



AUSTIN OPERA

Interactive Resource Guide

Access Opera

Final Dress Rehearsal

November 7, 2024

THE
MANCHURIAN
CANDIDATE

Puts and Campbell
November 9–10, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Table of Contents
3	Welcome
5	TEKS: Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills
7	Character Map
8	Synopsis
10	Cast & Creative Team
11	What is Opera?
12	Composer & Librettist
13	Meet some key players
14	The Music of <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i>
15	Propaganda in <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i>
18	What to expect at the opera

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Welcome to the Interactive Resource Guide for Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's *The Manchurian Candidate*.

This opera, based on the 1959 novel by Richard Condon, premiered in 2015 and has been performed many times since across the United States. The music mixes traditional operatic sounds with modern, sometimes tense, musical elements to reflect the complex psychological and political themes in the story. The opera also uses a unique storytelling model, by jumping between different points in time to focus on themes like brainwashing, political control, and the effects of war. It's easy to see this story's long-standing relevance as it has also been adapted into two films, in 1962 starring Frank Sinatra, and in 2004 starring Denzel Washington.

Before you arrive at the Long Center, we want you to dive into this opera and get a taste of all the work that goes into making the magic happen on stage. In this TEKS aligned Interactive Resource Guide, you will find a wealth of topics to further explore this piece and discuss with your students. You'll hear from cast and creative team members, learn about the composer and librettist, explore propaganda and learn about the modern music that makes us feel the characters' emotions even deeper.

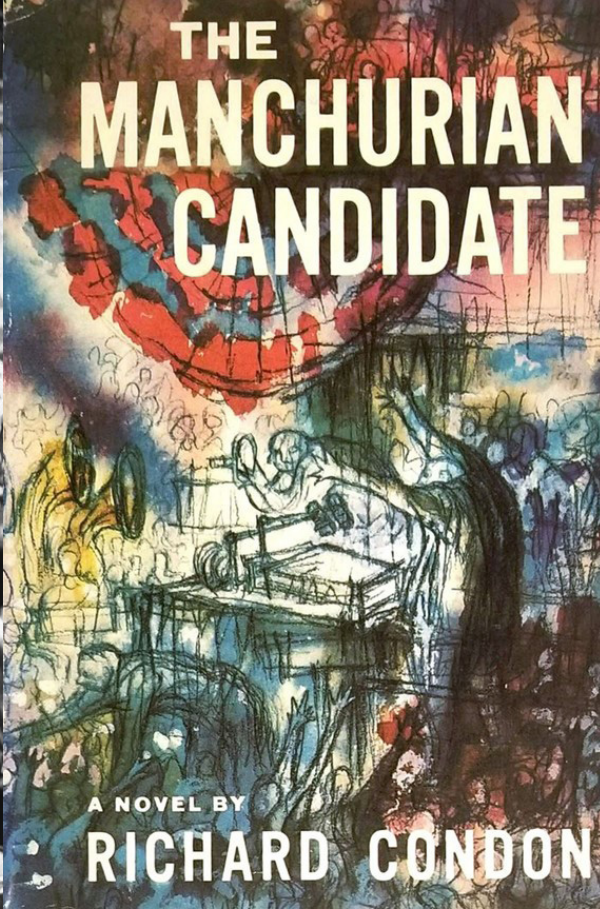
Whether this is your first time experiencing an opera or you're an avid fan, this guide is designed to teach you something new, and I know it will enhance your full Access Opera experience.

Enjoy, and we'll see you at the opera!



