



At a Glance
TURANDOT
by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

OPERA BACKGROUND

- *Turandot*, an opera in three acts was Puccini's final opera, and one of the most widely performed operas written in the 20th Century.
- The story is set in mythical ancient China, adapted from a drama by Carlo Gozzi based on an epic poem from 12-century Persia.
- Puccini never completed *Turandot*. He was diagnosed with throat cancer, began experimental radiation treatments, and died of heart failure soon after.
- Aside from composing and hunting, Puccini also loved new inventions and modern technology – especially fast cars. He was good friends with inventor Thomas Edison.

MAIN CHARACTERS

- Turandot (too-rah-n-DAWT), soprano – Princess of China
- Calàf (kah-LAHF), tenor – The unknown prince; exiled prince of Tartary
- Liù (LYOO), soprano – A slave girl who loves Calàf, because he once smiled at her
- Timur (tee-MOOR), bass – the deposed king of Tartary and Calàf's father
- Altoum (ahl-TOOM), tenor – Emperor of China and father of Turandot
- Ping (PING), baritone; Pang (PAHNG), tenor; Ping (PAWNG), tenor – Three government officials

WHAT HAPPENS?

- Turandot, a beautiful, but ice-cold princess, does not want to marry, so she challenges her suitors to answer three riddles or face death (lose his head).
- Calàf, an unknown prince, arrives and instantly falls in love with the princess. Despite the wishes of Timur, and the servant girl Liù, he tries his luck and succeeds in answering the riddles correctly.
- When Turandot shares her distress with the result, Calàf offers up to the princess a riddle of his own. She declares that "None Shall Sleep" until the stranger's name is discovered.
- Calàf's actions risk not just his own life, but those of Timur and Liù, who are both brought in front of Turandot to answer Calàf's riddle. Liù announces that she alone knows the answer to the riddle and kills herself to save Timur, declaring to all her love for the prince.

YOU'LL WANT TO SEE THIS SHOW IF...

- You are ready to hear Puccini's enchanting and intensely moving music, including the famous tenor aria "Nessun dorma".
- You love a good story with a compelling plot, full of personal turmoil, secrets, and unrequited love.
- You've never seen Grand Opera. The scale and spectacle of *Turandot* is dazzling, including a huge cast, including a large adult chorus, a children's chorus, and supernumeraries.

RECOMMENDED FOR Ages 8 & up (on stage stabbing; off-stage beheading)