

THE MET: HD LIVE IN SCHOOLS

2015-16 Educator Guide

PUCCINI

# Turandot



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**DOES LOVE CONQUER ALL? IN PUCCINI'S *TURANDOT*, HIS FINAL OPERA,** the composer transports us to a world where this becomes a question of life and death. Set in a mythical ancient China, the story centers on a beautiful princess, as enthralling as she is bloodthirsty, who has all her suitors killed unless they can solve the three riddles she poses to them. She meets her match in a mysterious and brave prince who not only defeats her but vows to win her heart. Their emotionally charged power struggle is brought to vivid life through Puccini's sumptuously melodic yet strikingly modern music.

The roots of this powerful—and occasionally disturbing—opera lie in the world of fairy tale. Though often used for childhood entertainment, in its historical form the genre can be surprisingly sinister and bloody. The ultimate source of *Turandot's* story is an epic romance from 12th-century Persia. When, 600 years later, the Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi adapted it into a drama, he created a lighter work and provided comic relief with the addition of three characters lifted from the commedia dell'arte tradition. Puccini's opera returns to the darker tone of the original source—his aim was to write “something that will make the world weep.”

Franco Zeffirelli's epic Met production provides an ideal setting for *Turandot's* larger-than-life characters, with a visual splendor to match the lush score, from the stirring crowd scenes of the beginning to the moonlit garden in Act III.

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate the drama and music of *Turandot*, as well as its unique style of storytelling. Students will explore the relationship of the opera to its fairy-tale roots and consider the protracted creative process that resulted in the work we know today—a work that was unfinished at Puccini's death. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide will also align with key strands of the Common Core Standards.



STEMME

HARTIG

BERTI

TSYMBALYUK

## THE WORK: *TURANDOT*

An opera in three acts, sung in Italian

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni

Based on the play by Carlo Gozzi

Third act completed by Franco Alfano

First performed April 25, 1926 at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy

## PRODUCTION

Paolo Carignani, Conductor

Franco Zeffirelli, Production

Franco Zeffirelli, Set Designer

Anna Anni, Dada Saligeri,  
Costume Designers

Gil Wechsler, Lighting Designer

Chiang Ching, Choreographer

## STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

Anita Hartig

LIÙ (soprano)

Marco Berti

CALÀF (tenor)

Alexander Tsymbalyuk

TIMUR (bass)

Dwayne Croft

PING (baritone)

Tony Stevenson

PANG (tenor)

Eduardo Valdes

PONG (tenor)

Nina Stemme

PRINCESS TURANDOT (soprano)

Production a gift of Mrs. Donald D. Harrington

This guide is divided into five sections.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN *TURANDOT*, AND A TIMELINE**

- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**  
Two activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula

- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:**  
Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production

- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:**  
A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities

- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:**  
Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The activities in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Turandot*:

- How the opera draws from and diverges from the fairy-tale world of its source
- The compositional history of the opera and its relation to the work's conclusion
- Musical devices used by the composer to illustrate the text
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Turandot*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

**THE SOURCE: CARLO GOZZI'S *TURANDOT*** The story of *Turandot* is based on an 18th-century dramatic fairy tale by the Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi. First performed in 1762, Gozzi's *Turandot* was a light comedy heavily influenced by the Italian theatrical tradition of *commedia dell'arte*, involving improvisation, juggling, and acrobatics. Gozzi's inspiration was an ancient Persian romance. Puccini was introduced to Gozzi's play as the potential source for an opera—curiously, by way of an Italian re-translation of Friedrich Schiller's German adaptation—by his friend, the playwright Renato Simoni. With Puccini's approval, Simoni began work on a libretto based on *Turandot*, along with the playwright and journalist Giuseppe Adami.

**ACT I** *Outside the Imperial Palace, Peking.* A Mandarin reads an edict to a crowd gathered outside the imperial palace: any prince seeking to marry the princess Turandot must solve three riddles. If he fails, he will die. The most recent suitor, the Prince of Persia, is to be executed at the moon's rising. Among the onlookers are the slave girl Liù, her aged master, and the young Calàf, who recognizes the old man as his long-lost father, Timur, exiled King of Tartary. When Timur reveals that only Liù has remained faithful to him, Calàf asks why. She replies that once, long ago, Calàf smiled at her. The mob cries for blood but greets the rising moon with a sudden fearful silence. When the Prince of Persia is led to his execution, the crowd calls upon the princess to spare him. Turandot appears, and with a contemptuous gesture orders that the execution

A scene from Act I

KEN HOWARD / METROPOLITAN OPERA



## VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

### COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

### BASS

the lowest male voice

proceed. As the victim’s death cry is heard from the distance, Calàf, transfixed by the beauty of the unattainable princess, strides to the gong that announces a new suitor. Suddenly Turandot’s three ministers, Ping, Pang, and Pong, appear to discourage him. Timur and the tearful Liù also beg him not to risk his life. Calàf comforts her but then strikes the gong and calls Turandot’s name.

**ACT II** *Inside the palace.* Ping, Pang, and Pong lament Turandot’s bloody reign, praying that love will conquer her heart and restore peace. The three let their thoughts wander to happier times, but the noise of the people gathering to hear Turandot question the new challenger calls them back to reality.

The old emperor asks Calàf to reconsider, but he will not be dissuaded. Turandot enters and describes how her beautiful ancestor, Princess Lou-Ling, was abducted and killed by a conquering prince. In revenge, she has turned against men and determined that none shall ever possess her. Facing Calàf, she poses her first question: What is born each night and dies each dawn? “Hope,” Calàf answers, correctly. Turandot continues: What flickers red and warm like a flame, yet is not a flame? “Blood,” Calàf replies after a moment’s thought. Shaken, Turandot delivers the third riddle: What is like ice but burns? Tense silence prevails until Calàf triumphantly cries, “Turandot!” The crowd erupts in joy, and the princess vainly begs her father not to give her to the stranger. Hoping to win her love, Calàf offers Turandot a challenge of his own: if she can learn his name by morning, he will forfeit his life.

**ACT III** *In the Imperial Gardens.* A few hours before dawn, Calàf hears a proclamation: on pain of death no one in Peking shall sleep until Turandot learns the stranger’s name. Calàf is certain of his victory, but Ping, Pang, and Pong try to bribe him to leave the city. As the fearful mob threatens him, soldiers drag in Liù and Timur. Calàf tries to convince the crowd that neither of them knows his secret. When Turandot appears, commanding Timur to speak, Liù replies that she alone knows the stranger’s identity and will never reveal it. She is tortured but remains silent. Impressed, Turandot asks Liù what makes her so strong. It is Love, she replies. When the soldiers intensify the torture, Liù tells Turandot that she, too, will know the joys of love. Then she snatches a dagger and kills herself. The crowd forms a funeral procession and the body is taken away. Turandot remains alone to confront Calàf, who impetuously kisses her. Knowing emotion for the first time, Turandot weeps. Calàf, now sure of winning her, reveals his identity. Once again before the emperor’s throne, Turandot declares she knows the stranger’s name: it is Love.

## WHO'S WHO IN *TURANDOT*

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

### Turandot History

**1672** Italian playwright Carlo Gozzi writes a commedia dell'arte play entitled *Turandot*, based on an epic romance from 12th-century Persia.

**1802** Friedrich Schiller adapts Gozzi's play as *Turandot, Prinzessin von China*, which he produces for the Weimar court theater. The fantastical elements in Gozzi's works continue to attract the attention of the German Romantics: Richard Wagner's first opera *Die Feen* (1834) is based on Gozzi's play *La Donna Serpente*.

**1809** Carl Maria von Weber writes an overture and incidental music to accompany a staged production of Schiller's *Turandot*.

**1858** Puccini is born to a family of musicians.

**1867** Antonio Bazzini, who later becomes Puccini's composition teacher, composes an opera entitled *Turanda*. Its premiere at La Scala is a massive failure.

**1905** Ferruccio Busoni composes incidental music to accompany Gozzi's play.

**1911** The Austrian-born director and filmmaker Max Reinhardt stages Gozzi's *Turandot* in a new German translation, using Busoni's incidental music, at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Puccini attends a performance when the play tours to London.

**1917** Busoni transforms his score of incidental music into a full-length opera, adapting Gozzi's play with an original libretto. The resulting "Chinese Fable" premieres at the Stadttheater in Zurich on May 11.

**1920** In March, Puccini has lunch with his colleagues, the librettists Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni; they discuss the story of *Turandot* as the source for an opera and agree to collaborate on it.

During the summer, Puccini visits his friend Baron Edoardo Fassini-Camossi in Lucca. Fassini, a veteran of the Boxer Rebellion in China, plays a Chinese music box for Puccini. Puccini will later incorporate three melodies from the music box into the score of *Turandot*.

**1921** In January, Puccini is finally satisfied with the libretto of Act I, and he begins to set it to music. By March of the following year, he is working on the full orchestration of the first act.



**1923** Puccini begins to write sketches for Act II of *Turandot*. In March, he tells Adami that he is not happy with the libretto of Act III and asks for revisions. By late June, he is working on Act III and completes the opera's most famous aria, "Nessun dorma."

In November, Puccini writes to Adami to request the final lines of Liù's death: "The music is all there; it is just a case now of writing words for music which is already composed." Some of his suggestions ultimately become lines in Liù's final aria.

**1924** By February, Puccini has completed all of Act II, and by March, after working at a feverish pitch, he has orchestrated all of Act III up to the death of Liù.

Puccini receives Simoni's sketches for the finale of the opera at the end of May, and, in September, the actual verses.

Having suffered for some time from throat pain, Puccini is diagnosed with throat cancer in September. He travels to Brussels to pursue the then-groundbreaking treatment of radium therapy. On November 29, he dies of cardiac arrest during treatment, leaving *Turandot* incomplete.

**1926** The composer Franco Alfano is commissioned by Puccini's publisher to complete the opera by composing the final duet between Turandot and Calaf and the concluding choral scene, based on Puccini's sketches.

*Turandot* premieres at La Scala in Milan on April 25. Conductor Arturo Toscanini ends the performance with Liù's death, turning to the audience to explain that the composer died at this point. Alfano's finale isn't heard until the second performance.



Rosa Raisa sang the title role at the world premiere in Milan.

**'TURANDOT' CAUSES  
A STIR IN MILAN**

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Puccini's Posthumous Opera, a  
Chinese Fairy Tale, Staged  
With Great Splendor.

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**FINE OPERATIC ENSEMBLE**

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Composer Lavished His Resources  
on Orchestral Color—Rosa Raisa  
and Fieta Bear Opera's Burden.

## English/Language Arts

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide, as well as the audio selections from *Turandot* available online or on the accompanying CD.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English/Language Arts, Creative Writing, Humanities

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify elements that are common in fairy-tale plots
- To understand *Turandot* within the context of fairy tales and folkloric literature
- To practice close reading and listening in order to analyze literary and musical techniques
- To prompt curiosity about the Met's approach to *Turandot* as seen in this *Live in HD* production

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale

Puccini's *Turandot* draws inspiration from the world of fairy tales. Adapted from a Persian romance, the opera is set in the legendary realm of ancient China, where a beautiful princess wields power over life and death. Through both text and music, the opera evokes a mythical world beyond reality, but its use of fairy-tale conventions isn't limited to the characters or the basic shape of the plot. In this activity, students will identify fairy-tale aspects in the opera and explore its deeper moral implications and ambiguities. They will:

- define the characteristics of fairy tales and folk tales
- explore the interpretive history of fairy tales, including psychological readings
- gather evidence of the opera's reliance on the conventions of fairy tales
- become familiar with the plot of *Turandot*
- discover some of the music in advance of the Met's *Live in HD* transmission

### STEPS

The fairy tale stands as one of the most universal of all literary genres, with examples in many different cultures across the globe. Fairy tales have been disseminated in both oral and literary formats for centuries: an early example of a written collection is Gianfrancesco Straparola's *Piacevoli Notti* ("The Pleasant Nights"), which dates from the mid-16th century and includes such now-classic tales as "Beauty and the Beast" and "Puss in Boots." In France, Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* ("Stories or Tales from Times Past," better known by their subtitle, "Tales of Mother Goose") dates from 1697. In Germany, the Brothers Grimm collected their *Kinder- und*



Met veteran tenor Charles Anthony as the Emperor Altoum, center. Between his debut in 1954 and his retirement in 2010, Anthony sang 2,928 performances.

