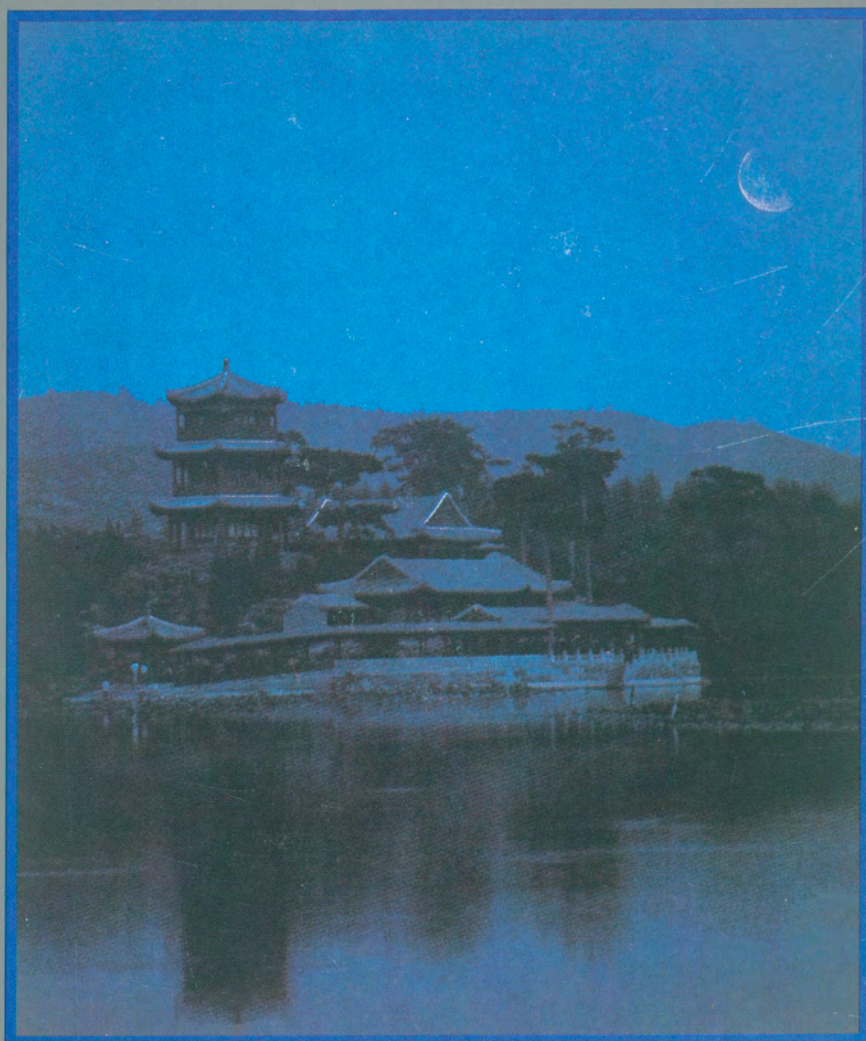


THE AUSTRALIAN
OPERA
1990

Turandot
Giacomo Puccini



The Australian Opera

Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House

August 14, 18, 22, 25, 29, September 1 (*matinee*), 5, 8, 11, 15, 18, 21,
October 11*, 16*, 19*, 1990

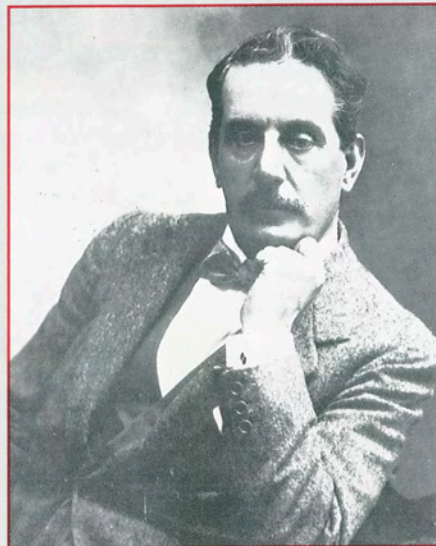
Turandot

An Opera in Three Acts by Giacomo Puccini
Completed by Franco Alfano

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Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni
After Carlo Gozzi's *Turandotte* (1762)

First performed at La Scala, Milan, April 25, 1926



GIACOMO PUCCINI

*Youth performances

Cover: The Temple of the Supreme Emperor at the Summer Palace in Chengde.

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Sponsored by

BORAL

Turandot

Conductor CARLO FELICE CILLARIO
VLADIMIR KAMIRSKI (October 11, 16, 19)
Director GRAEME MURPHY
Assistant Director JOHN WREGG
Assistant to the Director KIM WALKER
Designer KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON
Lighting Designer JOHN DRUMMOND MONTGOMERY

Characters, in order of appearance

A Mandarin GREG SCOTT
Liù, a slave girl AMANDA THANE
NICOLA FERNER-WAITE
(October 11, 16, 19)
Timur, exiled King of Tartary DONALD SHANKS
AREND BAUMANN
(October 11, 16, 19)
Calaf, Timur's son KENNETH COLLINS
Ping, Grand Chancellor of China DAVID BRENNAN
DOMINIC NATOLI
(October 11, 16, 19)
Pong, the Chief Cook GRAEME EWER
DAVID COLLINS-WHITE
(October 11, 16, 19)
Pang, the General Purveyor CHRISTOPHER DAWES
JONATHON WELCH
(October 11, 16, 19)
Altoum, Emperor of China JONATHON WELCH
GRAEME MACFARLANE
(October 11, 16, 19)
Princess Turandot GALINA SAVOVA
MARGARET HAGGART
(October 11, 16, 19)
Prince of Persia JIN TEA KIM
Two handmaidens JOANNA COLE
CHLORIS VOWELS

Musical Preparation ANDREA KATZ
SHAROLYN KIMMORLEY
Prompter SHAROLYN KIMMORLEY
Stage Manager PAUL CARR
Deputy Stage Manager CATHY DADD
Italian Language Coach RENATO FRESIA
Surtitles BRIAN FITZGERALD

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHORUS
Chorus Preparation NEIL FLOTTMAN
THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA CHILDREN'S CHORUS
Chorus Preparation SEAN O'DEA
AUSTRALIAN OPERA AND BALLET ORCHESTRA
Concertmaster JAN VAN DEN BERG

*There will be two intervals of approximately twenty minutes.
The performance lasts approximately three hours.*

Casting correct at time of publication but subject to amendment

Surtitles for these performances sponsored by Morgan & Banks

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BORAL

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

Turandot is a version of the ancient fairy tale of the cruel Eastern Princess who slays those who love her.

ACT ONE

Before the Imperial Palace in Peking

At sunset a Mandarin appears before the crowd and announces that any prince seeking to marry the Princess Turandot must first answer three riddles. If he fails, he must die. The latest suitor, the Prince of Persia, is to be executed at the moon's rising. The bloodthirsty crowd surges forward and an old blind man is knocked to the ground. In response to his slave's cries for help, a young man steps forward. The old man is Timur, the banished King of Tartary, who is overjoyed to learn that the young man is his long lost son, Calaf. Timur tells his son that only Liù, his slave, has remained faithful to him in his exile. Calaf asks why she has risked so much; she replies it is because once long ago he, Calaf, smiled at her. As the sky darkens, the mob again cries for blood but greets the moon with sudden, fearful silence. They are further moved when the Prince of Persia passes by and call upon the princess to spare him. Calaf curses the beauty who sends noble and innocent lovers to their deaths. Turandot appears and, with an imperious gesture, bids the execution to proceed. As the death cry is heard in the distance, Calaf, transfixed by the beauty of the unattainable princess, strides towards the gong that announces a new suitor. Suddenly Turandot's three ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong, materialise to discourage him. Timur and the tearful Liù also beg him to reconsider, but as their pleas intensify, he strikes the fatal gong and calls Turandot's name.

ACT TWO

The Ministers' Pavilion

Ping, Pang and Pong lament Turandot's bloody reign, hoping that love will conquer her icy heart and peace will return. They think longingly of their distant country homes, but the noise of the populace gathering to hear Turandot question the new challenger brings them back to reality.

Before the Imperial Palace

The people, eager for another execution, have gathered in the square. The aged Emperor, seated on a high throne, vainly asks Calaf to reconsider. Turandot appears and describes how her beautiful ancestor, Princess Lou Ling, was carried off and ravished by a conquering prince; in revenge, she has turned against all men and determined that none shall ever possess her. Facing Calaf, she poses her first question: What is born each night and dies each dawn? 'Hope' answers Calaf correctly. Unnerved, Turandot continues: What flickers red and warm like a flame, yet is not fire? 'Blood' replies Calaf after a moment's pause. Visibly shaken, Turandot delivers her third riddle: What is like ice but burns? A tense silence prevails until Calaf triumphantly cries, 'Turandot!' While the crowd voices thanks, the princess begs her father not to give her to the stranger, but to no avail. Calaf, hoping to win her love, generously offers Turandot a challenge of his own: if she can learn his name by dawn, he will forfeit his life. Turandot accepts.

