

Visual Arts: *Turandot* Opera Advertisement

Students Will:

- Read “**The Story of the Opera**” and “**The Characters**”
- Research the background and setting used in the opera to depict the time period
- Create an advertisement using characters, scenes, and/or themes from the opera

Copies for the Student: “**The Story of the Opera**” and “**The Characters**”

Copies for the Teacher: “**The Story of the Opera**”, “**The Characters**”

Materials Needed:

Pencils, map colors, rulers, paper and any other art materials can be used

Getting Ready: Prepare online music clips located in “**The Characters**” sheet. Have the students read through “**The Story of the Opera**” and “**The Characters**.” Then, have the students view a few of the online clips provided paying particular attention to the set and costume designs.

Guided/Independent Lesson: After studying the opera using the materials above, allow the students to discuss some of the main themes, the characters, and conflicts that can be identified in the opera. Then, have the students discuss the set and costume designs they have observed in the different productions seen in the clips provided.

Assignment: Students will be asked to create an advertisement for the opera. They may use all art materials available to them and must include the title of the opera, composer’s name and “The Dallas Opera” logo in their project. It may also include: the composer’s image, scenes and themes from the opera and its characters, clothing, and any other items typical of the time period in which the opera is set. Depending on your grade level and the ability of your students, you may choose to conduct this project as a whole class, small group, or partner activity.

For Further Study: Students may want to do additional research on Puccini, *Turandot*, or other related topics online or in their school library. They may also wish to search for more online clips to have more examples of different productions to help generate more ideas of what they would like to create. For more in-depth video tutorial, see

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL14hRqd0PELHpYZwltfnfIJ7M2uIHasOn0>

Evaluation: When students have completed the advertisement, have them present it before the class individually or as a group. Then, discuss the different advertisements and interpretations of *Turandot* as a class.

Additional Material: “Two Examples of Past TDO Advertisement Pieces”

TEKs:

6th - 8th Grade

- (1) - (A) Identify and illustrate concepts from direct observation, original sources, personal experiences, and communities such as family, school, cultural, local, regional, national, and international.
- (2) - (A) Create original artworks that express a variety of ideas based on direct observations, original sources, and personal experiences, including memory, identity, imagination, and the community.
- (B) Apply the art-making process to solve problems and generate design solutions.

9th

- (1) – (A) Consider concepts and ideas from direct observation, original sources, experiences, and imagination for original artwork.
- (2) - (A) Use visual solutions to create original artwork by problem solving through direct observation, original sources, experiences, narrations, and imagination.
- (3) - (A) Compare and contrast historical and contemporary styles while identifying general themes and trends.
- (B) Describe general characteristics in artwork from a variety of cultures, which might also include personal identity and heritage.

10th

- (1) - (A) Use visual comparisons to illustrate concepts and ideas from direct observation, original sources, experiences, narration, and imagination for original artworks.
- (2) - (A) Create original artwork using multiple solutions from direct observation, original sources, experiences, and imagination in order to expand personal themes that demonstrate artistic intent.
- (3) - (A) Examine selected historical periods or styles of art to identify general themes and trends.
- (B) Analyze specific characteristics in artwork from a variety of cultures.

11th

- (1) - (A) Analyze visual characteristics of sources to illustrate concepts, demonstrate flexibility in solving problems, create multiple solutions, and think imaginatively.

- (2) - (A) Create original artwork using multiple solutions from direct observation, original sources, experiences, and imagination in order to expand personal themes that demonstrate artistic intent.
- (3) - (A) Research selected historical periods, artists, general themes, trends, and styles of art.
 - (B) Distinguish the correlation between specific characteristics and influences of various cultures and contemporary artwork.

12th

- (1) - (A) Consider concepts and themes for personal artwork that integrate an extensive range of visual observations, experiences, and imagination.
- (2) - (A) Produce an original body of artwork that integrates information from a variety of sources, including original sources, and demonstrates sustained self-directed investigations into specific themes such as a series or concentration of works
- (3) - (A) Research and report on selected historical periods, artists, general themes, trends, and styles of art.
 - (B) analyze and evaluate the influence of contemporary cultures on artwork

Correlates

Social Studies

Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge

Comprehension

Application

Analysis

Evaluation

Online Resources:

www.youtube.com

www.oxfordmusiconline.com/

www.wikipedia.com

The Characters

Princess Turandot (*soprano*): A princess of ancient China. She claims to be the reincarnation of Princess Lou-Ling, an ancestor. Because Lou-Ling's kingdom was invaded and she was murdered by the King of Tartar, Turandot now hates all men, and she swears that none will possess her. Watch and listen to "In questa reggia," as Turandot tells the story of her betrayed ancestress. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xr_tsuJa4JE&list=RDxr_tsuJa4JE&start_radio=1. Whether this is real or only a ploy to remain unmarried is not clear. Much to her surprise, Turandot's icy countenance is finally won over by Calaf's devotion and love. It is totally unexpected, and Turandot surrenders to her love for Calaf.

