

## Summary

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### **The influence of the Oriental culture on Giacomo Puccini's operas *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot* based on selected fragments and the influence of these operas on the musical culture of today's China**

Giacomo Puccini, one of my favorite composers, introduces elements of Oriental culture and customs in his two operas "Turandot" and "Madama Butterfly". Despite the long-standing interest of European artists in oriental literature, painting and architecture, as well as music, not all the archetypes of Eastern culture can be understood here. I want to bring them closer - on the example of my artistic path - to show the points of contact and those more distant, so that the mutual understanding of distant cultures is fuller and deeper.

I selected the topic of this thesis after careful consideration. My favorite composer is Giacomo Puccini, and the operas "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" are among the operas that I place at the top of my repertoire. These are two operas in which I very much wish to perform. My dreams are connected with the type of voice I currently have and the technique that gives me the possibility to perform the soprano parts in these operas. Ten years of professional vocal studies have become a motivation for me to continue working on my own. Another argument for me is the fact that these two operas are set in Japan and China, which distinguishes them from other Western works. As a Chinese student, I really appreciate the opportunity to study opera in the West. I also believe that it is very important to strive for cross-cultural interaction, and the appearance of a Chinese face on the opera stage can enrich the interpretation. But why did Puccini, a Westerner, write these two operas? What elements of Oriental culture and music appear in them and how are they used? How did he use notes in interpreting the Oriental world that was actually quite unknown to him? All this aroused my immense curiosity, making me want to know and understand him even more. Finally, as a Chinese woman, I should know as much as possible about my homeland. It is no longer the China of 120 years ago, but a country that has lifted over 600 million people out of poverty. China has become the second largest economy in the world with a value of USD 8 000 per capita, but we still have to make a lot of effort to understand and popularize Western opera. According to my research, opera is still a relatively new art form in China. Compared with traditional art, it still needs a great deal of effort and endeavor for more people to understand,

know and love it. I am also glad that more and more Chinese students are interested in opera performance. I hope that this art form will create a platform for cultural exchange and cooperation between China and the West.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE WORK**

### **Chapter I**

I will analyze Eastern culture and Western music from two different perspectives. Firstly, I will focus on the culture of the East, in search of connections between it and the culture and music of the West. Most of the material I have collected comes from China and includes sources on Confucian culture in China and the phenomenon of geisha in Japan. Confucian culture is deeply rooted in Chinese tradition. The creator of this doctrine, Confucius is widely known and every Chinese person has come across this figure at some stage in their education. Although Confucianism is not a religion, it nevertheless has a profound influence on our thinking and behavior. I will characterize it here only briefly. In researching the phenomenon of the Japanese geisha, I have referred to numerous literary sources that have allowed me to understand its essence. I have also collected materials on the influence of Far Eastern culture on the Western world in ancient times, including historical materials on Kubilai Khan's journey from Mongolia to the West, Marco Polo's journey to the East, and the ancient Silk Road. At the same time, I will attempt to look at the Orient from the perspective of Western culture, trying to show its image in the eyes of Westerners, and how they interpret the culture of the East in their works. First of all, I will describe the world of the East in Puccini's eyes. Here I will use sources devoted to his life and work. In addition to a number of books suggested to me by the Promotor, I will also use Chinese source material on Puccini, such as the memoirs of Simoni, the librettist of the opera "Turandot", from his time as a reporter in China, and the story of that famous music box playing the Chinese melody "Jasmine flower", which Puccini used in his opera. I will describe all this in my work.

### **Chapter II**

In this chapter I will lay emphasis on presenting Puccini's operatic works. Two of his works - 'Madama Butterfly' and 'Turandot' - will be used as examples.

It is well known that Puccini was a master of the psychological creation of female characters, and his work is so moving precisely because of this fidelity and subtlety with

which he renders the female psyche. With this skill Puccini far surpassed all other composers. This is why I will use the female figure as a separate aspect of my analysis, presenting the different personality traits of the heroines he described. This is important knowledge not only because it will allow us to perform his works better, but at the same time to enter his spiritual world and get to know his own psyche better. In this section, I initially selected source material relating to the composer himself, showing his perception of women, as well as reporting on some of his personal experiences. Later I supplemented this analysis with some sources on psychology. In the second part, I return to the problematic of Puccini's work itself and describe the most important of his works, from his first, not yet very successful attempts to his later classics, describing the development and transformations that his musical creativity underwent. The operas "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" are classical creations from different periods of his work. What is the difference in their musical layer and why were they created in such a form? It is from this perspective that I will study the development of Puccini's music.

### **Chapter III**

I will devote this chapter to the description of two operas of great importance in the composer's oeuvre – Madama Butterfly and Turandot. I will analyze three characters from these operas (Cio-Cio-San, Liu and Turandot), from three different points of view. The first is the script, the differences in characters and plots. The second is the dramatic conflict and the choice of musical material, and the performance analysis. The last is the music. For in both singing and stage acting, we cannot forget the music and the score. Both operas, "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" are set in Asian countries. How is this fact reflected in the music? What oriental musical elements appear in the operas and how do they influence the final effect? With these questions in mind, I gathered information on the Chinese folk song "Jasmine Flower", studied its melody, style and origin. At the same time, I also studied the melody, style and creative techniques of the Japanese folk song "Cherry Blossom". This cost me a lot of effort, but allowed me to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of these musical elements. In the third part of this chapter I will compare the two operas. Both are dedicated to the Orient. What are the differences between them?

## Chapter IV

In this chapter, I will talk about the operas "Madama Butterfly" and "Turandot" in contemporary China. Thanks to the vibrant development of the Internet, international cultural exchange and integration is intensifying. China is no exception. Western opera is gaining acceptance and popularity there. In this chapter I have also provided statistics on the staging of these operas in China. I will also mention the careers and achievements of female sopranos performing the parts of Butterfly, Turandot and Liu, as well as I will present the impact of these operas on the development of their professional careers. In order to better show this issue, I interviewed Ms. Cao Ying, a young Chinese soprano, both before the performance and backstage, in the role of Liu. Thanks to the singers' constant efforts and endeavors, opera is gaining popularity in China. At the end of the chapter, I will also introduce the Chinese composer Hao Weiya, the third sequel to the opera 'Turandot'. For collecting these valuable materials, I would like to thank my assistant, my elder sister Liu Yang, who helped me find many materials in Chinese, which made the successful completion of my dissertation possible.

Human civilization exists and thrives by exchanging and learning from each other and respecting diversity. There are seven colors of sunlight, and the world is colorful too. The history of mankind proves that it is only through openness and exchange that we can maintain the development of our civilization. I hope that with this work I will contribute to popularizing knowledge about China and the East, building a bridge of cultural exchange between East and West, and enriching world culture.