ACT THREE

In the Palace Gardens

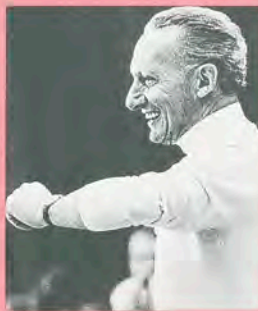
Calaf hears a proclamation: on pain of death, no one in Peking shall sleep until Turandot learns the stranger's name. He muses on his impending joy. Ping, Pang and Pong try unsuccessfully to bribe him with gifts of love, wealth and power to leave the city. As the mob threatens him to learn his name, soldiers drag in Liù and Timur. Horrified, Calaf tries to convince the mob that neither knows his secret. When Turandot appears, commanding the dazed Timur to speak, Liù cries out that she alone knows the stranger's identity but will never reveal it. She is tortured, but remains silent. Impressed by such endurance, Turandot asks Liù's secret: 'Love' replies the girl. The princess signals the soldiers to intensify the torture, but Liù snatches a dagger and kills herself. The crowd, fearful of her dead spirit, forms a funeral procession.

Turandot remains alone to confront Calaf, who tears the covering from her face and boldly kisses her. Knowing emotion for the first time, Turandot weeps. Now sure of his victory, Calaf reveals his identity.

As the people hail the Emperor, Turandot triumphantly approaches his throne, announcing the stranger's name: it is Love. As Calaf rushes to embrace her, the court hails the power of love and life.

CARLO FELICE CILLARIO

Maestro Cillario first appeared with The Australian Opera in 1968, conducting *Tannhäuser* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Since then he has been a regular guest conductor and was Musical Director of the Company from 1970-72. In 1987 he was appointed Principal Guest Conductor in addition to being one of two Musical Consultants of the Company. He has appeared in the world's principal theatres, including the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera, New York; Teatro alla Scala, Milan; and in San Francisco, Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Buenos Aires, Rome, the Arena di Verona, Chicago, Paris and the Glyndebourne Festival. He has recorded extensively and been awarded the Grand Prix du Disque. Maestro Cillario conducts frequently in Sweden, both at the Royal Opera in Stockholm and at the Drottningholm Court Theatre. In 1985 he



conducted *Tosca* to open the season at the Metropolitan Opera, New York and returned there in 1986 for further performances. Engagements for The Australian Opera have included *Macbeth*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Don Pasquale*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Il Trittico*, *La traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, *Medee*, *Tosca*, *Otello*, *Cunning Little Vixen*, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Werther* and *La Bohème*. Recent international engagements include *Lucia di Lammermoor* with San Francisco Opera; *Tosca* and *Orphée* with Marseille Opera; Donizetti's *Gianni di Parigi* in Bergamo; Cimarosa's *Il Fanatico Burlato* in Savona; Verdi's *Macbeth* and Pizzetti's *Assassino nella Cattedrale* at the Bergen Festival in Norway. This year for the Company he conducted *Werther* and *Tristan und Isolde* during the Melbourne Season, and this season he conducts *Lohengrin*.

VLADIMIR KAMIRSKI

Vladimir Kamirski was born in Poland and studied at the Warsaw Conservatoire. After a period as Associate Conductor of the Warsaw Grand Opera, he worked with the Royal Opera, Brussels, and as a guest conductor for the Warsaw and Lodz Grand Oper Theatres. In 1974 he was appointed General Music Director of the Polish Radio and TV Symphonic Orchestras in Warsaw. Since then he has led concerts and recordings in Leningrad, Venice, Berlin, Naples, Brussels, Cologne, Copenhagen, New York and Australia. Maestro Kamirski was also responsible for the creation of the concert series *Music and Screen* made for TV networks of intervision,



Eurovision and Unicef. Maestro Kamirski, who now resides in Sydney, made his debut with The Australian Opera in 1985 and has conducted *Roméo et Juliette*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Rigoletto*, *La fille du Régiment*, *I masnadieri*, *Carmen*, *Countess Maritza*, *La forza del Destino* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for the Company. Maestro Kamirski was recently appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. In 1989 he conducted *Madama Butterfly* for The Australian Opera and *Carmen* for the Lyric Opera of Queensland. This year for the Company he conducted *Il Trovatore* in Sydney and Melbourne.

GRAEME MURPHY

Appointed as Artistic Director of Sydney Dance Company in 1976, Graeme Murphy has established a reputation as one of the most outstanding choreographers of his generation. He has choreographed over 30 original works for Sydney Dance Company including 14 full-length productions. In addition to the prolific output for his company, Mr Murphy has directed Brian Howard's *Metamorphosis* for The Australian Opera, created choreography for Lotfi Mansouri's production of *Death in Venice* for the Canadian Opera Company, and choreographed for the Torvill and Dean World Tour Company. For the Australian Ballet he has created four works — *Tekton*, *Beyond Twelve*, *Meander* and *Gallery*. He created *Song of the Night* for the Nederlands Dans Theater in



1987. In 1988 he was commissioned by the Australian Bicentennial Authority, and created VAST, a three-act work which drew together the 66 dancers of the four major state dance companies, forging them into one enormous company for the four month project. Later that year he co-directed a new production of *Man of La Mancha* which was performed at the Victorian Arts Centre. Mr Murphy is a member of the Order of Australia, awarded for services to the dance. In 1989 he was named Australian of the Year by *The Australian*. He has recently premiered a new full length work, *Soft Bruising*, following his year of sabbatical. Future projects include a dance work to Karol Szymanowski's operatic score of *King Roger*.

KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON

Kristian Fredrikson trained at the Wellington School of Design in New Zealand and, on coming to Australia, joined the Melbourne Theatre Company in 1966 as Resident Designer and designed over forty productions in the following eight years. Since then he has designed sets and costumes for drama, ballet, opera, film and television. Five of his designs have won the coveted Erik Design Award. His designs for drama productions include *Coriolanus* for the South Australian Theatre Company at the Adelaide Festival in 1976, *No Names . . . No Pack Drill*, *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Pericles* for the Sydney Theatre Company. He has designed numerous productions for the Australian Ballet including *Aurora's Wedding*,



Act II Swan Lake for the appearances of Margot Fonteyn, *Cinderella*, *Coppelia* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He also designed, for the Sydney Dance Company, *After Venice*, *Sheherazade*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Poppy* and *Late Afternoon of a Faun*. Mr Fredrikson's association with The Australian Opera began in 1976 with the set and costume designs for *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Since then, for the Company, he has designed *The Merry Widow*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Manon*, *Manon Lescaut* and *Otello*. Television productions include costume designs for *Vietnam* and *Dirtwater Dynasty* as well as production designs for *The Shiralee*.

JOHN DRUMMOND MONTGOMERY

John Drummond Montgomery is regarded as one of Australia's most innovative lighting designers. In October 1989 he took up the position of Technical Manager of the Victorian Arts Centre after five years as the Sydney Dance Company's Production Manager and Lighting Designer. He designed lighting for the Australian Dance Theatre in the late seventies and started his own production company in Europe in 1981. During 1982 he designed lighting for numerous productions in Amsterdam including *Five Tangoes*, a Hans Van Manen ballet for the Het National Ballet, *Electric* for Art Theatre Salome and *The Winner* for Animate Theatre. In 1983 Mr Montgomery joined the Bat Dor Dance Company of Israel as Lighting



Designer and Production Manager and remounted many works as well as designing new productions and touring in Kenya, New York and Los Angeles. He returned to Australia in 1984 to join the Sydney Dance Company and highlights of this period include *After Venice*, *Shining*, *Nearly Beloved*, *Boxes*, *Poppy* and *Daphnis and Chloe*. For the Australian Ballet he has lit productions of Patricia Rianne's *Bliss*, Chris Jannide's *Portrait of Desire* and Paul Jerdan's *An Evening to Remember*. As well as his established repertoire in dance he regularly lights opera productions. Recent work has included Brian Howard's *Metamorphosis*, *Die Walküre* and *The Gondoliers* for The Australian Opera. This year for the Company he designed lighting for *Aida*.