Andréa Ochoa
Director of Education & Community Impact

AUSTIN OPERA

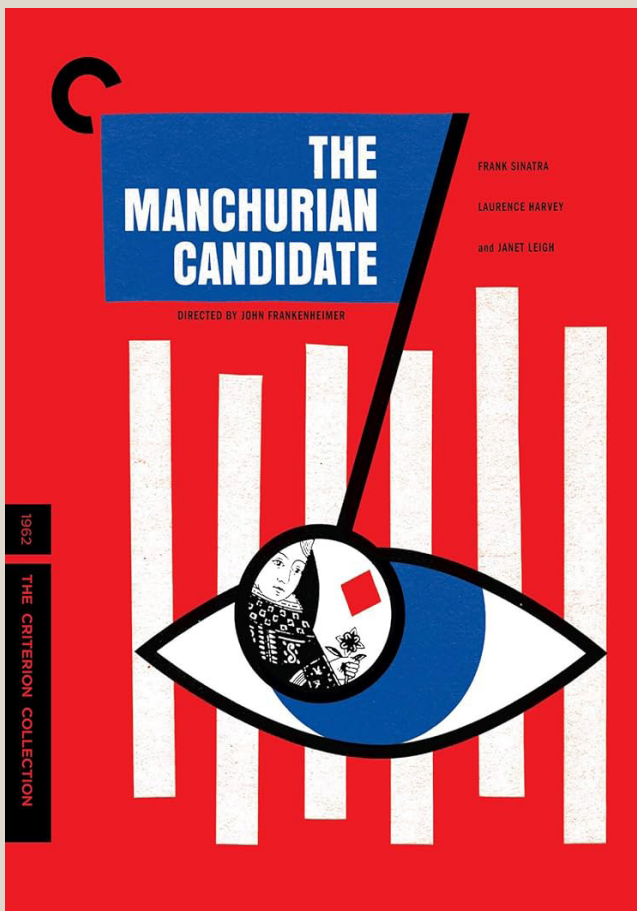


Richard Condon

photographed by
John Bryson / The LIFE Images Collection / Getty

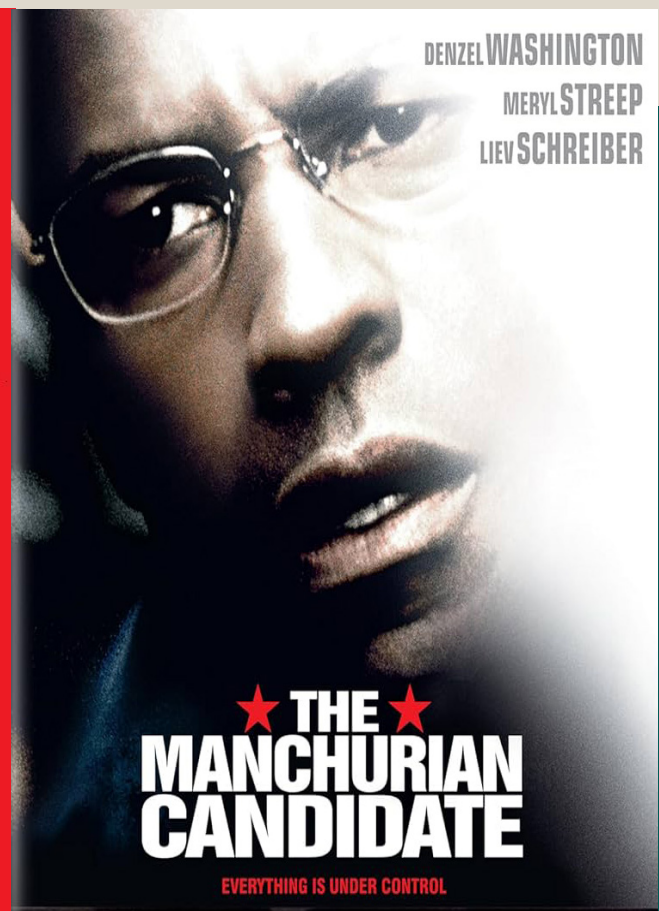
"The Manchurian Candidate"

Original book cover.



"The Manchurian Candidate"

1962 film



"The Manchurian Candidate"

2004 film

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Music TEKS (Middle School)

§117.208(c)(1): Foundations: Music Literacy

- The student describes and analyzes musical sound and demonstrates musical artistry.

The student is expected to:

- Categorize and explain a variety of musical sounds, including those of diverse cultures;
- Use standard terminology in explaining music, music notation, musical instruments, voices, and performances.

§117.208(c)(3): Historical and Cultural Relevance

- The student relates music to history, culture, and the world. The student is expected to:
 - Identify music-related vocations and avocations within the community.

§117.208(c)(4): Critical Evaluation and Response

- The student evaluates and responds to music and musical performance. The student is expected to:
 - Apply specific criteria for listening to and evaluating musical performances;
 - Describe and analyze musical performances and their impact on listeners.

Social Studies TEKS (High School - U.S. Government)

§113.44. United States Government (c)(2)(C)

- The student is expected to describe the impact of political socialization, public opinion, and the media on political decisions.

§113.44. United States Government (c)(2)(C)

- The student understands how media, including social media, influences political attitudes and behaviors, including techniques of propaganda and persuasion.