MARTY SOHL/METROPOLITAN OPERA

*Hausmärchen* (“Children’s and Household Tales”) in the early 19th century, while the Danish Hans Christian Andersen published his fairy tales a few years later in the 1830s.

Although the notion of fairy tales overlaps with that of children’s nursery tales, many of these stories include gruesome details and sinister outcomes that hardly seem child-appropriate to our modern sensibilities. In fact, these disturbing qualities have made the fairy tale fertile ground for investigations by 20th-century psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Bruno Bettelheim.

In this activity, students will draw upon previous knowledge to define common elements of fairy tales, and then examine the plot of *Turandot* to find similar elements. They will study two key scenes from the opera to examine not only how Puccini and his collaborators use text and music to create a fairy-tale world, but also how *Turandot* vividly replicates many of the darker and morally ambiguous qualities of fairy tales. They will approach *Turandot* as a textual critic, analyzing the uncomfortable psychological implications of the story, as well as its questionable morality.

**PREPARATORY WORK:** To ensure that students have a firm footing in the fairy tale oeuvre, assign each student one of the traditional fairy or folk tales provided at the back of this guide in the reproducible handouts. Ask students to come to class prepared to discuss their assigned fairy tale. Explain that although their assigned story may seem as though it were written for children, they will be digging deeper into the fairy tale genre’s conventions and implications. They should have a solid grasp of their story’s plot and characters, and come ready to talk about the characteristics that make their story seem particularly “fairy tale-ish.”

**STEP 1:** Begin class by introducing the opera *Turandot* and explaining that it was written in early 20th-century Italy, but that it’s based on a much older Persian story. In this lesson, students will be thinking about the tradition of fairy tales, folk tales, and legends, and the kinds of worlds and characters that they involve—as well as critiquing that tradition.

Divide students into groups, based on those who have read the same assigned reading beforehand. Distribute the “Fairy Tale Organizer” handout found at the back of this guide, and ask students to fill it out based on their understanding of their fairy tale.

**STEP 2:** After students have had ample time to fill out their organizer handouts, reconvene as a class. Ask a representative from each group to summarize the most notable aspects of their fairy tale and to extrapolate which characteristics seem to be the most paradigmatic for the fairy-tale genre. In this initial discussion, feel free to limit the conversation to various aspects of plot.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND TURANDOT

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.



A 1927 newspaper reviewer was impressed by Maria Jeritza, the Met's first Turandot (above in a photo by Mishkin). "She exercises an imperious domination over the performance—no role discloses her fundamentally theatrical art to better advantage. Here is need for inexhaustible voice, commanding gestures. The opera is hers from the moment she appears on her moon-lit balcony, an incarnation of vengeance, until undone and subdued, she gives herself to Calaf at the close."

**STEP 3:** After each group has had a chance to report, draw the class into a larger discussion of the genre. Ask students to think about other fairy tales they know or remember from their childhoods, and have two to three volunteers relate a fairy tale that they know from memory.

Using the blackboard, begin to make a list of the common plot points, character types, settings, story-telling styles, and other narrative elements that appear in the tales. After writing down a few examples as commentary on the students' stories, open up the floor for students to provide other examples of elements that they would expect to encounter in a fairy tale or folk tale. Some examples may include:

- "Once upon a time" setting—no clear historical time frame or location
- Young and unlikely hero or heroine who triumphs against the odds
- Magical elements, such as charms, spells, or magical creatures
- Violent actions or punishments
- Ritualistic plots—things that happen in threes or lots of repetition
- Arbitrary contests or challenges that characters must undergo
- Revenge motive
- Poor-to-rich/rich-to-poor transformations
- Characters of royalty or royalty in disguise
- Hidden strengths or virtues, especially in outwardly lowly people
- Simple narrative style, as if the story were transcribed from an oral tradition
- Moral ambivalence
- Importance of chutzpah, nerve, or cunning
- Tests of wisdom, such as riddles or the creation of poetry
- Tests of morality
- Female characters who have to tolerate unwanted advances

**STEP 4:** The versions of fairy tales that students may be most familiar with will often be the more child-friendly adaptations found in Disney movies. Students may be surprised to learn the darker and more violent original endings to some of their favorite tales.

- In the version of "Cinderella" as told by the Brothers Grimm, the two stepsisters cut off their toes and heels in order to fit their feet into the glass slipper.
- "Sleeping Beauty" in the version by Charles Perrault includes a lesser-known second part, in which the awakened princess and her prince marry and have children. The prince's mother, who has ogre blood, conspires to have the children killed—and gives her chef instructions on how they should be cooked and served, as she plans on eating them.
- In the Grimm Brothers' "Snow White," the evil queen is punished at the end of the story by being forced to wear iron shoes that have been heated until they glow, and to dance in them until she drops dead.



Timur mourns the death of Liù.  
MARTY SOHL/METROPOLITAN OPERA

Encourage students to reflect on the fairy tales that they know. In a free conversation, ask students to comment on the moral implications of fairy tales. A few guiding questions are provided below.

- Is there a lesson or moral to your story? What is it?
- Which values are rewarded within the story? Which values are punished?
- Did you enjoy reading the story? Or did it make you feel uncomfortable?
- Do you agree with its moral? Is the ending satisfying?
- Is it possible to read your story as an allegory—i.e. can the characters or plot be read as symbolizing another idea or story? What is an alternate interpretation for your fairy tale?

**STEP 5:** Now, distribute the synopsis of *Turandot* and have a volunteer read it aloud. You may wish to ask for three volunteers and have each one read one of the acts. Have the other students follow along and analyze the story critically, looking for details that remind them of the fairy-tale elements just discussed. Suggest that as they follow along, they highlight these elements by circling or underlining them, or by taking notes.

**FUN FACT:** The names of several characters in the opera contain possible hints about the story's origin as a Persian fairy tale. The name Turandot may derive from "Turan," the Persian name for central Asia, and the Prince's name, Calàf, recalls "Caliph," the title of a Muslim leader. Calàf's father Timur may reference the 14th-century Asian ruler of the same name who succeeded in conquering Persia. Europeans knew him by variations on the name Tamerlane. The play *Tamburlaine the Great* by the Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe is loosely based on the same historical figure, as is Handel's opera *Tamerlano*.

Afterwards, initiate a discussion in which your students recount the “fairy tale” elements they’ve identified. Possible responses include:

- An exotic setting: While we do know the location of the opera (Peking, or Beijing), the story isn’t set in “real-world” China. We don’t know what year it is, and the emperor isn’t an identifiable historical figure.
- A contest or challenge: The princess refuses to wed unless someone can guess the answer to her riddles.
- Son finds long-lost father: Coincidences and unexpected reunions are a common feature in folk tales and fairy tales.
- The underdog triumphs: Calāf is in exile and is not known as a prince. Against all odds, he is successful in Turandot’s challenge.
- Ritualistic violence: The decapitation of the suitors, the display of severed heads, and the torture of Liù are all reminiscent of the vivid violence of some traditional folk tales and legends.
- A mythically powerful ruler: The opera features an all-powerful emperor who is worshipped like a god.
- Surprises and reversals: Surprising elements include the unlikely redemption of the princess and the opera’s happy ending.

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

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

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

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





## Turandot's Riddles

### Gozzi's *Turandot*

#### *Riddle Number One*

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

*Answer: The Sun*

#### *Riddle Number Two*

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

*Answer: A Year*

#### *Riddle Number Three*

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

*Answer: The Lion of St. Mark*

### Schiller's *Turandot*

#### *Riddle Number One*

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

*Answer: A Year*

#### *Riddle Number Two*

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

*Answer: The Eye*

#### *Riddle Number Three*

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

*Answer: A Plough*

### Puccini's *Turandot*

#### *Riddle Number One*

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

*Answer: Hope*

#### *Riddle Number Two*

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

*Answer: Blood*

#### *Riddle Number Three*

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

*Answer: Turandot*

**FUN FACT:** The comic characters of Ping, Pang, and Pong may seem puzzling at first within the serious context of the story. They are, in fact, reminiscent of the Italian tradition of *commedia dell'arte*—broadly comic, satirical plays featuring stock characters that were popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. Gozzi's play *Turandot*, the source for the opera, was written as a tribute to this tradition. Puccini substantially altered Gozzi's treatment, but retained these characters. While Ping, Pang, and Pong still play the satirical role they fulfilled in the *commedia* tradition, in Puccini's adaptation they are humanized, acting as philosopher-clowns who comment on the action.



**STEP 6:** Tell your students that they'll now be taking a closer look at one of the key scenes in the opera and analyzing it for its connections to fairy-tale conventions. Distribute the reproducible for the libretto for **Track 1**, "The Riddle Scene." Explain that in this scene, Turandot poses her three riddles to the prince. Ask students to follow along to the text while listening to the recording, paying particular attention to the style of the music, the structure of the story, and the type of language used in the libretto.

**STEP 7:** Initiate a discussion with students about the excerpt they have just listened to. Ask them to share their reflections on the scene, its music, and its structure. Some guiding questions include the following:

- How would you describe the music? What descriptive words would you use to capture the music's feeling? Loud? Lyrical? Tender? Violent?
- What is happening in this scene? Who sings first? Who answers? What is the role of the crowd?
- How would you describe the kinds of voices you hear? What might you infer about their personalities based on their voices?

Once your students have formed some opinions about the scene, ask them how they think it is related to the fairy-tale elements you explored earlier. You may use the following guiding questions:

- What aspects of the music and text contribute to the sense that the action occurs within the realm of the fairy tale?
- How do these fairy-tale traits affect your understanding of the characters and their actions? What judgments do you make about them?

**STEP 8:** Next, distribute the excerpts from the end of Act III, “The Death of Liù” and “Turandot’s Change of Heart,” and explain that this scene occurs shortly before the end of the opera. Have students read the text. This is an extended passage, but if time allows, play **Tracks 2** and **3** as students follow along to the text. As before, invite them to underline or make notes on their handouts to indicate which sections of text and/or music they consider important.

**STEP 9:** After listening, discuss the opera’s resolution as a class. It may be helpful to refer to the sidebar *Turandot: An Unfinished Swan Song* for further details on Puccini’s unfinished work on the opera’s ending. Ask students whether they find Turandot’s transformation believable. How do they feel about the death of Liù? Are they satisfied with Calàf’s reaction to her death? Is his immediate pursuit of Turandot jarring?

Poll your students on which aspects of the scene seem to be drawn from the world of the fairy tale. Encourage students to compare the actions and implications of this scene with the darker qualities of fairy tales discussed above in Step 4. Can they find any similarities between the moral implications of *Turandot* and the fairy tales previously discussed? Do they find the opera’s plot uncomfortable, distancing, or implausible? Open up the floor to a discussion of the moral implications of the opera’s close.

Conclude the activity by asking students to reflect upon what they’ve learned about Puccini’s depiction of this legendary land. What is the affect of some of the fairy-tale elements used in the opera? How do they influence the way students feel about the actions of the opera’s characters?

**FOLLOW-UP:** As homework, ask students to pick a character of their choice from a fairy tale and place that character at the center of an opera. The character may be drawn from one of the examples in the reading assignment or a different fairy tale. Have students write the text to an aria or monologue that reveals that character’s inner motives or secret back story. What motivations can they create to help flesh out the fairy-tale world of their character?

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

*Music***IN PREPARATION**

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide as well as the audio selections from *Turandot* available online or on the accompanying CD.

**CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS**

Music, Humanities, and Arts

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology
- To listen to musical examples critically and to identify their basic harmonic and melodic shape, as well as their characteristic elements of orchestration
- To analyze various techniques of word-painting
- To explore Puccini's expanded orchestra by researching specialized instruments

**Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China**

Puccini was a master of musical storytelling, infusing his scores with musical images and metaphors that perfectly reflect the text and dramatic situation. As an introduction to the notion of musical word-painting, this activity is designed to help students dissect various elements of the score and explore how orchestration, harmony, and text-setting contribute to the creation of a vibrantly illustrative and dramatic musical work.

