatically compound the tension. But the underlying music of each Riddle rises chromatically, musically heightening the tension. As Calaf correctly answers each riddle, Turandot's fear of defeat becomes evident; after each correct answer she gradually descends the majestic palace steps, menacingly approaching and taunting the Unknown Prince. After Calaf's victory, Turandot betrays her promise and refuses to accept defeat, pleading with her father to rescue her from doom. But the Emperor confirms that the law is sacred, and she must accede.

Calaf magnanimously offers Turandot her freedom, but only if she can learn his name before dawn, underscored by the "Love" theme, the signature music of the opera.

Act III, Scene 1 opens with the distant voices of Turandot's heralds heard terrorizing Peking to learn the name of the Unknown Prince. Then Calaf intones "Nessun dorma," his confidence that he will be victorious by sunrise: that Turandot will not learn his name, and that he will win her love.

The nocturnal atmosphere is suddenly interrupted by the Three Ministers. They try to learn the Unknown Prince's name, invoking flattery as well as promises of women, money, and freedom, but they quickly become grave and despairing — and even threatening — when they fail to succeed with the obstinate and undaunted Unknown Prince.

Timur and Liù have been captured by Turandot's guards; they were seen with the Unknown Prince, circumstantial evidence that they surely know his name. Liù confounds Turandot by revealing that even under the threat of torture she will not reveal the Unknown Prince's name. Liù explains that it is because of love that she is silent, her "amore" underscored by Puccini's melting lyricism. Turandot is momentarily dazed, but the cruel and heartless Princess quickly regains power over her sensibilities and orders her guards to torture the slave girl until she reveals the Unknown Prince's name.

In Liù's melancholy aria, "Tu, che di gel sei cinta" ("You, wrapped in ice"), she predicts that one day Turandot will experience love. But Liù fears that she will reveal Calaf's name under torture. She unsheathes a dagger from a guard and kills herself, the sacrifice of her life so that the man she indeed loves can win the love of Turandot.

Liù's funeral procession is poignant and evocative, vintage Puccini music that is grave, somber, and heartrending, evoking profound sympathy and sadness for the tragic fate of the devoted slave-girl: it was the last music Puccini fully completed before his own death, despairing music that is the dramatic soul of the opera.

The focus of the opera transfers to Turandot, who up to this point in the drama, has been inhumane and brutally savage, a profound contrast to the loving and selfless Liù.

The final scene is Turandot's capitulation to Calaf, and in that final "Jubilation" scene Turandot and Calaf explode into heroic lyricism. Calaf has conquered Turandot with a kiss; a transformation that she admits is her discovery of the most noble of human aspirations; the glory of love.

Puccini generally composed music in harmonies that emphasized his nineteenth century roots: mostly tonal and diatonic. But in *Turandot's* score, there is much harmonic adventurism; advancements beyond any of his previous works. At times, the score contains huge dissonances, some strongly influenced by Igor Stravinsky, the composer of the innovative and pioneering *Rites of Spring*.

There are many dissonant harmonies — as well as barbaric rhythms — that were incorporated into the score in order to create specific effects: there is a harsh and crude bitonalism in the opening chords when the two unrelated keys of C-sharp major and D minor are superimposed, an effect that musically suggests the executioner's axe falling, evoking fear, terror, barbaric cruelty, and grotesqueness.

In *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini incorporated many authentic Japanese songs; in *La Fanciulla del West*, he likewise incorporated many authentic songs of the American West; but in both instances he also invented music in their respective idioms.

Turandot, set in ancient China, provided Puccini with another opportunity to prove his mastery at capturing exotic idioms, spicing his score with authentic Chinese music as well as self-invented oriental melodies. Many of its Chinese themes were apparently adapted from a Chinese music box belonging to an acquaintance, a diplomat who was a collector of Oriental art: there are fragments of the Chinese National anthem that underscore the music of the Three Ministers; and the authentic Chinese folksong "Mo-li-hua" ("The Jasmine Flower") that is the music identified with Princess Turandot.

The opera is scored for a huge orchestra, augmented with 23 different instruments in order to masterfully capture oriental effects: xylophone, bells, tam-tam, gong, saxophone, and carillon. As always, Puccini's orchestration possesses spectacular coloration and textures.

There is much music in the score that possesses Puccini's highly personal lyric signature: elegant, sumptuous, poignant, and lamenting musical phrases. Puccini wrote masterfully for the voice, and his major strength was his invention of lush and arching melodic lines that possess a sensuous if not melting lyricism. Liù's first act aria "Signor ascolta" and Calaf's response, "Non piangere Liù" are vintage Puccini arias that clearly bear the composer's unique signature: elegance and profound poignancy.

For *Turandot*, Puccini invented one of the most difficult arias in the entire operatic canon: Turandot's "In questa reggia" is a grueling test for singers, in which there is a tessitura with a wide range between low to high notes, as well as leaping intervals. Indeed, the aria's many high B's and C's must resound and pierce through Puccini's huge orchestra, a moment when the score is marked abundantly with *ff's* and *fff's*.

The exchange between Turandot and Calaf that follows Turandot's "In questa reggia" is no less punishing. First Turandot proclaims, "No, no! Mai nessun m'avrà!" ("No, no! No one will ever possess me!"), and then Turandot and Calaf duel over the fatal significance of the riddles: Turandot proclaims, "L'enigmi sono tre, la morte è una!" ("There are three riddles, but one death!"), and Calaf responds, "L'enigmi sono tre, una è la vita" ("There are three riddles, but one life!")

Calaf's "Love" theme, first heard in Act II when he counter-challenges Turandot, is the signature music of the opera; it becomes the music that underscores the conclusion of Act II, Calaf's aria "Nessun dorma," and the final "Jubilation" scene.

Calaf's third act aria, "Nessun dorma" is a brilliant and effective ode to the nobility of love that concludes with "All'alba vincerò!" ("At sunrise, I will be victorious!"), his "vincerò" dramatically and heroically repeated three times as the music builds to its spectacular climax.

In Liù's music, Puccini bared his musical soul for the character who became the true Puccinian heroine in the opera, a woman who became the victim of her yearning for love, but must sacrifice that love to death. Much of Liù's music is composed in the pentatonic harmony of the oriental five-tone scale, but in its moments of profound pathos, it reverts to western harmony. Nevertheless, Liù's music possesses that special Puccinian signature: there is an intense emotion in each of her arias: "Signore, ascolta!" ("My lord, listen to me!"); and her addresses to Turandot just before her pathetic suicide, "Tu, che di gel sei cinta" ("You are wrapped in ice"), her revelation that she can withstand torture because she is fortified by her intense love for Calaf, a love fulfilled by dying with Calaf's secret.

Until *Turandot*, Puccini was not a composer of ambitious works on the scale of grand opera. He often admitted that he was not a creator of stage spectacle in the manner of Meyerbeer, Verdi, or Wagner, his acknowledgement that his talent and temperament were not suited to works of large design, or even portrayals of romantic heroism. Puccini's world was of "piccole cose" or small things, a naturalism that portrayed people of everyday life rather than the grandeur of supercharged passions evolving from world-shattering events: that subtle poignancy that is evoked from moments of tender human emotion and sentiment.

Turandot became Puccini's singular grand opera, a vast work certainly more complex than any previous Puccini opera. In every respect, *Turandot* is an exception and exceptional: grandiose, sumptuous, exotic settings, large crowd scenes, and heroic characters. But its grandeur is remarkably blended with romantic and poignant sentimentalism.

Turandot is the swan song from one of the world's greatest and most popular opera composers. Many consider the opera Puccini's magnum opus, a powerful drama for which he invented lush music, arching melodies, rich harmonies, and a colorful and exotic orchestration. It is a music drama par excellence, and in its lyric intensity and melodiousness, it is Italian to the core.

Turandot is an unprecedented work among Puccini's 12 operatic inventions, and a fitting opera to mark the end of the great "Golden Age of Opera" that had dominated most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;

Turandot is an overwhelming operatic experience. It is an opera possessing unrivalled lyric beauty and intensive dramatic power. It was Puccini's last contribution to the canon of the great Italian opera tradition; no Italian opera composer since Puccini has appeared to rival him, or approach his impact on the opera stage.

Turandot

Principal Characters in *Turandot*

Brief Story Synopsis

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

Principal Characters in Turandot

Turandot, a Princess	Soprano
Calaf, the “Unknown Prince,” son of Timur	Tenor
Timur, Calaf’s father, the dethroned Tatar King	Bass
Liù, a Tatar slave girl	Soprano
Altoum, Turandot’s father, Emperor of China	Tenor
Turandot’s Ministers:	
Ping, the Grand Chancellor	Tenor
Pang, the General Purveyor	Baritone
Pong, the Chief Cook	Baritone
A Mandarin	Baritone

The Prince of Persia, the Executioner, dignitaries, eight wise men,
Turandot’s attendants, soldiers, and crowds of people

TIME: Ancient China
PLACE: the city of Peking

Brief Story Synopsis

In ancient Peking, China, the beautiful Princess Turandot has erected barriers to repel suitors: she will only wed a man of royal lineage who successfully answers her three riddles; anyone who fails will be executed.

Calaf, an enemy Tatar Prince in exile, travels in Peking incognito: he is the Unknown Prince. Calaf accidentally finds his exiled father, Timur, an old blind man, who is accompanied by the young slave girl, Liù, secretly in love with Calaf. Calaf beholds Princess Turandot and becomes awestruck by her beauty. He becomes obsessed to possess her, and he accepts her challenge to solve her three riddles.

Calaf succeeds in Turandot’s riddle contest. But she refuses to marry the victor of her diabolical contest and pleads with her father, the Emperor Altoum, to repudiate her solemn obligation. Calaf magnanimously poses a counteroffer to Turandot; if she can discover his name by dawn, he will free her from her promise and sacrifice his life to the executioner.

Turandot orders Liù tortured in order to discover the Unknown Prince’s name, but Liù kills herself rather than betray Calaf. Finally, Calaf melts Turandot’s resistance with a kiss, and then reveals his name to her. However, the victorious Turandot, now transformed from hostility to powerful emotions of love, does not condemn Calaf to death, but accepts him as her betrothed.

Story Narrative and Music Highlight Examples

Act I: Ancient China. The Imperial City of Peking at dawn.

The walls of ancient Peking are surmounted with the impaled heads of Princess Turandot's failed suitors.

A Mandarin announces that the Prince of Persia failed to solve Turandot's three riddles, and will be executed at moonrise. The agitated crowd seethes with savage enthusiasm, eagerly awaiting the execution.

The clashing opening chords, the bitonal dissonance of C# minor juxtaposed over D minor, provide a chilling and terrifying musical depiction of the executioner's axe falling.

Opening Chords:



Amid the turmoil and confusion of the bloodthirsty crowd, Liù, a young slave girl, is seen tending an old blind man; he is Timur, a Tatar King exiled after the Chinese vanquished his realm. Timur falls, and the fragile Liù pleads for help from the bystanders.

Calaf emerges from the crowd to help the old man. He is gratified to discover his missing father, whom he thought dead. Calaf is in mortal danger in Peking, a Tatar Prince in the land of his enemies; he travels incognito, simply known as the Unknown Prince.

Liù reveals that she has dedicated her life to serve Timur, motivated by her secret love for the Prince, who once smiled upon her in the palace courtyard: "Perchè un dì nella reggia m'hai sorriso!" ("Because one day in the royal palace, you smiled upon me!")

The barbaric crowd watches rabidly as men sharpen the Executioner's sword. They gaze anxiously at the moon, its rise the signal for the Prince of Persia's execution. They lust for an execution, but as the Prince of Persia is led to the scaffold, they become strangely compassionate to his gruesome fate and implore Turandot to be merciful and pardon him. Calaf likewise expresses indignation, cursing Turandot for her cruelty.

Princess Turandot appears on the balcony of the palace.

Turandot's motive:



Turandot is indifferent to the pleas of the crowd. With an imperious and definitive gesture, she signals immediate execution of the Prince of Persia.

Calaf becomes intoxicated and infatuated by Turandot's beauty: "O divina bellezza, meraviglia!" ("Oh what a divine and miraculous beauty!") He yearns to possess her, and explains his sudden irrational passion to Timur and Liù: "Il suo profumo è nell'aria! È nell'anima!" ("Her perfume is in the air! It has penetrated my soul!")

Calaf has become smitten and expresses his resolve and determination to challenge and solve Turandot's riddles. Neither the impassioned pleas from Timur to escape from Peking, nor the execution of the Prince of Persia — whose last cry of "Turandot" is heard just before he is beheaded — can deter Calaf. Calaf's passion has overcome reason: "Quest'è la vita, padre!" ("Father, life is here!") Calaf is undaunted in purpose, and consumed to win Turandot's love.

Turandot's Three Ministers, Ping, Pang, and Pong, attempt to discourage and dissuade Calaf, explaining that it is futile and impossible to win Turandot's diabolical contest; only death awaits him. They expound their cynical philosophy: that Turandot is merely flesh, and that he can possess 100 women just like her. They urge him to leave the butcher shop of Peking. They fail: Calaf is impassioned and intransigent in his determination.

Liù pleads with Calaf to abandon his reckless obsession: "Signore ascolta!" ("My lord, listen to me!") She explains that she has dedicated her life to serve Timur, a sacrifice motivated by her secret love for the young Prince, whose name remains engraved in her heart and soul. She fears for Calaf's life, reminding him that if he dies, they will perish in exile; Timur will lose his beloved son, and she will lose Calaf's smile.

"Signore ascolta!"

Adagio
LIÙ



Calaf acknowledges his gratitude to Liù for her faith and devotion to him and his father. He tells her that if he fails to solve Turandot's riddles, she must erase thoughts of him from her memory; but she must never abandon his old father. Liù cries, and Calaf responds sympathetically and compassionately.

"Non piangere, Liù!"

A tempo rallentando
CALAF



Timur, Liù, and Turandot's Three Ministers again attempt to dissuade Calaf from his reckless obsession to possess Turandot, but he remains impetuous, stubborn, intransigent, and undaunted in resolve, committed to follow his destiny to win Turandot by challenging and solving her riddles.

Intoxicated with passion and confident of victory, Calaf raises the hammer and strikes the great gong three times, the official challenge to Turandot's riddles.

Turandot appears on her balcony, scornfully and derisively signaling her acceptance of his challenge.

Andante sostenuto



The crowd lusts for blood, sensing an impending execution, it erupts into a sadistic frenzy and fiendish delirium.

Act II - Scene 1: A Pavilion in the palace.

Turandot's Three Ministers, Ping, Pang, and Pong, ponder the fate of the unknown Prince who has challenged Turandot, speculating whether they should prepare a victory celebration or a funeral. They express their agitation and discontent, because Turandot's diabolical riddle contest has brought chaos to their kingdom. Their country had been peaceful for thousand of years, but it has become a butchery, its graveyards filled with Turandot's failed suitors. The Ministers pray that Turandot will soon find a lustful husband; if she is conquered by love, then peace will finally be restored to China.