Media Literacy TEKS

§110.38. Media Literacy (c)(1)(B)

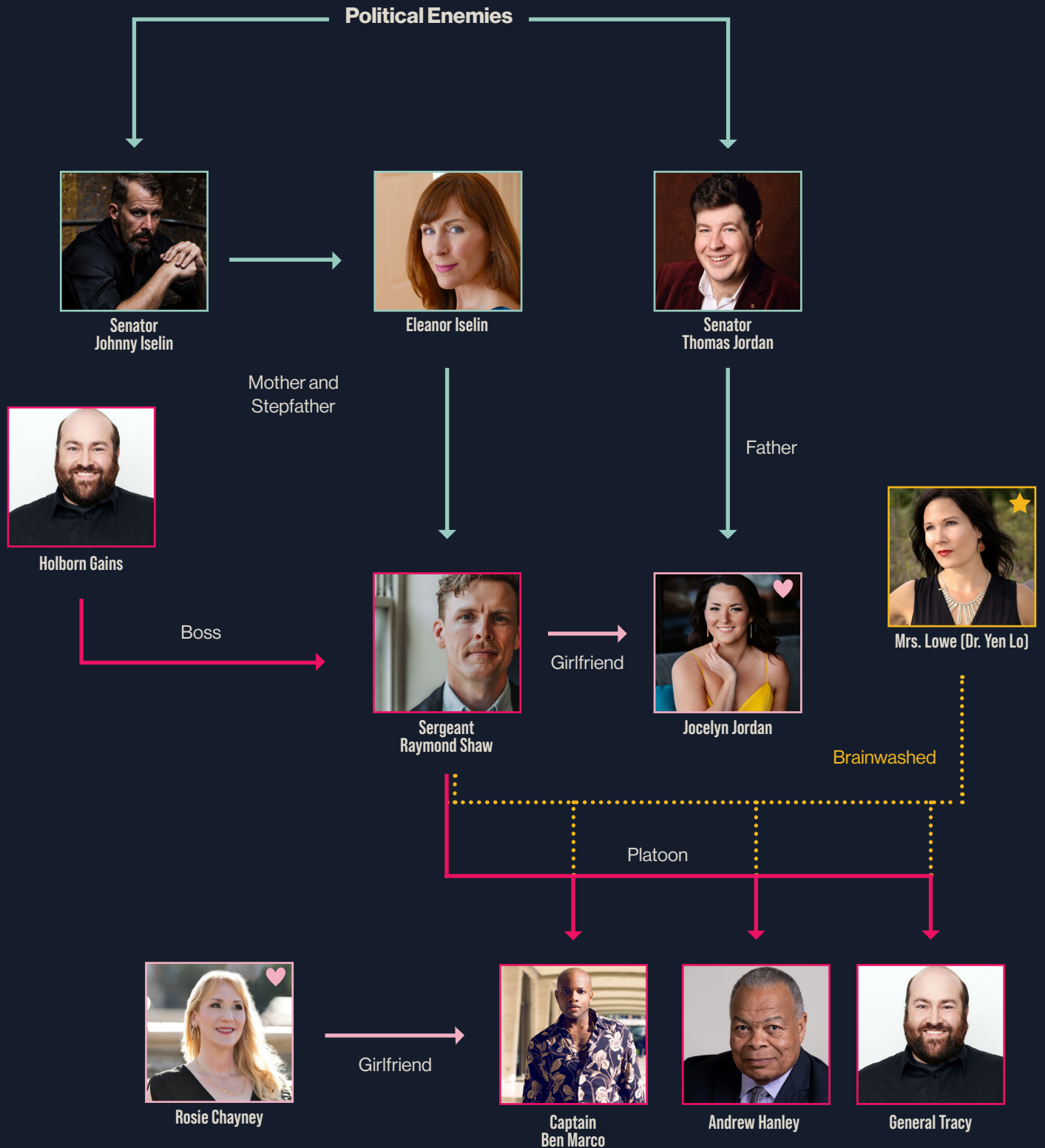
- The student evaluates the role of media in the democratic process, including media's influence on public opinion, voting, and policymaking.

§110.38. Media Literacy (c)(2)(C)

- The student is expected to analyze the impact of media messages on society, including the identification of bias, propaganda, and misinformation.



Character Chart



- Politicians
- Platoon
- Girlfriend
- ⋯ Brainwashed
- ★ Brainwasher

Synopsis

ACT I

Scene One – “The Ladies Garden Club of Northern New Jersey”

Mrs. Lowe introduces five soldiers, Ben Marco, Ed Mavole, Bobby Lembeck, Andrew Hanley and Raymond Shaw to her “garden club.” From the start, it is clear all is not as it should be. In fact, we are inside the brainwashed minds of the soldiers, who believe they are attending a ladies luncheon when in reality they are being displayed before a group of Communist officials. Mrs. Lowe (really Dr. Yen Lo) spotlights Raymond as the perfect assassin, one who can kill without computation or memory of the incident. In a demonstration to the Russian and Chinese audience, Raymond plays solitaire – when he uncovers the Queen of Diamonds, his mind is receptive to commands. Lowe suggests Raymond strangle Ed Mavole, the most popular member of their platoon, and he performs the terrible deed without hesitation. Next, under the same directive, he shoots Bobby Lembeck. The Communists are pleased. Marco is told to recommend Shaw for the Medal of Honor for being “a true American hero.”

