

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Musical Collision Course

MUSICAL ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION & MEANING/ASSOCIATION
The Star-Spangled Banner	
Imitation of the sound of traditional Japanese instruments	
Japanese national anthem	
Chinese folk song	
Japanese chant melody (based on the pentatonic scale)	
Pentatonic harmonies (two examples)	
Japanese percussion	

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“Dovunque al mondo”

PINKERTON: Dovunque al mondo

lo Yankee vagabondo

si gode e traffica

sprezzando i rischi.

Affonda l'ancora alla ventura ...

(interrupts himself to offer Sharpless a drink)

Milk-Punch, o Whiskey?

(starting again) Affonda l'ancora alla ventura

finchè una raffica scompigli nave e

ormeggi, alberatura.

La vita ei non appaga

se non fa suo tesoro

i fiori d'ogni plaga ...

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo.

PINKERTON: ... d'ogni bella gli amor.

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo

che fa la vita vaga

ma che intristisce il cuor.

PINKERTON: Vinto si tuffa e la sorte racciuffa.

Il suo talento fa in ogni dove.

Così mi sposo all'uso giapponese

per novecento novantanove anni.

Salvo a prosciogliermi ogni mese.

SHARPLESS: È un facile vangelo.

PINKERTON: “America forever!”

SHARPLESS: “America forever.”

Wherever the Yankee

vagabond roams,

he throws caution to the wind and

seeks his fortune and pleasure.

He drops his anchor where and when he wants ...

Milk punch or whisky?

He drops his anchor where and when he wants

until a storm wind blows and rocks his boat;

then he raises sail and casts off again.

Life isn't worth living

unless he can make

all the flowers in the fields ...

That's an easy philosophy.

... his own special treasures.

That's an easy philosophy,

which makes life pleasant

but leaves you with an empty heart.

Always undaunted, his luck will never run out.

He works his magic in every place he goes.

And so I'm marrying in the Japanese manner,

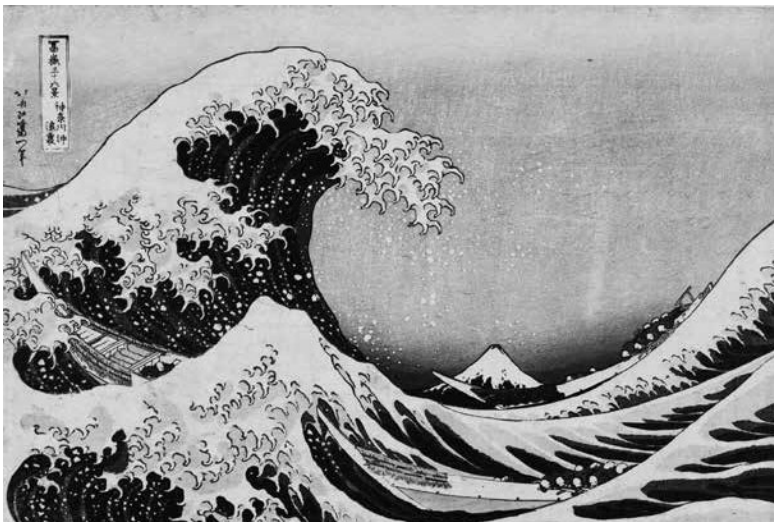
for nine hundred and ninety-nine years,

with the option to renew each month.

That's an easy philosophy.

“America forever!”

“America forever.”



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“Gran ventura”

BUTTERFLY: Gran ventura.

BUTTERFLY’S FRIENDS: Riverenza.

PINKERTON: (*smiling*) È un po’ dura la scalata?

BUTTERFLY: (*calmly*) A una sposa costumata più penosa è l’impazienza.

PINKERTON: (*somewhat derisively*) Molto raro complimento.

BUTTERFLY: (*naively*) Dei più belli ancor ne so.

PINKERTON: (*encouragingly*) Dei gioielli!