The Ministers fantasize about escaping from their duties, nostalgically yearning for the solitude of their respective homes: Ping yearns for his house of bamboo in Hunan by a blue lake; Pang for the solitude of a forest near Tsiang; and Pong for his garden near Kiù.

Ping: "Ho una casa nell'Honan"

Andante mosso



Ho una ca - sa nell'Ho - nan con il suo laghet - to blù,
I have a house in Hunan with a blue lake,

The sounds of crowds and trumpets remind the Three Ministers that the Unknown Prince is about to challenge Turandot's riddles, and they dutifully depart to attend the ceremony.

Act II - Scene 2: A large public square in front of the Imperial Palace.

An enormous crowd assembles, together with court dignitaries, and the Wise men bearing scrolls that contain the answers to Turandot's riddles. The Emperor Altoum sits on his throne high above a majestic staircase. The crowd blesses their exalted Emperor and wishes him long life.



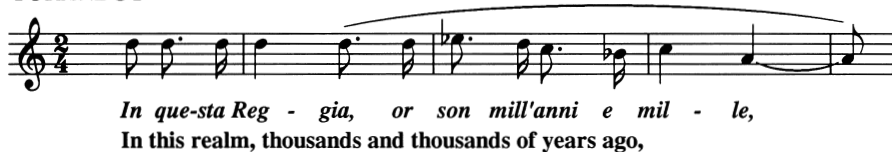
Altoum urges the Unknown Prince to abandon his quest and save his life, but the impassioned Calaf remains undaunted, unable to be deterred from his obsession.

A Mandarin reads Turandot's edict to the crowd, and then Princess Turandot appears to pose her riddles.

But beforehand, Turandot justifies her edicts, defending her hatred and obsession for vengeance against all men.

"In questa Reggia"

Molto lento
TURANDOT



Turandot explains that many years ago, a terrible crime was committed, and its memory gnaws within her soul: her ancestress, the chaste Princess Lo-u-ling, was dethroned, raped, and killed by an invading enemy. Turandot has resolved that it is her solemn duty to avenge the evil committed against her ancestress, a revenge that she achieves by challenging suitors to answer her riddles, and beheading them if they fail.

Turandot defends her duty heroically and eloquently, but as she again recalls the horrible fate of Lo-u-ling, her agitation and anguish intensify. She turns menacingly to the Unknown Prince, her voice rising in grandeur as she viciously denounces him. She warns him that she represents divine justice: his adventure is a futile challenge to her uncompromising will; and no one will ever possess her.

Mai nessun m'avrà!

"But no one will ever possess me!"

Straniero! Non tentar la fortuna! Gli enigmi sono tre, la morte è una!

"Stranger! Don't tempt fate! There are three riddles, but one death!"

Largamente

Calaf heroically contradicts Turandot by offering love, the essence of life.

No, no!, Gli enigmi sono tre, una è la vita!

“No, no! There are three riddles, but one life!”



Gli e - nig - mi so - no tre, la mor - te è u - na!

There are three enigmas, but one life!

Turandot's Riddles:

An eerie calm overcomes the crowd as Turandot prepares to pose the first riddle to the Unknown Prince.

Turandot describes a spirit that rises each night to evoke humanity's optimism, but at dawn, disappears to be reborn in the heart.

Nella cupa notte vola un fantasma iridescente. Sale e dispiega l'ale sulla nera infinita umanità! Tutto il mondo l'invoca e tutto il mondo l'implora! Ma il fantasma sparisce coll'aurora per rinascere nel cuore! Ed ogni notte nasce ed ogni giorno muore!

“An iridescent spirit flies in the dark night. It spreads its wings over humanity! The whole world invokes it, and the whole world implores it! But the spirit disappears with the dawn to be reborn in the heart! Every night it is born, and every morning it dies.”

Calaf ponders the answer to the first riddle, and then responds:

Sì! Rinasce! Rinasce e in esultanza mi porta via con sè, Turandot, la Speranza!

“Yes! Reborn! Reborn and triumphantly brought me to you! Turandot: it is Hope!”

The wise men address their scrolls and confirm Calaf's answer: “Hope.” Turandot becomes disturbed and alarmed. She acknowledges that Calaf's answer is correct, but scornfully and cynically comments that hope is a fantasy, humanity's delusion.

Turandot immediately proceeds to pose the second riddle:

Guizza al pari di fiamma, e non è fiamma! È tal volta delirio! È febbre d'impeto ardore! L'inerzia lo tramuta in un languore! Se ti perdi o trapassi, si raffredda! Se sogni la conquista, avvampa, avvampa! Ha una voce che trepido tu ascolti, e del tramonto il vivido baglior!

“Though not a flame, it darts like a flame! It is a fire with intense heat! Its exertion makes it weaken! If it is lost, you become chilled! If it is conquered, it inflames you! You listen to its voice with fear, and it glows like the setting sun!

As Calaf ponders the answer to the second riddle, the Emperor and the crowd encourage him: “Do not fail, stranger, it is for your life!” Liù, anxious about the Prince’s fate, comments despairingly how he has become overpowered by love: “È per l’amore!” (It is for love!)”

Calaf replies to Turandot’s second riddle:

Sì, Principessa! Avvampa e insieme langue, se tu mi guardi, nelle vene: Il Sangue!

“Yes, Princess! It glows and at the same time languishes, you can find it in the veins: It is Blood!”

The wise men confirm the answer: “Blood.” The crowd senses the Prince’s imminent victory and encourages him. Turandot reprimands them, scornfully commanding silence. Then Turandot poses her final riddle:

Gelo che ti dà foco e dal tuo foco più gelo prende! Candida ed oscura! Se libero ti vuol, ti fa più servo. Se per servo t'accetta, ti fa Re!

“The ice that inflames you makes you more frigid! It is dispassionate and obscure! If you want to be free from it, it makes you subservient. If you serve it and it accepts you, you become king!

Calaf nervously contemplates his answer. Turandot, having descended the majestic stairs, stands before Calaf scornfully, self-assured, and convinced that he will be unable to answer her final riddle; she derides him because he appears ashen with fear.

Suddenly Calaf rises with confidence and assurance, and heroically calls out the answer to Turandot’s final riddle: “Turandot.”

The wise men confirm that Calaf’s answer is correct. The crowd erupts into praise for the victor, the conquering hero for whom they invoke the blessings of happiness and love.

Ti sorrida la vita! Ti sorrida l'amor!

“May life smile on you! May love smile on you!”

Turandot becomes distraught and hostile, unable to face the reality and truth that her riddles have been solved: that she has been finally vanquished. She rejects Calaf’s victory and desperately pleads with the Emperor that he not force her to yield to the foreigner. But the Emperor reminds her that he is the guardian of their laws, and that her oath is sacred: Turandot must marry the stranger who has now solved her riddles.

Turandot continues to plead with her father: "I am sacred, you cannot cast me to a stranger like a slave. I will die in shame." Defiantly, she turns to the Unknown Prince and proclaims that even though he has been victorious and solved her riddles, he will never possess her soul: "No, non sarò tua! Non voglio!" ("No, I will never be yours! It is not my will!")

The Prince responds with equal ardor, advising Turandot that he desires her love, but that love must be her willful desire: "No, no, Principessa altera! Ti voglio ardente d'amor!" ("No, no, proud Princess, I want your love to be ardent!")

Calaf was victorious, but he cannot melt the intransigence of the frigid Princess. Nevertheless he is undaunted, vowing to transform Turandot's lost pride into fervent love. Courageously, he offers her a magnanimous counter-proposal: that if Turandot can solve his riddle by morning, he will free her from her sacred pledge.

Turandot does not know his name: "Il mio nome non sai" ("You do not know my name"), his words underscored with the signature "Love" music of the opera, a theme that now belongs to Calaf, and the music that will underscore Calaf's "Nessun dorma" aria in Act III, as well the final transformation scene.

Love music:

Moderto sostenuto



Calaf proposes that if Turandot can learn his name before dawn, he will accept death by the executioner's axe, like all the other princes who preceded him. For the moment, Turandot is free from her sacred obligation.

Calaf's dramatic challenge to Turandot incites the crowd to excitement, their anticipation of either a celebration of love, or an execution.

The ceremonious Riddle scene closes as all praise their Emperor: "Glory to the Emperor."

Act III - Scene 1: Palace gardens.

Music with exquisitely delicate harmonies portrays a sublime nocturnal atmosphere. The voices of Turandot's heralds echo from the distance, proclaiming Turandot's decree of torture and death until the name of the Unknown Prince is revealed: "Nessun dorma!" ("No one may sleep!")

Calaf has emerged triumphant from Turandot's grueling test of the riddles. He is equally confident that Turandot will fail to learn his name by morning. He contemplates his forthcoming victory, reflecting with triumphant pride and passion how he will transform Turandot into a woman of tenderness and unbounded love.

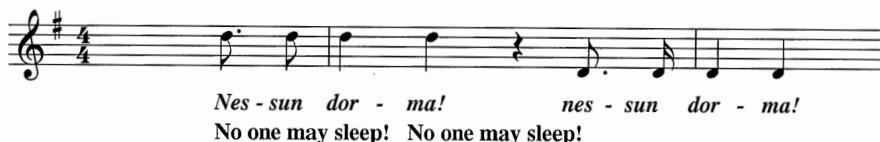
Calaf repeats the call of the heralds, "Nessun dorma," and transforms it into his victory resolve: Calaf will conquer Turandot with the sublime mysteries of love; day will conquer night, and male will conquer female.

At first Calaf meditates on the terror Turandot has initiated in Peking. Then, in poetic words underscored by the “Love” theme, he dreams about his transformation of Turandot: “Ma il mio mistero è inchiuso in me, il nome mio nessun saprà!” (“But my mystery is locked within me, and no one will learn my name!”) He vows to unlock the mystery of love by placing a kiss on Turandot’s lips. With bold certainty and conviction, Calaf proclaims his forthcoming victory over Turandot: “All’alba vincerò!” (“At sunrise I will be victorious!”)

“Nessun dorma”

Andante sostenuto

CALAF



Calaf’s anticipation of victory is suddenly interrupted by Turandot’s Three Ministers. She has commanded them to liberate her from her dreadful fate by persuading the Unknown Prince to leave Peking. The Three Ministers offer Calaf women, money, and an escape route to freedom, but he declines, his passion to possess Turandot remaining ardent.

Timur and Liù have been captured by Turandot’s guards. Both were seen conversing with the Unknown Prince, and the guards are certain that they know his name. Turandot appears and demands that Timur disclose the Prince’s name: he is silent.

Liù fears for Timur’s safety and intervenes to declare that she alone knows the Prince’s name. Turandot orders that Liù be tortured until she reveals the Unknown Prince’s name, but she heroically resists, refusing to reveal her secret. Her steadfastness stuns and bewilders Turandot, who inquires what strange power she possesses that enables her to withstand the torture: “Chi pose tanta forza nel tuo cuore?” (“What powerful force lies in your heart?”) Liù reveals that it is the power of love: “Principessa, l’amore!” At the mention of love, Turandot momentarily hesitates, overcome by some strange sensibility that stirs within her unconscious. Nevertheless, Turandot orders the guards to tear the secret from her, which elicits the encouragement of the crowd and Ping, who calls for the Executioner.

Liù reveals that she is possessed by an impossible hope of love, but in her silence, she will save the life of the man she loves; she will be giving Calaf life and love, his victory and the love of Turandot.

Liù rises to address Turandot, predicting that her destiny is to be conquered by the flames of love.

“Tu, che di gel sei cinta”

Andantino mosso

LIÙ



Liù fears that she will yield under further torture. She seizes a dagger from one of the guards and stabs herself, sacrificing her life to save Calaf, the man she truly loves.

For Liù's tragic death, Puccini provided some of the finest musical inventions in the *Turandot* score. The music pulsates with a pathos that rises to great nobility and dignity, becoming even more exquisite through its rich and exotic harmonic coloring. In a crescendo of heightened emotion, Liù addresses her final farewell to Calaf, the man she truly yearns and desires, but with her imminent death, has lost forever: "Per non vederlo più!" ("And I will never see him again!") Liù dies.

The sad death of Liù is intensely emotional, evoking a profound sense of remorse and pity from the on-looking crowd. As all pray for forgiveness, Liù's body is carried away into the darkness of night, Timur holding her hand. Calaf reacts to her death in shock and disbelief, expressing heartfelt emotion and compassion for Liù: "Tu sei morta, o mia piccola Liù!" ("You are dead, my little Liù!") Timur denounces and curses Turandot, praying that the avenging spirits will exact justice for her cruelty and brutality.

Toscanini, at the premiere of Turandot, turned to the audience after Liù's death and said: "A questo punto, il maestro è morto" ("At this point, the maestro died.")

After Puccini composed the music for Liù's death, he laid down his pen: it was his final music; his final poetry; his final artistic expression of sorrow, sacrifice, and death.

Act III - Scene 2:

Calaf and Turandot are alone. Turandot will become transformed from inhuman to human sensibilities: the Princess of ice will be raised to sublime consciousness and discover her soul, ultimately aspiring to the nobility of love.

Calaf, reeling from the brutal horror of Liù's death, reproaches Turandot for her cruelty:

Principessa di morte! Principessa di gelo! Dal tuo tragico cielo scendi giù sulla terra. Ah! Solleva quel velo! Guarda, crudele, quel purissimo sangue che fu sparso per te!

"Princess of death! Princess of ice! Descend to earth from your tragic heaven!
Ah, raise your veil! Look, cruel one, at that pure blood that was shed for you!"

Turandot commands Calaf to leave her. She must remain chaste and free, a divine, sacred, and untouchable daughter of heaven. He may lift her veil but it is a sacrilege to touch her.

Calaf cannot be deterred from his passion for Turandot: impetuously, he takes her into his arms, overcomes her resistance, and kisses her.

There is a pause, an eerie silence. A sublime calm overcomes Turandot. She seems dazed, stunned, and in an almost dream-like stupor. She asks Calaf: "What did you do to me?" Turandot, unable to understand that she has been defeated by Calaf's ardor, despairingly comments: "I am lost!"

Calaf's kiss has transformed Turandot and broken the spell of the "icy" Princess. At first, Turandot reflects on her defeat: "La mia gloria è finita!" ("My glory is finished!"), but Calaf reassures her that it has just begun: "No! Essa incomincia!" ("No! It just begins!")

Turandot again commands Calaf to leave, urging him to ask nothing more and take the mystery of his identity with him. Calaf refuses: he has triumphed and he wants to possess his victory prize. Calaf also wants Turandot to know him, and he feels compelled to reveal his name to her, no matter the fatal consequences: “My mystery? I no longer have it! You are mine! You trembled when I barely touched you! You became pale when I kissed you and you now wish me to leave! My name and life are one, I give both to you! I am Calaf, son of Timur!”

Calaf has placed his destiny at Turandot’s mercy: she now possesses his secret — his name — and she has the power to destroy him if she wishes. But Turandot has been transformed by Calaf’s kiss: she has discovered love and responds to Calaf ecstatically.

As dawn approaches, Turandot leads Calaf before the Emperor, the court, and the people, to announce her victory — and Calaf’s destiny.

She proclaims that at last she knows the stranger’s name.