Scene Two – the tarmac of Idlewild Airport

Raymond greets his mother, Eleanor Iselin, with contempt. She has arranged a photo opportunity to praise her son’s courage, but also to advance the career of her husband and Raymond’s stepfather, Senator Johnny Iselin. Raymond angrily denounces both as frauds, and discloses that he has accepted a position at a New York newspaper, the Daily Press, hoping to distance himself from them both.

Scene Three – darkness

A McCarthy-esque television speech made by Johnny Iselin morphs into a recap of the garden club meeting. Night after night Captain Marco has had the same recurring dream depicting the deaths of Mavole and Lembeck.

Scene Four – the Army offices

Marco discusses his dream with General Tracy. His superior officer dismisses it as battle fatigue and assigns

him to less demanding work as a press representative.

Scene Five – a press conference

Johnny Iselin interrupts the Defense Department’s budgetary press conference, brazenly waving a list of 207 Communists working inside the organization. Claiming this house cleaning is the responsibility of the Senate, he rushes out of the room as flashbulbs go off and television cameras roll. Marco tells the Secretary of Defense that he will manage the problem.

Scene Six – the office of the Daily Press

Raymond’s boss, Holborn Gaines, comments on Johnny’s spectacle and promises to stop him. He is about to have lunch with Senator Thomas Jordan, one of Johnny’s most formidable opponents. Raymond admits he once knew the senator’s daughter, Jocelyn.

Scene Seven – a bucolic setting on Long Island

Raymond recalls the summer he met “Jocie” when she saved him from a snakebite. He learns that her father became the sworn enemy of his mother. Raymond agrees with Senator Jordan’s characterization of Eleanor. Now in love, Raymond suggests that he and Jocie run away together. Ever belligerent, Eleanor puts an end to the relationship.

Scene Eight – a train car

Captain Marco makes small talk with an attractive, yet mysterious, Rosie Chayney. They agree to meet at her apartment in New York.

Scene Nine – outside Raymond’s apartment

Marco emerges from the shadows and pulls Raymond aside, describing the strange dreams with the gun and the scarf. Not really wanting to discuss it further, Raymond admits he has received a letter from Corporal Hanley admitting exactly the same thing. Marco gives Raymond Rosie’s phone number, where he will be staying while in New York, in case Raymond wishes to discuss it further. As Marco leaves, Raymond’s telephone rings. He answers and then pulls out a deck of playing cards.

Scene Ten – the bedroom of Holborn Gaines

Early in the morning, Raymond shoots and kills his boss Holborn Gaines.

Scene Eleven – the Iselin’s home

Eleanor comments on the headlines reporting Gaines’ murder while Johnny rehearses a speech. She has decided to throw a costume party ostensibly to celebrate the return of Jocelyn Jordan, whose father’s favor she now hopes to garner to enhance their political position.

Scene Twelve – the Army offices

In response to Marco’s query about Corporal Hanley, General Tracy shows him some photographs. Just like Hanley, Marco recognizes Dr. Lo Yen and Berezovo, two people of interest to international security.

Scene Thirteen – the Iselin’s home

At the costume party, Raymond asks after Jocie. Eleanor proposes that he play solitaire until she appears. When the Queen of Diamonds is played, Eleanor (now clearly an agent for the Communists) begins to coach him for another murder, but is interrupted by Johnny, who announces Senator Jordan’s arrival. While Eleanor solicits Jordan’s support in another room, Jocie arrives, attired in a Queen of Diamonds costume. Completely under her spell, Raymond agrees to run away with her. Meanwhile, Jordan repulses Eleanor and declares that he will do everything possible to derail Johnny’s bid for the vice presidential nomination. Returning to the study, Eleanor is furious to discover Raymond has left with Jocie.

Intermission

Act II

Scene One – Raymond’s apartment

Recently married, Raymond and Jocie revel in their mutual adoration. Marco drops by, learns the happy news, then insists that he speak to Raymond. Now alone, Jocie answers the ringing telephone, but no one is at the other end.