NICOLA FERNER-WAITE

New Zealand soprano Nicola Ferner-Waite graduated in musicology from Victoria University in 1979 and performed the roles of Serpina in *La Serva Padrona*, Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. In 1980 Miss Ferner-Waite joined The Australian Opera Chorus. In 1982 she won the first Marianne Mathy International Singing Competition and studied in Milan with Rina Malatrasi as well as performing the soprano role in Vivaldi's *Gloria* in Milan and Rome and the soprano role in Haydn's *Creation* in Rome. She also performed as a member of the Trio Ambrosiana. In 1986 she was the Esso Young Artist and a member of The Australian Opera's Esso Young Artists Development



MARGARET HAGGART

Margaret Haggart made her professional debut with Welsh National Opera as Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*. In 1974 she became a principal artist with English National Opera, performing numerous roles including Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Miss Haggart has sung with Scottish Opera, Opera North, BBC TV Opera, the Camden Festival, the Promenade Concerts in the UK; and with Nancy Opera and at the Orange Festival in France, as well as with Santiago Opera in Chile. She returned to Australia in 1979 to sing Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* for the Victoria State Opera and in 1980 to sing Violetta in *La traviata* and Constanze for the Western Australian Opera. Based in



GALINA SAVOVA

Internationally acclaimed soprano Galina Savova was born in Varna, Bulgaria and studied at the Conservatorium of Sofia. She made her debut at the National Theatre in Sofia. In 1971 she made her debut in Paris in the title role in *Turandot*. She has sung in all the major European theatres including Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Munich, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Berlin, Mannheim, Barcelona, Madrid, Lyons, Strasbourg, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lille, Marseilles, Paris, Budapest, Zurich, Prague, Bern, Bregenz, Vienna, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Torre del Lago, Lisbon and Cologne. In 1979 Miss Savova made her immensely successful debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York in *Aida* and subsequent performances at the Metropolitan have included the title roles in *Tosca* and *La Gioconda*,



AMANDA THANE

An honours graduate of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, Amanda Thane performs a wide repertoire in opera, oratorio and concert which has taken her to many parts of the world including the United Kingdom, Eastern and Western Europe, USA and extensively throughout Australia where she appears regularly with the state Symphony Orchestras. One of the highlights abroad was an appearance in the 1988 Concert for Peace in Seoul, Korea. Miss Thane has been successful in a number of singing competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in New York and the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition. She has also received a number of prizes including a 1990 Churchill Scholarship which



KENNETH COLLINS

Born in Birmingham, Kenneth Collins made his debut as a principal artist in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Camden Festival in 1971, and appeared at the Aldeburgh Festival and at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Mr Collins returned to Covent Garden in *Lucia di Lammermoor* opposite Joan Sutherland, in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and with the Royal Ballet in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. He has appeared with the English National and Welsh National Operas and with all the major British orchestras. Concert and opera performances have taken him throughout Europe and to Los Angeles and New York. Mr Collins made his debut with The Australian Opera in 1983 as Manrico in *Il Trovatore* and subsequent roles have included Gustavus in *Un ballo in maschera*, Carlo in *I masnadieri*, Gabriele in *Simon Boccanegra*, Don José in *Carmen*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Canio in *Pagliacci*,



Program. In 1987 she made her debut with Wellington State Opera Company performing Violetta in *La traviata*, and with that company has subsequently performed Marguerite in *Faust*. For Canterbury Opera she has performed Violetta in *La traviata* and this year she will perform the title role in *Tosca*. For The Australian Opera her roles have included Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Karolka in *Jenůfa*, the First Gypsy in *Les Huguenots*, the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, the Priestess in *Aida*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Frasquita in *Carmen* and Sister Infirmaress in *Suor Angelica*. This year for the Company she performed Leonora in *Il Trovatore*.

Melbourne since 1984 she has performed numerous roles for the Victoria State Opera including Queen of the Night and The Foreign Woman in *The Consul* — for which she won a Green Room Award. In 1985 she made her USA debut in *Die Zauberflöte* and in 1986 appeared at the Spoleto Festivals in Charleston and Spoleto. Miss Haggart debuted with The Australian Opera in 1987 as Mrs Grose in *The Turn of the Screw* and subsequent roles have included Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Lady Billows in *Albert Herring* and Helmwige in *Die Walküre*. For The Australian Opera this year she performed the title role in *Lucrezia Borgia*.

Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*, Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera* and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Miss Savova made her debut in Italy in 1980 at the Arena di Verona in *La Gioconda* and performs there regularly in roles including *Tosca*, *Turandot* and *Aida*. Miss Savova's many international engagements have included *Tosca* and *Un ballo in maschera* in San Carlo di Napoli, Minnie in *La fanciulla del West* at Comunale di Genova and Palermo, *Aida* and *Turandot* in Rome and Trieste, *Tosca* in Ravenna and *La forza del Destino* in Bologna. Recently Miss Savova performed *Tosca*, *Turandot* and *La forza del Destino* in Japan. Miss Savova makes her Australian debut in this production. Future engagements include *Turandot* at Covent Garden.

will take her to Europe later this year. Miss Thane first appeared with The Australian Opera in 1983 as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Violetta in *La traviata*. Her numerous subsequent roles for the Company have included Marzelline in *Fidelio*, Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem serail*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Micaela in *Carmen*, Lauletta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Antonia and Stella in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Leila in *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Nedda in *Pagliacci*. In London Miss Thane has performed the title roles in *Suor Angelica* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Liù in *Turandot*. Roles for the Company this season include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and Valentine in *Les Huguenots*.

Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West* and Don Alvaro in *La forza del Destino*. He appeared with the Victoria State Opera as Samson in *Samson and Delilah* and in the title role of *Don Carlos*. 1984 and 1986 saw two major international debuts — in *Jerusalem* at the Paris Opera and in *Norma* at the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires. In 1986 he returned to ENO for further performances of Manrico and in 1988 performed Cavaradossi for Western Australian Opera. Concert engagements include Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Sydney Opera House, Calaf in concert performances of *Turandot* for The Australian Opera and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Sydney Philharmonia and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and at the Hong Kong Festival. Roles for The Australian Opera this year included Manrico in *Il Trovatore* and Radames in *Aida*. In 1991 he makes his New Zealand debut as Manrico for Wellington City Opera.

DAVID COLLINS-WHITE

David Collins-White graduated from the NSW Conservatorium of Music with a Bachelor of Music Education in 1985. He studied with Raymond Myers from 1978-88. Mr Collins-White made his professional debut in the Victoria State Opera's production of *My Fair Lady* in 1988. He has made several appearances for the National Lieder Society, and in 1987 he was tenor soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for the University of Newcastle. Mr Collins-White performed



Ernest in The Australian Opera's 1988 premiere of *Whitsunday*, and was a member of The Australian Opera's 1989 Esso Young Artists Development Program. Last year for the Company he performed Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Chief Justice in *Un ballo in maschera*, Harry in *La fanciulla del West*, several roles in the new production of *Death in Venice* and Marco in *The Gondoliers*. This year for the Company his roles include Marco, Liverotto in *Lucrezia Borgia* and Tom Radclyffe in *Voss*.

The Australian Opera is grateful to Rex Irwin, Esq. for sponsoring Mr Collins-White's appearances in this season.

CHRISTOPHER DAWES

Tasmanian-born Christopher Dawes made his debut with The Australian Opera in 1984 as Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, after having spent eight years with the Würzburg City Theatre. Since joining the Company he has appeared in a wide variety of roles including Gastone in *La traviata*, Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Bardolph in *Falstaff*, Missail in *Boris Godounov*, Baron Zsupan in *Countess*



Maritza, Lucano in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Remendado in *Carmen* and Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. Since returning to Australia in 1981 Mr Dawes has made guest appearances with the major State opera companies and this year has sung the role of David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, for the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts. Roles for The Australian Opera this year included Melot in *Tristan und Isolde* and Rustighello in *Lucrezia Borgia*.

GRAEME EWER

In his 23 years with The Australian Opera, Graeme Ewer has appeared in a formidable array of roles, covering the full range of theatrical interpretation from comedy to drama. His many roles have included Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, the title role in *Albert Herring*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Prologue in *The Turn of the Screw*, the Rector in *Peter Grimes*, Abbe Chazeuil in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, Vasek in *The Bartered Bride*, Nick in



La fanciulla del West, Fe-ni-han in *Ba-ta-clan*, Rustighello in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Dunstable in *Patience*, Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*, Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi*, Njegus in *The Merry Widow*, the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Beppo in *Fra Diavolo*, Sellem in *The Rake's Progress*, the Chaplain in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, the four comedy roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and The Duchess of Plaza-Toro in *The Gondoliers*. This season for the Company he performs Feri von Kerekes in *The Gipsy Princess* and Benoit in *La Bohème*.

GRAEME MACFARLANE

Graeme MacFarlane was born in Sydney and studied at the NSW Conservatorium of Music gaining a diploma in Operatic Art. In 1979 he won the Sydney Sun Aria and travelled to the United Kingdom to study at the Royal Northern College of Music. Whilst in the UK he performed major roles with Scottish, Welsh and North Ireland Opera Companies. Since returning to Australia he has performed as a guest artist with The Australian Opera, the State



Opera of South Australia, Western Australian Opera and Canberra Opera. In 1983 he became a resident tenor with the Western Australian Opera Company and performed leading roles in operas including *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff* and *Don Giovanni*. He has performed in oratorios including *Messiah* and *Childhood of Christ*, and also made several broadcast recordings for the ABC.