Liù (*soprano*): A slave girl. She is the only person who stayed with the exiled King of Tartary. She is so devoted because Calaf once smiled at her, and she felt deep love for him from that day on. Watch and listen to "Signore ascolta," as Liù pleads with Calaf not to risk his life on the riddles. <https://youtu.be/Wf0h8bbQfWs?si=Ha4ipCXxbCJyiZ73>. Liù risks her own life to save the King from torture. Her final accomplishment is to sacrifice her own life rather than reveal the Unknown Prince's true identity. Watch and listen to "Tu, che di gel sei cinta" as Liù tells Turandot that she will be conquered by Calaf's love. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-Gsj70wPrg>.

Emperor Altoum (*tenor*): Emperor of China and Turandot's father. He has absolute power over his empire, but not over his daughter's heart. He wants to find a worthy husband for her. He goes along with her insistence that a suitor must answer riddles to prove his worth, and face death if they fail. In the end, he prevents Turandot from backing out of her own promise, and insists that she marry the Unknown Prince. When she begins to love the Prince and accepts him, he is happy.

Calaf (*tenor*): An unknown prince of an exiled royal family. Calaf has had to make it on his own. In order to stay alive he has not been able to reveal his true identity. When he sees Turandot he falls instantly in love. Risking life itself, he takes on the challenge of the three riddles. He lets no one talk him out of it. After winning the challenge, Calaf gives Turandot two more chances to get out of marrying him. He wants her to love him, and does not seem afraid of death if she does not. Watch and listen to "Nessun dorma" as Calaf awaits the morning, convinced that he will be victorious in keeping his identity secret and winning over Turandot to his love. <https://youtu.be/SgiBKuWY2hc?si=3Od4OlSV3uT1cWIO>. His perseverance pays off when Turandot's heart finally opens to him and they can be married as a loving couple.

Timur (*bass*): The blind exiled King of Tartary. He finds his son after many years only to face the possibility of losing him again to a pointless challenge for the hand of Turandot. He knows how

many others have been executed after failing the challenge, and is not convinced that Calaf will be any more successful. Liù has been his only comfort and help for all these years. She has sacrificed herself to save him and his son. He is faced with being totally alone. He is overjoyed when Calaf succeeds in winning Turandot's hand and heart.

The complete performance of the opera is also available at https://youtu.be/A01_CoQxvTY?si=QTL5BX1BWvIKf0tg.

The Story of the Opera

Any man who wishes to marry Turandot, the beautiful Princess of Peking, must correctly answer three riddles. If he fails, he will die. Timur, the deposed King of Tartary, arrives in Peking just as the Prince of Persia, having failed the test, is about to be executed. Timur is surprised to find his son, Calaf, in Peking; the two of them had fled separately when their kingdom was lost. Timur tells Prince Calaf that the servant girl Liù has cared tenderly for him during his time of exile. Liù tells the Prince that his own kind treatment of her inspired her care for Timur.

When Turandot arrives to preside over the execution of the Prince of Persia, Timur's son is stunned by her beauty and determined to try the riddles. His father warns him that he is certain to fail and die like the others. Liù pleads with him, confessing her love, but the Prince is obsessed and will not be dissuaded.

The ministers of Peking prepare for the trial and whatever may follow—either a wedding or a funeral—as they remember all the other Princes who have faced Turandot's riddles and failed. They lament their role in the kingdom's cruel affairs and long for their homes, describing the beautiful landscapes they traded for the laws and books of the imperial court.

The Emperor gives the Prince leave to attempt Turandot's riddles. Turandot explains that many years ago, her ancestress Princess Lo-u-ling was brutally assaulted and murdered by a man. As a result, Turandot has taken a two-fold vow: to avenge her ancestress and never to be possessed by any man.

When the Prince correctly answers Turandot's riddles, no one is more astonished than the Princess herself. Turandot begs for the Emperor to save her from a fate she loathes, but he will not. Wishing Turandot's love, not just her defeat, the Prince makes a counteroffer: if she can learn his name before dawn, he will surrender his life.

The Story of the Opera *cont.*

Turandot commands that no one must sleep until the Prince's name is discovered. The quest seems hopeless until guards bring in Timur and Liù, noting that they were seen talking with the Prince earlier that evening. Liù steps forward and claims that while she knows the name, the old man knows nothing. Turandot orders Liù tortured, but she will not speak. Finally, fearing the increasing pain may cause her to utter his name, she kills herself. All are astonished at the show of selfless love, even Turandot.

The Prince challenges Turandot to end the bloodshed, but she insists that it is necessary to avenge Lo-u-ling. After he protests that it is madness to sacrifice the living for the dead, Turandot makes a confession: The assault she seeks to avenge is not only Lo-u-ling's, but her own.

Calaf insists that life, not more death, will bring her peace. When Turandot dismisses his arguments, he places his life in her hands, telling her his name. After a moment of hesitation, Turandot chooses mercy. "I know the name of the Stranger," she tells her people. "His name is Love." Turandot orders a royal burial for Liù and commands the Executioner to put away his blade. All celebrate the dawn of a new order, ruled by Turandot, who is mercy, compassion, wisdom, and strength.

Synopsis by Washington National Opera

Ex 1: Puccini's *La Rondine*, 2006-2007



Ex 2: Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, 2009-2010