Scene Two – a bar

Marco reveals to Raymond that his Medal of Honor is based on a lie, and that the young sergeant killed both Mavole and Lembeck. Raymond doesn’t remember any

of it, and Marco explains that he has been programmed to become a killing machine. Meanwhile, a bartender relays some domestic details to another customer. When she says “Why don’t you pass the time by playing a little game of solitaire,” Raymond instinctively asks for a deck of cards. At the moment the Queen of Diamonds is displayed, an absurd suggestion is made, and to Marco’s astonishment, Raymond dutifully performs the task. Marco begins to decode the master plan.

Scene Three – Raymond’s apartment/Rosie’s apartment

Both Raymond and Rosie watch the political convention on their respective televisions. Raymond receives a phone call and begins to play solitaire while Rosie and Marco share a tender moment, agreeing to marry. Marco suddenly realizes that the Queen of Diamonds is the trigger card.

At the Jordan’s home, Jocie announces her marriage to her father. Raymond slips into the apartment unnoticed. He shoots Jordan and then Jocie.

Scene Four – Raymond’s apartment

Raymond is under Eleanor’s spell. She commands him to assassinate the presidential nominee at the convention to clear the way for her husband’s succession. After she leaves, Marco arrives, determined to deprogram Raymond. Using the playing cards, he intends to learn Raymond’s most recent mission.

Scene Five – a small office near the convention floor

Marco relays what he has learned to the security agents. Rosie arrives unexpectedly, and in spite of his concern for her safety, refuses to leave.

Scene Six – the convention floor

The presidential nominee, his wife and children, and the Iselins sit on the platform. While the nominee makes his opening remarks, Eleanor privately savors her accomplishments. A shot rings out and Eleanor falls dead. Another shot takes out Johnny. A third shot rings out as chaos ensues. Marco confesses to Rosie his reprogramming of Raymond’s mind, even if it cost him his own life.

Courtesy of Minnesota Opera.

Cast



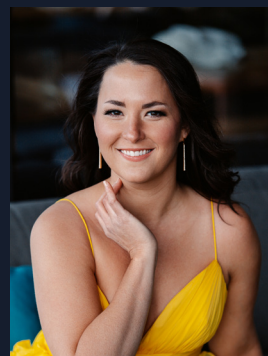
Mark Diamond+
Sergeant Raymond
Shaw



Mary Dunleavy*+
Eleanor Iselin



Frederick
Ballentine*+
Captain Ben Marco



Rachel Blaustein*+
Jocelyn Jordan



Kyle Albertson*+
Johnny Iselin

Creative Team



Conductor
Timothy Myers
Sarah and Ernest Butler
Music Director



Director
Alison Moritz
Director

Kevin Puts
Music

Mark Campbell
Libretto

Vince Herod
Scene Design

Greg Emetaz
Projection Design

Kathryn Eader
Lighting Design

Notes

* Austin Opera debut
+ Role debut

Based on the novel by Richard Condon
Commissioned by Minnesota Opera
A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative Commission

What is Opera?

For many of us, the word opera conjures up pictures of women singing in Viking helmets or—let's be real—the over-the-top drama of Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd cartoons. Well, to be honest, those cartoons aren't that far off. Operas are supposed to be dramatic! But what is opera, actually?



The word “opera” comes from the Latin word for “work,” and that’s what it is—all of the arts (music, singing, acting, movement, and design) combined to give you larger-than-life characters and dramatic situations in fantastic locations. (It’s like TikTok but live!)

Opera as we know it today began in 16th Century Italy, when musicians, scholars, and philosophers got together to try to re-create the “pure” drama of Ancient Greece. For them, this meant blurring the lines between singing and speaking, and using instruments to help to singers communicate deeper meanings than acting alone could. They thought this unified approach would speak more directly to audiences. What do you think?

The flexibility of opera means that these elements can be combined to tell many different kinds of stories—from hilarious comedies, to heartbreaking tragedies. One of the best examples of this range is a newer opera, *The Manchurian Candidate*, which uses fierce and energetic music to tell a story of suspicion, love, and murder against a backdrop of Cold War-era intrigue. It is opera storytelling at its best: a tense spy tale set to dramatic music that will jolt you right out of your seat!

By Dr. Charles Carson, 2024-2025
Scholar-In-Residence

Composer & Librettist



Photo by David White

Kevin Puts Composer

Winner of numerous prestigious awards, including the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his debut opera *Silent Night*, Kevin Puts' works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading ensembles, and soloists throughout the world, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Jeffrey Kahane, Dame Evelyn Glennie, the New York Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchester (Zurich), the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Miro Quartet, and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta, Colorado, Houston, Fort Worth, St. Louis, and Minnesota. His newest orchestral work, *The City*, was co-commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in honor of its 100th anniversary and by Carnegie Hall in honor of its 125th anniversary. His new vocal work *Letters From Georgia*, written for Soprano Renée Fleming and orchestra and based on the personal letters of Georgia O'Keeffe, had its world premiere in New York in Fall 2016, and his first chamber opera, an adaptation of Peter Ackroyd's gothic novel *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree* commissioned by Opera Philadelphia, had its world premiere in September 2017, followed by performances with Chicago Opera Theater in February 2018. Kevin is currently a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute and the Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute.

