

# Comparison Study of Female Characters Between Puccini Opera and Chinese National Opera

## Abstract

The interest in this topic comes from the author's own experience in practicing and teaching Chinese national vocal art in conjunction with western opera, especially operas by the composer Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) who is one of the main representatives of Italian opera in China. He is widely known for having drawn inspiration from Asian culture, as exemplified in his flagship opera *Turandot*.

The questions raised in this thesis concentrate on whether Chinese National Opera can be sung in a more 'western' way, supported by the science and knowledge stemming from the European tradition, and what kind of operatic performance can meet the aesthetic needs of both national and foreign audiences. These issues are explored through literary research, comparative analysis, and case studies of female characters in the operas of Puccini and Chinese national opera with the purpose of determining what kind of similarities and differences run through the characteristics, politicization, and idealization of these characters across the two genres.

Based on the theory of cross-cultural communication, this paper makes a detailed analysis of female characters such as Mimì and Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème* as well as Turandot and Liù from *Turandot* and compares them with heroines of Chinese National Opera: *Sister Jiang*, Zijun in *Grief for the Past* and *Mulan*. The observations resulting from this exploration highlight the deep influence exerted by the operas of Puccini on Chinese National Opera, not only in terms of dramatic development or general musical style but also in the style of singing and vocal techniques.

The author has proved that through detailed study of the background and context of a work, as well as attention to the language characteristics, performers originating from the Chinese vocal art tradition can successfully perform western opera, while Chinese National Opera is also bound to develop by adopting a more scientific approach to singing. This paper concludes that whether Puccini or Chinese National

Opera, the Chinese scholarship on the topic tends to beautify characters, lacking critical thinking and ignoring the impact of realism on the creation of the operas. Therefore, the characterization is not stereoscopic enough to resonate with audience. These findings are confirmed by the author's practical experience in both genres of opera.

**Key words: Puccini Opera, Female Characters, Chinese National Opera, Characterization, cross-cultural communication, vocal art, singing, comparison study**