Turandot turns to Calaf, shaking and trembling with incomprehensible, mysterious emotions, and then addresses her father, Emperor Altoum:

*Padre augusto, conosco il nome dello straniero!
Il suo nome è Amor!*

“August Father, I know the name of the stranger!
His name is Love.”

The jubilant crowd acclaims the two lovers, underscored with the “Love” motive: love has been victorious.

LIBRETTO

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ACT I

*Ancient China. It is sunset in the Imperial City of Peking.
In a plaza before the Imperial Palace, there are large statuary of
sculptured monsters, unicorns, phoenixes and massive tortoises.
Hanging from an arch, there is a large bronze gong.*

*On the walls of the Palace are mounted
the severed heads of Turandot's failed suitors.
A Mandarin reads a decree to a large Crowd.*

**Un mandarino**

Popolo di Pekino! La legge è questa:
Turandot la Pura sposa sarà di chi,
di sangue regio,
spieghi i tre enigmi ch'ella proporrà.
Ma chi affronta il cimento e vinto resta
porga alla scure la superba testa!

A Mandarin

People of Peking! The law has stated:
the chaste Turandot will marry a man
of royal blood,
who solves the riddles that she proposes.
But the man who fails the test will have
his head impaled on the walls!

La folla

Ah! Ah!

The Crowd

Ah! Ah!

Il mandarino

Il principe di Persia avversa ebbe fortuna:
Al sorgere della luna per la man del boia
muoia!

The Mandarin

The prince of Persia was unfortunate:
at moonrise, he will die by the
executioner's hand!

As the Mandarin departs, the crowd becomes rowdy and boisterous.

La folla

Muoia! Sì, muoia!
Noi vogliamo il carnefice!
Presto, presto! Muoia, Muoia!
Al supplizio! Muoia, muoia!
Presto, presto! Se non appari,
non ti sveglierem!
Pu-Tin-Pao, Pu-Tin-Pao!
Alla reggia! Alla reggia! Alla reggia!

The Crowd

Death! Yes, death!
We want the executioner!
Quickly, right away! Death!
To the torture! Death!
Quickly! If he doesn't appear,
we won't wake him!
Pu-Tin-Pao, Pu-Tin-Pao!
To the royal palace!

*The Crowd moves toward the palace, shouting in fear and terror.
The guards repel them. In the clash, many people fall to the ground.*

Le guardie imperiali

Indietro, cani! Indietro, cani!

Imperial Guards

Get back, you dogs!

La folla

Oh, crudeli! Pel cielo, fermi!

Oh, madre mia!

The Crowd

Oh, how cruel! For heaven's sake, stop!

Oh mother!

Le guardie imperiali

Indietro, cani!

Imperial Guards

Get back, you dogs!

La folla

Ahi! I miei bimbi! Crudeli!

Oh, madre mia! Crudeli!

Per il cielo, fermi! Fermi!

Fermi! Oh, madre mia!

The Crowd

Oh, my children! So cruel!

Oh, mother! So cruel!

For heaven's sake, stop!

Stop! Oh, mother!

Le guardie imperiali

Indietro, cani!

Imperial Guards

Get back, dogs!

*Liù appears with the old and blind Timur.
After he falls to the ground, she cries in desperation for help.*

Liù

Il mio vecchio è caduto!

Liù

The old man has fallen!

La folla

Crudeli! Siate umani! Pel cielo, fermi!

Crudeli! Non fateci male!

The Crowd (to the Guards)

So cruel! You are inhuman! For

Heaven's sake, stop! So cruel! Let's not
be injured!

Le guardie imperiali

Indietro, cani!

Imperial Guards (to the Crowd)

Get back, dogs!

Liù

Chi m'aiuta a sorreggerlo?

Il mio vecchio è caduto. Pietà!

Liù

Who will help me to raise him?

The old man has fallen. Mercy!

*Calaf appears and rushes to help Liù and Timur.
He recognizes his father, and shouts joyfully.*

Calaf

Padre! Mio padre!

Calaf

Father! My father!

Le guardie imperiali
Indietro!

Imperial Guards
Get back!

Calaf
O padre, sì, ti ritrovo!

Calaf
Father, indeed I have found you!

La folla
Crudeli!

The Crowd
So cruel!

Calaf
Guardami! Non è sogno!

Calaf
Look at me! It isn't a dream!

La folla
Perché ci battete? Ahimè!

The Crowd
Why do you strike us? Mercy!

Liù
Mio signore!

Liù
My lord!

La folla
Pietà!

The Crowd
Mercy!

Calaf
Padre! Ascoltami! Padre! Son io!
E benedetto sia il dolor per questa gioia
che ci dona un Dio pietoso!

Calaf
Father! Listen to me! Father! It is me!
This is a painful joy, a blessing and a
gift from a merciful God!

Timur
O mio figlio! Tu! Vivo!

Timur
Oh my son! It is you! Alive!

Calaf
Taci! Chi usurpò la tua corona
me cerca e te persegue.
Non c'è asilo per noi, padre, nel mondo.

Calaf
Quiet! Those who usurped your throne
search and pursue you.
Father, there is no refuge in the world for us.

Timur
T'ho cercato, figlio mio, e t'ho creduto
morto.

Timur
I searched for you, my son, and I
believed that you were dead.

Calaf
T'ho pianto, padre, e bacio queste mani
sante.

Calaf
Father, I cried for you, and I kiss these
holy hands.

Timur
O figlio ritrovato!

Timur
My son, I have found you again!

*As the Executioner's Servants arrive, the Crowd becomes agitated.
The Guards try to quiet the Crowd; they push them back, and try to disperse them.*

La folla

Ecco i servi del boia.
Muoia! Muoia! Muoia! Muoia!

The Crowd

Here are the executioner's servants.
Death! Death! Death! Death!

Timur

Perduta la battaglia, vecchio re
senza regno e fuggente,
una voce sentii che mi diceva:
"Vien con me, sarò tua guida."
Era Liù.

Timur

The battle is lost. I am an old king,
a fugitive without a throne,
but I heard a voice saying to me:
"Come with me, I will lead you."
It was Liù.

Calaf

Sia benedetta!

Calaf

Bless her!

Timur

Ed io cadevo affranto, e m'asciugava il
pianto, mendicava per me.

Timur

I was crushed. She dried my tears,
and sought alms for me.

Calaf

Liù, chi sei?

Calaf

Liù, who are you?

Liù

Nulla sono! Una schiava, mio signore.

Liù (humbly)

My lord, I am nothing, just a slave.

The Executioner's Servants sharpen their blades on the flint stones.

Le donne, gli uomini

Gira la cote!

Women and Men

The sharpening stone turns!

Calaf

E perché tanta angoscia hai diviso?

Calaf

Why have you suffered so much anguish?

Liù

Perché un dì nella reggia m'hai sorriso.

Liù

Because one day, in the royal palace,
you smiled upon me.

Gli uomini

Gira la cote, gira, gira! Gira, gira, gira!

The Men

The sharpening stone turns! It turns!

I servi del boia

Ungi, arrota, che la lama guizzi,
sprizzi fuoco e sangue!

The Executioner's servants

Grease and hone the blade so that it
glistens, and spouts fire and blood!

Il lavoro mai non langue, mai non langue. The work of the executioner never ends.

La folla

...mai non langue...

I servi del boia

...dove regna Turandot.

La folla

...dove regna Turandot.

I servi del boia

Ingi! Arrota!

I servi del boia, gli uomini

Fuoco e sangue!

Le donne, gli uomini

Dolci amanti, avanti, avanti!

I servi del boia

Cogli uncini e coi coltelli

Gli uomini

Noi siamo pronti a ricamar le vostre pelli! We are ready to weave your hair!

La folla

Dolci amanti, avanti, avanti!

I servi del boia

Siamo pronti a ricamar!

Tutti

Chi quel gong percuoterà apparire la
vedrà! Bianca al pari della giada,
fredda come quella spada
è la bella Turandot!

Dolci amanti, avanti, avanti!

Quando rangola il gong gongola il boia.
Vano è l'amore se non c'è fortuna.
Gli enigmi sono tre, la morte è una!
La morte è una! Ungi, arrota!

La folla

Gli enigmi sono tre, la morte è una!
Che la lama guizzi, sprizzi sangue.
Chi quel gong percuoterà?

The Crowd

...it never ends...

The Executioner's servants

...where Turandot reigns.

The Crowd

...where Turandot reigns.

The Executioner's servants

Grease and hone the blade!

Executioner's servants, the Men

Fire and blood!

Woman and Men

Gentle lovers, come forward!

The Executioner's servants

With hooks and the knives.

Men**The Crowd**

Gentle lovers, come forward!

The Executioner's servants

We are ready to weave!

All

Whoever strikes the gong will see her
appear! The beautiful Turandot
is pure like jade,
but cold like that saber!

Gentle lovers, come forward!

When the gong sound, the executioner
rejoices. Love is futile without luck!
There are three enigmas, but one death!
Grease and hone the blade!

The Crowd

There are three enigmas, but one death!
May the blade glisten and spout blood.
Who will strike the gong?

I servi del boia

Morte! Morte!

The Executioner's Servants

Death! Death!

La folla

Ah, ah! Ah, ah!

The Crowd

Hah, hah! Hah, hah!

I servi del boia, la folla

...dove regna Turandot!

The Executioner's Servants, the Crowd

...where Turandot reigns!

*The Servants leave to deliver the sharpened blade to the Executioner.**The Crowd looks toward the sky, which slowly darkens.***La folla**

Perché tarda la luna? Faccia pallida!

Mostrati in cielo! Presto, vieni!

Spunta! O testa mozza! O squallida!

Vieni! Spunta! Mostrati in cielo!

O testa mozza! O esangue!

O esangue, o squallida!

O taciturna! O amante, smunta dei morti!

O taciturna, mostrati in cielo!

Come aspettano, o taciturna,

il tuo funereo, lume i cimiteri!

O esangue, squallida!

O testa mozza!

The Crowd

Why is the moon so late? Pale face!

Show yourself in the sky! Quickly, come!

Emerge! Severed head! Wretched face!

Come! Emerge! Show yourself in the sky!

Oh severed head! Oh colorless face!

Oh colorless face, oh wretched face!

Oh silent one! Oh lover, pale from death!

Oh silent one, show yourself in the sky!

How they wait, oh silent one,

for your funeral, graveyard light!

Oh colorless face, wretched face!

Oh severed head!

Ecco laggiù un barlume!

Vieni, presto, spunta!

O testa mozza, spunta!

Vieni! O testa mozza, vieni!

Mostrati, o faccia pallida!

O faccia pallida! O esangue, pallida!

Vieni, amante smunta dei morti!

O amante, smunta dei morti!

Vieni, vieni, spunta!

There is a glitter over there!

Come, quickly, emerge!

Oh severed head, emerge!

Come! Oh severed head, come!

Show yourself, oh colorless face!

Oh pale face! Oh colorless face!

Come, lover pale from death!

Oh lover, pale from death!

Come, come, emerge!

The moon begins to appear

Ecco laggiù un barlume, dilaga in cielo,
 la sua luce smorta!

There is a glitter over there, your pallid
 light floods the sky!

Tutti

Pu-Tin-Pao! La luna è smorta!

All

Pu-Tin-Pao! The moon is pallid!

Ragazzi

Là sui monti dell'Est la cicogna cantò.

Boys

There, in the eastern mountains, the
 stork sang.

Ma l'april non rifiorì, ma la neve non sgelò. Dal deserto al mar non odi tu mille voci sospirar: "Principessa, scendi a me! Tutto fiorirà, tutto splenderà!" Ah!	But in April there was no flowering, because the snow did not melt. From desert to sea, you failed to hear thousands of sighing voices calling to you: "Princess, descend to me! All will bloom, all will be resplendent!" Ah!
--	--

*A cortege accompanies the Prince of Persia to the scaffold.
As the crowd notices that he is pallid and dazed,
their fierce and barbarous demeanor transforms to pity and compassion.*

La folla

O giovinetto! Grazia, grazia!
Com'è fermo il suo passo! Grazia!
Com'è dolce, com'è dolce il suo volto!
Ha negli occhi l'ebbrezza! Pietà!
Com'è fermo il suo passo!
Ha negli occhi la gioia! Pietà! Pietà!

Calaf

Ah! La grazia!

Le donne, gli uomini, la folla

Pietà di lui! Pietà! Principessa!
Pietà di lui! Pietà!
Principessa! Grazia! Grazia!
Pietà di lui! Pietà! Pietà!

Calaf

Ch'io ti veda e ch'io ti maledica!
Crudele, ch'io ti maledica!

La folla, gli uomini

Principessa! Pietà di lui!
Principessa! Principessa, pietà!
Principessa! Pietà di lui! Pietà di lui!
Pietà! Pietà! La grazia, Principessa!
Principessa! La grazia! La grazia!

The Crowd

Such a young man! Mercy and pity!
How firm his steps are! Mercy!
How gentle his face is!
His eyes are dreamy! Mercy!
How firm his steps are!
He has joy in his eyes! Mercy! Mercy!

Calaf

Oh! Mercy!

Women, Men, and the Crowd

Mercy on him! Mercy! Princess!
Mercy on him! Mercy!
Princess! Mercy and pity!
Mercy on him! Mercy! Mercy!

Calaf (addressing Turandot)

If I could see you I would curse you!
You are so cruel, that I would curse you!

The Crowd, the Men

Princess! Mercy on him!
Princess! Princess, mercy!
Princess! Mercy on him! Mercy on him!
Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Princess!
Princess! Mercy! Mercy!

*The Crowd turns toward a balcony where Turandot appears like a vision,
illuminated by a ray of moonlight.*

*The Crowd kneels in supplication; only standing are Calaf,
the Executioner, and the Prince of Persia.*

*Turandot makes an imperious gesture indicating that the
Prince of Persia is to be condemned to death.*

**Calaf**

O divina bellezza!
O meraviglia! O sogno!

Calaf

Oh what a divine beauty!
Oh what a marvel! Oh what a dream!

I sacerdoti bianchi del corteo

O gran Koung-tzè!
Che lo spirito del morente giunga fino a te!

Priests

Oh great Koung-tzè!
May the spirit of the dying join you!

Calaf becomes intoxicated by the vision of Turandot.

*All disperse. In the semidarkness before the palace,
only Calaf, Liù and Timur remain.*

Timur approaches Calaf and admonishes his son's impetuosity.

Timur

Figlio, che fai?

Timur

My son, what are you doing?

Calaf

Non senti? Il suo profumo è nell'aria!
È nell'anima!

Calaf

Don't you understand? Her perfume is in
the air! It has penetrated my soul!

Timur

Ti perdi!

Timur

You have lost yourself!

Calaf

O divina bellezza, meraviglia!
Io soffro, padre, soffro!

Calaf

Oh what a divine and marvelous beauty!
Father, I am suffering!

Timur

No, no! Stringiti a me.
Liù, parlagli tu!
Qui salvezza non c'è!
Prendi nella tua mano la sua mano!

Timur

No, no! Embrace me.
Liù, you speak to him too!
There is no safety here!
Take his hand in yours!

