

# Opera turandot essay sample



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Giacomo Puccini, an Italian composer, created a unfinished masterpiece opera titled, ' Turandot.' The first show was staged 2 years after his death in 1926. This opera is a classic and a popular form of musical culture. The Turandot opera is about an ice cold Princess that requires her would be suitor to answer three riddles. It is set up as a Chinese fairy tale, divided into three (III) acts. Lotfi Mansouri serves as the Director and Italian native, Edoardo Muller is the conductor of this 21st century opera. CAST: RUNTIME: 2 hours, 45 minutes

Turandot - Lise Lindstrom 2 - 20 minute intermissions Calaf - Carlo ventre

Liu - Ermonela Jaho

Timur - Reinhard Hagen

Ping - Jeff Matsey

I had the pleasure of viewing this opera, ' Turandot' on February 6th, 2pm at the San Diego Civic Theater. I bought a glass of wine and read through the code of conduct list that was handed out. It was rather extensive in its rule list of proper opera etiquette. We were ushered in and shortly thereafter the show began. This adaptation holds true to the original opera. Puccini's vision of ancient China was brought to life by the lavish sets and decorations. During the 1900's, most opera plots did not make sense but served one purpose, singing. " In telling the colorful story, Puccini created an opera that's simultaneously extravagant, exotic, musically powerful and dramatically ' over the top.' That is, it's got everything an operatic potboiler could possibly want, and then a little bit more!" (Giacomo Puccini, 2007). For the most this opera respected that theme and just like the original tried to separate the show into III acts to aid the audience in connecting with the

story. One unexpected and invited gesture was the fact that the opera was sung in Italian with English subtitles that scrolled above the stage. This helped feel a greater connection with the story and the lyrics.

Puccini would have been proud of this adaptation. Form: Opera - acting and singing. The singing in this opera was dramatic, extravagant and over the top. Lise Lindstorm, a Soprano singer, played the lead, Princess Turandot. Her timbre was very warm, round, brilliant and inviting. She did not have the mightiest voice among the cast but she sang with passion and power, nailing those highs and top notes. Almost bell like, her pitch and intensity were uncanny. The tones were well rounded with no wobbles and sustained themselves through the long notes. Her tones and sound were magnificent and her vibrato was excellent as well. Lindstrom easily transitioned from loud to soft singing. She excelled during the dramatic spoiled Princess scenes and often came across very commanding and intimidating. At times, the level of loudness was almost deafening.

Her accent and pronunciations of the Italian language sounded good. As an actress, she seemed comfortable and confident on stage. The musical style incorporated ancient Chinese folk music and a hint of a modern symphony of almost 200 people. The cast " includes an 80-member adult chorus, a 34-member children's chorus, 47 supers (non-singing extras), six acrobats and four " temptresses" (Kragen, 2011). It was incredible watching this large ensemble on stage. Italian conductor, Edoardo Muller excelled and gracefully waved his wand leading the orchestra beautifully through Puccini's score, taking us back through time and space. The opera had beautiful sounds of the violin and saxophone as well. The ' violinata' made famous by Puccini to

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make a melody stand out were very pleasing to the ear. Strings of multiple octaves formed a strong legato with beautiful Chinese wind sounds playing in the background. It was peaceful and serene and my first encounter with the violinata.

The opera was melodic and very harmonious. The sounds were pleasing to the ear and were delivered promptly. Chinese folk melodies were played during the opera, bringing forth the voices of the singers. The melody always supported the singing and never overtook or outran it. During the show, there were more minor harmonies creating sadder sounds and tones versus major harmonies. It set a dramatic and intense mood when needed.

The opera incorporated an accompanying tonality. The Princess was depicted as cruel and callous as can be. During her interactions with her suitor, Calif, the tones would differ. Calif constantly seeks her approval and the tones are uplifting with higher keys but the Princess's response changes the tone down as though she were rejecting or eliminating him.

Turandot was quite an experience. The show ended with a loud applause. I was just thankful it ended, it seemed like forever in there. I enjoyed the lavish sets and décor but at times I felt it was a bit much. There was too much going on with the singing, the lights and the costumes. It could stand to be toned down a little. On the positive side, I enjoyed ACT II the most. The interactions of Ping, Pong and Pang as they describe Turandot's tyranny and crimes against men are hilarious and well portrayed. The ending kiss from ACT III was rather nice and very dramatic as well, watching Turandot finally breakdown and cry, love prevails all. I personally have only been to one

opera prior. I had enjoyed it but an opera and a headache seem to come hand in hand. It is far too loud at times and my ears start ringing with the powerful voices. I enjoyed Turandot but even with the two intermissions, I found it far too long. The wine helped me in being more aware and responsive to note taking during the show. Opera is definitely not my style and I would not go see it if it weren't for this class. I am happy to say I tried it once but this musical style is not for me.

#### References:

Giacomo puccini's turandot. (2007, July 20). Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12012240>

Kragen, P. (2011, February 2). Opera review: silly yes, but ' turandot' is grand opera at its best. Retrieved from [http://www.nctimes.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/theatre/article\\_86e60d28-47d0-52d0-bb23-8f2ceffe66bf.html](http://www.nctimes.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/theatre/article_86e60d28-47d0-52d0-bb23-8f2ceffe66bf.html)