JONATHON WELCH

Melbourne-born tenor Jonathon Welch studied music at Melbourne State College and completed a post-graduate degree at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in 1986. He began his operatic career with the Victoria State Opera, touring with them in *Pirates of Penzance* in 1984-85. He has been successful in many singing competitions as well as performing as a finalist in several Sun and Shell Arias. Mr Welch has appeared with the Lyric Opera of Queensland in concert as well as in performances of Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mercury in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Parpignol in *La Bohème*, Borsa in *Rigoletto*, Gastone in *La traviata*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and Lucas in *The Student Prince*. In 1986 he performed the Celebrant in the Australian premiere of



Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. Mr Welch was a member of The Australian Opera's 1988 Esso Young Artists Development Program and made his debut with the Company performing the Maitre d'Hotel in *The Merry Widow*. Subsequent roles include Pang in concert performances of *Turandot*, Valetto in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, performances in the National Opera Workshop *Ra* Project, the four servant roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, the title role in *Albert Herring*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Amelia's servant in *Un ballo in maschera* and Postiglione in *La fanciulla del West*. In 1988 Mr Welch also performed the Duke of Plaza-Toro in *The Gondoliers* for the Lyric Opera of Queensland. Roles for The Australian Opera this season include Boni in *The Gipsy Princess* and Blind in *Die Fledermaus*.

DAVID BRENNAN

David Brennan began his professional career with the Victoria State Opera in 1973 and since 1975 he has appeared in more than thirty roles with the State Opera of South Australia, including the Count in *Il Trovatore*, the four villains in *Tales of Hoffmann*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Pizarro in *Fidelio* and Beppo in *Paganini*. He spent 1979 studying with the late Otakar Kraus in London and returned to Adelaide in 1980. In 1985 he appeared in the title role in *Nabucco* for the Western Australian Opera Company and *Don Giovanni* for the State Opera of South Australia and has appeared as Ford in *Falstaff* in both South Australia and Western Australia. He has sung for the Lyric Opera of Queensland and appeared



as the Herald in *Lohengrin* for the Victoria State Opera in 1986. In 1987 Mr Brennan made his debut with The Australian Opera, performing Baron Douphol in *La traviata*. Subsequent roles for the Company have included Bogdanovitch in *The Merry Widow*, Yamadori and the Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*, De Bretigny in *Manon*, Mordcha in *Fiddler on the Roof*, an Officer in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Coppelius in *Tales of Hoffmann*, the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Alfio in *Cavalleria rusticana* and Castro in *La fanciulla del West*. Roles for the Company this year include Baron Douphol in *La traviata*, Albert in *Werther*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Falke in *Die Fledermaus*.

DOMINIC NATOLI

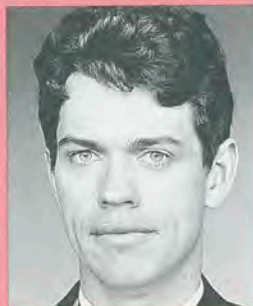
Melbourne-born Dominic Natoli began his vocal studies in the Australian Boys' Choir, achieving success as a soloist on the Choir's premiere overseas tour to Japan in 1971. He recommenced his studies at the age of 20, with renowned Italian baritone Afro Poli. In 1981 Mr Natoli won the Heinz Youth Aria and was a finalist in a number of major competitions including the Melbourne Sun Aria and the National Finals of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions. In 1983 he travelled to Europe for further study, and completed a Diploma in Opera at the Vienna



Conservatorium, graduating with First Class Honours. He performed extensively throughout Austria as Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Paisello's opera of the same name, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and in many recitals of oratorio and lieder. Mr Natoli returned to Australia in 1987 and has performed in many concerts and recitals. He has sung Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto* for the Victoria State Opera and last year for The Australian Opera performed Zurga in *Les pêcheurs de perles* and several roles in the new production of *Death in Venice*.

GREG SCOTT

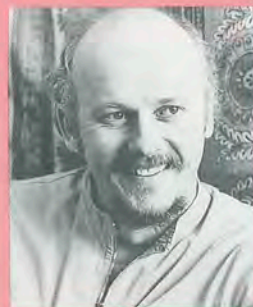
Greg Scott has studied singing since 1976 with Ronald Jackson, Max Speed and Robert Bickerstaff. In 1978 he sang the role of Colline in *La Bohème* in Canberra and repeated this role while studying at the NSW Conservatorium of Music in 1982. Other roles have included Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. Mr Scott joined The Australian Opera Chorus in 1987 and was a



finalist in the Covent Garden Scholarship in 1988. Last year for the Company he performed Larkens in *La fanciulla del West*. Mr Scott is a member of The Australian Opera's 1990 Esso Young Artist Development Program and his roles for the Company this year include Gubetta in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, Third Monk in *Les Huguenots* and Fourth Knight in *Lohengrin*.

AREND BAUMANN

Arend Baumann was born in Germany and studied at the Konservatorium in Frankfurt/Main. In 1973 he joined the Mainz Opera as a principal artists until in 1982 he was invited to join the Stuttgart Opera. During this period he performed many major roles including Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rocco in *Fidelio*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, King Phillip in *Don Carlos*, Count Waldner in *Arabella*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Colline in *La Bohème*, King Henry in *Lohengrin*, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman*, Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*, Arkel in *Pelleas and Melisande* and the title role in *The Barber of Baghdad*. Since 1978 he has guested in Cologne, Dusseldorf, Munich, Hamburg and Hannover, as well as various houses in Spain, Holland and Austria. Mr Baumann made his Australian debut with the Victoria State Opera in 1984 as King Phillip in



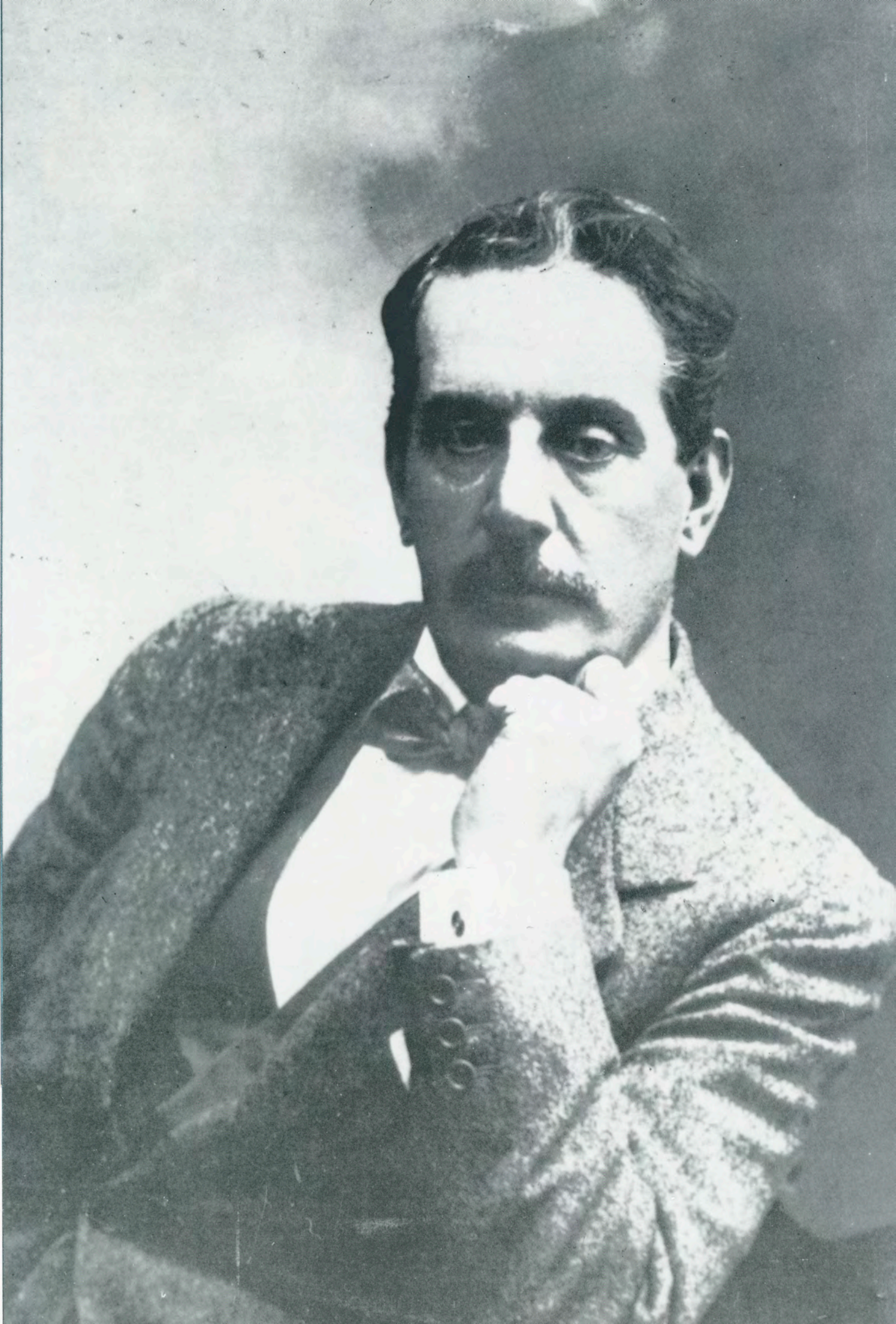
Don Carlos. Subsequent engagements have included Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* at the Hong Kong Festival, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* for the Western Australian Opera, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman* for the Victoria State Opera and the State Opera of South Australia, the King of Egypt in *Aida* and the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* for the Lyric Opera of Queensland. He made his debut with The Australian Opera in 1985 as Ribbing in *Un ballo in maschera* and has subsequently performed the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* and Hans Schwartz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Recent engagements include performances of Colline in *La Bohème* and Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for the Victoria State Opera. Roles for The Australian Opera this year include Le Bailli in *Werther*, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*.