Liù
Signore, andiam lontano!

Liù
My lord, let's go far away!

Timur
La vita c'è laggiù!

Timur
Life is over far away!

Calaf
Quest'è la vita, padre!

Calaf
Father, here is where life is!

Timur
La vita c'è laggiù!

Timur
Life for us is far away from here!

Calaf
Io soffro, padre, soffro!

Calaf
Father, I am suffering!

Timur
Qui salvezza non c'è!

Timur
There is no safety here!

Calaf
La vita, padre, è qui!
Turandot! Turandot! Turandot!

Calaf
Father, life is here!
Turandot! Turandot! Turandot!

*Just before his beheading, the Prince of Persia
is heard shouting the name of Turandot.*

La voce del principe del Persia
Turandot!

The Prince of Persia
Turandot!

La folla
Ah!

The Crowd
Ah!

Timur
Vuoi morire così?

Timur
Do you want to die that way?

Calaf
Vincere, padre, nella sua bellezza!

Calaf
Father, I will win her beauty!

Timur
Vuoi finire così?

Timur
Do you want to end that way?

Calaf
Vincere gloriosamente nella sua bellezza! I will win her beauty with glory!

Calaf

*As Calaf advances toward the gong to challenge Turandot's riddles,
Turandot's Three Ministers block his path.*

Ping, Pong, Pang

Fermo! Che fai? T'arresta!
Chi sei, che fai, che vuoi?
Va' via!
Va', la porta è questa
della gran beccheria!

Pazzo, va' via!
Qui si strozza! Si trivella! Si sgozza!
Si spella! Si uncina e scapitozza!
Va' via! Si sega e si sbudella! Va' via!
Sollecito, precipite. Va' via!

Al tuo paese torna in cerco d'uno stipite. Hurry, quickly. Go away!

Che vuoi, chi sei?
Per romperti la corona!
Va' via, va' via!
Ma qui no!
Pazzo, va' via, va' via!

Calaf

Lasciatemi passare!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Qui tutti i cimiteri sono occupati!
Qui bastano i pazzi indigeni!
Non vogliam più pazzi forestieri!
O scappi, o il funeral per te s'appressa!

Calaf

Lasciatemi passare!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Per una principessa! Peuh! Che cos'è?
Una femmina colla corona in testa
e il manto colla frangia!
Ma se la spogli nuda è carne!
È carne cruda! È roba che non si mangia!

Calaf

Lasciatemi passare, lasciatemi!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Halt! What are you doing? Stop!
Who are you, what are you doing, what
do you want? Go away!
Go, this is the door
to a large butchershop!

Insane man, go away!
Here one is strangled! Stabbed!
Slaughtered!
Skinned! The head impaled!
Go away! One is sawed and
disemboweled!

Return to your country and family.
What do you want, who are you?
You want to destroy the crown!
Go away! Not here!
Insane man, go away!

Calaf (*trying to reach the gong*)

Let me pass!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Here all the cemeteries are full!
Here there are enough insane people!
We don't want more insane foreigners!
Run away, or your funeral awaits you!

Calaf

Let me pass!

Ping, Pong, Pang

All for a Princess! Ay! What is she?
A woman with a crown on her head
and a fringed dress.
But if you undress her she is flesh!
Impure flesh! Something not to be eaten!

Calaf

Let me pass, let me pass!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Ah, ah, ah!

Ping

Lascia le donne! O prendi cento spose,
che, in fondo, la più sublime Turandot
del mondo ha una faccia, due braccia, e
due gambe, sì belle, imperiali, sì, sì,
belle, ma sempre quelle!

Con cento mogli, o sciocco,
avrà gambe di ribocco,
duecento braccia e cento dolci petti.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Cento petti sparsi per cento letti!
Ah, ah, ah!

Calaf

Lasciatemi passar!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Pazzo, va' via, va' via!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Ha, ha, ha!

Ping (*calmly and with quiet dignity*)

Leave the women! It is better to take one
hundred wives that are more splendid
than Turandot, with a face, two arms,
and two legs. Yes, yes, very beautiful
women who are very regal and beautiful,
but only take those!

With one hundred wives, foolish man,
you'll have legs overflowing, two
hundred arms and one hundred gentle breasts.

Ping, Pong, Pang

One hundred breasts for one hundred beds!
Ha, ha, ha!

Calaf

Let me pass!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Insane man, go away!

*Turandot's Servants appear on the balcony of the Imperial Palace
and raise their hands to silence the noise.*

Le ancelle di Turandot

Silenzio, olà! Laggiù chi parla? Silenzio!
Silenzio! È l'ora dolcissima del sonno.
Silenzio, silenzio, silenzio!
Il sonno sfiora gli occhi di Turandot!
Si profuma di lei l'oscurità!

Ping

Via di là, femmine ciarlare!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Attenti al gong! Attenti al gong!

Calaf

Si profuma di lei l'oscurità!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Guardalo, Pong (Ping, Pang)!
È insordito! Intontito! Allucinato!

Turandot's Servants

Silence over there! Who's talking over
there? Quiet! It is the time for her gentle
sleep. Quiet, quiet, quiet!
Turandot's eyes have just barely closed!
Her fragrance has disappeared!

Ping

Leave here, and the feminine chatter!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Listen to the gong!

Calaf

Her fragrance has disappeared!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Look at him, Pong (Ping, Pang)!
He's deaf! Stupefied! Hallucinated!

Timur

Più non li ascolta, ahimè!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Su! Parliamogli in tre!

Notte senza lumicino, gola nero d'un
cammino son più chiare degli enigmi di
Turandot!

Ferro, bronzo, muro, roccia,
l'ostinata tua capoccia,
son men duri degli enigmi di Turandot!
Dunque va', saluta tutti!
Varca i monti, taglia i flutti!
Sta alla larga dagli enigmi di Turandot!

Timur

I can't bear to listen any more!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Get up! Let's speak to him together!

A dark, unlit road at night,
is much clearer
than Turandot's enigmas!

Steel, bronze, walls, rocks,
are obstacles in your path that are less
difficult than Turandot's riddles!
Wherever you go, everyone greets you!
Across the mountains, cutting the waves!
But stay far away from Turandot's riddles!

Voices from the impaled heads of Turandot's failed victims.

Le ombre dei morti

Non indugiare!

Se chiami, appare quella che estinti ci fa sognare.

Fa ch'ella parli!

Fa che l'udiamo! Io l'amo!

Io l'amo! Io l'amo!

Apparitions of the dead

Don't delay!

If you call, the dead appear in your dreams.

Make her talk to you!

Make her listen! I love you!

I love you! I love you!

Calaf

No, no, io solo l'amo!

Calaf

No, no, I alone love her!

Ping, Pong, Pang

L'ami? Che cosa?

Chi? Turandot?

Ah, ah, ah! Turandot!

O ragazzo demente!

Turandot non esiste!

Non esiste che il niente nel quale ti annulli!

Turandot non esiste, non esiste!

Come tutti quei citrulli tuoi pari!

L'uomo! Il Dio! Io! I popoli! I sovrani!

Pu-Tin-Pao! Non esiste che il Tao!

Tu ti annulli come quei citrulli tuoi pari,
tu ti annulli!

Come tutti quei citrulli tuoi pari!

Non esiste che il Tao!

Ping, Pong, Pang

You love her? What is this?

Who? Turandot?

Ha, ha, ha! Turandot!

Oh insane young man!

Turandot doesn't exist!

She doesn't exist at all,
so call off your quest!

Turandot doesn't exist!

You are the same as all those other fools!

Man! God! Me! People! Subjects!

Pu-Tin-Pao! The Tao doesn't exist!

End your quest or you'll die like all
those other fools, end your quest!

You are like all those other fools!

The only reality is the executioner!

Calaf

A me il trionfo!
A me l'amore!

Calaf

It will be my triumph!
Her love will be mine!!

The Executioner appears with the severed head of the Prince of Persia.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Stolto, ecco l'amore!
Così la luna bacerà il tuo volto!

Ping, Pong, Pang (*pointing to the head*)

Fool, that is love!
That is the light that will kiss your face!

Timur addresses Calaf with desperate supplication.

Timur

O figlio, vuoi dunque ch'io solo trascini
pel mondo la mia torturata vecchiezza?
Aiuto! Non c'è voce umana
che muova il tuo cuore feroce?

Timur

My son, do you want me to roam the
world alone, like a tortured old man?
Help me! Is there a human voice that can
penetrate your ferocious heart?

Adagio**LIÙ**

Signore a - ascolta! Ah, signore, ascolta!

Liù

Signore, ascolta! Ah, signore, ascolta!
Liù non regge più, si spezza il cuor!
Ahimè, quanto cammino col tuo nome
nell'anima, col nome tuo sulle labbra!

Liù

My lord, listen to me! My lord, listen!
Liù can bear it no longer, her heart
breaks! Alas, how many roads I traveled
with your name in my soul, with your
name on my lips!

Ma se il tuo destino doman sarà deciso,
noi morrem sulla strada dell'esilio.
Ei perderà suo figlio, io l'ombra d'un
sorriso.

But if you have decided that tomorrow
holds your destiny, we'll die in exile.
He will lose his son, and I will lose the
trace of a smile.

Liù non regge più! Ah!

Liù can bear it no longer! Ah!

A tempo rallentando**CALAF**

Non piangere, Liù!

Se in un lontano giorno io t'ho sorriso

Calaf

Non piangere, Liù!

Se in un lontano giorno io t'ho sorriso,
per quel sorriso, dolce mia fanciulla,
m'ascolta:
il tuo signore sarà domani, forse solo al
mondo.

Non lo lasciare, portalo via con te!

Calaf

Don't cry, Liù!

If a long time ago I smiled upon you,
it is because of that smile, gentle little
girl,
that you must wait for me:
perhaps you are alone in the world, but
your man will come to you tomorrow..
No don't leave him, take him with you!

Liù

Noi morrem sulla strada dell'esilio!

Liù

We'll die in exile!

Timur

Noi morrem!

Timur

We will die!

Calaf

Dell'esilio addolcisci a lui le strade!
Questo, o mia povera Liù,
al tuo piccolo cuore che non cade,
chiede colui che non sorride più!

Calaf

Sweeten the road of his exile!
My poor little Liù,
your little heart should not fail to
be with him or he will no longer smile!

Andante sostenuto**Timur**

Ah, per l'ultima volta!

Timur

Ah, for the last time!

Liù

Vinci il fascino orribile!

Liù

I am defeated by his horrible charm!

Ping, Pong, Pang

La vita è così bella!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Life is so beautiful!

Timur

Abbi di me pietà!

Timur

Have mercy on me!

Liù

Abbi di Liù pietà!

Liù

Have mercy on me!

Timur

Abbi di me, di me pietà, pietà!

Timur

Have mercy on me, mercy!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Non perderti così!

Calaf

Son io che domando pietà!

Liù

Signore, pietà!

Timur

Non posso staccarmi da te!

Calaf

Nessuno più ascolto! Nessuno più ascolto! No one wait here any more!

Liù

Pietà di lui!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Afferralo, portalo via! Portalo via!

Su! Porta via quel pazzo!

Calaf

Io vedo il suo fulgido volto!

La vedo! Mi chiama! Essa è là!

Il tuo perdono chiede colui che non
sorride più!**Timur**Non voglio staccarmi da te! Pietà! Pietà!
Mi getto ai tuoi piedi gemente.
Abbi pietà! Non voler la mia morte!**Ping, Pong, Pang**

Su, portalo via quel pazzo!

Trattieni quel pazzo furente!

Folle tu sei! La vita è bella!

Liù

Pietà! Signore, pietà, pietà!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Su, un ultimo sforzo, portiamolo via!

Portiamolo via, portiamolo via!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Don't destroy yourself this way!

Calaf

It is I who asks mercy!

Liù

My lord, mercy!

Timur

I cannot leave without you!

Calaf**Liù**

Mercy for him!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Grab him, and take him away!

Get up! Take this insane man away!

Calaf

I see her resplendent face!

I see it! She calls me! She is there!

I ask for your pardon because you can
no longer smile!**Timur**I cannot leave you! Mercy! Mercy!
I throw myself at your feet lamenting.
Have mercy! Don't wish my death!**Ping, Pong, Pang**

Get up! Take this insane man away!

Hold on to this furious insane man!

You are foolish! Life is beautiful!

Liù

Mercy! Lord, mercy, mercy!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Up, a last effort, let's take him away!

Let's take him away!

Calaf

Lasciatemi! Ho troppo sofferto!
La gloria m'aspetta laggiù.
Forza umana non c'è che mi trattenga.
Io seguo la mia sorte.
Son tutto una febbre, son tutto un
delirio!
Ogni senso è un martirio feroce.
Ogni fibra dell'anima ha una voce che
grida: Turandot.

Timur

Tu passi su un povero core
che sanguina invano per te!
Nessuno ha mai vinto, nessuno.
Su tutti la spiada piombò.
Mi getto ai tuoi piedi: non voler la mia
morte!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Il volto che vedi è illusione,
la luce che splende è funesta.
Tu giochi la tua perdizione, tu giochi la
testa.
La morte, c'è l'ombra del bioa laggiù.
Tu corri alla rovina!
La vita non giocare!

Liù

Pietà! Pietà di noi!
Se questo suo strazio non basta,
signore, noi siamo perduti con te!
Ah, fuggiamo, signore, ah! Fuggiamo!

La folla

La fossa già scaviam per te che vuoi
sfidar l'amor.
Nel buio c'è segnato, ahimè, il tuo
crudel destin!

Calaf

Turandot!

Liù, Timur, Ping, Pong, Pang

La morte!

Calaf

Let me alone! I have suffered too much!
My glory awaits me there.
There is no human force that can hold
me.
I follow my destiny.
I am inflamed, delirious!
I feel a sense of fierce torture.
Every fiber in my soul is shouting:
Turandot.

Timur

You are stepping upon a poor heart that
hopes for you in vain!
No one has ever been victorious, no one.
The deadly ghost has fallen on all of us.
I throw myself at your feet: you do not
wish me to die!

Ping, Pong, Pang

The face that you see is an illusion,
the light that shines is deadly.
You are playing with hell, you are
gambling with your head.
Death, there in the shadow of the executioner.
You are running to your ruin!
Don't play games with life!

Liù

Mercy! Mercy on us!
If this torture is not enough, my lord,
we are lost with you!
Ah, let's flee, my lord! Let's flee!

The Crowd

We'll dig the grave for you if you wish
to challenge love.
The executioner is the sign of your cruel
destiny!

Calaf

Turandot!

Liù, Timur, Ping, Pong, Pang

Death!

Calaf

Turandot!

Calaf

Turandot!

Calaf strikes the gong three times.

Ping, Pong, Pang

E lasciamolo andar! Inutile è gridar in
sanscrito, in cinese, in lingua mongola!
Quando rangola il gong la morte
gangola.

Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Let's let him go! It's useless to shout in
either Sanskrit, Chinese, or Mongolian!
When the gong is struck, death
resounds.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Calaf remains in ecstasy at the base of the gong.
Liù and Timur embrace each other as they look at him despairingly.*

END OF ACT I

ACT II - Scene 1

*A Pavilion decorated with symbolic and fantastic Chinese figures.
Turandot's Three Ministers, Ping, Pang, and Pong,
philosophize pessimistically about events in the realm.*

Ping

Olà, Pang! Olà, Pong!