**STEPS**

Following an introduction to the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* drawn from this activity, *Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China* is designed in two parts, with each part drawing on a different scene from *Turandot*. The first part will ease students into labeling and categorizing what they hear. In the following section, they will analyze the musical storytelling of a scene in more detail, describing the musical elements moment by moment in the opera's central riddle scene.

The audio examples are available on the CD at the back of this guide and also online. Examples below are drawn from the *Ten Essential Musical Terms*, and may be used to help your students understand the Terms. A guide to these tracks is below.

**TRACK MUSICAL TERM**

3	Forte
4	Legato
5	Major
6	Minor
7	Pentatonic scale
8	Timpani
9	Tremolo
10	Word-Painting (to the text " <i>Gira la cote,</i> " or "sharpen the blade")

**STEP 1:** Distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar and have your students review it as a pre-lesson assignment. Alternatively, you may prefer to discuss it at the beginning of class, using the audio clips or demonstrating the concepts with

your own instrument or voice. Students will be using these terms, among other musical vocabulary words that they already know, to describe the musical excerpts to follow.

**STEP 2:** Now distribute the *Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China* reproducible handout found at the back of this guide. Begin the discussion by examining the opening scene of the opera, first by reading aloud the text and translations provided on the handout. The scene in full is provided on **Track 12**.

This scene dramatically establishes the opera's setting and is full of evocative musical colors and sounds. The handout includes charts that will aid students in identifying the musical instruments and devices Puccini uses to create the sound world of the opera. The scene is broken into three sections. Play **Tracks 13, 14, and 15** separately, giving students time to fill in their charts, referring to the texts and translations as necessary.

An answer key is provided on the following page for your reference.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND TURANDOT

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.



# Ten Essential Musical Terms

**Forte** An Italian word meaning “strong” or “loud.” In musical notation, a large letter *f* is used to indicate that a section or chord should be played or sung loudly. Two or sometimes three forte symbols next to each other *fff*, pronounced as “fortissimo,” “double forte,” or “triple forte,” indicate an extra-high volume level. The opposite term is piano (“quiet, soft”), represented by the letter *p*.

**Gong** A percussion instrument that resembles a giant cymbal. Gongs have a long history: there is evidence of their use in China from as early as the third century BC. They are usually flat and round in shape, and made out of resonating metal (such as bronze or brass). They typically hang from a frame and are played by hitting them with a mallet. Gongs have a very specific timbre, and in *Turandot* Puccini uses several different ones to evoke the sounds of the Far East.

**Legato** The term comes from the Italian word for “to tie together.” It is used in music to describe a series of notes that are played or sung with smooth connection from one note to the next. It is the opposite of staccato, an articulation in which notes are played in a short, detached manner.

**Major and Minor** Western music written since around 1600 has been built on two basic tonal principles: major and minor. Although the terms can be used to describe scales, intervals, harmonies, or keys, in their most basic application they refer to the overarching tonal organization of a composition, or its mode. Pieces in the major mode typically sound bright, cheery, or optimistic, while pieces in the minor mode may sound somber, plaintive, or sinister.

**Orchestration** An aspect of composition, orchestration is the art of choosing which instruments should play each musical idea in a musical work. Successful orchestration requires that the instrument chosen is appropriate to the melody—that the musical line is within the instrument’s playable range and expressive capabilities. The art of orchestration also allows a composer to draw on and combine the disparate timbres of instruments to amplify melodic expression and create a wide range of musical color. In *Turandot*, Puccini adds several instruments to the standard orchestra, including gongs, saxophones, and a xylophone, in order to expand the timbral possibilities of his melodies.

**Pentatonic Scale** A scale made up of five pitches. The most common pentatonic scale includes the pitches C-D-E-G-A, although other combinations of intervals are possible, including some that have a more “minor” inflection to Western ears. The black keys on a piano keyboard form another pentatonic scale. Pentatonic scales have been used in music from many cultures and throughout history, from China, Japan, and Java to folk music from Scotland and Hungary, as well as in American popular music, especially the African-American spiritual, jazz, Motown, and rock.

**Timbre** Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. Just as we can recognize each other by the differences in our speaking voices, operatic singing voices are distinguishable by their unique timbres. Listeners can also identify orchestral instruments by their timbre without being able to see them. The creative combination of different instrumental timbres is one of the artistic aspects of orchestration.

**Timpani** Pitched percussion instruments, traditionally constructed from copper in the shape of a large bowl, topped with a stretched head that the player strikes with a mallet. Timpani are the most common percussion instruments in a symphony orchestra.

**Tremolo** A musical term indicating the rapid repetition of a single note, from the Italian for “trembling” or “quivering.” In string instruments, it requires that players move their bows back and forth across the string as fast as possible. A solo string player playing a tremolo may not sound very powerful, but when all the string instruments in the orchestra play a tremolo together, it creates an impressive effect. Timpani can also create tremolos (called “rolls”), and Puccini uses timpani tremolos throughout *Turandot* at moments of heightened drama.

**Word-Painting** The musical depiction of the literal meaning of words. Word-painting can be simple, as in the imitation of natural sounds such as bird calls and thunder, or more abstract, in which the composer draws a connection between the innate qualities of the word and various musical characteristics. Examples might include setting the word “victory” with snare drums, trumpets, and a military gesture; or setting the word “weep” with falling figures, minor tonality, and chromatic dissonance. Puccini was a master of word-painting, and many instances of highly evocative text setting can be found in his operas.

## Answer Key

Track 13: The curtain opens to reveal the walls of a great city. The whole chorus is on stage, and the Mandarin announces to the crowd that Princess Turandot will marry the prince who is able to solve her three riddles. But whoever does not answer correctly must die. Check off all of the musical elements that you hear in this scene:

- Mostly major harmonies
- Mostly minor harmonies
- Lots of dissonance
- Mixture of major and minor harmonies
- Pentatonic scale sounds
- Snare Drum
- Gongs and cymbals
- Xylophone
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Foreboding chords
- Dramatic crescendos and decrescendos
- Forte dynamics in the orchestra
- Very melodic and flowing vocal line
- Jumps and leaps in the vocal line
- A speech-like vocal line
- Romantic, legato melodies
- Folksong-like melodies
- Sliding, eerie melodies
- Plodding rhythms
- Dramatic cries from the chorus
- Chorus interjections in the background
- Tremolos in the strings
- Timpani roll

Track 14: As the chorus cries out in reaction to the Mandarin's words, an old man falls. Liù cries for help, and Calàf comes to their aid. In doing so, he realizes that the old man is his father. Check off all of the musical elements that you hear in this scene:

- Mostly major harmonies
- Mostly minor harmonies
- Lots of dissonance
- Mixture of major and minor harmonies
- Pentatonic scale sounds
- Snare Drum
- Gongs and cymbals
- Xylophone
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Foreboding chords
- Dramatic crescendos and decrescendos
- Forte dynamics in the orchestra
- Very melodic and flowing vocal line
- Jumps and leaps in the vocal line
- A speech-like vocal line
- Romantic, legato melodies
- Folksong-like melodies
- Sliding, eerie melodies
- Plodding rhythms
- Dramatic cries from the chorus
- Chorus interjections in the background
- Tremolos in the strings
- Timpani roll

Track 15: Calàf's father describes how Liù came to his aid after he lost his throne. Calàf is touched by her kindness. The chorus calls for the blade to be sharpened, anticipating that Turandot's suitor will not answer the three riddles correctly. Check off all of the musical elements that you hear in this scene:

- Mostly major harmonies
- Mostly minor harmonies
- Lots of dissonance
- Mixture of major and minor harmonies
- Pentatonic scale sounds
- Snare Drum
- Gongs and cymbals
- Xylophone
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Foreboding chords
- Dramatic crescendos and decrescendos
- Forte dynamics in the orchestra
- Very melodic and flowing vocal line
- Jumps and leaps in the vocal line
- A speech-like vocal line
- Romantic, legato melodies
- Folksong-like melodies
- Sliding, eerie melodies
- Plodding rhythms
- Dramatic cries from the chorus
- Chorus interjections in the background
- Tremolos in the strings
- Timpani rolls

**STEP 3:** Now that students have become acquainted with Puccini’s musical material, they are prepared to analyze a longer and more complex scene to determine how Puccini crafts his music to enhance the text and dramatically tell the story.

The text of the riddle scene is provided on the handout. This is the centerpiece of the opera and one of its most important scenes. Calà’s life hangs in the balance: if he can’t answer the riddles correctly, he will be put to death.

Before listening to the music, have students read the text of the scene aloud. Once they understand the action, they are ready to turn to the chart. The scene is broken up into brief dramatic moments, each with its own audio track. For each moment,

## ***Turandot:* An Unfinished Swan Song**



Puccini, left, with conductor Arturo Toscanini

“This infamous *Turandot* terrifies me and I shan’t finish it, or if I finish it, it will be a fiasco,” Puccini wrote in March 1923. His words proved prophetic: by the time of his death a year and a half later, the opera was still unfinished.

Nearly from its inception, *Turandot* presented considerable challenges for the composer. Puccini wasn’t always happy with his collaborators, who were also working on other projects and delayed sending the revisions he requested. Even after the libretto was ready for him to begin composing, Puccini continued to send comments and suggestions for changes.

By March 1924, he had written and orchestrated nearly the entire work—except for the crucial final duet, in which the icy princess is redeemed and made human by the power of love. Puccini asked for further revisions of the text, and by September of that year was finally ready to move forward. But by then it was too late. Having been plagued by sore throats for several months, he was diagnosed with throat cancer. The extent of his illness was kept from him and he continued to sketch themes and melodies for the opera’s finale, but wasn’t satisfied with the results. In November, he traveled to Brussels for a new treatment, underwent surgery, and later that month, died of heart failure.

The composer Franco Alfano was commissioned by Puccini’s publisher to finish the score based on the surviving sketches. When the opera was given its premiere at La Scala in Milan in 1926, the conductor Arturo Toscanini, who was unhappy with Alfano’s work, stopped the performance at the point where Puccini’s composition ended, set down his baton, and announced, “The opera ends here, because at this point, the master died.” Alfano’s ending was first heard at the following performance.

students should describe the instruments and musical devices Puccini uses to portray the text, with both literal and abstract word-painting. An answer key is provided below for your reference.

**TRACK 16:** Turandot warns Calàf that he must give her three replies, but death comes only once. Calàf interrupts, saying that he will give her three replies, and that we only live once. The major key of the melody contributes to the confident attitude of the music. When Calàf replies, he sings the same melody as Turandot, but a step higher, challenging her musically. The entire orchestra is accompanying the singers, with heavy bass instruments punctuating the dramatic feeling of the moment.

**TRACK 17:** Calàf reiterates that we live only once, while Turandot reiterates that we only die once.

Calàf and Turandot sing the melody together, another step higher, matching each other in pitch, as if musically looking each other in the eye with fierce determination.

**TRACK 18:** The chorus says that Turandot should let the stranger try to solve her riddles. The chorus is accompanied by full orchestra, with the brass very prominent. The music then slows down and becomes quieter, with a plodding rhythm as it winds down.

**TRACK 19:** Turandot calls for attention, urging Calàf to listen and reply.

A single trumpet brings everyone to attention, and Turandot's vocal line mimics the melody of the trumpet. She begins unaccompanied, but then the orchestra enters dramatically with brass instruments and timpani.

**TRACK 20:** Turandot poses the first riddle: "In the gloomy night an iridescent phantom flies. It spreads its wings and rises over dark, infinite humanity."

Turandot sings unaccompanied, with only the timpani punctuating her vocal line. Her melody, which has a minor inflection, moves in small steps, drawing us into the language of the riddle.

**TRACK 21:** Turandot continues the riddle: "Everyone invokes it, everyone implores it! But the phantom disappears at dawn to be reborn in the heart"

After a moment of silence, dissonant clarinets and strings enter underneath Turandot's line, with repeated descending sighing figures, expressing the mortals' requests in the text.

**TRACK 22:** Turandot ends the first riddle: "And every night it is born, and every day it dies."

A mellow bassoon enters and is paired with Turandot's vocal line, while the repeated sighing motion continues in the strings.