DONALD SHANKS

Queensland-born Donald Shanks made his debut with The Australian Opera in 1964 and since then has sung a wide variety of roles in Australia and overseas. His vast repertoire includes Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Orveso in *Norma*, the title roles in *Boris Godounov* and *Don Pasquale*, Massimiliano in *I masnadieri*, Seneca in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Padre Guardiano in *La forza del Destino*, Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Kecal in *The Bartered Bride*, Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Dr Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman*, Veit Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Fafner and

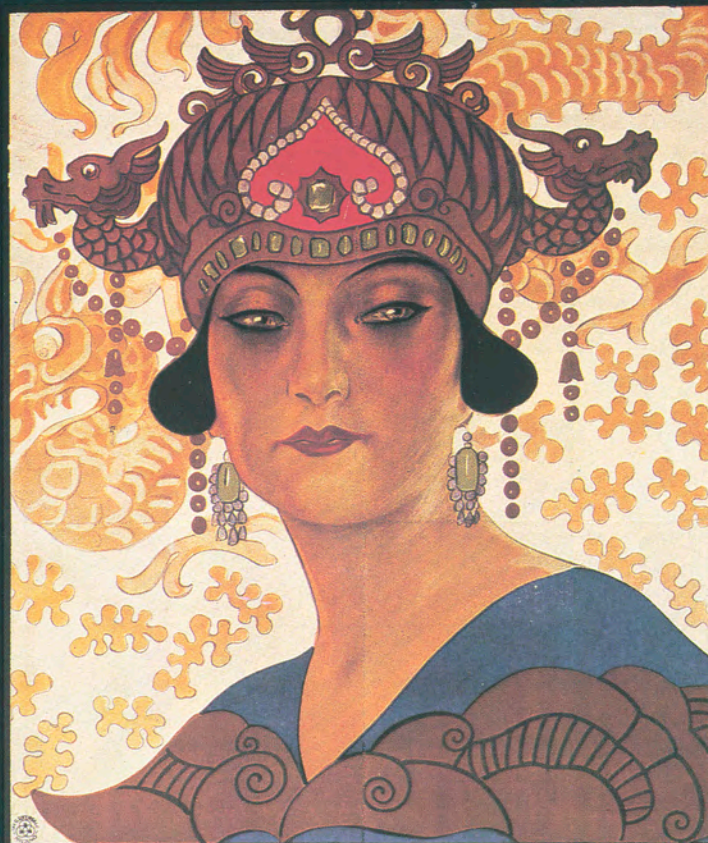


Wotan in *Das Rheingold*, Heinrich in *Lohengrin*, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* and King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*. International engagements include Fafner in *Das Rheingold* at Covent Garden and for Paris Opera, Heinrich in *Lohengrin* and the King in *Hamlet* for Canadian Opera. In 1975 he was awarded the O.B.E. and in 1987 the A.O. for his services to music. He made his debut with the Victoria State Opera as Giorgio in *I Puritani* in 1986 and in 1988 performed Nourabad in *Les pêcheurs de perles* in a joint production with The Australian Opera. Recently he performed Daland in *The Flying Dutchman* with the Lyric Opera of Queensland and later this year he will perform the title role in *Don Pasquale* with the Victoria State Opera. Roles for The Australian Opera this year include Ramphis in *Aida*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, and King Henry in *Lohengrin*.



PRINCESS OF DEATH, PRINCESS OF ICE

Puccini's reputation immediately after World War I was decidedly anomalous. On the one hand he remained — along with Ravel, Sibelius and Richard Strauss the best-loved of living composers: his most famous works continuing to fill opera houses from Brazil to Lithuania, his matinee-idol good looks (scarcely touched by age) still recognisable to millions who had never attended an operatic performance in their lives. On the other hand, his fame rested very largely on music that was fourteen or more years old. However satisfying his increased harmonic audacity and his development as a superlative orchestrator both were to connoisseurs, they proved unable to inspire a correspondingly enthusiastic commercial response. Of his last four operas two (*Suor Angelica*, *La Rondine*) had been popularly considered failures, and one (*Il Tabarro*) was strictly a *succes d'estime*: only *Gianni Schicchi*, musically the most retrogressive of the four, had made a very palpable hit. For a composer who scorned ideologies of every hue, who made no more secret than did Trollope or Somerset Maugham of his desire to make money by pleasing the big public, this was a humiliating position to occupy. The temptation to adopt a sour-grapes attitude of 'I write for posterity' was strong, although he never actually succumbed to it. They who live by the box-office may reasonably expect to perish by the box-office, and with his run of operatic ill-luck the emergent generation of Italian composers — led by the long-forgotten but then-acclaimed Ildebrando Pizzetti short-sightedly dismissed Puccini as one of yesterday's men. Puccini suffered ►

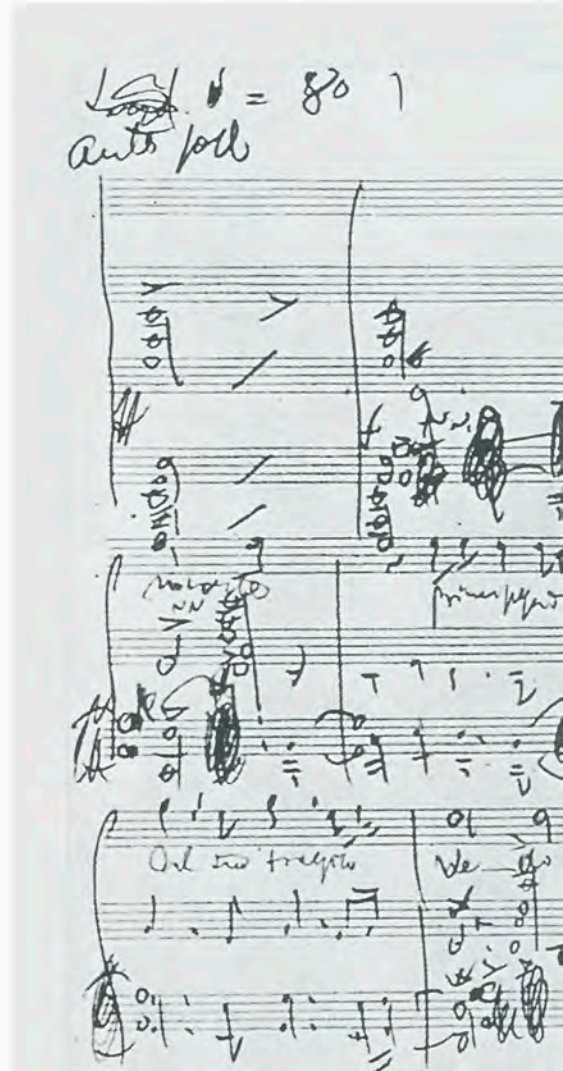


TURANDOT.
MUSICA DI **G. PUCCINI** LIBRETTO DI G. ADAMI E R. SIMONI
= EDIZIONI RICORDI =

additionally from the fact that, though his antagonists regarded him as a monster of cynicism, he could never bring himself to churn out pot-boilers. He needed to immerse himself in the libretti that he set, as completely as any Method actor does in the role that he assumes; and he was incapable of setting any libretto whose plot and characters did not involve his emotions. Rossini and Donizetti thought nothing of putting music to whatever their librettists served up: not so Puccini. At various points in his later life he toyed with an opera about Marie Antoinette, another opera based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, and a third about the *Children's Crusade* that was to be in collaboration with D'Annunzio. All three projects were abandoned in turn when Puccini realised that they failed to quicken his pulse.

The theme suggested to him in March 1920 by Renato Simoni, a dramatist of his acquaintance, was one that at first blush seems as alien to Puccini's muse as any theme could be: *Turandotte*, a theatrical fairytale with conspicuous *commedia dell'arte* elements, created in 1762 by the Venetian playwright Count Carlo Gozzi. Not only does its brand of 18th Century *chinoiserie* appear to offer no chance for the sumptuous lyricism which lay at the core of Puccini's genius, but it had been given musical treatment several times before: notably by Weber (who wrote seven incidental pieces for it) and Busoni (who also wrote a musical accompaniment for it, and later reworked it as a fullblown opera). None of these earlier adaptations had held the stage, even fleetingly: which augured ill for a new one. Yet the subject's unpromising nature was precisely what challenged Puccini. It would force him, as he himself said, *tentar vie non battute*: to follow paths not hitherto beaten, by himself at least. Simoni agreed to collaborate with Giuseppe Adami, the librettist for *Il Tabarro* and *La Rondine*, in producing *Turandot's* text. Puccini liked and confided in Adami, inasmuch as he ever liked and confided in any man apart from Toscanini; the Puccini marriage — which had been in tatters after Signora Puccini drove the family's maidservant to suicide eleven years earlier was stitched together anew, if precariously; in short, all appeared to be going well for *Turandot's* composition.