BUTTERFLY: (*wishing to show off her collection of compliments*)
Se vi è caro sul momento ...

PINKERTON: Grazie, no.

I’m delighted.

We are honored.

Did you find it difficult to climb the hill?

For a genteel bride, the waiting is much more difficult.

What a beautiful thing to say.

I know even more beautiful phrases.

Such jewels!

If you would like to hear more of them now ...

Thank you, no.

Having already observed the group of girls with curiosity, Sharpless draws near Butterfly, who listens to him attentively.

SHARPLESS: Miss Butterfly. Bel nome, vi sta a meraviglia.
Siete di Nagasaki?

BUTTERFLY: Signor sì. Di famiglia assai prospera un tempo.
(*to her friends*) Verità?

BUTTERFLY’S FRIENDS: (*agreeing eagerly*) Verità!

BUTTERFLY: Nessuno si confessa mai nato in povertà,
e non c’è vagabondo che a sentirlo non sia
di gran prosapia. Eppur conobbi la ricchezza.
Ma il turbine rovescia le querce più robuste
e abbiám fatto la gheschia per sostentarci.
(*to her friends*) Vero?

BUTTERFLY’S FRIENDS: Vero!

BUTTERFLY: Non lo nascondo nè m’adonto.
(*seeing that Sharpless is laughing*) Ridete? Perché? Cose del mondo.

PINKERTON: (*having listened with interest, he turns to Sharpless*)
(Con quel fare di bambola quando parla m’infiama.)

SHARPLESS: (*also interested in Butterfly’s chatter, he continues to question her*) E ci avete sorelle?

BUTTERFLY: No, signore. Ho la mamma.

GORO: (*solemnly*) Una nobile dama.

BUTTERFLY: Ma senza farle torto povera molto anch’essa.

SHARPLESS: E vostro padre?

BUTTERFLY: (*taken by surprise, she replies dryly*) Morto.

Miss Butterfly. A beautiful name, and it suits you so well.
You are from Nagasaki?

Yes, sir. And my family was at one time rather wealthy.
Isn’t that true?

It’s true!

I know that no one will admit to being from a poor family,
and even the humblest vagabond will say he was
born of noble forebears. Still we were wealthy once.
But storm winds can uproot even the strongest oaks.
And so, we had to work as geishas to support ourselves.
Didn’t we?

It’s true!

I do not hide it, and why should I?
You’re laughing? But why? That’s life.

(With her innocent chatter, she sets me on fire.)

And do you have any sisters?

No sir. I just have my mother.

A gracious lady.

But to speak the truth, she’s just as poor as I am.

And your father?

He’s dead.

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“Un bel dì”

BUTTERFLY: Un bel dì, vedremo levarsi
 un fil di fumo sull'estremo confin del mare.
 E poi la nave appare.
 Poi la nave bianca entra nel porto,
 romba il suo saluto. Vedi? È venuto!
 Io non gli scendo incontro, io no.
 Mi metto là sul ciglio del colle e aspetto,
 e aspetto gran tempo e non mi pesa
 la lunga attesa.
 E uscito dalla folla cittadina
 un uom, un picciol punto
 s'avvia per la collina.
 Chi sarà? chi sarà?
 E come sarà giunto
 che dirà? che dirà?
 Chiamerà “Butterfly” dalla lontana.
 Io senza dar risposta
 me ne starò nascosta
 un po' per celia, e un po' per non morire
 al primo incontro, ed egli alquanto in pena
 chiamerà, chiamerà: “Piccina mogliettina,
 olezzo di verbena”
 i nomi che mi dava al suo venire.
(to Suzuki) Tutto questo avverrà, te lo prometto.
 Tienti la tua paura—io con sicura fede l'aspetto.