**TRACK 23:** Calàf replies that the answer is "hope" (*"la speranza"*).

An energetic ascending flourish in the strings anticipates Calàf's entrance, creating a musical image of lifting or ascending. His vocal line is confident and bold. When he provides the correct answer, the whole orchestra enters in a dramatic descending flourish, as Turandot's first attempt to trick Calàf has failed.

**TRACK 24:** Turandot affirms that he has answered correctly but adds that "hope always deludes."

The low voices of the sages confirm Calàf's answer. Repeated downward patterns accompany Turandot's begrudging affirmation.

**FUN FACT:** Until the end of the 20th century, *Turandot* had never been produced in the country of its setting. Although it was never officially banned in China, authorities were offended by the opera's historical inaccuracies and the unflattering representation of its rulers. After two smaller-scale productions in the early 1990s in Shanghai, *Turandot* received a grand, opulent production in 1998 in the Forbidden City, when it was presented on the terrace of the Imperial Ancestral Temple. Ten years later, the same staging was lavishly remounted as part of a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the country's Communist Revolution.

**TRACK 25:** Turandot begins the second riddle: "It flickers like a flame, and is not a flame." Turandot is accompanied by flickering musical gestures in the orchestra, imitating the flickering of a flame in the riddle. The timpani continue to beat, similar to bells tolling or counting off the time before Calàf's doom.

**TRACK 26:** The riddle continues: "Idleness changes it to languor! If you're defeated or lost, it grows cold! If you dream of winning, it flames!"

The orchestra is pared down to only flute and cellos, with the downward sighing motions seeming sad and drawn out. On the word "fredda," meaning "cold," there is a dramatic entrance of strings in the orchestra. When Turandot sings of the sunset, we hear repeated bell-like sounds from the celesta in the orchestra.

**TRACK 27:** The emperor interjects with words of encouragement for Calàf, and the crowd echoes him. Liù remarks that it is for the sake of love.

There is an alternation between the high and low voices of the chorus, while the woodwinds accompany and the strings continue their tremolos.

**TRACK 28:** Calàf jumps in with his answer: "Blood!" He notes the blazing and faltering of his own blood.

Again, the ascending flourish in the strings anticipates Calàf's answer. He sings the same melody as he did during his answer to the first riddle, strong and confident, with low brass and timpani accentuating the vocal line. When he finishes, there is again a dramatic descending line from the whole orchestra, as Turandot's second attempt to trick Calàf has failed.

**TRACK 29:** As Calàf's answer is confirmed, the chorus encourages him. Turandot orders that the crowd be silent.

Low voices of the sages again affirm Calàf's answer, and the chorus offers whisper-like encouragement to Calàf. Turandot's command is given without any orchestral accompaniment, followed by a low, aggressive series of chords that suggest a brutish suppression of the crowd.

**TRACK 30:** Turandot begins the last riddle: "Ice that sets you on fire, and by your own fire is made more icy. Perfectly pure and dark! If it sets you free, it makes you a slave."

Turandot begins the riddle with the same melody as before, but at a higher pitch, heightening the tension. She sounds more aggressive, with more ascending patterns and tremolos in the accompanying orchestration. As she speaks of the darkness, a flute is paired with her vocal line, bringing out a dark, haunting feeling.

**TRACK 31:** Turandot continues the riddle: "If it accepts you as a slave, it makes you a King!"

The orchestra becomes even thinner, with its dissonant downward sighing motions followed by very soft beats in the timpani.

**TRACK 32:** Turandot stops her riddle-telling to comment that Calàf looks pale with fright and in fear of defeat.

Puccini uses longer silences to build tension. The downward sighing motions continue, slowing the tempo, and they sound almost like they are halting and falling. The music implies that Turandot has taken a break from riddle-telling to torment Calàf.

**TRACK 33:** Turandot repeats the last riddle: "Come, stranger! What is the ice that sets the world on fire?"

An ascending flourish in the orchestra and a powerful, forte entrance in the vocal line turn the attention back to the riddle, and fast ascending repeated patterns in the strings bring a sense of urgency and tension. Turandot holds the last note of her melody confidently, as if she is triumphantly expecting Calàf's defeat.

**TRACK 34:** Turandot waits for Calàf's reply.

A tremolo in the timpani, paired with dissonant downward sighing motions, builds suspense as we wait for Calàf's reply.

**TRACK 35:** Calàf replies that the answer is Turandot herself and awaits affirmation while the sages repeat his answer.

As the orchestra once again dramatically accompanies Calàf's answer, his vocal line is more confident than ever. The sages affirm his answer.

**TRACK 36:** The chorus praises Calàf's victory.

The music builds into a triumphant response by the chorus. The melody is pentatonic. The entire orchestra is involved, and the trumpet can be heard soaring above the chorus.

**FOLLOW UP** For a take-home assignment, students may delve deeper into the histories and sound characteristics of some of the instruments of Puccini's orchestra. The score for *Turandot* calls for a number of instruments that were not common in the standard opera orchestra of the time. The percussion section is greatly expanded with specialized instruments, including woodblock, tam-tam, tubular bells, glockenspiel, xylophone, and several different-sized gongs. The score also calls for an expanded brass section, as well as celesta, organ, English horn, and two saxophones.

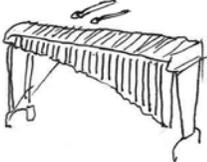
In this take-home assignment, students should use written and online resources to research some of these specialized instruments. A chart is provided in the reproducible section, and an answer key is provided on the following page for your reference.

## MUSICAL SNAPSHOT

**"NESSUN DORMA"** *Turandot* includes one of the best-known and most beloved arias in the operatic repertoire, Calàf's "Nessun dorma." Awaiting the morning that will decide his fate, the prince declares that he will be successful in winning Turandot. The shape of the vocal line reflects this romantic and hopeful sentiment, with the melody rising as Calàf sings more and more fervently, confident that he will be victorious. A dramatic high note punctuates the aria's final phrase on the word "*vincerò*" ("I will be victorious"). In performance, this theatrical effect often makes the audience erupt into applause, but there is no break in the music to allow for a pause. (When performed outside the context of the opera, an ending is usually added to the aria.)

The main melody of "Nessun dorma" is heard several times throughout the opera. It appears for the first time after Calàf has successfully solved Turandot's riddles, then in the aria itself, and one last time at the very end of the opera, as sung by the chorus, when Calàf and Turandot are finally united. The text of the aria can be found in the reproducible handouts at the end of this guide, and the aria may be heard in its entirety on **Track 37**.

**Answer Key: Exploring the Instruments in Puccini's Orchestra**

<b>INSTRUMENT:</b>	<b>DATE OF INVENTION AND NAME OF INVENTOR (IF ANY):</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT'S CLASSIFICATION AND TIMBRE:</b>	<b>WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? (DRAW OR FIND A PICTURE)</b>
Alto Saxophone	<i>Invented by Adolph Sax in 1880</i>	A wind instrument played with a single reed attached to a metal body. It has a smooth, velvety timbre.	
Celesta	<i>Invented in 1886 by Auguste Mustel</i>	A keyboard instrument (in the appearance of a small upright piano) that employs a set of resonating boxes. It has a shimmering, round timbre, similar to a glockenspiel.	
Xylophone	<i>Ancient origins</i>	A pitched percussion instrument that consists of different-sized wooden bars played with mallets. The timbre can be harder or softer depending on the type of mallet used.	
Tam-Tam	<i>Ancient origins</i>	An un-pitched percussion instrument identified by its metallic crashing sound	
English Horn	<i>Invented in the 18th century</i>	A double-reed woodwind instrument. A tenor oboe, it has a very mellow timbre, darker and richer than a normal oboe.	

## Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For *Turandot*, the first activity sheet, *Staging Intimacy*, encourages students to think about how the set and staging support the action. In this opera, Puccini creates a mythical, larger-than-life world from his fairy-tale source. But he also humanizes his characters, offering insights to them as real people relating to one another. The opera thus moves between opposite extremes in its dramatic and emotional scope. Students will note how the sets and the placement of performers on the stage work to create either a sense of mythical grandiosity or private intimacy.

The second, basic activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The Performance Activity reproducible handouts can be found in the back of this guide. On the next page, you'll find an activity created specifically for follow-up after the *Live in HD* transmission.

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND TURANDOT

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

## Turandot: A Fitting End?

### IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Turandot*. If desired, you may share the sidebar *Turandot: An Unfinished Swan Song*.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review and synthesize students' understanding of *Turandot*
- To discuss students' overall experience of watching *Turandot*
- To examine how Puccini's compositional process affected the final form of the opera
- To draw conclusions and develop a personal interpretation of the events in *Turandot*

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND TURANDOT

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Turandot* experts.

As noted in the sidebar *Turandot: An Unfinished Swan Song*, the process of writing *Turandot* was lengthy and challenging. Puccini was not easily satisfied with the libretto he was provided and frequently asked for revisions. But of all the challenges the opera presented, the most daunting was how



to end it. Puccini struggled with how to convey the melting of the princess's heart. Some critics feel that his imagination was too fully captured by the secondary character of Liù, whose self-sacrifice can be seen as overshadowing the climax of the action, the final romantic union of Turandot and Calàf.

When Puccini died, he had not yet completed this crucial scene, and left behind only sketches, which the composer Franco Alfano used to create the opera's finale. You can share this compositional history with your students by referring them to the sidebar *Turandot: An Unfinished Swan Song*. Then ask them to discuss whether they feel the opera comes to a fitting conclusion or not. Some questions you may wish to pose include:

- Does Liù's death overshadow Turandot's final personal struggle?
- What do you think of Calàf's response to Liù's torture and suicide?
- Do you think the kiss between Calàf and Turandot is a convincing way to present Turandot's change from cold-blooded detachment to passion?

- What do you think of the pacing of the duet between Calaf and Turandot, and of the final scene that follows? Do the changes occur too quickly? Too slowly?

If students feel the ending of the opera is unsatisfying, you could propose that they try to devise an ending that they prefer. This could take the form of individual written assignments, such as a short story or a dialogue, or as small-group projects, in which they plan their alternate ending and then act it out in front of the class.

**Excerpts taken from the  
Metropolitan Opera broadcast of  
November 7, 2009**

**TURANDOT**

Maria Guleghina

**CALÀF**

Marcello Giordani

**LIÙ**

Marina Poplavskaya

**TIMUR**

Samuel Ramey

Conducted by  
Andris Nelsons

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
and Chorus

- 1 The Riddle Scene
- 2 The Death of Liù
- 3 Turandot's Change of Heart
- 4 Forte
- 5 Legato
- 6 Major
- 7 Minor
- 8 Pentatonic Scale
- 9 Timpani
- 10 Tremolo
- 11 Word Painting
- 12 Opening scene of *Turandot* (complete)
- 13 The curtain opens
- 14 The chorus reacts and an old man falls

- 15 Timur's story
- 16 The Riddle Scene: Turandot's warning
- 17 The Riddle Scene: Calàf's response
- 18 The Riddle Scene: The chorus responds
- 19 The Riddle Scene: Turandot calls for attention
- 20 The Riddle Scene: First riddle, part 1
- 21 The Riddle Scene: First riddle, part 2
- 22 The Riddle Scene: First riddle, part 3
- 23 The Riddle Scene: Calàf answers correctly
- 24 The Riddle Scene: Turandot confirms the answer
- 25 The Riddle Scene: Second riddle, part 1
- 26 The Riddle Scene: Second riddle, part 2
- 27 The Riddle Scene: The Emperor encourages Calàf
- 28 The Riddle Scene: Calàf answers correctly
- 29 The Riddle Scene: His answer is confirmed
- 30 The Riddle Scene: Third riddle, part 1
- 31 The Riddle Scene: Third riddle, part 2
- 32 The Riddle Scene: Turandot comments on Calàf's fear
- 33 The Riddle Scene: Third riddle, part 3
- 34 The Riddle Scene: Turandot waits for Calàf's reply
- 35 The Riddle Scene: Calàf gives his answer
- 36 The Riddle Scene: The chorus rejoices
- 37 "Nessun dorma"



## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples

## 1: The Cunning Little Tailor

There was once upon a time a princess who was extremely proud. If a wooer came, she gave him some riddle to guess, and if he could not guess it, he was sent contemptuously away. She let it be made known also that whosoever solved her riddle should marry her, let him be who he might. At length, three tailors fell in with each other, the two eldest of whom thought they had done so many dexterous jobs of work successfully that they could not fail to succeed in this also, the third was a little, useless harum-scarum, who did not even know his trade, but thought he must have some luck in this venture, for where else was it to come from. Then the two others said to him, just stay at home, you cannot do much with your little understanding. The little tailor, however, did not let himself be discouraged, and said he had set his mind to work on this for once, and he would manage well enough, and he went forth as if the whole world were his.