Poiché il funesto gong desta la reggia e
desta la città, siam pronti ad ogni evento:
Se lo straniero vince, per le nozze,
e s'egli perde, pel seppellimento.

Ping

Hello, Pang! Hello, Pong!

Since the solemn gong awakened the
empire, every city has become stirred.
We are ready for every event: the
wedding if the stranger wins, and the
burial if he loses.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Io preparo le nozze, ed io le esequie,
Le rosse lanterne di festa!
Le bianche lanterne di lutto!
Gli incensi e le offerte,
monete di carta dorate,
il bel palanchino scarlatto, thè, zucchero,
noci moscate, il feretro grande,
ben fatto, i bonzi che cantano,
i bonzi che gemono,
e tutto quanto il resto, secondo vuole il
rito, minuzioso, infinito!

Ping, Pong, Pang

I prepare weddings, and I prepare funerals,
The red lanterns for a party!
The white lanterns for mourning!
The incense and the offerings,
moneys for gilded paper,
a beautiful scarlet carriage, tea, sugar,
walnut, wine, a well-made grand coffin,
and priests who sing,
and priests who groan,
and everything else for the second wish of
the rite, will be meticulous and endless!

Ping

O China, o China, che or sussulti
e trasecoli inquieta,
come dormivi lieta, gonfia
dei tuoi settantamila secoli!

Ping

Oh China, oh China, you are shaking and
startled into restlessness,
how you slept happily, arrogant from
your seventeen thousand centuries.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Tutto andava secondo
l'antichissima regola del mondo.
Poi nacque Turandot.
E sono anni che le nostre feste
si riducono a gioie come queste:
tre battute di gong, tre indovinelli,
e giù teste!

Ping, Pong, Pang

All was going favorably for the
oldest empire in the world.
Then Turandot was born.
And in these years the joys of our feasts
have dwindled:
three strikes of the gong, three puzzles,
and then heads!

L'anno del topo furon sei.	There were six years of the sign of the rat.
L'anno del cane furon otto.	There were eights years of the dog.
Nell'anno in corso, il terribile anno della Tigre.	And in the course of years, the terrible year of the tiger.
Siamo già al tredicesimo!	We already have the thirteenth!
Tredicesimo, con quello che va sotto!	Thirteenth, with the earlier ones!
Che lavoro! Che noia!	What work! What bother!
A che siamo mai ridotti?	And why have we been demoted?
I ministri siam del boia!	We are ministers of the executioner!
Ministri del boia!	Ministers of the executioner!

Andante mosso*Ho una ca - sa nell'Ho - nan**con il suo laghet - to blù,***Ping**

Ho una casa nell'Honan con il suo laghetto blu, tutto cinto di bambù.
E sto qui a dissiparmi la mia vita,
a stillarmi il cervel sui libri sacri.

Ping

I have a house in Hunan with a blue lake,
all made with bamboo.
Here my life becomes dissipated,
racking my brains with sacred books.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Sui libri sacri. E potrei tornar laggiù,
presso il mio laghetto blu,
tutto cinto di bambù.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Sacred books. If I could only return
there, to my blue lake that is
surrounded with bamboo.

Pong

Ho foreste, presso Tsiang, che più belle
non c'è ne,
che non hanno ombra per me.
Ho foreste, che più belle non c'è ne!

Pong

I have a forest near Tsiang, and there is
nothing more beautiful,
that could arouse my imagination.
I have a forest, and nothing is more
beautiful!

Pang

Ho un giardino, presso Kiu, che lasciai
per venir qui, e che non rivedrò, non
rivedrò mai più, mai più!

Pang

I have a garden near Kiu, that I left to
come here,
and that I'll never see again, never again!

Ping

E potrei tornar laggiù,
presso mio laghetto blu, tutto cinto di
bambù!

Ping

That I might be able to return there, near
my blue lake, all surrounded with
bamboo.

Ping, Pong, Pang

E stiam qui a stillarci il cervel, sui libri
sacri!

E potrei tornare a Tsiang.

E potrei tornare laggiù. E potrei tornare
a Kiu,

a godermi il lago blu. Tsiang...Kiu...

Honan...tutto cinto di bambù!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Here we rack our brains with sacred
books!

If I could return to Tsiang.

If I could return there. And I could return
to the sea at Kiu,

and enjoy the blue lake. Tsiang...Kiu...

Honan...all surrounded by bamboo!

Ping, Pong, Pang

O mondo pieno di pazzi innamorati!

Ne abbiamo visti arrivar degli aspiranti!

O quanti! O quanti!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Oh world full of insane lovers!

We have seen the candidates arrive!

Oh so many! So many!

Ping

O mondo pieno di pazzi innamorati!

Vi ricordate il principe regal di

Samarcanda?

Fece la sua domanda,

e lei con quale gioia gli mandò il boia!

Ping

Oh world full of insane lovers!

Do you remember the royal prince of

Samarcanda?

She posed her question,

and she sent him joyfully to the executioner!

La folla

Ungi, arrota, che la lama guizzi e sprizzi
fuoco e sangue!

The Crowd (from outside)

Sharpen and hone the blade so that fire
and blood will gush forth!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Il boia! E l'Indiano gemmato Sagarika

cogli orecchini come campanelli?

Amore chiese, fu decapitato!

Ed il Birmano? E il prence dei Kirghisi?

Uccisi! Uccisi! Uccisi! Uccisi!

E il Tartaro dall'arco di sei cubiti

di ricche pelli cinto? Estinto! Estinto!

Ping, Pong, Pang

The executioner! And the jeweled

Sagarika Indian with little ears like bells?

He wanted love and was decapitated!

And the Burmese? And the prince of

Kirghis? Killed! Killed! Killed! Killed!

And the Tartar skinned by an arrow from

six cubits? Exterminated! Exterminated!

La folla

Dove regna Turandot il lavoro mai non
langue!

The Crowd

Where Turandot reigns the work never
ends!

Ping, Pong, Pang

E decapita! Uccidi! Uccidi!

Uccidi! Uccidi! Ammazza!

Estingui! Uccidi!

Estingui! Ammazza!

Addio, amore, addio, razza!

Addio, stirpe divina!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Decapitated! Killed! Killed!

Killed! Killed! Murdered!

Exterminated! Killed!

Exterminated! Murdered!

Farewell love, farewell race!

Farewell divine culture!

E finisce la China!
Addio, stirpe divina!
O Tigre! O Tigre!

China is finished!
Farewell divine culture!
Oh Tiger! Oh Tiger!

O grande marescialla del cielo,
fa che giunga la gran notte attesa,
la notte della resa!
Il talamo le voglio preparare!
Sprimaccerò per lei le molli piume.
Io l'alcova le voglio profumare.
Gli sposi guiderò reggendo il lume.
Poi tutt'e tre in giardino noi canterem
d'amor
fino al mattino, così.

Oh great lord of the sky,
make the anticipated great night arrive,
the night of surrender!
I want to prepare the nuptial bed for her!
I will fluff the soft feathers.
I will perfume the bedroom.
I will guide the newlyweds with light.
Then the three of us will sing in the
garden about love
until morning, just like this.

Non v'è in China per nostra fortuna
donna più che rinneghi l'amor!
Una sola ce n'era e quest'una che fu
ghiaccio, ora è vampa ed ardor!

Our fate is that there has never before been
a woman in China who repudiated love!
Only one, and that one was ice,
and now it has flame and ardor!

Principessa, il tuo impero si stende
dal Tsè-Kiang all'immenso Jang-Tsè!
Ma là, dentro alle soffici tende,
c'è uno sposo che impera su te!
Tu dei baci già senti l'aroma,
già sei doma, sei tutta languor!

Princess, your empire extends from Tsè-
Kiang to the vast Yangtse!
But there, behind the soft tents,
there is a man who wants to rule you!
He has already sensed the aroma of your
kisses, you are already tamed, and you
are already weakening!

Gloria, gloria alla notte segreta,
che il prodigio ora vede compir!
Gloria, gloria alla gialla coperta di seta,
notte segreta!
Testimonio dei dolci sospir!

Glory, glory to the secret night,
that the wonder might be fulfilled now!
Glory, glory to the yellow cover of silk,
secret night!
Witness of gentle sighs!

Nel giardin sussurran le cose
e tintinnan campanule d'or.
Si sospiran parole amorose,
di rugiada s'imperano i fior!
Gloria, gloria al bel corpo discinto
che il mistero ignorato ora sa!
Gloria all'ebbrezza e all'amore
che ha vinto e alla China la pace ridà!

In the garden things murmur
and golden flowers jingle.
Sighing words of love,
make the dew cover the flowers!
Glory, glory to the mysteries of that
scantly dressed body that no one knows!
Glory to intoxication and to love,
that it may triumph and China may smile
in peace!

Ping

Noi si sogna e il palazzo già formicola di
lanterne, di servi e di soldati.

Udite il gran tamburo del tempio verde!
Già stridon le infinite ciabatte di Pekino.

Ping

We rest while the palace is already filling
with lanterns, servants and soldiers.

Listen to the great drum from the green
temple! The multitudes of Peking are
already striding to the palace.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Udite trombe! Altro che pace!

Ha inizio la cerimonia.

Andiamo a goderci l'ennesimo supplizio!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Hear the trumpets! No more peace!

The ceremony has begun!

Let's go enjoy the ultimate torture!

ACT II - Scene 2

A plaza before the Royal Palace.

Large steps lead up to a throne in which the Emperor Altoum is seated.

*The Mandarin ceremoniously arrives, followed by eight Wisemen, who bear scrolls
with the answers to Turandot's enigmas.*

The Three Ministers arrive, and the Crowd slowly fills the plaza.

La folla

Gravi, enormi ed imponenti col mister
dei chiusi enigmi

già s'avanzano i sapienti.

Ecco Ping! Ecco Pong! Ecco Pang!

The Crowd

The Wisemen, serious, large and
imposing, bear the inaccessible mystery
of the enigmas.

There is Ping! There is Pong! There is
Pang!

Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!

Gloria a te!

Ten thousand years to our Emperor!

Glory to you!



Die - ci-mi - la an - ni al nostro Impe - ra - to - re!

*Calaf stands at the base of the steps. Timur and Liù stand near him.
The Emperor addresses the Crowd, and then Calaf.*

L'Imperatore

Un giuramento atroce mi costringe
a tener fede al fosco patto.
E il santo scettro ch'io stringo gronda di
sangue.
Basta sangue! Giovine, va'!

The Emperor

I am obliged by an outrageous oath to be
faithful to this ominous covenant.
The sacred scepter that I bear drips with
blood.
Enough blood! Young man, go away!

Calaf

Figlio del Cielo, io chiedo d'affrontar la
prova!

Calaf

Son of Heaven, I request permission to
face the trial!

L'Imperatore

Fa ch'io possa morir senza portare
il peso della tua giovine vita!

The Emperor

You wish me to bear the guilt for your
young life after I die!

Calaf

Figlio del Cielo, io chiedo d'affrontar la
prova!

Calaf

Son of Heaven, I request permission to
face the trial!

L'Imperatore

Non voler che s'empia ancor d'orror la
Reggia, il mondo.

The Emperor

Don't wish even more wickedness on this
reign.

Calaf

Figlio del Cielo,
io chiedo d'affrontar la prova!

Calaf

Son of Heaven, I request permission to
confront the test!

L'Imperatore

Straniero, ebbro di morte!
E sia! Si compia il tuo destino!

The Emperor

Stranger, you are intoxicated with death!
Let it be! Fulfill your destiny!

La folla

Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!

The Crowd

Ten thousand years to our Emperor!

The Mandarin reads Turandot's decree to the Crowd.

Il Mandarino

Popolo di Pekino! La legge è questa:
Turandot, la pura, sposa sarà di chi,
di sangue regio, spieghi gli enigmi
ch'ella proporrà.
Ma chi affronta il cimento e vinto resta
porga alla scure la superba testa!

The Mandarin

People of Peking! This is the law.
The chaste Turandot will marry a man
of royal blood, who solves the riddles
that she proposes.
But the man who fails the test will have
his head impaled on the walls!

I ragazzi

Dal deserto al mar non odi mille voci
sospirar:

Principessa, scendi a me!

Tutto splenderà, splenderà, splenderà!

Boys

From desert to sea, you failed to hear
thousands of sighing voices calling you.

Princess, descend to me!

Everything will radiate! It will radiate!

*Turandot rises from the throne. She looks coldly at Calaf,
and then solemnly addresses him.*

Molto lento
TURANDOT

**Turandot**

In questa reggia, or son mill'anni e
mille,
un grido disperato risonò.

E quel grido, traverso stirpe e stirpe
qui nell'anima mia si rifugiò!

Turandot

In this realm, thousands and thousands of
years ago, an agonizing scream re-
sounded.

And that shout, that was heard from
generation to generation, took refuge in
my soul!

Principessa Lo-u-Ling, ava dolce e
serena
che regnavi nel tuo cupo silenzio
in gioia pura, e sfidasti inflessibile e
sicura l'aspro dominio, oggi rivivi in me!

Princess Lo-u-Ling, my gentle and placid
ancestress is revived in me. She was
undaunted and courageous to secure our
land, but now remains in gloomy silence
and chaste joy!

La folla

Fu quando il Re dei Tartari le sette sue
bandiere dispiegò.

The Crowd

It was when the Tartar king unleashed his
seven armies.

Turandot

Pure nel tempo che ciascun ricorda,
fu sgomento e terrore e rombo d'armi.

Turandot

Indeed it was a time that everyone
remembers; it was frightening and
terrifying, with the roar of armies.

Il regno vinto! E Lou-Ling,
la mia ava, trascinata da un uomo come
te,
come te straniero, là nella notte atroce
dove si spense la sua fresca voce!

Her reign was defeated! And Lou-Ling,
my ancestor, was dragged before a man
like you, like you stranger. There in the
desperate night her wise voice was
silenced!

La folla

Da secoli ella dorme nella sua tomba enorme.

The Crowd

It is for centuries that she rests in her imposing tomb.

Turandot

O Principi, che a lunghe carovane
d'ogni parte del mondo qui venite
a gettar la vostra sorte,
io vendico su voi, su voi quella purezza,
quel grido e quella morte!

Turandot

You Princes come here from every part of
the world
to risk your fate,
I have vengeance for you, from that pure
woman, from that shout and that death!

Mai nessun m'avrà!

L'orror di che l'uccise vivo nel cuor mi
sta!

But no one will ever possess me!

The horror of her murder remains
engraved within me!

No, no! Mai nessun m'avrà!

No, no! No one will ever possess me!

Largamente

Ah, rinasce in me l'orgoglio di tanta
puretà!

Straniero! Non tentar la fortuna!

Gli enigmi sono tre, la morte è una!

Ah, the pride of her purity is reborn
within me!

Stranger! Don't tempt your luck!

There are three enigmas, but one death!



Gli e - nig - mi so - no tre, la mor - te è u - na!