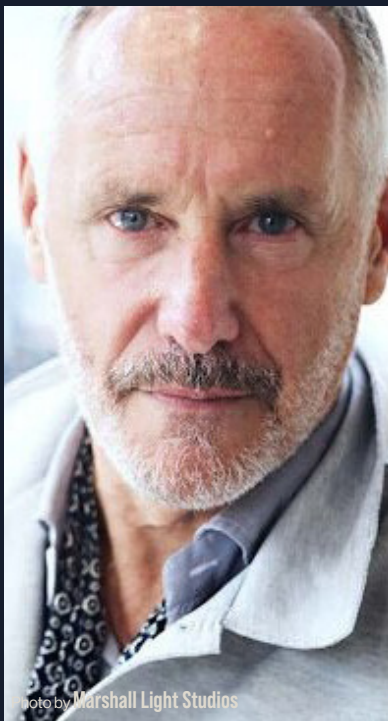


Photo by Marshall Light Studios

Mark Campbell Librettist

The Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award winning operas of librettist/lyricist Mark Campbell are among the most successful in the contemporary canon. A prolific writer, Mark has created 41 opera librettos, lyrics for 7 musicals, and the text for 9 song cycles and 5 oratorios. He received the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Opera Association.

Mark's best-known opera is *Silent Night*, which received a Pulitzer Prize in Music and, along with his opera *As One*, is one of the most frequently produced operas in recent history. *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, an audience favorite, received a 2018 GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording. Mark's other works include *The Shining*, *Sanctuary Road*, *Edward Tulane*, *A Thousand Acres*, *Unruly Sun*, *A Nation of Others*, *Stonewall*, *Later the Same Evening*, *The Nefarious*, *Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare*, *A Sweet Silence in Cremona*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Approaching Ali*, *The Secret River*, *A Letter to East 11th Street*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Volpone*, *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World*, *Stone Soup*, and *Bastianello/Lucrezia*. His musicals include *Songs from an Unmade Bed*, *The Audience* and *Splendor*.

Meet some key players

Want to hear from the people who make the magic happen?

Watch the videos below from two of our principal singers about what it's like to work on *The Manchurian Candidate*.

- ◆ What is it like stepping into the shoes of your character?
- ◆ What are some of the fun or challenging moments you have playing them?
- ◆ Tell us about your process of learning this role, and any challenges you faced with the contemporary musical style.
- ◆ Tell us a bit about your career. What advice would you give a young aspiring singer?



Mark Diamond

Sergeant Raymond Shaw



Rachel Blaustein

Jocelyn Jordan

The Music of *The Manchurian Candidate*

Listening and Musical Analysis: “Lies”

In this aria, Raymond Shaw finally discovers the manipulation, betrayal, and psychological control he has suffered. The musical elements of this aria are crafted to convey Raymond’s deep internal struggle, his anguish, and his sense of entrapment. He suffers a near mental breakdown, as he is wracked by guilt over the realization of his actions under hypnosis.



Listen to the aria, and circle the words you would use to describe the following musical elements that reflect Raymond Shaw’s psychological agony.

Musical Elements

<u>Melody</u>	<u>Rhythm</u>	<u>Dynamics</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Text</u>
Smooth	Consistent	Foreceful	Brooding	Raw
Jagged	Irregular	Quiet	Full	Fragmented
Connected	Syncopated	Varied	Dissonant	Confident
Agitated	Predictable	Consistent	Tense	Confused

Circle one: Overall would you describe this aria as...

relaxing/connected/predictable

OR

irregular/intense/suspenseful

Are there any other words you would use to describe this music?

You’ll find many of the themes we’ve discovered in this aria throughout the opera, as *The Manchurian Candidate* is a story of uncertainty, manipulation, and psychological torture.

Let's talk about propaganda.

What is propaganda?

Propaganda is a form of communication aimed at influencing the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of a group of people, often by presenting biased, misleading, or manipulated information. It is typically used to promote a specific political agenda, ideology, or cause, and can be spread through various media, including newspapers, television, radio, social media, and other forms of communication.

Biased Information: Propaganda often presents information in a way that favors a particular viewpoint, while omitting or distorting facts that might contradict that viewpoint.