They all three announced themselves to the princess, and said she was to propound her riddle to them, and that the right persons were now come, who had understandings so fine that they could be threaded in a needle. Then said the princess, "I have two kinds of hair on my head, of what color is it." "If that be all," said the first, "it must be black and white, like the cloth which is called pepper and salt." The princess said, "Wrongly guessed, let the second answer." Then said the second, "If it be not black and white, then it is brown and red, like my father's Sunday coat." "Wrongly guessed," said the princess, "let the third give the answer for I see very well he knows it for certain." Then the little tailor stepped boldly forth and said, "The princess has a silver and a golden hair on her head, and those are the two different colors."

When the princess heard that, she turned pale and nearly fell down with terror, for the little tailor had guessed her riddle, and she had firmly believed that no man on earth could discover it. When her courage returned she said, "You have not won me yet by that.

There is still something else that you must do. Below, in the stable is a bear with which you shall pass the night, and when I get up in the morning if you are still alive, you shall marry me." She expected, however, she would thus get rid of the tailor, for the bear had never yet left anyone alive who had fallen into his clutches. The little tailor did not let himself be frightened away, but was quite delighted, and said, "Boldly ventured is half won."

So when the evening came, our little tailor was taken down to the bear. The bear was about to set on the little fellow at once, and give him a hearty welcome with his paws. "Softly, softly," said the little tailor, "I will soon make you quiet." Then quite composedly, and as if he had no anxiety in the world, he took some nuts out of his pocket, cracked them, and ate the kernels.

When the bear saw that, he was seized with a desire to have some nuts too. The tailor felt in his pockets, and reached him a handful, they were, however, not nuts, but pebbles. The bear put them in his mouth, but could get nothing out of them, let him bite as he would. "Eh," thought he, "what a stupid blockhead am I, I cannot even crack a nut." And then he said to the tailor, "Here, crack me the nuts." "There, see what a stupid fellow you are," said the little tailor, "to have such a great mouth, and not be able to crack a small nut." Then he took the pebble and nimbly put a nut in his mouth in the place of it, and crack, it was in two. "I must try the thing again," said the bear, "when I watch you, I then think I ought to be able to do it too." So the tailor once more gave him a pebble, and the bear tried and tried to bite into it with all the strength of his body. But even you do not believe that he managed it.

When that was over, the tailor took out a violin from beneath his coat, and played something to himself. When the bear heard the music, he could not help beginning to dance, and when he had danced a while, the thing pleased him so well that he said to the little tailor, "Listen, is it difficult to fiddle?" "Easy enough for a child. Look, with the

left hand I lay my fingers on it, and with the right I stroke it with the bow, and then it goes merrily." "So," said the bear, "fiddling is a thing I should like to learn too, that I might dance whenever I felt like it. What do you think of that? Will you give me lessons?" "With all my heart," said the tailor, "if you have a talent for it. But just let me see your claws, they are terribly long, I must cut your nails a little."

Then a vise was brought, and the bear put his claws in it, and the little tailor screwed it tight, and said, "Now wait until I come with the scissors." And he let the bear growl as he liked, and lay down in the corner on a bundle of straw, and fell asleep.

When the princess heard the bear growling so fiercely during the night, she believed nothing else but that he was growling for joy, and had made an end of the tailor. In the morning she arose careless and happy, but when she peeped into the stable, the tailor stood gaily before her, and was as healthy as a fish in water. Now she could not say another word against the wedding because she had given a promise before everyone, and the king ordered a carriage to be brought in which she was to drive to church with the tailor, and there she was to be married.

When they had climbed into the carriage, the two other tailors, who had false hearts and envied him his good fortune, went into the stable and unscrewed the bear again. The bear in great fury ran after the carriage. The princess heard snorting and growling. She was terrified, and she cried, "Ah, the bear is behind us and wants to get you." The tailor was quick and stood on his head, stuck his legs out of the window, and cried, "Do you see the vise? If you do not be off you shall be put into it again." When the bear saw that, he turned round and ran away. The tailor drove quietly to church, and the princess was married to him at once, and he lived with her as happy as a woodlark.

*(from Grimm's Fairy Tales)*

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

## 2: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

On New Year's Day, King Arthur gathers with his court at Camelot for a feast. The festivities are interrupted when an enormous green knight, riding on a green horse, enters the hall, holding an axe in one hand and a holly bough in the other. He offers a merry Yuletide "game": Anyone in the court may strike him one time with his axe. In exchange, that person must seek him out in a year and a day and submit to the same blow. He will give the axe to anyone who accepts the challenge.

Only Arthur's nephew, Sir Gawain, the youngest of the knights, accepts the challenge. But when Gawain strikes with the axe, the Green Knight does not fall, even though he is beheaded. Instead, he takes up his severed head and remounts his horse. The severed head reminds Gawain to fulfill his promise: In a year and a day, he must seek the Green Knight at the Green Chapel. Then he leaves the court.

Nearly a year passes, and Sir Gawain leaves Camelot to find the Green Chapel. At last, he arrives at a magnificent castle and meets its lord, Bertilak de Hautdesert. He's also greeted by the lord's beautiful wife and an old crone. When Gawain explains that he is looking for the Green Knight, Bertilak tells him that the Green Chapel is less than two miles away. He invites Gawain remain at the castle until his appointed day arrives, and

Gawain agrees.

The next day, Bertilak tells Gawain he is going hunting, and tells him he will give Gawain whatever he catches during the hunt, as long as Gawain agrees to give him whatever he gains during the day. Gawain accepts, and no sooner does Bertilak leave, but his wife comes to Gawain's bedroom. She does her best to woo him, but he resists. At last, to avoid offending her, he gives her a single kiss. At the end of the day, Bertilak offers Gawain a deer he killed during the hunt, and in exchange, Gawain gives him a kiss, but does not say from whom he received it.

The following day, the same exchange occurs: Bertilak brings a boar back from the hunt, and this time, Gawain gives him two kisses, which the lady of the castle had bestowed on him. On the third day, this occurs again, but this time, the lady offers Gawain a gold ring. He refuses it, and she insists that instead he take her belt of green and gold silk. She tells him it is magic and will protect him from harm. Knowing he is to face the Green Knight and the axe the next day, Gawain at last accepts it. He also accepts three kisses from the lady. When Bertilak offers Gawain a fox from the day's hunting, Gawain exchanges it for the three kisses, but he does not offer up the green and gold belt.

At last, Gawain goes to the Green Chapel, first dressing himself with the belt. When he arrives, the Green Knight is there, sharpening an axe. Gawain does his part, offering his neck for the blow, but flinches, and Green Knight withholds the blow and mocks him. The Green Knight swings again, and Gawain does not flinch, but once again, the Green Knight withholds the blow.

Gawain is angry, and orders the Green Knight to deliver his blow. He does, but only slightly, so Gawain receives only a nick. Gawain takes up his sword to fight the knight, who laughs and reveals he's Bertilak de Hautdesert. He explains that he has been transformed to the Green Knight by the old crone at the castle, who is the sorceress Morgan le Fay, Arthur's sister, who wanted to test Arthur's knights.

Gawain feels guilty that he was deceitful while he was a guest at Bertilak's castle, and returns to Camelot, wearing the girdle as a token of his failure to keep his promise. At Camelot, the court absolves him of blame. Thenceforward, they agree to wear a green sash in commemoration of Gawain's adventure.

*(adapted from the English translation by Kenneth Sisam in A Middle English Reader and Vocabulary, 1921)*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

### 3: The Three Rhymsters

Once there were three daughters in a family. The oldest one married a physician, the second one married a magistrate; but the third, who was more than usually intelligent and a clever talker, married a farmer.

Now it chanced, once upon a time, that their parents were celebrating a birthday. So the three daughters came, together with their husbands, to wish them long life and happiness. The parents-in-law prepared a meal for their three sons-in-law, and put the birthday wine on the table. But the oldest son-in-law, who knew that the third one had not attended school, wanted to embarrass him.

“It is far too tiresome,” said he, “just to sit here drinking: let us have a drinking game. Each one of us must invent a verse, one that rhymes and makes sense, on the words: ‘in the sky, on the earth, at the table, in the room,’ And whoever cannot do so, must empty three glasses as a punishment.”

All the company were satisfied. Only the third son-in-law felt embarrassed and insisted on leaving. But the guests would not let him go, and obliged him to keep his seat.

Then the oldest son-in-law began: “I will make a start with my verse. Here it is:

In the sky the phoenix proudly flies,  
On the earth the lambkin tamely lies,  
At the table through an ancient book  
I wade,  
In the room I softly call the maid.”

The second one continued: “And I say:

In the sky the turtle-dove flies round,  
On the earth the ox paws up the  
ground,  
At the table one studies the deeds of  
yore,  
In the room the maid she sweeps the  
floor.

But the third son-in-law stuttered, and found nothing to say. And when all of them insisted, he broke out in rough tones of voice:

In the sky—flies a leaden bullet,  
On the earth—stalks a tiger-beast,  
On the table—lies a pair of scissors,  
In the room—I call the stable-boy.”

The other two sons-in-law clapped their hands and began to laugh loudly.

“Why the four lines do not rhyme at all,” said they, “and, besides they do not make

sense. A leaden bullet is no bird, the stable-boy does his work outside, would you call him into the room? Nonsense, nonsense! Drink!”

Yet before they had finished speaking, the third daughter raised the curtain of the women’s room, and stepped out. She was angry, yet she could not suppress a smile.

“How so do our lines not make sense?” said she. “Listen a moment, and I’ll explain them to you: In the sky our leaden bullet will shoot your phoenix and your turtle-dove. On the earth our tiger-beast will devour your sheep and your ox. On the table our pair of scissors will cut up all your old books. And finally, in the room—well, the stable-boy can marry your maid!”

Then the oldest son-in-law said: “Well scolded! Sister-in-law, you know how to talk! If you were a man you would have had your degree long ago. And, as a punishment, we will empty our three glasses.”

*(from ancient sources, transcribed  
and translated by R. Wilhelm in  
The Chinese Fairy Book, 1921)*

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

## 4: The Juniper Tree

A long time ago, a man and his wife loved each other greatly but were sorrowful that they had no children and prayed fervently for one. One day when the woman was peeling an apple under the juniper tree in the garden, she cut her finger and blood dripped on the snow. She wished for a child as red as blood and as white as snow, and felt happy.

Spring came, and as the berries grew on the Juniper Tree, a child grew in her womb. The woman gorged herself on the berries from the Juniper Tree until she felt sick, and asked that if she die, she be buried under the Tree. The woman finally bore a son, as white as snow and as red as blood, and died of joy. The man was heartbroken and wept for days. After a time he felt better and was eventually ready to take a second wife.

The second wife gave birth to a daughter, and was concerned that her daughter should receive the entire inheritance, and was harsh and cruel to the son.

One day her daughter asked her for an apple, and she gave her an apple from a chest with a big heavy lid. The girl asked if her brother could have an apple as well, and the woman, annoyed, said that the boy could have one when he got home from school. When he did, the wife acted as if possessed by the devil—she gave him a look of hate but asked sweetly if he would like an apple. He did, and as the little boy bent down into the chest, she slammed the lid down and his head flew off into the apples.

The wife realized with fear what she had done, and quickly fetched a scarf, propped the boy's body up, and tied the head on with the scarf. When his sister Marlene asked him a question and he did not answer, she became frightened of his stillness and pale face, and asked her mother about it. Her mother suggested that, if her brother did not answer her again, she slap his face. Marlene did this, and his head flew right off. Marlene ran crying to her mother, who said, "What a dreadful thing you've done! But don't breathe a word to a soul, for there's nothing we can do. We'll cook him up into a stew."