One fine day, we'll see a thin thread of smoke rising
 on the horizon where the sky meets the ocean.
 And then a ship appears.
 The white ship enters the harbor,
 booming its salute. You see? He's come!
 But I won't go down to meet him—not me.
 I'll go to the top of our little hill and wait,
 and wait for a long time, but I don't mind
 the long interval.
 And emerging from the crowded city,
 a man, a tiny figure,
 sets out for the hilltop.
 Who is it? Who can it be?
 And when at last he arrives,
 what will he say? What?
 From afar, he'll call, “Butterfly.”
 I'll give no answer,
 I'll stay hidden,
 partly to tease him, and partly so that I don't die
 at our reunion! And then he'll call to me, worried,
 he'll call: “My little wife, my darling,
 my sweet girl who smells of flowers”—
 the names he used to call me when we first met.
 All of this will happen, I promise you.
 Have no fear; I wait for him with unshaken faith!

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The opera's final scene

BUTTERFLY: *(softly reading the words inscribed on the knife)*

"Con onor muore chi non può serbar
vita con onore."

"Let those who cannot live an honorable life have an
honorable death instead."

She places the tip of the blade at her throat. Suddenly the door opens, and Suzuki pushes the child into the room. The child runs toward his mother with his hands outstretched. Butterfly lets the knife fall. She rushes toward the child, embraces him, and smothers him with kisses.

BUTTERFLY: Tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu?

(with great feeling, breathing hard)

piccolo Iddio! Amore, amore mio,
fior di giglio e di rosa.

(taking the child's head and pulling it toward herself)

Non saperlo mai per te,

pei tuoi puri occhi,

(in tears) muor Butterfly ...

perché tu possa andar di là dal mare

senza che ti rimorda ai dì maturi,

il materno abbandono.

(with great love)

O a me, sceso dal trono dell'alto Paradiso,

guarda ben fiso, fiso di tua madre la faccia!

che ten resti una traccia, guarda ben!

Amore, addio! addio! piccolo amor!

(her voice breaking) Va, gioca, gioca!

You? You? You? You? You? You? You?

Oh, my dearest darling,
blossom of lily and rose.

I hope you never know this,

but it's for your sake, for your beautiful eyes,

that Butterfly must die ...

So that you can go to the other side of the sea

without thinking, when you've grown up,

that your mother abandoned you.

Oh my angel, who came to me from heaven,

look at your mother's face with care,

so that you'll one day remember a trace of it.

Goodbye, love! Goodbye, my little one!

Go now, go play! Go play!

Butterfly picks up the child and places him on her tatami mat. She hands him an American flag and a little doll, then carefully puts a blindfold over his eyes. Then she picks up the knife again and, with her gaze fixed on her child, places the knife against her own chest. With great conviction, she stabs herself and pulls the knife across her stomach. Collapsing on the floor, she looks up at her child, who is oblivious to what is happening. With a weak smile, she drags herself toward him, hugs him one last time, and then falls dead on the ground.

PINKERTON: *(from outside)* Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

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THE SONGS AND SOUNDS OF MY WORLD

BRAINSTORMING CATEGORIES:	MY IDEAS:
<p>Folk songs and instruments from my cultural background</p> <p><i>(Example: the songs "Danny Boy" or "Santa Lucia," and instruments like the oud, conga drums, flamenco guitar, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Songs I listen to on a regular basis</p> <p><i>(Example: your favorite song from your favorite band)</i></p>	
<p>Sounds that I encounter on a daily basis</p> <p><i>(Example: car horns, subway door closing chimes, alarm clock, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Sounds that I associate with my favorite memories</p> <p><i>(Example: bird calls in the summer, my father playing guitar, my mother singing, etc.)</i></p>	
<p>Instruments that I think capture my personality</p> <p><i>(Example: violin, harp, trumpet, guitar, etc.)</i></p>	

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THE SONGS AND SOUNDS OF MY WORLD

Written Response:

If Puccini had written an opera based on your life, what are some of the songs, instruments, and sounds he would have incorporated into the score to best capture the world and culture you live in? Draw from your list of brainstormed songs and sounds, and incorporate as many musical terms as you can in your description.

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