A draft of Act I's libretto was finished and sent to Puccini in May 1920. Puccini loved it: by sharp contrast with his usual response to his collaborators, which consisted of harassing them into rewrite after rewrite. But the suggested text for Act II greatly disappointed him: he hammered out possible alternative approaches with Adami and Simoni during a meeting at his home the following August. His annoyance at the inferior quality of Act II's words now spilled over into a dissatisfaction with Act I's, and he wanted the latter revised as well. Not until this stage did the crucial character of Liù come into being. Puccini was still thinking in terms of two huge acts rather than three shorter ones: much of what we know as Act III was originally supposed to go into Act II. His initial conception of the story was more complicated, and in dramaturgical terms riskier than the splendidly austere scenario which he eventually used. According to this first conception Calaf, the prince who seeks Turandot's hand, would be sentenced to death and would sing a 'farewell to the world, to love, to life' shortly before mounting the scaffold. He would be tempted with (but would reject) drink, women, and the promise of rescue: all offered on condition that he revealed his name, thereby freeing Turandot from her obligation to marry him. Turandot — instead of paying Calaf the touching compliment that she utters at the end of the present version — was to conclude the work by saying, bathetically, 'I don't know what his name is'. This finale was mercifully scrapped; so was the less absurd notion of Calaf's 'farewell to the world', which harked back all too obviously to Cavaradossi on death-row in *Tosca*. None of the music had yet been written: Puccini did not attempt to produce any until December 1920, the month in which the new version of Act I's libretto arrived. ▶



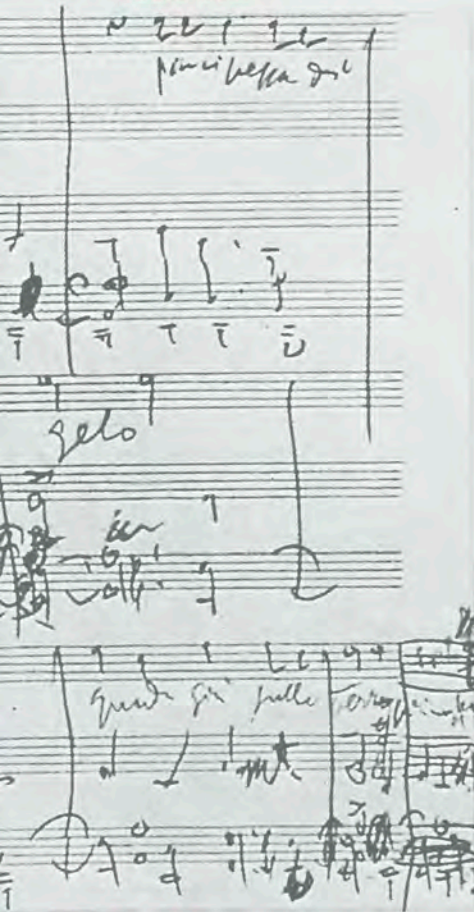
One of Puccini's sketches for



Renato Simoni and Giuseppe Adami with Puccini



Carlo Gozzi




the final duet of the opera



The following January, after another meeting with Adami and Simoni, Puccini reported that he was hard at work on Act I's music: he spent between ten and twelve hours each day on it. Three months later (30 April) he wrote to Adami 'In a little while I come to the riddle scene. I consider I have made great strides'. (It was his, and his colleagues' original intention to have the riddles propounded to Calaf in Act I: rather than, as in the finished product, in Act II Scene 2.) He now conceded the merit of a three-act rather than two-act structure. Even this concession he retracted in September 1921: he feared that, what with the riddles in Act I and the salvation of Calaf in Act III, there would be too little action in the intervening period. A bacchic dance, 'a hymn to the risen victory', and 'an epilogue with Liù, slaves and Turandot' were among the suggestions he made for solving this problem. Adami and Simoni wanted none of these, and said so in their correspondence. Annoyingly, Puccini found himself faced at this already difficult period with the necessity to move house: his villa at Torre del Lago, near Pisa, had been made uninhabitable by the noise and odours of a peat-processing plant which the government had built nearby. Finally, on 26 December, he wrote to his librettists from his new home at Viareggio and admitted that a three-act formula was best, and that the riddle scene was most suitably located in Act II.

In March 1922 Puccini completed Act I's short-score version: having had some exceptionally large music paper custom-made for him, the better to accommodate the enormous instrumental forces he envisaged, he spent most of the next eight months orchestrating what he had done. During that time the remainder of the opera's libretto arrived. Puccini wrote delightedly to the Ricordi firm, his publishers, on 25 June: 'Propitious days for me . . . Simoni and Adami have delivered to me, to my complete satisfaction, the finished libretto of *Turandot*'. But Puccini being Puccini, this uncritical euphoria did not last: he could not help requesting amendments a few weeks afterwards. It was only at this astonishingly late moment in *Turandot*'s creation that Puccini first came up with one of the plot's supreme twists. 'I think [he told Adami in his letter of 3 November 1922] that Liù must be sacrificed to some grief, but I cannot see how this can be done unless we make her die under torture. And why not?' While his colleagues pondered how his wish in this area could be fittingly satisfied (the eventual opening line of Liù's last solo, *Tu che di quel sei cinta*, was Puccini's own inspiration), he beavered away at Act II. This took him most of 1923, Act II Scene 1 ('Ping and Co.', as he called it) causing him particular frustration both theatrically and musically. Indeed, the whole project was sapping his spirits by now. 'Maybe, or even without the 'maybe', I am no longer any good . . . I don't want to say *muoio disperato* [the climactic line of Cavaradossi's despairing Act III aria], but I am almost at that point . . . I am a poor, very unhappy man, discouraged, old, useless and disheartened. What can I do?' This state of intense depression was all too familiar to Puccini: just after his sixtieth birthday he had sought to combat it through undergoing Dr Voronov's notorious 'monkey-gland' rejuvenation treatment in Switzerland, and was only prevented from doing so by a long-standing diabetic condition. His melancholy would not have mattered much had it not impeded his creative processes. Unfortunately, the more obsessive his self-criticism, the harder he found it to exert himself for any musical activity whatever: and the easier it became for him to use his newly high artistic standards as an excuse for lethargy. Citing the poor quality of the proposed words for the *Turandot/Calaf* finale, he made Adami and Simoni write the love duet's text four times in all. Admittedly, he was not himself idle yet; he had approved the text for the rest of Act III, and he finished setting this (during a last feverish burst that included devising the orchestration as well as creating the music) in March 1924. The very closeness of his ultimate goal was a source of vexation to him. Ominously, in early March he began to complain that his throat was giving him trouble. A note on 13 March to his English friend Sybil Seligman started 'I haven't been at all well and I've still got a sore throat and an obstinate cough'. The illness could not be explained away by influenza or any other viral infection, and it refused to let up. ▶



It was cancer, which a lifetime's loyal patronage of the Italian tobacco industry had caused. Puccini himself was kept ignorant of his true medical state, as was his wife: it was in his son Tonio that the composer's doctors confided. By the time he received medical attention the cancer had spread so far as to be incurable by any Italian specialist. And still the final version of the love-duet's words remained unwritten, mainly because Adami and Simoni were totally unaware of how sick Puccini had become. Not until 1 September 1924 did Puccini receive a revision of that duet which satisfied him: straightaway he began to clothe the words in music. The only hope now held out for Puccini's health was that he might respond to the ministrations of a Brussels physician named Ledoux. He continued to make light of his discomfort, and of the resultant change in his speaking voice. 'You hear my tenor's voice, Arturo?' he disconcertingly asked Toscanini when the two men met for the last time on 3 November. Puccini made the train trip to Belgium the following day, accompanied by Tonio and Tonio's half-sister Fosca: in his luggage were the 36 manuscript pages on which he had wrestled with the duet's composition.