The mother chopped the little boy into pieces and cooked them into a stew which needed no salt because Marlene sat there and wept into it. When her father returned home, he asked where his son was, and his wife told him he had gone to stay with his uncle. The father was upset that his son had left so suddenly without saying goodbye, but he began eating the stew and thought it was delicious. He kept eating more and more, saying, "No one else can have any of it. Somehow I feel as if it's all for me."

Marlene sat crying through the meal. As her father threw the bones under the table, she collected them, tied them up in a silk handkerchief, and buried them under the Juniper Tree—only then did she feel better and stop crying. Just then a mist arose from the tree, in which a flame was burning, and from the flame emerged a beautiful bird

that began to sing. Marlene felt happy and returned home.

The bird began to sing:

My mother, she slew me,  
My father, he ate me,  
My sister, Marlene,  
Gathered my bones,  
Tied them in silk,  
For the juniper tree.  
Tweet, tweet, what a fine bird am I!

The neighbors who heard the bird all came out and begged him to repeat his song for them, but the bird said he would not repeat his song for nothing. He received a gold chain from the goldsmith, red shoes from the shoemaker, and a millstone from the mill workers, in payment for singing his song to them. Then the bird returned to the house with the Juniper Tree and began to sing his song again. His father felt happier the more the bird sang, the mother more frightened, and Marlene continued to weep. But the bird dropped the gold chain around the father's neck, and the red shoes at Marlene's feet, and she was happy again. The mother went outside to see if she would feel better too, but the bird dropped the millstone on her head and she died. The bird vanished in a cloud of flames, and when they left, their brother and son was standing there, and they all went in to a meal together.

*(from the Brothers Grimm)*

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

## 5: Blue Beard

There was a man who had fine houses, both in town and country, a deal of silver and gold plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over with gold. But this man had the misfortune to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly, that all the women and girls ran away from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters who were perfect beauties. He desired of her one of them in marriage, leaving to her the choice which of the two she would bestow upon him. They would neither of them have him, and each made the other welcome of him, being not able to bear the thought of marrying a man who had a blue beard. And what besides gave them disgust and aversion, was his having already been married to several wives, and nobody ever knew what became of them.

Blue Beard, to engage their affection, took them, with the lady their mother, and three or four ladies of their acquaintance, with other young people of the neighborhood, to one of his country seats, where they stayed a whole week. There was nothing then to be seen but parties of pleasure, hunting, fishing, dancing, mirth and feasting. Nobody went to bed, but all passed the night in playing tricks upon each other. In short, everything succeeded so well, that the youngest daughter began to think the master of the house not to have a beard so very blue, and that he was a mighty civil gentleman. As soon as they returned home, the marriage was concluded.

About a month afterwards Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a country journey for six weeks at least, about affairs of very great consequence, desiring her to divert herself in his absence, to send for her

friends and acquaintances, to carry them into the country, if she pleased, and to make good cheer wherever she was.

“Here,” said he, “are the keys of the two great wardrobes, wherein I have my best furniture; these are of my silver and gold plate, which is not every day in use; these open my strong boxes, which hold my money, both gold and silver; these my caskets of jewels; and this is the master-key to all my apartments. But for this little one here, it is the key of the closet at the end of the great gallery on the ground floor. Open them all; go into all and every one of them; except that little closet which I forbid you, and forbid it in such a manner that, if you happen to open it, there will be no bounds to my just anger and resentment.”

She promised to observe, very exactly, whatever he had ordered; when he, after having embraced her, got into his coach and proceeded on his journey.

Her neighbors and good friends did not stay to be sent for by the new-married lady, so great was their impatience to see all the rich furniture of her house, not daring to come while her husband was there, because of his blue beard which frightened them. They ran thro’ all the rooms, closets, and wardrobes, which were all so rich and fine, that they seemed to surpass one another.

After that, they went up into the two great rooms, where were the best and richest furniture; they could not sufficiently admire the number and beauty of the tapestry, beds, couches, cabinets, stands, tables, and looking-glasses in which you might see yourself from head to foot; some of them were framed with glass, others with silver, plain and gilded, the

finest and most magnificent which were ever seen. They ceased not to extol and envy the happiness of their friend, who in the mean time no way diverted herself in looking upon all these rich things, because of the impatience she had to go and open the closet of the ground floor. She was so much pressed by her curiosity, that, without considering that it was very uncivil to leave her company, she went down a little back-stair-case, and with such excessive haste, that she had twice or thrice like to have broken her neck.

Being come to the closet door, she made a stop for some time, thinking upon her husband’s orders, and considering what unhappiness might attend her if she was disobedient; but the temptation was so strong she could not overcome it. She took then the little key, and opened it trembling; but could not at first see anything plainly, because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to perceive that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, in which were reflected the bodies of several dead women ranged against the walls: these were all the wives whom Blue Beard had married and murdered one after another. She was like to have died for fear, and the key, which she pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.

After having somewhat recovered her senses, she took up the key, locked the door, and went up stairs into her chamber to recover herself; but she could not, so much was she frightened. Having observed that the key of the closet was stained with blood, she tried two or three times to wipe it off, but the blood would not come off; in vain did she wash it, and even rub it with soap and sand, the blood still remained, for the key was a

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

Fairy, and she could never make it quite clean; when the blood was gone off from one side, it came again on the other.

Blue Beard returned from his journey the same evening, and said, he had received letters upon the road, informing him that the affair he went about was ended to his advantage. His wife did all she could to convince him she was extremely glad of his speedy return. Next morning he asked her for the keys, which she gave him, but with such a trembling hand, that he easily guessed what had happened.

"What," said he, "is not the key of my closet among the rest?"

"I must certainly," answered she, "have left it above upon the table."

"Fail not," said Blue Beard, "to bring it me presently."

After putting him off several times, she was forced to bring him the key. Blue Beard, having very attentively considered it, said to his wife:

"How comes this blood upon the key?"

"I do not know," cried the poor woman, paler than death.

"You do not know," replied Blue Beard; "I very well know, you were resolved to go into the closet, were you not? Mighty well, Madam; you shall go in, and take your place among the ladies you saw there."

Upon this she threw herself at her husband's feet, and begged his pardon with all the signs of a true repentance for her disobedience. She would have melted a rock, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Blue Beard had

a heart harder than any rock.

"You must die, Madam," said he, "and that presently."

"Since I must die," answered she, looking upon him with her eyes all bathed in tears, "give me some little time to say my prayers."

"I give you," replied Blue Beard, "half a quarter of an hour, but not one moment more."

When she was alone, she called out to her sister, and said to her:

"Sister Anne" (for that was her name), "go up I beg you, upon the top of the tower, and look if my brothers are not coming; they promised me that they would come to-day, and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste."

Her sister Anne went up upon the top of the tower, and the poor afflicted wife cried out from time to time, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

And sister Anne said:

"I see nothing but the sun, which makes a dust, and the grass growing green."

In the meanwhile Blue Beard, holding a great scimitar in his hand, cried out as loud as he could bawl to his wife:

"Come down instantly, or I shall come up to you."

"One moment longer, if you please," said his wife, and then she cried out very softly:

"Anne, sister Anne, dost thou see anybody coming?"

And sister Anne answered:

"I see nothing but the sun, which makes a dust, and the grass growing green."

"Come down quickly," cried Blue Beard, "or I will come up to you."

"I am coming," answered his wife; and then she cried:

"Anne, sister Anne, dost thou see anyone coming?"

"I see," replied sister Anne, "a great dust that comes this way."

"Are they my brothers?"

"Alas! no, my dear sister, I see a flock of sheep."

"Will you not come down?" cried Blue Beard.

"One moment longer," said his wife, and then she cried out:

"Anne, sister Anne, dost thou see nobody coming?"

"I see," said she, "two horsemen coming, but they are yet a great way off."

"God be praised," she cried presently, "they are my brothers; I am beckoning to them, as well as I can, for them to make haste."

Then Blue Beard bawled out so loud, that he made the whole house tremble. The distressed wife came down, and threw herself at his feet, all in tears, with her hair about her shoulders.

"Nought will avail," said Blue Beard, "you must die"; then, taking hold of her hair with one hand, and lifting up his scimitar with the other, he was going to take off her head.

The poor lady turning about to him, and looking at him with dying eyes, desired him to afford her one little moment to recollect herself.

"No, no," said he, "recommend thyself to God," and was just ready to strike.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Examples (CONTINUED)

At this very instant there was such a loud knocking at the gate, that Blue Beard made a sudden stop. The gate was opened, and presently entered two horsemen, who drawing their swords, ran directly to Blue Beard. He knew them to be his wife's brothers, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer; so that he ran away immediately to save himself; but the two brothers pursued so close, that they overtook him before he could get to the steps of the porch, when they ran their swords thro' his body and left him dead. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength enough to rise and welcome her brothers.

Blue Beard had no heirs, and so his wife became mistress of all his estate. She made use of one part of it to marry her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had loved her a long while; another part to buy captains' commissions for her brothers; and the rest to marry herself to a very worthy gentleman, who made her forget the ill time she had passed with Blue Beard.

The Moral

O curiosity, thou mortal bane!  
Spite of thy charms, thou caus'est  
often pain  
And sore regret, of which we daily find  
A thousand instances attend mankind:  
For thou—O may it not displease the  
fair—  
A fleeting pleasure art, but lasting  
care.  
And always proves, alas! too dear the  
prize,  
Which, in the moment of possession,  
dies.

Another

A very little share of common sense,  
And knowledge of the world, will soon  
evince  
That this a story is of time long pass'd;  
No husbands now such panic terrors  
cast;  
Nor weakly, with a vain despotic hand,  
Imperious, what's impossible,  
command:  
And be they discontented, or the fire  
Of wicked jealousy their hearts inspire,  
They softly sing; and of whatever hue  
Their beards may chance to be, or  
black, or blue,  
Grizzled, or russet, it is hard to say  
Which of the two, the man or wife,  
bears sway.

*(French folk tale, collected by  
Charles Perrault in *Histoires ou  
Contes du Temps Passé*, 1697.)*

**TURANDOT**

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale: Fairy Tale Organizer

Read and discuss your group's assigned fairy tale. Complete the chart below as best you can, providing details drawn from your reading. Your assigned fairy tale may or may not feature details related to each category below.

	ASSIGNED FAIRY TALE
<b>SETTING/TIME PERIOD</b>	
<b>MAIN CHARACTERS</b>	
<b>ANTAGONIST</b>	
<b>MAGICAL ELEMENTS, IF ANY</b>	
<b>CHALLENGE OR TASK AT HAND</b>	
<b>RISK OR DOWNSIDE TO FAILURE</b>	
<b>OUTCOME</b>	
<b>MORAL OF THE STORY?</b>	

TURANDOT

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

The Riddle Scene

TRACK 1

**TURANDOT:** Straniero, ascolta!  
"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 con l'aurora  
per rinascere nel cuore!  
Ed ogni notte nasce  
ed ogni giorno muore!"

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Sì! Rinasce!  
Rinasce e in esultanza  
mi porta via con sé, Turandot:  
la speranza.

**THE SAGES:** (*opening the first scroll*) La speranza!

**TURANDOT:** (*pronounced in anger*)  
Sì! La speranza che delude sempre!  
(*Turandot nervously descends halfway down the stairs.*)  
"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!  
Ha una voce che trepido tu ascolti,  
e del tramonto il vivido baglior!"

**THE EMPEROR:** Non perderti, straniero!

**THE CROWD:** È per la vita! Parla!  
Non perderti, straniero!  
Parla!

**LIÙ:** È per l'amore!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Sì, Principessa!  
Avvampa e insieme langue,  
se tu mi guardi, nelle vene: il sangue!

**THE SAGES:** (*opening the second scroll*) Il sangue!

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

Yes! It's reborn!  
It's reborn and, exulting,  
it carries me with it, Turandot.  
It is Hope!

Hope!

Yes! Hope—which always deludes!

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

Don't give up now, stranger!

Your life is at stake! Speak!  
Don't give up, stranger!  
Speak!

Do it for love!

Yes, Princess!  
It pulses forward and retreats back at the same time, ,  
if you look at my veins. It is Blood!

Blood!