Calaf

No, no! Gli enigmi sono tre, una è la
vita!

Calaf

No, no! There are three enigmas, but one
life!

La folla

Al Principe straniero offri la prova
ardita, o Turandot! Turandot!

The Crowd

Turandot! Turandot! The unknown Prince
offers to challenge your bold test!

Trumpets blare to announce the first riddle.

Turandot

Straniero, ascolta:

“Nella cupa notte vola un fantasma iridescente. Sale e spiega l’ale sulla nera infinita umanità. Tutto il mondo l’invoca e tutto il mondo l’implora. Ma il fantasma sparisce coll’aurora per rinascere nel cuore. Ed ogni notte nasce ed ogni giorno muore!”

Turandot

Stranger, listen.

“An iridescent ghost flies in the dark night. It spreads its wings on humanity! The whole world invokes it, and the whole world implores it! But the ghost disappears with the dawn to be reborn in the heart! Every night it is born, and every morning it dies.”

Calaf

Si! Rinasce! Rinasce e in esultanza mi porta via con sé, Turandot: La Speranza!

Calaf

Yes! Reborn! Reborn and triumphantly brought me to you. Turandot: it is Hope!

I Sapienti

La Speranza! La Speranza! La Speranza!

The Wisemen

Hope! Hope! Hope!

Turandot

Si, la speranza che delude sempre!

Turandot

Yes, hope that always deceives!

Turandot poses the second riddle.

“Guizza al pari di fiamma, e non è fiamma. È talvolta delirio. È febbre d’impeto e ardore! L’inerzia lo tramuta in un languore.
Se ti perdi o trapassi, si raffredda.
Se sogni la conquista, avvampa, avvampa! Ha una voce che trepido tu ascolti, e del tramonto il vivido baglior!”

“Though not a flame, it darts like a flame! It is a fire with intense heat! Its exertion makes it weaken! If it is lost, you become chilled!
If it is conquered, it inflames you!
You listen to its voice with fear, and it glows like the setting sun!”

L’Imperatore

Non perderti, straniero!

The Emperor

Don’t fail, stranger!

La folla

È per la vita! Parla!
Non perderti, straniero! Parla!

The Crowd

It is for your life! Speak!
Don’t fail, stranger! Speak!

Liù

È per l’amore!

Liù

He does it for love!

Calaf

Si, Principessa! Avvampa e insieme langue, se tu mi guardi, nelle vene:
Il Sangue!

Calaf

Yes, Princess! It glows and at the same time languishes, you can find it in the veins: It is Blood!

I Sapienti

Il Sangue! Il Sangue! Il Sangue!

The Wisemen

Blood! Blood! Blood!

La folla

Coraggio, scioglitori degli enigmi!

The Crowd

Courage, solve the enigmas!

Turandot

Percuotete quei vili!

Turandot (*becoming anxious*)

Strike those vile ones!

Turandot poses the third riddle.

“Gelo che ti dà foco e dal tuo foco più
gelo prende!

Candida ed oscura!

Se libero ti vuol ti fa più servo.

Se per servo t’accetta, ti fa Re!”

“The ice that inflames you and makes
you more frigid! It is dispassionate and
obscure! If you want to be free from it, it
makes you subservient. If you serve it
and it accepts you, you become king!

Su, straniero, ti sbianca la paura!

E ti senti perduto!

Su, straniero, il gelo che dà foco,
che cos’è?”

Rise, stranger, you’re pale with fear!

And you sense defeat!

Rise, stranger, the ice that generates fire,
what is it?”

Calaf

La mia vittoria ormai t’ha data a me!

Il mio fuoco ti sgela: Turandot!

Calaf

Finally you have given me my victory!

It is my fire that melts you: it is Turandot!

I Sapienti

Turandot! Turandot! Turandot!

The Wisemen

Turandot! Turandot! Turandot!

La folla

Turandot! Turandot!

Gloria, gloria, o vincitore!

Ti sorrida la vita!

Ti sorrida l’amor!

Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!

Luce, Re di tutto il mondo!

The Crowd

Turandot! Turandot!

Glory, glory to the victor!

May life smile on you!

May love smile on you!

Ten thousand years to our Emperor!

Light, King of the entire world!

Agonizing over her defeat, Turandot pleads with the Emperor.

Turandot

Figlio del Cielo! Padre augusto!

No! Non gettar tua figlia

nelle braccia dello straniero!

Turandot

Son of Heaven! August father!

No! Don’t cast your daughter into the
arms of the stranger!

L'Imperatore

È sacro il giuramento!

The Emperor

It is the sacred law!

Turandot

No, non dire! Tua figlia è sacra!

Non puoi donarmi a lui, a lui come una schiava.

Turandot

No, don't say it! Your daughter is sacred!

You cannot give me to him, cast me to him like I was a slave.

Ah, no! Tua figlia è sacra!

Non puoi donarmi a lui
come una schiava morente di vergogna!

Ah, no! Your daughter is sacred!

You cannot give me to him like a slave
dying of shame!

Turandot addresses Calaf.

Non guardarmi così!

Tu che irridi al mio orgoglio,

non guardarmi così!

Non sarò tua!

No, non sarò tua!

Non voglio, non voglio!

Don't look at me that way!

You mock my shame,

don't look at me that way!

I will never be yours!

No, I will never be yours!

It is not my will!

L'Imperatore

È sacro il giuramento!

The Emperor

It is a sacred oath!

La folla

È sacro il giuramento!

Ha vinto, Principessa!

Offri per te la vita!

The Crowd

It is the sacred law!

He has won, Princess!

He offered his life for you!

Turandot

Mai nessun m'avrà!

Turandot

No one will ever possess me!

La folla

Sia premio al suo ardimento!

The Crowd

You are the prize of his boldness!

Turandot

Mi vuoi nelle tue braccia a forza,
riluttante, fremente?

Turandot

Do you wish in your arms by force,
cold and unwilling?

La folla

È sacro, è sacro, è sacro il giuramento, è
sacro!

The Crowd

It is sacred, it is the sacred law!

Calaf

No, no, Principessa altera!

Ti voglio ardente d'amor!

Calaf

No, no, proud Princess!

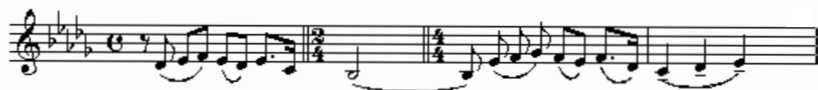
I want your love to be ardent!

La folla

Coraggioso! Audace!
Coraggioso! O forte!

The Crowd

Courageous! Dauntless!
Courageous! Oh what strength!

Moderto sostenuto**Calaf**

Tre enigmi m'hai proposto, e tre ne
sciolsi.
Uno soltanto a te ne proporrò:
Il mio nome non sai. Dimmi il mio nome.
Dimmi il mio nome prima dell'alba,
e all'alba morirò.

Calaf

You proposed three riddles, and I solved
the three riddles.
I will propose one riddle for you.
You do not know my name.
Tell me my name before sunrise,
and at sunrise I will die.

L'Imperatore

Il cielo voglia che col primo sole mio
figliolo tu sia!

The Emperor

The Heavens may wish that at sunrise
you will become my son!

La folla

Ai tuoi piedi ci prostriam, Luce,
Re di tutto il mondo!
Per la tua saggezza,
per la tua bontà ci doniamo a te, lieti in
umiltà,
a te salga il nostro amor!

The Crowd (to the Emperor)

We prostrate ourselves at your feet, Light,
King of the entire world!
We sacrifice ourselves to you, happily
and humbly, because of your wisdom and
goodness,
and may our love rise to you!

Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!
A te, erede di Hien-Wang noi gridiam:
Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!
Alte, alte le bandiere!
Gloria a te! Gloria a te!

Ten thousand years to our Emperor!
To you, hero of Hien-Wang we shout.
Ten thousand years to our Emperor!
Raise the banners!
Glory to you! Glory to you!

END OF ACT II

ACT III - Scene 1

*The garden of Turandot's palace. It is night.***Gli araldi**

Così comanda Turandot:

“Questa notte nessun dorma in Pekino!”

The Heralds

Thus Turandot has commanded:

“On this night no one sleeps in Peking!”

La folla

Nessun dorma! Nessun dorma!

The Crowd

No one sleeps! No one sleeps!

Gli araldi“Pena la morte, il nome dell'ignoto
sia rivelato prima del mattino!”**The Heralds**“On the pain of death, the stranger's
name must be revealed by morning!”**La folla**

Pena la morte! Pena la morte!

The Crowd

The pain of death! The pain of death!

Andante sostenuto**CALAF****Calaf**

Nessun dorma! Nessun dorma!

Tu pure, o Principessa,

nella tua fredda stanza guardi le stelle
che tremano d'amore e di speranza.**Calaf**

No one may sleep! No one may sleep!

You, chaste Princess,

from your cold room, look at the stars
that tremble with love and hope.Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me,
il nome mio nessun saprà!No, no, sulla tua bocca lo dirò,
quando la luce splenderà.Ed il mio bacio scioglierà
il silenzio che ti fa mia.But my mystery is locked within me,
and no one will learn my name!No, no, your mouth will say it,
when the light shines.And my kiss will dissolve that silence
that has made you mine.**Le donne**

Il nome suo nessun saprà.

E noi dovrem, ahimè, morir, morir!

The Women

No one will know his name.

And alas, we must die!

Calaf

Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle!
All'alba vincerò!
Vincerò!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Tu che guardi le stelle,
abbassa gli occhi.
La nostra vita è in tuo potere!

Ping

Uddisti il bando?
Per le vie di Pekino ad ogni porta batte
la morte e grida: il nome!

Pong, Pang

Il nome!

Ping, Pong, Pang

O sangue!

Calaf

Che volete da me?

Ping, Pong, Pang

Di' tu che vuoi? È l'amore che cerchi?
Ebbene, prendi!
Guarda, son belle, son belle fra lucenti
veli.

Pong, Pang

Corpi flessuosi.

Ping

Tutte ebbrezze e promesse d'amplessi
prodigiosi!

Calaf

No! No!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Che vuoi? Ricchezza?
Tutti i tesori a te!
Rompon la notte nera queste fulgide
gemme!

Calaf

Vanish, oh night! Trembling stars!
At sunrise I will be victorious!
I will be victorious!

Ping, Pong, Pang

You who look to the stars,
lower your eyes.
We have power over your life!

Ping

Did you hear the announcement?
Throughout Peking, every door is struck
with death and shouts: his name!

Pong, Pang

His name!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Oh blood!

Calaf

What do you want with me?

Ping, Pong, Pang

What do you want? You seek love?
Well, take it!
Look, they are beautiful, beautiful
between the sparkling veils.

Pong, Pang

Fleshy bodies.

Ping

All intoxicated and with promises of
wonderful embraces!

Calaf

No! No!

Ping, Pong, Pang

What do you want? Riches?
All treasures are for you!
The dark night overflows with these
resplendent gems!

Fuochi azzurri! Verdi splendori!
 Pallidi giacinti! Le vampe rosse dei rubini!
 Sono gocciole d'astri!
 Prendi! È tutto tuo!

Blue fires! Green splendors!
 Pallid hyacinths! The fiery red of rubies!
 They are the teardrops of the stars!
 Take them! It is all for you!

Calaf

No! Nessuna ricchezza! No!

Calaf

No! No riches! No!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Vuoi la gloria?
 Noi ti farem fuggir e andrai lontano
 con le stelle verso imperi favolosi!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Do you want glory?
 We can make you flee and go far with the
 stars toward the mythical empire!

La folla

Fuggi!

The Crowd

Flee!

Le donne

Va' lontano, va' lontano!

The Women

Go far away!

La folla

Fuggi! Va' lontano, e noi ci salviam!

The Crowd

Flee! Go far away, and we will be saved!

Calaf

Alba, vieni! Quest'incubo dissolvi!

Calaf

Sunrise, come! Let this nightmare end!

Ping

Straniero, tu non sai di che cosa è capace
 la Crudele.

Ping

Stranger, you don't know how much
 cruelty she is capable of.

Ping, Pong, Pang

Tu non sai quali orrendi martiri la China
 inventi.
 Se tu rimani e non ci sveli il nome siamo
 perduti.
 L'insonne non perdona!

Ping, Pong, Pang

You don't know how many martyrs China
 has created.
 We are lost if you remain and don't
 reveal your name.
 The sleepless offer no pardon!

La folla

Sarà martirio orrendo!
 I ferri aguzzi! L'irte ruote!
 Il caldo morso delle tenaglie!
 La morte a sorso a sorso!
 Non farci morire!

The Crowd

It will be a horrendous martyrdom!
 Sharp steel! Pointed wheels!
 The hot sting of pincers!
 Sipping death!
 Don't force us to die!

Calaf

Inutili preghiere! Inutili minacce!
 Crollasse il mondo, voglio Turandot!

Calaf

Useless prayers! Useless menaces!
 Let the world collapse, I want Turandot!

La folla

Non l'avrai!
 No, non l'avrai!
 Morrai prima di noi! Tu maledetto!
 Morrai prima di noi,
 tu spietato, crudele!
 Parla, il nome, il nome, il nome!

The Crowd

You won't possess her!
 No, you won't possess her!
 You will die before us! You are cursed!
 You will die before us,
 you are pitiless, cruel!
 Speak, the name, the name!

A group of soldiers drag in Timur and Liù.

Gli sgherri

Eccolo il nome! È qua! È qua!

Soldiers

Here you'll learn the name! It is here.

Calaf

Costor non sanno!
 Ignorano il mio nome!

Calaf

They know nothing!
 They're ignorant of my name!

Ping

Sono il vecchio e la giovane
 che ier sera parlavano con te!

Ping

They are the old man and the young girl
 who spoke with you last evening!

Calaf

Lasciateli!

Calaf

Let them go!

Ping

Conoscono il segreto!
 Dove li avete colti?

Ping

They know the secret!
 Where did you find them?

Gli sgherri

Mentre erravano là, presso le mura!

Soldiers

While they were over there, near the
 wall!

Turandot appears.

Ping, Pong, Pang, la folla

Principessa!

Ping, Pong, Pang, the Crowd

Princess!

Ping

Principessa divina! Il nome dell'ignoto
 sta chiuso in queste bocche silenti.
 E abbiamo ferri per schiodar quei denti e
 uncini abbiamo per strappar quel nome!

Ping (pointing to Timur and Liù)

Divine Princess! The name of the
 stranger remains in these silent mouths.
 And we have tools and hooks to remove
 their nails and teeth to tear the name from
 them!

Turandot

Sei pallido, straniero!

Turandot (addressing Calaf)

You are pale, stranger!

Calaf

Il tuo sgomento vede il pallor dell'alba
sul mio volto.

Costor non mi conoscono!

Calaf

Your fear sees the pallor of sunrise on
my face.

They do not know me!

Turandot

Vedremo! Su, parla, vecchio!
Io voglio ch'egli parli! Il nome!

Turandot

We shall see! Rise, speak, old man!
I want you to speak! His name!

Liù

Il nome che cercate io sola so!

Liù

I alone know the name you seek!