Dr Ledoux treated his patient with X-rays at first, and neither ordered nor expected Puccini to remain in bed. On 22 November he undertook internal surgery: implanting seven small crystal needles in Puccini's larynx, where the tumour was ('I seem to have bayonets in my throat', Puccini wrote on his scribbling-pad) and inserting a tube by which Puccini could breathe. The operation seemed to be very successful. Ledoux, normally a most pessimistic man, announced that *Puccini en sortira*: 'Puccini will pull through'. He intended to extract the needles from Puccini's neck on Sunday 30 November, once the tumour had been killed. The composer was in such good post-operative spirits that he was briefly allowed to leave the hospital for a festive lunch on the 28th. Then the terrible blow fell. That same evening, at around 6 o'clock, Puccini had a massive heart attack: Ledoux hastily removed the needles in the hope of alleviating Puccini's agony, but it was useless. At 11.30 on the morning of Saturday 29 November, the composer was announced dead. Princess Turandot had claimed her last victim. ■

ROBERT J. STOVE



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PUCCINI'S LETTERS

Torre del Lago
10 November 1920

Dear Adamino,

I am afraid that *Turandot* will never be finished. It is impossible to work like this. When the fever abates it ends by disappearing, and without fever there is no creation; because emotional art is a kind of malady, an exceptional state of mind, over-excitation of every fibre and every atom of one's being, and so on *ad aeternum*. I am going to the Maremma towards the end of the month to become still more brutish. Will you come there, or do you prefer to come here first? It depends on you and the work you have done. And what about Simoni? Now that the thrushes have gone south will he get to work? Is he still on his high horse, I wonder? I hope not, because for me the libretto is nothing to trifle with. It is not a question of finishing it. It is a question of giving life that will endure to a thing which must be alive before it can be born, and so on till we make a masterpiece. Shall I have the strength to second you? Who can tell? Shall I be tired, discouraged, weighed down by years and spiritual torment, and by my never-ceasing discontent? Who can tell? Work as if you were working for a young man of thirty, and I shall do my best; and if I do not succeed it will be my fault!

Affectionately yours,

Puccini



Monte Carlo
Thursday
(Spring 1924)

Dear Adamino,

Thank you for the lines, which are good. There is just one word which will not do: "I shall shout my love," because it occurs on a low note. But that is easy to change. Hour by hour and minute by minute I think of *Turandot*, and all the music I have written up to now seems a jest in comparison and pleases me no more. Is it a good sign? I think so.

My kindest regards to Renato. I send you golden spurs to speed you in the sacred race which we are running.

The rehearsals here are going well. I have seen nothing of them yet, as I wanted everybody there, so as to correct from a musical view. I shall see tomorrow at the full rehearsal. I am told that Gunsbourg has upset everything. The man amuses me! I am letting him do what he likes — especially as by now there is nothing else to do.

I too am homesick for you and the collaboration which is so precious and so delightful to me.

Kind regards to Renato and yourself.

Puccini

Viareggio
1 September 1924

Dear Adamino,

I am starting to write again today. I have been passing through tremendous crises — with regard to my health as other things. The trouble in my throat that has been worrying me since March was beginning to appear serious. I am feeling better now, and have, moreover, the assurance that it is rheumatic in origin and that with treatment I shall be cured. But I have had some very black days. That is why I wrote to nobody, not even to you, which is saying everything!

Clausetti came yesterday and I said yes for the Scala. I wonder if I was wise?

I shall start again now the work interrupted six months ago! And I hope soon to see the end of this blessed princess.

At the moment my horizon is clearer in every direction.

Kindest regards. Why don't you come here for a little?

Richard Wagner



Viareggio
10 October 1924

Dear Adamino,

Is it really true that I am not to work any more? Not to finish *Turandot*? There was so little still to do for the successful completion of the famous duet. Come, come, dear little Adamino, do me this favour, make me the great effort of devoting two or three hours to me and send me the lines which I need. But do this little piece of work in such a way that it will be final and not have to be returned again. Don't disappoint me!

Affectionately yours,

Richard Wagner

Viareggio
22 October 1924

Dear Adamino,

What am I to say to you? I am going through a terrible time. This trouble in my throat is giving me no rest, although the torment is more mental than physical. I am going to Brussels to consult a well-known specialist. I am setting out very soon. I am waiting for a reply from Brussels and for Tonio's return from Milan. Will it be an operation? or medical treatment? or sentence of death? I cannot go on any longer like this. And then there's *Turandot*. Simoni's verses are good, and I think he has done just what was needed and what I had dreamed of. All the rest of Liu's appeal to *Turandot* was irrelevant, and I think your opinion is correct that the duet is now complete. Perhaps *Turandot* has too much to say in that passage. We shall see — when I get to work again on my return from Brussels.

Let us hope I shall get over this!

Yours affectionately,

Puccini



Puccini's funeral in Brussels in 1924

[LAST LETTER]

Institut Chirurgical
Avenue de la Couronne
Bruxelles

Dear Adamino,

So far the treatment is not too bad. External applications. But on Monday God knows what they are going to do to me, in order to get at the epiglottis from underneath! They assure me that it will not be painful — and they say too that I shall be cured. Some days ago I had lost all hope of recovery. And what hours and days I have passed! I am prepared for anything.

Write to me sometimes.

Yours affectionately,

My regards to Signora Amalia. Elvira is in Milan.

Puccini

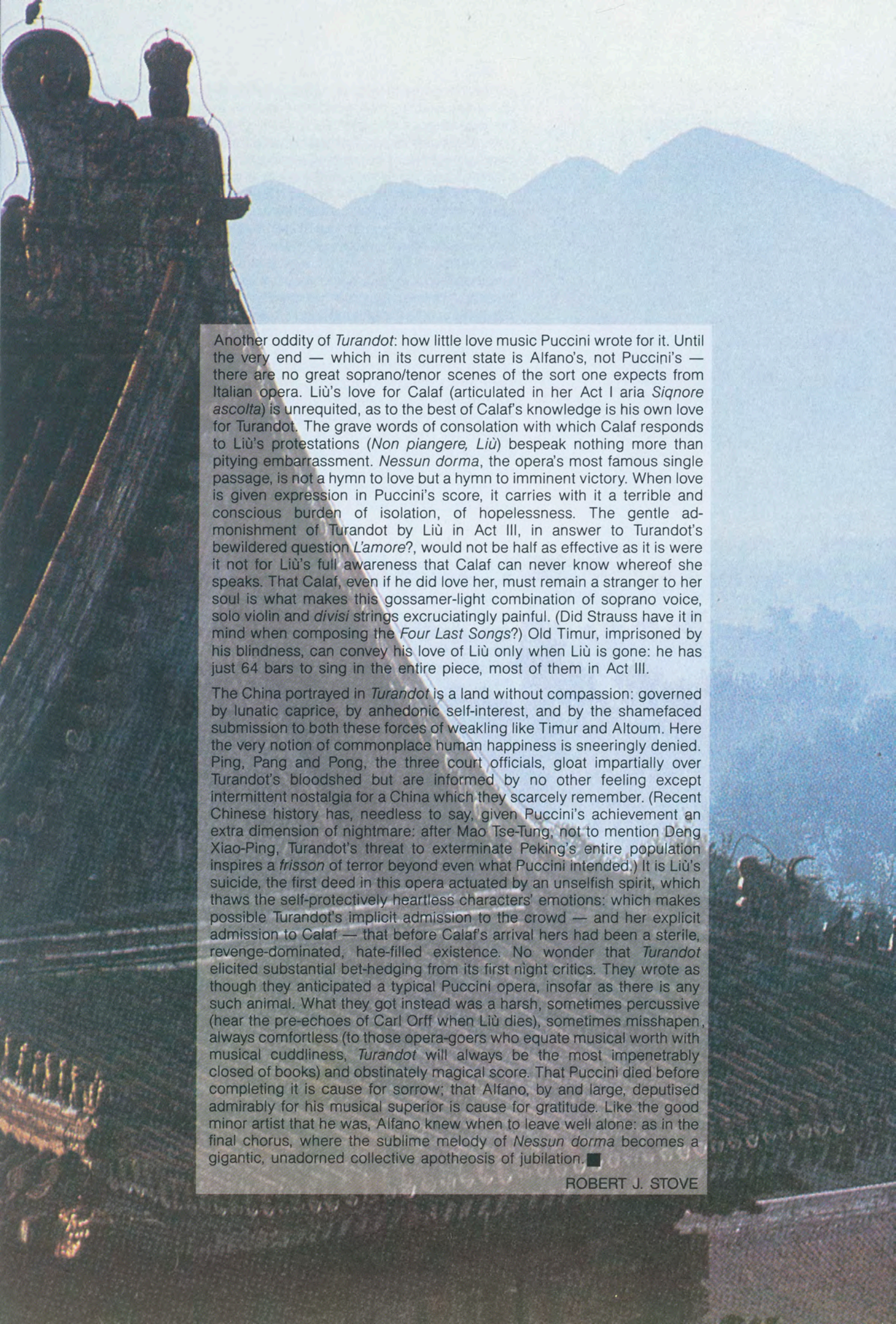
Even as a youth Puccini was celebrated among his colleagues for the untidiness of his musical handwriting: his first opera, *Le Villi*, failed to win a prize in the Sonzogno company's 1883 operatic competition not because of its musical defects but because the judges could scarcely read his manuscript. In this respect Puccini did not improve with advancing years. The 36 pages of sketches he left for the *Turandot* love duet were a headache-inducing palimpsest of lines from the libretto, possible instrumental combinations, vocal passages, begun but not finished, crossings-out, and gnomic *aides-mèmoires*: 'find melody', 'less silly than the other', 'then Tristan' (!). They seemed to defy interpretation as surely as, until the 1950s, did Linear B cuneiform. Still, *someone* needed to interpret them, otherwise *Turandot* would be condemned to stay an unperformable torso. Realising this, Toscanini obtained permission from both Ricordi and the Puccini estate to conscript Franco Alfano for the task. Alfano (1876-1954) had enjoyed a few ephemeral operatic successes in his own right; as the conscientious and untemperamental craftsman, he fitted the bill much better than a greater composer would have done. Musical history knows of no more thankless reconstruction job than this: while Alfano's completion of *Turandot* has been snittily disparaged by most Puccini commentators, one need only compare it to its nearest analogue in the non-operatic field Franz Süssmayr's unscrupulous recomposition of Mozart's *Requiem* — to appreciate the Italian's tact and humility. (He unfortunately needed such virtues, since Toscanini pitilessly abridged what Alfano had written: it is this cut version which almost all performances of *Turandot* adopt, though Alfano's original completion has been accorded occasional recent hearings). Alfano's efforts, by their nature, could not be rushed: as a result, *Turandot's* premiere was postponed by a year.