## TURANDOT

---

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

**THE CROWD:** Coraggio, scioglitore degli enigmi!

**TURANDOT:** *(directing the guards towards the crowd)*

Percuotete quei vili!

*(She comes down the stairs and leans over the Unknown Prince, who falls to his knees.)*

“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!”

Su, straniero!

Ti sbianca la paura!

E ti senti perduto!

Su, straniero, il gelo

che da foco, che cos’è?

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** *(leaps to his feet, exclaiming confidently)*

La mia vittoria ormai

t’ha data a me!

Il mio fuoco ti sgela:

Turandot!

Stay strong, riddle-solver!

Lash those wretches!

“Ice that sets you on fire,

and by your own fire is made more icy!

Perfectly pure and dark!

If it sets you free,

it makes you a slave!

If it accepts you as a slave,

it makes you a King!”

Come, stranger!

You’re pale with fright!

And you know you are lost!

Come, stranger, what is the ice

that sets the world on fire?

I have conquered you

at last!

My fire will thaw you:

Turandot!

## TURANDOT

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### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

### The Death of Liù

#### TRACK 2

**TURANDOT:** (*violently*) Strappatele il segreto!

**PING:** (*authoritatively*) Chiamate Pu-Tin-Pao!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** No, maledetto, maledetto!

**THE CROWD:** Il boia!

**PING:** Sia messa alla tortura!

**THE CROWD:** Alla tortura! Sì, il boia! Parli!

**LIÙ:** [*desperately*] Più non resisto!

Ho paura di me!

Lasciatemi passare!

**THE CROWD:** Parla, parla!

**LIÙ:** Sì, Principessa, ascoltami!

Tu, che di gel sei cinta,

da tanta fiamma vinta

l'amerai anche tu!

Prima di questa aurora,

io chiudo stanca gli occhi,

perché egli vinca ancora...

Per non vederlo più!

*(Suddenly she seizes a dagger from a soldier and stabs herself to death. She casts her dazed eyes around, looks at the Prince, who is still held by the Guards. She stumbles over to him and falls dead at his feet.)*

**THE CROWD:** Ah! Parla! Parla!

Il nome! Il nome!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Ah! tu sei morta,  
o mia piccola Liù!

*(A great silence falls, filled with terror..)*

**TIMUR:** (*staggering over to Liù, kneels beside her*)

Liù...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!

Wrest the secret from her!

Call Pu-Tin-Pao!

No, curse you! Curse you!

The executioner!

Put her to the torture!

Torture! Yes, the executioner! Make her speak!

I can bear it no longer!

I'm afraid of myself!

Let me by!

Speak, speak!

Yes, Princess, listen to me!

You, who are enclosed in ice,

conquered by such flame,

you will love him, too!

Before the dawn,

I will wearily close my eyes,

so he can win again...

And I'll never see him more!

Ah, speak! Speak!

His name! His name!

Ah! You are dead,

O my poor little Liù...

Liù... Liù... get up!

It's the bright hour

for all awakening!

It's the dawn, my Liù...

Open your eyes, my dove!

Get up, old man! She's dead!

Ah! horrible crime!

We will all pay for it!

The offended spirit will take revenge!

TURANDOT

---

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

**THE CROWD:** Ombra dolente, non farci del male!  
Ombra sdegnosa, perdona! perdona!  
*(With religious piety, the little body is raised up amidst the profound respect of the crowd. The old man comes over, tenderly takes the dead girl's hand, and walks along beside her.)*

**TIMUR:** Liù...bontà!  
Liù...dolcezza!  
*(holding the dead girl's little hand)*  
Ah! camminiamo insieme un'altra volta...  
così, con la tua man nella mia mano!  
Dove vai ben so.  
Ed io ti seguirò  
per posare a te vicino  
nella notte che non ha mattino!

**PING:** *(with heartbreaking pity)* Ah! per la prima volta  
al vedere la morte non sogghigno!

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

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

*(The sad procession moves away.)*

**THE CROWD:** Liù...bontà...perdona!  
Liù...dolcezza, dormi!  
Oblia! Liù...Poesia!

Grieving shade, don't harm us!  
Scornful shade, forgive us!

Liù... goodness!  
Liù... sweetness!

Ah! we are walking together again,  
This, your hand in mine!  
I know well where you're going.  
And I will follow you  
to rest near you  
in the night that has no morning.

Ah! for the first time  
I don't snicker at seeing Death!

That old machine,  
my heart, has wakened inside me  
and is tormenting me!

That dead child weighs  
on my heart like a stone!

Liù... goodness... forgive!  
Liù... Sweetness, sleep!  
Forget! Liù... Poetic spirit!

Turandot's Change of Heart

TRACK 3

*(All have left. Only the Prince and Turandot remain. The princess remains motionless under her ample veil, frozen like a statue.)*

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** *(seething with anger)* Principessa di morte!  
Principessa di gelo!  
Dal tuo tragico cielo  
scendi giù sulla terra!...  
Ah! Solleva quel velo...  
Guarda...guarda, crudele,  
quel purissimo sangue  
che fu sparso per te!  
*(He rushes to her and tears away her veil.)*

Princess of death!  
Princess of ice!  
Come down to earth  
from your tragic heaven!  
Ah! Raise that veil...  
Look...look, cruel one,  
at that purest blood  
that was shed for you!

## TURANDOT

---

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

**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!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** 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...  
*(He rushes toward Turandot, grabbing her by the arms.)*

**TURANDOT:** Non profanarmi!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Ah! Sentirti viva!

**TURANDOT:** Indietro! Non profanarmi!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Il gelo tuo è menzogna!

**TURANDOT:** No, mai nessun m'avrà!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Ti voglio mia!

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

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Ti voglio mia!

**TURANDOT:** Non mi toccar, straniero!  
È un sacrilegio!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** No, il bacio tuo mi dà l'eternità!

**TURANDOT:** Sacrilegio!  
*(As he speaks, the Unknown Prince, sure of his privilege and his passion, seizes Turandot in his arms and wildly kisses her. Overcome, Turandot no longer resists; she has no more strength, no more will power. This unbelievable contact has transformed her. In a pleading, almost childish voice, she now murmurs.)*  
Che è mai di me? Perduta!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** 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!

**VOICES WITHIN:** Ah! Ah!

How do you dare, stranger!  
I am not human...  
I am the daughter of heaven...  
free and pure.  
You clasp my cold veil,  
but my spirit is there, aloft!

Your spirit is on high!  
But your body is near.  
With burning hands I'll clasp  
the gold border of your starry cloak...  
My trembling mouth  
will be pressed on yours...

Do not profane me!

Ah! To feel you alive!

Stand back! Do not profane me!

Your iciness is a lie!

No, no one will ever possess me!

I want you to be mine!

My ancestress's torment  
will not be repeated! Ah, no!

I want you to be mine!

Touch me not,  
it is a sacrilege!

No, your kiss gives me eternity!

Sacrilege!

What has become of me? I'm lost!

My flower!  
Oh, my morning flower!  
My flower, I breathe you in!  
Your lily breasts,  
ah! they tremble against my chest!  
Already I feel you faint with sweetness,  
all white in your silver cloak!

Ah! Ah!

## TURANDOT

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### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Grand Operatic Fairy Tale (CONTINUED)

**TURANDOT:** Come vincesti?

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Piangi?

**TURANDOT:** È l'alba! È l'alba!  
Turandot tramonta!

**VOICES WITHIN:** L'alba! Luce e vita!  
Principessa, tutto è puro!  
Tutto è santo!  
Che dolcezza nel tuo pianto!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** È l'alba! È l'alba!  
E amore nasce col sole!

**TURANDOT:** Che nessun mi veda...  
La mia gloria è finita!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** (*with soaring passion*) No! Essa incomincia!

**TURANDOT:** Onta su me!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Miracolo!  
La tua gloria risplende  
nell'incanto del primo bacio,  
del primo pianto.

How did you win?

You weep?

It's the dawn! Dawn!  
Turandot's sun has set!

Dawn! Light and Life!  
Princess, all is pure!  
All is holy!  
What sweetness in your weeping!

It's dawn! The dawn!  
And Love is born with the sun!

No one must see me...  
My glory is ended!

No! It has begun!

I am ashamed!

Miracle!  
Your glory is radiant  
in the magic of a first kiss,  
of your first tears.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China

The opening scene of *Turandot* dramatically establishes the opera's setting, and is full of evocative musical colors and sounds. Read through the plot synopsis and libretto for this scene as a class, and then fill out the chart on the following page.

The curtain opens

### TRACK 13

**MANDARIN:** Popolo di Pekino!

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

**THE CROWD:** Ah! Ah!

**MANDARIN:** Il principe di Persia  
avversa ebbe fortuna:  
al sorgere della luna,  
per man del boia  
muoia!

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

People of Peking!

This is the law:  
Turandot, the Pure, will be the bride  
of a man of royal blood  
who solves the three riddles  
that she asks him.  
But whoever faces the trial  
and fails to answer them correctly,  
must bow his haughty head  
to the axe!

Ah! Ah!

The Prince of Persia  
had Fate against him:  
when the moon rises,  
he will die  
by the executioner's hand!

He must die! Yes, die!  
We want the executioner!  
Quickly, quickly!  
Death! Death!  
The punishment!  
If you don't appear,  
we'll waken you,  
Pu-Tin-Pao! Pu-Tin-Pao!  
To the palace! To the palace!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

The Chorus Reacts

TRACK 14

**GUARDS:** (*thrusting back the crowd; in the chaos many people fall.*)

Indietro, cani!

**THE CROWD:** Oh, crudeli! Pel cielo, fermi! O madre mia!

**GUARDS:** Indietro, cani!

**THE CROWD:** O madre mia!

Ahì, i miei bimbi!

Crudeli, fermi!

Siate umani! Non fateci male!

**LIÙ:** (*desperately*) Il mio vecchio è caduto!

(*looking around the crowd and begging*)

Chi m'aiuta a sorreggerlo?

Il mio vecchio è caduto!

Pietà! Pietà...

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Padre! Mio padre!

O padre, sì, ti ritrovo!

Guardami! Non è sogno!

**GUARDS:** Indietro!

**LIÙ:** Mio signore!

**THE CROWD:** Perché ci battete? ahimè!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Padre! Ascoltami!

Padre! Son io!

E benedetto sia il dolor

per questa gioia che ci dona

un Dio pietoso.

**TIMUR:** O mio figlio! tu! vivo?

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** (*with great fear*) Taci!

Chi usurpò la tua corona

me cerca e te persegue!

Non c'è asilo per noi,

padre, nel mondo!

**TIMUR:** T'ho cercato, mio figlio,

e t'ho creduto morto!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** T'ho pianto, padre,

e bacio queste mani sante!

**TIMUR:** O figlio ritrovato!

**THE CROWD:** Ecco i servi del boia!

Muoia! Muoia!

Stand back, dogs!

Ah, cruel ones! Stop, by Heaven! Oh mother!

Stand back, dogs!

Oh, my mother!

Ah, my babies!

Stop, cruel ones!

Have a heart! Don't hurt us!

This old man has fallen!

Who will help me lift him up?

This old man has fallen!

Have pity! Pity!

Father! My father!

Oh, father, yes, I've found you!

Look at me! It's not a dream!

Stand back!

My lord!

Why are you striking us? Alas!

Father! Listen to me!

Father! It is I!

And may my grief itself be blessed,

for a merciful God

has changed it to great joy.

Oh my son! You! Alive?

Silence!

The one who stole your crown

still seeks me and pursues you!

There's no hiding place for us

anywhere in the world, father!

I looked for you everywhere, my son;

I thought you were dead!

I wept for you, father;

now I kiss these blessed hands!

Oh, my son, found again!

Here are the executioner's men!

Kill him! Kill him!



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

Timur's story

TRACK 15

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

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Sia benedetta!

**TIMUR:** Ed io cadeva affranto,  
e m'asciugava il pianto,  
mendicava per me!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Liù, chi sei?

**LIÙ:** Nulla sono...  
Una schiava, mio signore...

**THE CROWD:** (*within*) Gira la cote! Gira la cote!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** E perché tanta angoscia hai diviso?