La folla

La vita è salva, l'incubo svani!

The Crowd

Life is saved, the nightmare ended!

Calaf

Tu non sai nulla, schiava!

Calaf

You know nothing, slave!

Liù

Io so il suo nome.
M'è suprema delizia tenerlo segreto
e possederlo io sola!

Liù

I know his name.
But it is a supreme joy to be the only one
to possess that secret!

La folla

Sia legata! Sia straziata!
Perché parli! Perché muoia!

The Crowd

Tie her! Torture her!
Why not speak! Why should you die!

Calaf

Sconterete le sue lagrime!
Sconterete i suoi tormenti!

Calaf

Atone for your tears!
Atone for your torment!

Turandot

Tenetelo!

Turandot

Hold him!

Liù

Signor, non parlerò!

Liù

My lord, I won't speak!

Ping

Quel nome!

Ping

His name!

Liù

No!

Liù

No!

Ping

Quel nome!

Ping

His name!

Liù

La tua serva chiede perdono,
ma obbedir non può! Ah!

Timur

Perché gridi!

Calaf

Lasciatela!

Liù

No, non grido più! Non mi fan male!
No, nessun mi tocca!
Stringete, ma chiudetemi la bocca
ch'ei non mi senta! Non resisto più!

La folla

Parla! Il suo nome!

Turandot

Sia lasciata! Parla!

Liù

Piuttosto morirò!

Turandot

Chi pose tanta forza nel tuo cuore?

Liù

Principessa, l'amore!

Turandot

L'amore?

Liù

Tanto amore segreto e inconfessato,
grande così che questi strazi son
dolcezza per me
perché ne faccio dono al mio Signore.
Perché, tacendo, io gli do, gli do il tuo
amore.

Te gli do, Principessa, e perdo tutto!

Persino l'impossibile speranza!
Legatemi! Straziatemi!

Liù

Your slave asks pardon, but they cannot
make me obey! Ah!

Timur

Why do you shout!

Calaf

Let her free!

Liù

No, don't shout! They can't harm me!
No, no one touch me!
Crush me, but I close my mouth so I
won't feel! I can't resist any more!

The Crowd

Speak! His name!

Turandot

Free her! Speak!

Liù

Soon I will die!

Turandot

What powerful force lies in your heart?

Liù

Princess, it is love!

Turandot

Love?

Liù

So much secret and unavowed love,
so great that this torment is sweetness for
me
because I give it as a gift to my lord.
Because, being silent, I give him his love.

I give it to you, Princess, and I lose
everything!

Even the impossible hope!
Tie me! Torture me!

Tormenti e spasimi date a me, Those tortures and pains,
ah, come offerta suprema del mio amore! are the offerings of my supreme love!

Turandot

Strappatele il segreto!

Turandot

Tear the secret from her!

Ping

Chiamate Pu-Tin-Pao!

Ping

Call Pu-Tin-Pao!

Calaf

No! Maledetto! Maledetto!

Calaf

No! Curse you!

La folla

Il boia! Il boia! Il boia!

The Crowd

The executioner!

Ping

Sia messa alla tortura!

Ping

Start the torture!

La folla

Alla tortura! Sì, il boia!
Parli! Alla tortura!

The Crowd

The torture! Yes, the executioner!
Speak! Use torture!

Liù

Più non resisto! Ho paura di me!
Lasciatemi passare!

Liù

I can't resist any more! I have fear!
Let me pass!

La folla

Parla! Parla!

The Crowd

Speak! Speak!

Liù

Sì, Principessa, ascoltami!

Liù

Yes, Princess, listen to me!

Andantino mosso

LIÙ



Tu che di gel sei cinta, You, wrapped in ice, flames have
da tanta fiamma vinta, l'amerai anche tu! defeated you, and you will also love!
Prima di questa aurora io chiudo stanca Before sunrise I close my tired eyes,
gli occhi, perché egli vinca ancora. because he has been victorious.
Ei vinca ancor! And love will be the victor!
Per non vederlo più! And I will never see him again!

Liù dies.

La folla

Ah! Parla! Parla! Il nome! Il nome!

Calaf

Ah! Tu sei morta, o mia piccola Liù!

Timur

Liù! Sorgi!

È l'ora chiara d'ogni risveglio.

È l'alba, o mia Liù.

Apri gli occhi, colomba!

Ping

Alzati, vecchio! È morta!

Timur

Ah! Delitto orrendo! L'espieremo tutti!

L'anima offesa si vendicherà!

La folla

Ombra dolente, non farci del male!

Ombra sdegnosa, perdona, perdona!

Timur

Liù, bontà! Liù, dolcezza!

Ah, camminiamo insieme un'altra volta
così, con la tua mano nella mia mano.

Dove vai ben so.

Ed io ti seguirò per posare a te vicino
nella notte che non ha mattino!

Ping, Pong, Pang

Svegliato s'è qui dentro il vecchio
ordigno, il cuore, e mi tormenta!

Ah, per la prima volta

al vedere la morte non sogghigno!

Quella fanciulla spenta pesa
sopra il mio cuor come un macigno!

La folla

Liù, bontà, perdona, perdona!

Liù, bontà, Liù, dolcezza, dormi!

Oblia! Liù! Poesia!

The Crowd

Ah! Speak! Speak! His name! His name!

Calaf

Ah! You are dead, my little Liù!

Timur

Liù! Rise!

It is the hour of awakening.

It is sunrise, my Liù.

Open your eyes, my dove!

Ping

Get up, old man! She is dead!

Timur

Ah! Horrible crime! We condemn you all!

The offended soul will be avenged!

The Crowd

Sorrowful spirit, don't condemn us!

Indignant spirit, pardon!

Timur

Liù, kind one! Liù, gentle one!

Ah, we'll travel together another time
with your hand in mine.

I know well where you go.

And I will follow you to be near you in
that darkness that has no morning!

Ping, Pong, Pang

One is aroused by his loss,

and it agonizes and torments me!

Ah, for the first time I don't scorn the
sight of death!

That young girl's death weighs on my
heart like a heavy stone!

The Crowd

Liù, kind one, pardon, pardon!

Liù, kind one, Liù, gentle one, sleep!

Oblivion! Liù! Poetry!

ACT III - Scene 2

Calaf

Principessa di morte! Principessa di gelo!
Dal tuo tragico cielo scendi giù sulla terra!
Ah, solleva quel velo!
Guarda, crudele,
quel purissimo sangue che fu sparso per te!

Calaf

Princess of death! Princess of ice!
Descend to earth from your tragic
heaven!
Ah, raise your veil!
Look, cruel one,
at that pure blood that was shed for you!

Turandot

Che mai osi, straniero!
Cosa umana non sono!
Son la figlia del Cielo
libera e pura.
Tu stringi il mio freddo velo ma l'anima
è lassù!

Turandot

What do you dare, stranger!
I am not a human being!
I am the daughter of Heaven,
free and chaste.
You may pierce my cold exterior, but
never my soul!

Calaf

La tua anima è in alto, ma il tuo corpo è
vicino!
Con le mani brucianti stringerò
i lembi d'oro del tuo manto stellato.
La mia bocca fremente premerò su di te.

Calaf

Your soul is in the Heavens, but your
body is near!
I will hold the golden edges of your
sparkling dress with my burning hands.
I will place my throbbing mouth on yours.

Turandot

Non profanarmi!

Turandot

Don't malign me!

Calaf

Ah, sentirti viva!

Calaf

Ah, feel the essence of life!

Turandot

Indietro!

Turandot

Go away from me!

Calaf

Il gelo tuo è menzogna!

Calaf

Your ice is a lie!

Turandot

No, mai nessun m'avrà!

Turandot

No, no one will ever possess me!

Calaf

Ti voglio mia!

Calaf

I love you!

Turandot

Dell'ava lo strazio non si rinnoverà!
Ah, no!

Turandot

Don't renew the suffering of my ancestress!
Ah, no!

Calaf

Ti voglio mia!

Turandot

Non mi toccar, straniero!

È un sacrilegio!

Calaf

No, il bacio tuo mi dà l'eternità!

Turandot

Sacrilegio!

Che è mai di me? Perduta!

Calaf

Mio fiore! Oh, mio fiore mattutino!

Mio fiore, ti respiro!

I seni tuoi di giglio,

ah, treman sul mio petto!

Già ti sento mancare di dolcezza,
tutta bianca nel tuo manto d'argento.

Turandot

Come vincesti?

Calaf

Piangi?

Turandot

È l'alba! Turandot tramonta!

I ragazzi

L'alba! Luce e vita! Tutto è puro!

Gli uomini

L'alba! Luce e vita! Principessa,
che dolcezza nel tuo pianto!

Calaf

È l'alba! E amore nasce col sole!

I ragazzi

Tutto è santo! Che dolcezza nel tuo
pianto!

Calaf

I love you!

Turandot

Don't touch me, stranger!

It is a sacrilege!

Calaf

No, your kiss will give me eternity!

Turandot (*Calaf kisses Turandot*)

Sacrilege!

What did you do to me? I am lost!

Calaf

My flower! Oh, my morning flower!

My flower, I breathe your essence!

Your breast is like lilies,

ah, my chest trembles!

Already I feel you wanting gentleness,
all white in your silver dress.

Turandot

How did you defeat me?

Calaf

Are you crying?

Turandot

It is sunrise! Turandot's sunset!

Boys

Sunrise! Light and life! All is chaste!

The Men

Sunrise! Light and life! Princess,
what gentleness in your weeping!

Calaf

It is sunrise! Love is born with the sun!

Boys

All is sacred! What gentleness in your
weeping!

Turandot

Che nessun mi veda, la mia gloria è finita!

Turandot

May no one see me, my glory is finished!

Calaf

No! Essa incomincia!

Calaf

No! It just begins!

Turandot

Onta su me!

Turandot

I have shame!

Calaf

Miracolo! La tua gloria risplende
nell'incanto del primo bacio, del primo
pianto!

Calaf

It is a miracle! Your glory sparkles in the
enchantment of the first kiss, the first
kiss!

Turandot

Del primo pianto.
Ah! Del primo pianto!
Sì, straniero, quando sei giunto,
con angoscia ho sentito il brivido fatale
di questo mal supremo.

Turandot

From the first tear.
Ah! From the first tear!
Yes, stranger, when you arrived, I felt
anguish and the fatal quiver
of this supreme evil.

Quanti ho visto morire per me!
E li ho spregiati. Ma ho temuto te!
C'era negli occhi tuoi la luce degli eroi.
C'era negli occhi tuoi la superba certezza.
E t'ho odiato per quella!
E per quella t'ho amato!

I saw how much you wanted to die for me!
And I despised you. But I feared you!
In your eyes I saw the light of a hero.
In your eyes a superb assurance.
And I hated you for that!
And I loved you for that!

Tormentata e divisa fra due terrori
uguali:
vincerti o esser vinta.
E vinta sono! Ah! Vinta, più che dall'alta
prova, da questa febbre che mi vien da te!

I was tormented and divided by two equal
terrors: to defeat you or be defeated.
And I am defeated!
Ah! Defeated by the burning passion that
you instill in me.

Calaf

Sei mia! Mia!

Calaf

You are mine! Mine!

Turandot

Questo chiedevi. Ora lo sai.
Più grande vittoria non voler!
Parti, straniero, col tuo mister!

Turandot

You yearned for this. Now you know.
Don't wish for a greater victory!
Leave, stranger, leave with your mystery!

Calaf

Il mio mistero? Non ne ho più!
Sei mia!
Tu che tremi se ti sfioro!

Calaf

My mystery? I no longer have it!
You are mine!
You trembled when I barely touched you!

Tu che sbianchi se ti bacio puoi perdermi
se vuoi!

Il mio nome e la vita insiem ti dono!
Io sono Calaf, figlio di Timur!

Turandot

So il tuo nome!
So il tuo nome!

Calaf

La mia gloria è il tuo amplesso!

Turandot

Odi! Squillan le trombe!

Calaf

La mia vita è il tuo bacio!

Turandot

Ecco! È l'ora!
È l'ora della prova!

Calaf

Non la temo!

Turandot

Ah! Calaf, davanti al popolo con me!

Calaf

Hai vinto tu!

La folla

Diecimila anni al nostro Imperatore!

Turandot

Padre augusto, conosco il nome dello
straniero!
Il suo nome... è Amor!

La folla

Amor! O sole! Vita! Eternità!
Luce del mondo e amore!
Ride e canta nel sole l'infinità nostra
felicità!
Gloria a te! Gloria a te! Gloria!

You became pale when I kissed you and
you now wish me to leave!

My name and life are one, I give both to you!
I am Calaf, son of Timur!

Turandot

I now know your name!
I now know your name!

Calaf

My glory is your embrace!

Turandot

Listen! The trumpets blare!

Calaf

My life is your kiss!

Turandot

Now! It is the hour!
It is the hour of proof!

Calaf

I do not fear!

Turandot

Calaf, come with me before the people!

Calaf

You are the victor!

The Crowd

Ten thousand years to our Emperor!

Turandot

August father, I know the name of the
stranger!
His name....is Love!

The Crowd

Love! Oh sun! Life! Eternity!
The light of the world is love!
The sun smiles and sings of our infinite
happiness!
Glory to you! Glory to you! Glory!