Emotional Appeal: It often appeals to emotions rather than logic, using fear, pride, anger, or hope to persuade the audience.

Repetition: Messages are often repeated frequently to reinforce the desired message and make it more memorable.

Simplification: Complex issues are often oversimplified to make the message easier to understand and more persuasive.

Targeted Audience: Propaganda is usually directed at a specific group of people, with messages tailored to their beliefs, fears, or desires.

Examples of Propaganda Techniques:

Bandwagon: Encouraging people to think or act in a certain way because “everyone else is doing it.”
Testimonial: Using a celebrity or authority figure to endorse a product, idea, or cause.

Fear: Spreading fear to influence public perception or behavior, often by exaggerating potential dangers.

Glittering Generalities: Using vague, emotionally appealing words that have little concrete meaning but evoke positive feelings (e.g., “freedom,” “democracy”).

Name-Calling: Attaching negative labels to opponents or ideas to discredit them.

Plain Folks: Presenting the speaker or the promoted idea as ordinary and relatable to the average person.

Transfer: Associating a respected symbol (like a flag) with an idea or cause to lend it credibility.

Propaganda in The Real World

Below are some examples of propaganda in United States history.

The infamous U.S. recruitment poster of Uncle Sam pointing, with the slogan, "I Want YOU for U.S. Army 1917."

Technique: Bandwagon and Emotional Appeal. This poster played on patriotism and the sense of duty, encouraging young men to join the army during World War I because it was presented as the honorable and patriotic thing to do.



Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 presidential election "Daisy" ad which suggested that his opponent, Barry Goldwater, would lead the country into nuclear war.

Technique: Fear. The ad leveraged fear of nuclear war to persuade voters that Johnson was the safer candidate, even though it didn't directly accuse his opponent, Senator Barry Goldwater, of wanting war.



Having this knowledge of propaganda and its implications in history, can you think of some examples in our modern world? Discuss with your classmates, and use the space at the bottom of this pages to write your notes.

Propaganda in *The Manchurian Candidate*

This opera explores themes of mind control, political manipulation, and the use of propaganda to influence both individuals and the public.

Here are some examples of propaganda in the opera:

1. Mind Control and Brainwashing: The central character, Raymond Shaw, is brainwashed by Communist agents to become an unwitting assassin. The brainwashing serves as an extreme form of propaganda, where his thoughts and actions are manipulated to serve the interests of a foreign power.

2. Political Manipulation: Raymond's mother, Eleanor Iselin, uses her son's brainwashed state to further her husband, Senator Johnny Iselin's, political career. She manipulates Raymond into carrying out actions that will help her husband gain power, exploiting his conditioned state.

3. McCarthyism and Fear-Mongering: Senator Johnny Iselin, a character modeled after Senator Joseph McCarthy, frequently makes baseless accusations of communism within the U.S. government. His claims are part of a broader propaganda campaign to instill fear and paranoia in the public, which he uses to consolidate power.

4. Public Perception and Media Influence: The Iselin family uses the media to propagate their narrative, controlling the information that reaches the public and using it to their advantage. Eleanor carefully crafts her public image and that of her husband to sway voters and maintain power.

5. Symbolism and Nationalism: Throughout the opera, symbols of American patriotism are used to mask the Iselins' manipulative actions. The use of the American flag and patriotic rhetoric serves as a form of propaganda that appeals to nationalistic sentiments, distracting from the sinister motivations behind their actions.



WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA

Whether it's your first time at the opera, or you've been more times than you can count, these tips and tricks for your visit will help you feel comfortable and help Access Opera run smoothly.

Final Dress Rehearsal ◆◆◆◆

Because this is a final dress rehearsal, there will still be elements of the production that are in process. There may be stopping to fix mistakes, or singers "marking," which means singing lightly to save their voices. There will also be a tech table in the middle of the audience where the production team, including the director, costume, lighting, and set designers, are working hard to make sure all of the finishing details are in place.

Be quiet and courteous ◆◆◆◆

Be quiet and courteous to the actors on stage. Since a night at the opera is a live theater experience, things work a little differently than they would at a movie theater or school assembly. Since there are singers on stage actively working, our audience needs to be as respectful as possible.

Applaud after arias ◆◆◆◆

Let the singers know that you love the work they're doing. You can say "bravo" for men, "brava" for women, and "bravi" for a group!