**LIÙ:** Perché un dì...

**THE CROWD:** Gira la cote!

**LIÙ:** ...nella reggia, mi hai sorriso.

**THE CROWD:** Gira la cote! Gira! etc.

**EXECUTIONER'S MEN:** Ungi, arrota,  
che la lama guizzi, sprizzi  
fuoco e sangue!  
Il lavoro mai non langue,  
dove regna Turandot!

When the battle was lost,  
this old King without a throne, fleeing,  
heard a voice  
saying,  
"Come with me, I'll be your guide."  
It was Liù!

Bless her!

When I would fall, exhausted,  
she would dry my tears;  
she even begged for me!

Liù, who are you?

I'm nobody...  
a slave, my lord.

Sharpen the blade! Sharpen the blade!

Why have you suffered so much along with him?

Because, one day...

Sharpen the blade!

...in the palace, you smiled at me.

Sharpen the blade! etc.

Oil it! Sharpen it!  
Let the blade gleam, spattering  
fire and blood!  
Work is never dull for us  
where Turandot reigns!



## TURANDOT

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### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

### The Riddle Scene

#### TRACKS 16–17

**TURANDOT:** Gli enigmi sono tre,  
la morte è una!

There are three riddles,  
but just one death!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** No, no! Gli enigmi sono tre,  
una è la vita!

No, no! There are three riddles,  
but just one life!

#### TRACK 18

**THE CROWD:** Al Principe straniero  
offri la prova ardata,  
O Turandot! Turandot!

Offer the supreme test  
to the foreign Prince,  
O Turandot! Turandot!

#### TRACK 19

*(The trumpets blare. Silence. Turandot asks the first riddle.)*

#### TRACK 20

**TURANDOT:** Straniero, ascolta!  
"Nella cupa notte  
vola un fantasma iridescente.  
Sale e dispiega l'ale  
sulla nera infinita umanità!"

Stranger, listen!  
"In the gloomy night  
an iridescent phantom flies.  
It spreads its wings and rises  
over dark, infinite humanity!"

#### TRACK 21

**TURANDOT:** "Tutto il mondo l'invoca  
e tutto il mondo l'implora!  
Ma il fantasma sparisce con l'aurora  
per rinascere nel cuore!"

"Everyone invokes it,  
everyone implores it!  
But the phantom disappears at dawn  
to be reborn in the heart!"

#### TRACK 22

**TURANDOT:** "Ed ogni notte nasce  
ed ogni giorno muore!"

"And every night it's born  
and every day it dies!"

#### TRACK 23

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Sì! Rinasce!  
Rinasce e in esultanza  
mi porta via con sé, Turandot:  
la speranza!

Yes! It's reborn!  
It's reborn and, exulting,  
it carries me with it, Turandot.  
It is Hope!

## TURANDOT

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### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

### TRACK 24

THE SAGES: (*opening the first scroll*) La speranza!

Hope!

TURANDOT: (*pronounced in anger*)

Si! La speranza che delude sempre!

Yes! Hope – which always deludes!

(*Turandot nervously descends halfway down the stairs.*)

### TRACK 25

TURANDOT: “Guizza al pari di fiamma, e non è fiamma!

“It flickers like flame, and is not flame!

È talvolta delirio!

Sometimes it rages!

È febbre d’impeto e ardore!”

It’s feverish, impetuous, burning!”

### TRACK 26

TURANDOT: “L’inerzia lo tramuta in un languore!

“But idleness changes it to languor!

Se ti perdi o trapassi, si raffredda!

If you’re defeated or lost, it grows cold!

Se sogni la conquista, avvampa!

If you dream of winning, it flames!

Ha una voce che trepido tu ascolti,

Its voice is faint, but you listen;

e del tramonto il vivido baglior!”

it gleams as bright as the sunset!”

### TRACK 27

THE EMPEROR: Non perderti, straniero!

Don’t give up now, stranger!

THE CROWD: È per la vita! Parla!

Your life is at stake! Speak!

Non perderti, straniero!

Don’t give up, stranger!

Parla!

Speak!

LIÙ: È per l’amore!

Do it for love!

### TRACK 28

THE UNKNOWN PRINCE: Sì, Principessa!

Yes, Princess!

Avvampa e insieme langue,

It pulses forward and retreats back at the same time,  
if you look at my veins.

se tu mi guardi, nelle vene:

It is Blood!

il sangue!

### TRACK 29

THE SAGES: (*opening the second scroll*) Il sangue!

Blood!

THE CROWD: Coraggio, scioglitore degli enigmi!

Stay strong, riddle-solver!

TURANDOT: (*directing the guards towards the crowd*)

Percuotete quei vili!

Lash those wretches!

(*She comes down the stairs and leans over the*

*Unknown Prince, who falls to his knees.*)

## TURANDOT

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### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

### TRACK 30

**TURANDOT:** "Gelo che ti dà foco  
e dal tuo foco più gelo prende!  
Candida ed oscura!  
Se libero ti vuol,  
ti fa più servo!"

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

### TRACK 31

**TURANDOT:** "Se per servo t'accetta,  
ti fa Re!"

If it accepts you as a slave,  
it makes you a King!"

### TRACK 32

**TURANDOT:** Su, straniero!  
Ti sbianca la paura!  
E ti senti perduto!

Come, stranger!  
You're pale with fright!  
And you know you are lost!

### TRACK 33

**TURANDOT:** Su, straniero, il gelo  
che da foco, che cos'è?

Come, stranger, what is the ice  
that sets the world on fire?

### TRACK 34

Orchestra Alone

### TRACK 35

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** (*leaps to his feet, exclaiming confidently*)

La mia vittoria ormai t'ha data a me!  
Il mio fuoco ti sgela: Turandot!

I have conquered you at last!  
My fire will thaw you: Turandot!

**THE SAGES:** (*opening the scroll*) Turandot!

Turandot!

### TRACK 36

**THE CROWD:** Turandot!  
Gloria, o vincitore!  
Ti sorrida la vita!  
Ti sorrida l'amor!

Turandot!  
All hail the conquering hero!  
May life smile on you!  
May love smile on you!

TURANDOT

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	HOW THE MUSIC ENHANCES THE STORYTELLING (Describe and list musical devices & instruments you hear, as well as the resulting feeling of the moment)
16	Turandot warns Calàf that he must give her three replies, but death comes only once. Calàf interrupts, saying that he will give her three replies, and that we only live once.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
17	Calàf reiterates that we live only once, while Turandot reiterates that we only die once.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
18	The chorus says that Turandot should let the stranger try to solve her riddles.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
19	Turandot calls for attention, urging Calàf to listen and reply.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

TURANDOT

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

20	Turandot poses the first riddle: "In the gloomy night an iridescent phantom flies. It spreads its wings and rises over dark, infinite humanity."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
21	Turandot continues the riddle: "Everyone invokes it, everyone implores it! But the phantom disappears at dawn to be reborn in the heart!"	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
22	Turandot ends the first riddle: "And every night it is born, and every day it dies."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
23	Calàf replies that the answer is "hope" ( <i>"la speranza"</i> ).	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
24	Turandot affirms that he has answered correctly but adds that "hope always deludes."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

TURANDOT

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

25	Turandot begins the second riddle: "It flickers like flame, and is not a flame."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
26	The riddle continues: "But idleness changes it to languor! If you're defeated or lost, it grows cold! If you dream of winning, it flames! Its voice is faint, but you listen; it gleams as bright as the sunset!"	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
27	The emperor interjects with words of encouragement for Calâf, and the crowd echoes him. Liù remarks that it is for the sake of love.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
28	Calâf jumps in with his answer: "Blood!" He notes the blazing and faltering of his own blood.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
29	As Calâf's answer is confirmed, the chorus encourages him. Turandot orders that the crowd be silent.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

TURANDOT

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	HOW THE MUSIC ENHANCES THE STORYTELLING (Describe and list musical devices & instruments you hear, as well as the resulting feeling of the moment)
30	Turandot begins the last riddle: "Ice that sets you on fire, and by your own fire is made more icy. Perfectly pure and dark! If it sets you free, it makes you a slave."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
31	Turandot continues the riddle: "If it accepts you as a slave, it makes you a King."	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
32	Turandot stops her riddle-telling to comment that Calâf looks pale with fright and in fear of defeat.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
33	Turandot repeats the last riddle: "Come, stranger! What is the ice that sets the world on fire?"	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

TURANDOT

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	HOW THE MUSIC ENHANCES THE STORYTELLING (Describe and list musical devices & instruments you hear, as well as the resulting feeling of the moment)
34	Turandot waits for Calàf's reply.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
35	Calàf replies that the answer is Turandot herself and awaits affirmation while the sages repeat his answer.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
36	The chorus praises Calàf's victory.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Painting a Musical Picture of Legendary China (CONTINUED)

MUSICAL SNAPSHOT: "NESSUN DORMA"

TRACK 37

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Nessun dorma!

Nessun dorma...

Tu pure, o Principessa,  
nella tua fredda stanza  
guardi le stelle che tremano  
d'amore e di speranza!

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!

**WOMEN'S VOICES:** Il nome suo nessun saprà...

E noi dovrem, ahimè, morir!

**THE UNKNOWN PRINCE:** Dilegua, o notte!...

tramontate, stelle!

All'alba vincerò!

Vincerò! Vincerò!

No one sleeps!

No one sleeps!

You, too, o Princess,  
in your cold room  
watching the stars that tremble  
with hope and love.

But my secret is safe inside me—  
no one will discover my name!

No, no, I will say it on your mouth

when light shines forth!

And my kiss will dissolve

the silence that makes you mine!

No one will find out his name.

And, we will have—ay!—to die! To die!

Disperse, o night!

Hurry and set, stars!

At dawn I will win!

I will overcome! I will vanquish!

**TURANDOT**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

**Exploring the Instruments in Puccini's Orchestra**

The following instruments are all part of Puccini's score for *Turandot*, but are not common in opera orchestras. Research and find the indicated facts about each of the listed instruments.

INSTRUMENT:	DATE OF INVENTION AND NAME OF INVENTOR (IF ANY):	DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT'S CLASSIFICATION AND TIMBRE:	WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? (DRAW OR FIND A PICTURE)
Alto Saxophone	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	
Celesta	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	
Xylophone	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	
Tam-Tam	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	
English Horn	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	

## At the Met: *Staging Intimacy*

*Turandot* tells the story of a mythical princess in a fairy-tale setting. But it also shows the personal passions of a real man and a real woman. In staging this opera, the director and design team must find a way to present both the mythical side of the opera as well as its more intimate side. During *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, take notes about the set and staging (where actors appear, how they are grouped, etc.), and decide whether each scene presents the grand fairy-tale side of *Turandot* or its more human aspects.

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### Act 1: Outside the Imperial Palace

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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### Act 2, Scene 1: The rooms of Ping, Pang, and Pong

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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### Act 2 Scene 2: The emperor's throne room

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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### Act 3, Scene 1: The imperial gardens (interrogation of Liù)

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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### Act 3, Scene 2: The imperial gardens (duet between Turandot and Calàf)

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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### Act 3, Finale: The throne room

Describe the set.	Who is on stage? How are they grouped?	What is the effect of the set and staging?
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# Turandot: My Highs & Lows

JANUARY 30, 2016

CONDUCTED BY PAOLO CARIGNANI

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

<b>THE STARS</b>	<b>STAR POWER</b>	<b>MY COMMENTS</b>
NINA STEMME AS TURANDOT	*****	
ANITA HARTIG AS LIÙ	*****	
MARCO BERTI AS CALÀF	*****	
ALEXANDER TSYMBALYUK AS TIMUR	*****	

<b>THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>MUSIC</b>	<b>SET DESIGN/STAGING</b>
THE MANDARIN ANNOUNCES TURANDOT'S CHALLENGE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CALÀF MEETS TIMUR AND LIÙ MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
TURANDOT APPEARS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CALÀF'S RESPONSE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
TIMUR AND LIÙ TRY TO DISSUADE CALÀF MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CALÀF RINGS THE GONG MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
PING, PONG, AND PANG DISCUSS THE SITUATION MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
TURANDOT PRESENTS HER RIDDLES MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CALÀF GIVES TURANDOT MORE TIME MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
NO ONE SLEEPS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
LIÙ'S SACRIFICE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
TURANDOT'S CHANGE OF HEART MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5