END OF OPERA

Discography

- 1938 Cigna (Turandot); Merli (Calaf); Olivero (Liù); Neroni (Timur);
Poli (Ping); del Signore (Pang); Zagonara (Pong);
Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra;
Ghione (Conductor)
- 1953 Grob-Prandl (Turandot); Zola (Calaf); Ongaro (Liù); Scott (Timur);
Rossi (Ping); M. Caruso (Pang); Mercuriali (Pong);
La Fenice Chorus and Orchestra;
Capuana (Conductor)
- 1955 Borkh (Turandot); del Monaco (Calaf); Tebaldi (Liù); Zaccaria (Timur);
Corena (Ping); Ercolani (Pang); Carlin (Pong);
Academy of Santa Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra;
Erede (Conductor)
- 1957 Callas (Turandot); Fernandi (Calaf); Schwarzkopf (Liù); Zaccaria (Timur);
Boriello (Ping); Ercolani (Pang); de Palma (Pong);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra;
Serafin (Conductor)
- 1958 Udovick (Turandot); Corelli (Calaf); Mattioli (Liù);
RAI Orchestra and Chorus;
Previtali (Conductor)
- 1960 Nilsson (Turandot); Björling (Calaf); Tebaldi (Liù); Tozzi (Timur);
Sereni (Ping); de Palma (Pang); Frascati (Pong);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Leinsdorf (Conductor)
- 1965 Nilsson (Turandot); Corelli (Calaf); Scotto (Liù); Giajotti (Timur);
Mazzini (Ping); Ricciardi (Pang); de Palma (Pong);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Molinari-Pradelli (Conductor)
- 1973 Sutherland (Turandot); Pavarotti (Calaf); Caballé (Liù); Ghiaurov (Timur);
Krause (Ping); Poli (Pang); de Palma (Pong);
Alldis Choir/London Philharmonic Orchestra;
Mehta (Conductor)
- 1977 Caballé (Turandot); Carreras (Calaf); Freni (Liù); Plishka (Timur);
Sardinero (Ping); Sassinelli (Pang); Corazza (Pong);
Rhine Opera Chorus/Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra;
Lombard (Conductor)

- 1981 Ricciarelli (Turandot); Domingo (Calaf); Hendricks (Liù); Raimondi (Timur);
Hornik (Ping); de Palma (Emperor);
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Vienna State Opera Chorus;
von Karajan (Conductor)
- 1983 Marton (Turandot); Carreras (Calaf); Ricciarelli (Liù);
Bogart (Timur); Kerns (Ping); Kmentt (Emperor);
Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Maazel (Conductor)
- 1987 Narton (Turandot); Domingo (Calaf); Mitchell (Liù);
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus;
Levine (Conductor)
- 1994 Marton (Turandot); Sylvester (Calaf); Mazzaria (Liù);
San Francisco Opera (Luciano Berio conclusion of Act III);
Ronald Runnicles (Conductor)
- 1998 “Turandot at the Forbidden City of Beijing”
Casolla (Turandot); Larin (Calaf); Marin (Liù);
Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Orchestra and Chorus;
Zubin Mehta (Conductor)
- 2002 Gabriele Schnaut (Turandot); Botha (Calaf); Gallardo Domas (Liù)
Vienna State Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Valery Gergiev (Conductor)
- 2002 Eaglen (Turandot) O’Neill (Calaf); Plazas (Liù);
Philharmonia Orchestra;
Parry (Conductor)

Videography

RAI (1958)

Udovic (Turandot); Corelli (Calaf);
RAI Orchestra and Chorus
Previtali (Conductor)

CASTLE VHS (1983)

Dimitrova (Turandot); Martinucci (Calaf); Gasdia (Liù); Vincò (Timur);
Verona Arena Chorus and Orchestra;
Maurizio Arena (Conductor);
Giuliano Montaldo (Director);
Brian Large (Video Director)

DG VHS (1988)

Marton (Turandot); Domingo (Calaf); Mitchell (Liù);
Plishka (Timur);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
James Levine (Conductor);
Franco Zeffirelli (Director);
Kirk Browning (Video Director)

IMAGE (1994)

Eva Marton (Turandot); Michael Sylvester (Calaf); Lucia Mazzaria (Liù);
San Francisco Opera
Donald Runnicles (Conductor)

BMG/RCA (1998)

“Turandot at the Forbidden City of Beijing”
Casolla (Turandot); Farin (Calaf); Frittoli (Liù);
Maggio Musicale Fiorentino;
Zubin Mehta (Conductor)
Ruth and Hugo R  th (Directors)

NAXOS (2002)

Schnaut (Turandot); Botha (Calaf); Gallardo-Domas (Liù);
Luciano Berio finale of Act III;
Vienna State Opera;
Valery Gergiev (Conductor);
Brian Large (Video Director)

DICTIONARY OF OPERA AND MUSICAL TERMS

Accelerando - Play the music faster, but gradually.

Adagio - At a slow or gliding tempo, not as slow as largo, but not as fast as andante.

Agitato - Restless or agitated.

Allegro - At a brisk or lively tempo, faster than andante but not as fast as presto.

Andante - A moderately slow, easy-going tempo.

Appoggiatura - An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.

Arabesque - Flourishes or fancy patterns usually applying to vocal virtuosity.

Aria - A solo song usually structured in a formal pattern. Arias generally convey reflective and introspective thoughts rather than descriptive action.

Arietta - A shortened form of aria.

Arioso - A musical passage or composition having a mixture of free recitative and metrical song.

Arpeggio - Producing the tones of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.

Atonal - Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.

Ballad opera - Eighteenth-century English opera consisting of spoken dialogue and music derived from popular ballad and folksong sources. The most famous is *The Beggar's Opera*, which is a satire of the Italian opera seria.

Bar - A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into measures.

Baritone - A male singing voice ranging between bass and tenor.

Baroque - A style of artistic expression prevalent in the 17th century that is marked by the use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and florid decoration. The Baroque period extends from approximately 1600 to 1750 and includes the works of the original creators of modern opera, the Camerata, as well as the later works by Bach and Handel.

Bass - The lowest male voice, usually divided into categories such as:

Basso buffo - A bass voice that specializes in comic roles: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Basso cantante - A bass voice that demonstrates melodic singing quality: King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Basso profondo - the deepest, most profound, or most dramatic of bass voices: Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Bel canto - Literally, "beautiful singing." It originated in Italian opera of the 17th and 18th centuries and stressed beautiful tones produced with ease, clarity, purity, and evenness, together with an agile vocal technique and virtuosity. Bel canto flourished in the first half of the 19th century in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Cabaletta - A lively, concluding portion of an aria or duet. The term is derived from the Italian word "cavallo," or horse: it metaphorically describes a horse galloping to the finish line.

Cadenza - A flourish or brilliant part of an aria (or concerto) commonly inserted just before a finale. It is usually performed without accompaniment.

Camerata - A gathering of Florentine writers and musicians between 1590 and 1600 who attempted to recreate what they believed was the ancient Greek theatrical synthesis of drama, music, and stage spectacle; their experimentation led to the creation of the early structural forms of modern opera.

Cantabile - An indication that the singer should sing sweetly.

Cantata - A choral piece generally containing Scriptural narrative texts: the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach.

Cantilena - Literally, "little song." A lyrical melody meant to be played or sung "cantabile," or with sweetness and expression.

Canzone - A short, lyrical operatic song usually containing no narrative association with the drama but rather simply reflecting the character's state of mind: Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Castrato - A young male singer who was surgically castrated to retain his treble voice.

Cavatina - A short aria popular in 18th and 19th century opera that usually heralded the entrance of a principal singer.

Classical Period - A period roughly between the Baroque and Romantic periods, the late 18th through the early 19th centuries. Stylistically, the music of the period stresses clarity, precision, and rigid structural forms.

Coda - A trailer added on by the composer after the music's natural conclusion. The coda serves as a formal closing to the piece.

Coloratura - Literally, "colored": it refers to a soprano singing in the bel canto tradition. It is a singing technique that requires great agility, virtuosity, embellishments and ornamentation: The Queen of the Night's aria, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren," from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Commedia dell'arte - A popular form of dramatic presentation originating in Renaissance Italy in which highly stylized characters were involved in comic plots involving mistaken identities and misunderstandings. Two of the standard characters were Harlequin and Colombine: The "play within a play" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Comprimario - A singer who performs secondary character roles such as confidantes, servants, and messengers.

Continuo, Basso continuo - A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of an independent succession of bass notes that indicate the required chords and their appropriate harmonies. Also called *figured bass*, *thoroughbass*.

Contralto - The lowest female voice, derived from "contra" against, and "alto" voice; a voice between the tenor and mezzo-soprano.

Countertenor - A high male voice generally singing within the female high soprano ranges.

Counterpoint - The combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character. The most sophisticated form of counterpoint is the fugue form, in which from two to six melodies can be used; the voices are combined, each providing a variation on the basic theme but each retaining its relation to the whole.

Crescendo - A gradual increase in the volume of a musical passage.

Da capo - Literally, "from the top"; repeat. Early 17th-century da capo arias were in the form of A B A, with the second A section repeating the first, but with ornamentation.

Deus ex machina - Literally "god out of a machine." A dramatic technique in which a person or thing appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly; it provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic difficulty.

Diatonic - A major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.

Diminuendo - Gradually becoming softer; the opposite of crescendo.

Dissonance - A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.

Diva - Literally, “goddess”; generally the term refers to a leading female opera star who either possesses, or pretends to possess, great rank.

Dominant - The fifth tone of the diatonic scale; in the key of C, the dominant is G.

Dramatic soprano or tenor - A voice that is powerful, possesses endurance, and is generally projected in a declamatory style.

Dramma giocoso - Literally, “amusing (or humorous) drama.” An opera whose story combines both serious and comic elements: Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Falsetto - A lighter or “false” voice; an artificially-produced high singing voice that extends above the range of the full voice.

Fioritura - It., “flowering”; a flowering ornamentation or embellishment of the vocal line within an aria.

Forte, fortissimo - Forte (*f*) means loud; mezzo forte (*mf*) is fairly loud; fortissimo (*ff*) is even louder; additional *fff*’s indicate greater degrees of loudness.

Glissando - Literally, “gliding.” A rapid sliding up or down the scale.

Grand opera - An opera in which there is no spoken dialogue and the entire text is set to music, frequently treating serious and tragic subjects. Grand opera flourished in France in the 19th century (Meyerbeer); the genre is epic in scale and combines spectacle, large choruses, scenery, and huge orchestras.

Heldentenor - A tenor with a powerful dramatic voice who possesses brilliant top notes and vocal stamina. Heldentenors are well suited to heroic (Wagnerian) roles: Lauritz Melchior in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

Imbroglia - Literally, “intrigue”; an operatic scene portraying chaos and confusion, with appropriate diverse melodies and rhythms.

Largo or larghetto - Largo indicates a very slow tempo, broad and with dignity. Larghetto is at a slightly faster tempo than largo.

Legato - Literally, “tied” or “bound”; successive tones that are connected smoothly. The opposite of legato is staccato (short and plucked tones.)

Leitmotif - Literally, “leading motive.” A musical fragment characterizing a person, thing, feeling, or idea that provides associations when it recurs.

Libretto - Literally, “little book”; the text of an opera.

Lied - A German song; the plural is “lieder.” Originally, a German art song of the late 18th century.

Lyric - A voice that is light and delicate.

Maestro - From the Italian “master”; a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.

Melodrama - Words spoken over music. Melodrama appears in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and flourished during the late 19th century in the operas of Massenet (*Manon* and *Werther*).

Mezza voce - Literally, “medium voice”; singing with medium or half volume. It is sometimes intended as a vocal means to intensify emotion.

Mezzo-soprano - A woman’s voice with a range between soprano and contralto.

Obbligato - An accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by an important, single instrument.

Octave - A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees; from C to C is an octave.

Opera - Literally, “work”; a dramatic or comic play in which music is the primary vehicle that conveys its story.

Opera buffa - Italian comic opera that flourished during the bel canto era. Highlighting the opera buffa genre were buffo characters who were usually basses singing patter songs: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*; Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*.

Opéra comique - A French opera characterized by spoken dialogue interspersed between the musical numbers, as opposed to grand opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. Opéra comique subjects can be either comic or tragic.

Operetta, or light opera - Operas that contain comic elements and generally a light romantic plot: Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *La Périchole*, and Lehar’s *The Merry Widow*. In operettas, there is usually much spoken dialogue, dancing, practical jokes, and mistaken identities.

Oratorio - A lengthy choral work, usually of a religious nature and consisting chiefly of recitatives, arias, and choruses, but performed without action or scenery: Handel's *Messiah*.

Ornamentation - Extra embellishing notes—appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas—that enhance a melodic line.

Overture - The orchestral introduction to a musical dramatic work that sometimes incorporates musical themes within the work. Overtures are instrumental pieces that are generally performed independently of their respective operas in concert.

Parlando - Literally, “speaking”; the imitation of speech while singing, or singing that is almost speaking over the music. Parlando sections are usually short and have minimal orchestral accompaniment.

Patter song - A song with words that are rapidly and quickly delivered. Figaro's “Largo al factotum” in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a patter song.

Pentatonic - A five-note scale. Pentatonic music is most prevalent in Far Eastern countries.

Piano - A performance indication for soft volume.

Pitch - The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.

Pizzicato - An indication that notes are to be played by plucking the strings instead of stroking the string with the bow.

Polyphony - Literally, “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed; counterpoint.

Polytonal - Several tonal schemes used simultaneously.

Portamento - A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another through all the intervening pitches.

Prelude - An orchestral introduction to an act or a whole opera that precedes the opening scene.

Presto, prestissimo - Vigorous, and with the utmost speed.

Prima donna - Literally, “first lady.” The female star or principal singer in an opera cast or opera company.

Prologue - A piece sung before the curtain goes up on the opera proper: Tonio's Prologue in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Quaver - An eighth note.

Range - The span of tonal pitch of a particular voice: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Recitative - A formal device used to advance the plot. It is usually sung in a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech; it conveys the dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios. *Secco*, or dry, recitative is accompanied by harpsichord and sometimes with other continuo instruments; *accompagnato* indicates that the recitative is accompanied by the orchestra.

Ritornello - A refrain, or short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.

Romanza - A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage, or anger.

Romantic Period - The Romantic period is usually considered to be between the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Romanticists found inspiration in nature and man. Von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) are considered the first German Romantic operas; many of Verdi's operas as well as the early operas of Wagner are also considered Romantic operas.

Roulade - A florid, embellished melody sung to one syllable.

Rubato - An expressive technique, literally meaning "robbed"; it is a fluctuation of tempo within a musical phrase, often against a rhythmically steady accompaniment.

Secco - "Dry"; the type of accompaniment for recitative played by the harpsichord and sometimes continuo instruments.

Semitone - A half step, the smallest distance between two notes. In the key of C, the half steps are from E to F and from B to C.

Serial music - Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.

Sforzando - Sudden loudness and force; it must stand out from the texture and be emphasized by an accent.

Singspiel - Literally, "song drama." Early German style of opera employing spoken dialogue between songs: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano - The highest range of the female voice ranging from lyric (light and graceful quality) to dramatic (fuller and heavier in tone).

Sotto voce - Literally, “below the voice”; sung softly between a whisper and a quiet conversational tone.

Soubrette - A soprano who sings supporting roles in comic opera: Adele in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*; Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Spinto - From the Italian “spingere” (to push); a singer with lyric vocal qualities who “pushes” the voice to achieve heavier dramatic qualities.

Sprechstimme - Literally, “speaking voice.” The singer half sings a note and half speaks; the declamation sounds like speaking but the duration of pitch makes it seem almost like singing.

Staccato - Short, clipped, detached, rapid articulation; the opposite of legato.

Stretto - Literally, “narrow.” A concluding passage performed in a quick tempo to create a musical climax.

Strophe - Strophe is a rhythmic system of repeating lines. A musical setting of a strophic text is characterized by the repetition of the same music for all strophes.

Syncopation - A shifting of the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.

Supernumerary - A “super”; a performer with a non-singing and non-speaking role: “Spear-carrier.”

Symphonic poem - A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually narrative or descriptive in character: Franz Liszt’s *Les Preludes*; Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and *Ein Heldenleben*.

Tempo - The speed at which music is performed.

Tenor - The highest natural male voice.

Tessitura - The usual range of a voice part.

Tonality - The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).

Tone poem - An orchestral piece with a program.

Tonic - The principal tone of the key in which a piece is written. C is the tonic of C major.

Trill - Two adjacent notes rapidly and repeatedly alternated.

Tutti - All together.

Twelve-tone - The twelve chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting, with some permitted permutations and derivations, the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note is repeated.

Verismo - Literally “truth”; the artistic use of contemporary everyday material in preference to the heroic or legendary in opera. A movement particularly in Italian opera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Vibrato - A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone to enrich and intensify sound, and add warmth and expressiveness through slight and rapid variations in pitch.