No food allowed ◆◆◆◆

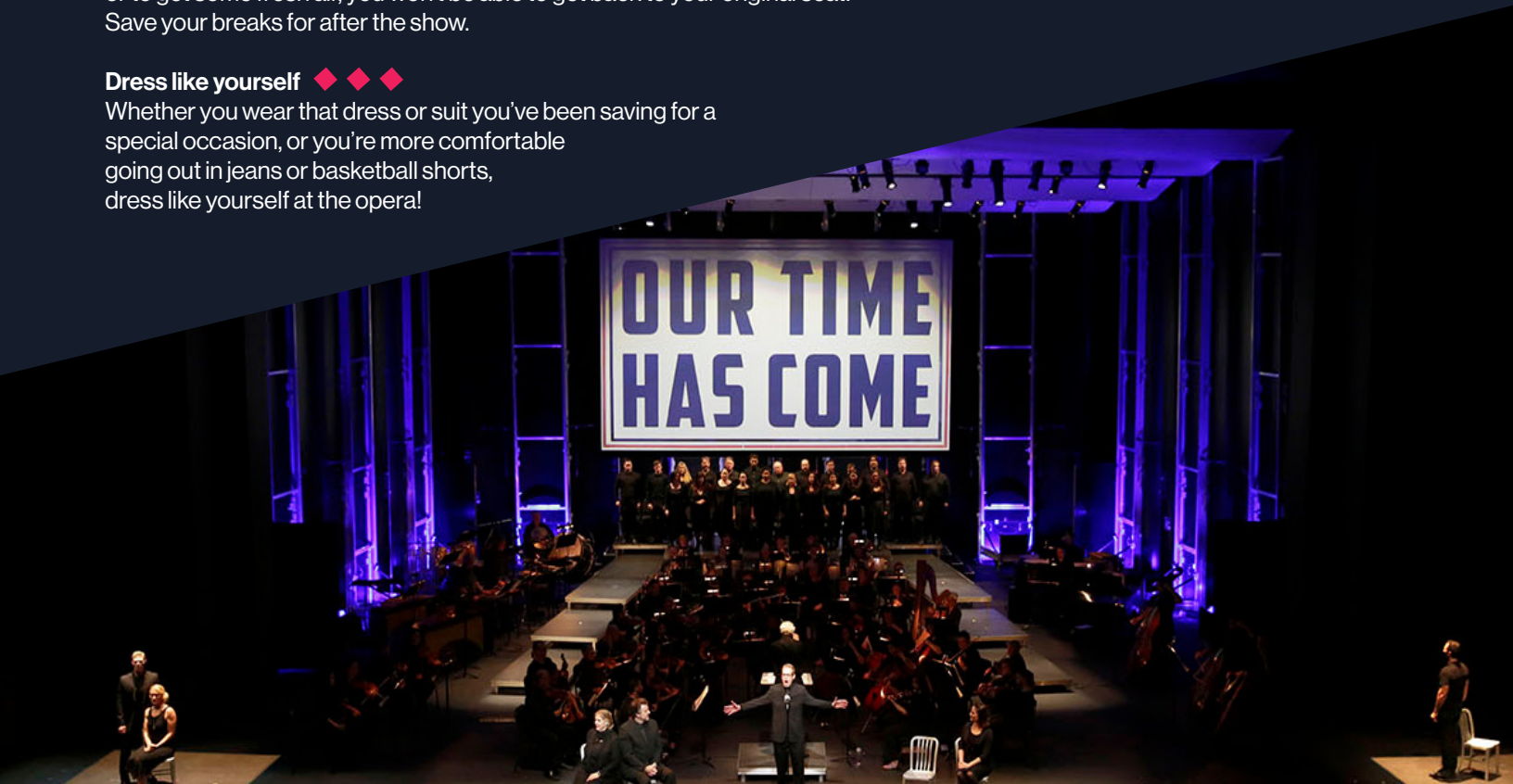
No food is allowed in the theater. Concessions will be open for purchase before the show and during intermission, and you can enjoy your treats in the lobby. Drinks are allowed in the theater as long as they have a covered lid, which the concession stand will provide.

Don't leave the theater ◆◆◆◆

We lock our doors from the outside during the show, so if you leave for a bathroom break or to get some fresh air, you won't be able to get back to your original seat. Save your breaks for after the show.

Dress like yourself ◆◆◆◆

Whether you wear that dress or suit you've been saving for a special occasion, or you're more comfortable going out in jeans or basketball shorts, dress like yourself at the opera!



And finally... **Have fun!**

AUSTIN OPERA

A stylized, abstract illustration of a person in a dark suit and white shirt. The person's face is obscured by a large, vibrant red ribbon that is tied around their neck and hangs down. The background is dark with teal and orange accents, suggesting a stage or a dramatic setting. The overall style is graphic and expressive.

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Puts and Campbell
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