That premiere, when it eventually occurred — at La Scala on 25 April 1926 — was predictably charged with a sense of excitement unusual even for a Puccini first night. It was an excitement sharpened by political drama. Mussolini ostentatiously boycotted the occasion, enraged by Toscanini's refusal to begin the proceedings with a rendition of the Fascist hymn *Giovinetta*. Act I inspired rapturous public acclaim; the bigger, less extroverted Act II was somewhat coolly received. Having directed the performance of Act III up to Liù's funeral march, Toscanini astonished performers and listeners alike by laying down his baton. He then turned to face the audience, and in a trembling voice he said: 'Qui finisce l'opera lasciata incompiuta dal Maestro, perché a questo punto il Maestro è morto' ('Here ends the opera left unfinished by the Maestro, because at this point the Maestro died'). Complete silence fell, finally broken by a lone shout from the stalls: *Viva Puccini!* This cry triggered one of the longest and most deafening ovations in La Scala's history. So moving a popular tribute made it unthinkable to continue the performance with Alfano's music: and only on the second night was the latter used.

Turandot is the grandest and most ambitious of Puccini's operas, though *Madama Butterfly* and *La fanciulla del West* both exceed it in playing time. Its amplitude is a matter not of unusual length, but of its basic ►



Rosa Raisa, the first Turandot



Another oddity of *Turandot*: how little love music Puccini wrote for it. Until the very end — which in its current state is Alfano's, not Puccini's — there are no great soprano/tenor scenes of the sort one expects from Italian opera. Liù's love for Calaf (articulated in her Act I aria *Signore ascolta*) is unrequited, as to the best of Calaf's knowledge is his own love for Turandot. The grave words of consolation with which Calaf responds to Liù's protestations (*Non piangere, Liù*) bespeak nothing more than pitying embarrassment. *Nessun dorma*, the opera's most famous single passage, is not a hymn to love but a hymn to imminent victory. When love is given expression in Puccini's score, it carries with it a terrible and conscious burden of isolation, of hopelessness. The gentle admonishment of Turandot by Liù in Act III, in answer to Turandot's bewildered question *L'amore?*, would not be half as effective as it is were it not for Liù's full awareness that Calaf can never know whereof she speaks. That Calaf, even if he did love her, must remain a stranger to her soul is what makes this gossamer-light combination of soprano voice, solo violin and *divisi* strings excruciatingly painful. (Did Strauss have it in mind when composing the *Four Last Songs*?) Old Timur, imprisoned by his blindness, can convey his love of Liù only when Liù is gone: he has just 64 bars to sing in the entire piece, most of them in Act III.

The China portrayed in *Turandot* is a land without compassion: governed by lunatic caprice, by anhedonic self-interest, and by the shamefaced submission to both these forces of weakling like Timur and Altoum. Here the very notion of commonplace human happiness is sneeringly denied. Ping, Pang and Pong, the three court officials, gloat impartially over Turandot's bloodshed but are informed by no other feeling except intermittent nostalgia for a China which they scarcely remember. (Recent Chinese history has, needless to say, given Puccini's achievement an extra dimension of nightmare: after Mao Tse-Tung, not to mention Deng Xiao-Ping, Turandot's threat to exterminate Peking's entire population inspires a *frisson* of terror beyond even what Puccini intended.) It is Liù's suicide, the first deed in this opera actuated by an unselfish spirit, which thaws the self-protectively heartless characters' emotions: which makes possible Turandot's implicit admission to the crowd — and her explicit admission to Calaf — that before Calaf's arrival hers had been a sterile, revenge-dominated, hate-filled existence. No wonder that *Turandot* elicited substantial bet-hedging from its first night critics. They wrote as though they anticipated a typical Puccini opera, insofar as there is any such animal. What they got instead was a harsh, sometimes percussive (hear the pre-echoes of Carl Orff when Liù dies), sometimes misshapen, always comfortable (to those opera-goers who equate musical worth with musical cuddliness, *Turandot* will always be the most impenetrably closed of books) and obstinately magical score. That Puccini died before completing it is cause for sorrow; that Alfano, by and large, deputised admirably for his musical superior is cause for gratitude. Like the good minor artist that he was, Alfano knew when to leave well alone: as in the final chorus, where the sublime melody of *Nessun dorma* becomes a gigantic, unadorned collective apotheosis of jubilation. ■

ROBERT J. STOVE



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TURANDOT ON DISC

I find *Turandot* one of the most difficult of all operas for which to find satisfactory recordings. Find the perfect soprano for the contradictory role of Turandot — all that ice and fire — and her Calaf lets her down. Or find a well-matched Turandot and Calaf, and find a poor Liù, or, worst of all, orchestra and chorus forces which sound thin and drained of energy when they should be blazing with tortured excitement.

There is however one CD recording which brings together all the right ingredients triumphantly. This Decca set (414 274-2) brings us the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Alldiss Choir under Zubin Mehta in an electrifying performance, with Joan Sutherland giving a moving performance which invests Turandot with a human believability missing from many other performances, and with a fine cast of great strength, as in the casting of Montserrat Caballe as Liù.

This recording has a triumphant Calaf of thrilling tone in Luciano Pavarotti, whose performance shows that the mass adulation this tenor now receives is not misplaced. How good that his 'Nessun Dorma' is topping the pop charts of Europe, taking opera to the people it was created for!

Birgitt Nillson was and remains for many *the* Turandot of the post-war years, and there are two of her accounts on CD. The earliest, on RCA (RD 85932) has the Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Erich Leinsdorf, with Jussi Bjoerling as Calaf and Renata Tebaldi as Liù. The later recording (EMI CMS 7 69327 2) finds Nillson partnered by Franco Corelli and Renata Scottò, with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. Of the two recordings I prefer the former for Bjoerling's noble Calaf, but my personal taste finds Nillson's ice-maiden performance just too unapproachable on disc, and lacking visceral excitement.

Visceral excitement there is, and more, in Maria Callas's wonderful assumption of the role (HMV CDS 7 47971-8) with Tullio Serafin conducting the Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala and with a marvellous Liù in Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. The Calaf of Eugenio Fernandi is unfortunately big-voiced but stolid, but while not the perfect set, Callas's nerve-rending performance, and Schwarzkopf's melting tone, makes it indispensable.

On Nuova Era there is a recent live recording (Nuova Era 6786/87) with a fine Turandot in Ghena Dimitrova, an unconvincing Nicola Martinucci as Calaf and an Orchestra and Chorus of Genova Opera conducted by Daniel Oren. The orchestra sounds as if half its numbers have already left for holidays, and the remainder are thinking where to go while they play. For a live performance, the sound is excellent, revealing some odd things indeed.

ANTHONY CLARKE

The Australian Opera and *Turandot*

Turandot was first performed by The Australian Opera in 1967 in a production by Stephen Hall, with sets designed by Friedrich Bliem and costumes designed by Mel Clifford and Robert Potter. After a warehouse fire in 1969, the sets were recreated by Friedrich Bliem and the opera re-entered the repertoire in 1970 directed by Moffatt Oxenbould.

The opera was last performed in a staged version by the Company in Sydney in 1971. Two concert performances in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Bicentennial Festival of Sydney were given in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall in February 1988, conducted by Carlo Felice Cillario.



Ronald Maconaghie (Ping), Robert Gard (Pong),
John Heffernan (Pang) and Rosemary Gordon (Liu) 1967



Morag Beaton (Turandot) and Umberto Borso (Calaf) 1970



Graeme Ewer (Pang), Ronald Maconaghie (Ping) and Robert Gard (Pong) 1967



Donald Smith (Calaf), Neil Warren-Smith (Timur)
and Joan Carden (Liu) 1971



Morag Beaton (Turandot) and Donald Smith (Calaf) 1967

