

Giacomo Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, the composer's "American" opera, is set in a frontier mining town during the California Gold Rush. Peopled with ruthless bandits, rough-talking but goodhearted miners, a cynical sheriff, and one remarkable female tavern-keeper, it tells a tale of love, money, and betrayal that is as thrilling as any cinema Western, wrapped in an unmistakably Italian score. The story explores the shifting line between justice, mob rule, and lawlessness, but on a deeper level, it also plumbs the nature of forgiveness and its cost—both to an individual and to the community.

From its lovable outlaw-hero to its Bible-teaching heroine, *La Fanciulla del West* is unique among operas of its time for its treatment of American mythology. Not only did Puccini set this rip-roaring tale in the American West, he also launched it in New York at the Metropolitan Opera, in December 1910. It was the Met's first world premiere, as well as the production intended to propel the opera company to global prominence. The Met's new production, by British director Richard Jones—who previously directed Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* for the company—advances the action from the mid-19th century to the first half of the 20th. Although this setting introduces new possibilities (like electricity in Minnie's bar), the action-packed staging retains the bar brawls, high-stakes poker matches, and near-executions at the heart of *Fanciulla*'s gritty realism.

La Fanciulla del West presents students with the rare opportunity to explore a classic opera that focuses on familiar and quintessentially American characters and settings. As such, it also provides material for broader discussions about exoticism, race, colonialism, and cultural stereotypes—both within the opera and beyond it. Thus, while we can say that *Fanciulla* is an artifact of its time, it is also a startlingly modern work from which we can continually learn.

THE WORK

An opera in three acts, sung in Italian

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Carlo Zangarini and Guelfo Civinini

Based on the play *The Girl of the Golden West* by David Belasco

First performed December 10, 1910, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City

PRODUCTION

Richard Jones Production

Miriam Buether Set Designer

Nicky Gillibrand Costume Designer

Mimi Jordan Sherin Lighting Designer

Lucy Burge Choreographer

Tilman Michael

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Director

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD

January 23, 2027

Encore January 27, 2027

Vida Miknevičiūtė Minnie

SeokJong Baek Dick Johnson

Christopher Maltman Jack Rance

Keri-Lynn Wilson Conductor

La Fanciulla del West Educator Guide
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MIKNEVIČIŪTĖ

BAEK

MALTMAN

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ONLINE ACCESS To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit metopera.org/fanciullaguide.



CHARACTER	THE LOWDOWN
Minnie SOPRANO	Owner of the Polka saloon. Tough, protective, and beloved by all the miners, Minnie must reconcile her hard-won independence with her love for Dick Johnson—whose revealed identity creates violent conflict in the camp.
Dick Johnson TENOR	A notorious bandit. Dick Johnson is the assumed identity of Ramerrez, an outlaw who intends to rob the saloon before Minnie inspires him to seek a better life.
Jack Rance BARITONE	Sheriff of the mining camp. The face of law and order at the camp, Rance wants two things: to win Minnie's affection and to capture the bandit Ramerrez.
Nick TENOR	Bartender at the saloon. Though he tries to maintain a gruff exterior to protect his status among the miners, Nick recognizes Minnie's love for Dick Johnson and helps her protect him from harm.
Ashby BASS	An agent for the Wells Fargo stagecoach company, Ashby arrives with news of the bandit Ramerrez.
Sonora BARITONE	A miner. Sonora has tender feelings for Minnie—like the other miners—and acts as the conscience of the camp.
Wowkle MEZZO-SOPRANO	A Native American woman. Wowkle works as housekeeper for Minnie and helps her prepare for Dick Johnson's visit to her cabin.
Billy Jackrabbit BASS	A Native American man. The father of Wowkle's son, Billy works in the saloon and takes reading lessons from Minnie.

GLOSSARY

Hard-won (*adj.*): with a great deal of effort, energy, or force

Gruff (*adj.*): rough, sour, or sullen

Stagecoach (*n.*): a horse-drawn carriage used to carry passengers or mail



THE STORY

Synopsis

ACT I. *California during the Gold Rush.* Inside the Polka Saloon, Nick, the bartender, welcomes the miners as they return from the hills. Jake Wallace, a traveling **minstrel**, sings a sentimental song that causes Jim Larkens to break down in tears. The men collect money for his passage back home. Trin and Sonora both bribe Nick to help them win the heart of Minnie, the owner of the bar, with whom all the men are in love. The Wells Fargo agent Ashby arrives with news of the **imminent** capture of the Mexican **bandit** Ramerrez and his band. An argument breaks out between Rance and Sonora, each claiming Minnie will be his wife. Just as a brawl begins to erupt, Minnie herself appears and restores order. She sits the men down for a Bible lesson, teaching them that there isn't a sinner on Earth who can't be redeemed. Later, alone with her, Rance confesses his love to Minnie. But she is not interested and, recalling her happy childhood, paints a different picture of her ideal love. A

GLOSSARY

Minstrel (*n.*): a singer who provides accompaniment on a stringed instrument

Imminent (*adj.*): impending, about to happen

Bandit (*n.*): an outlaw or gangster

A scene from Act I of *La Fanciulla del West*

KEN HOWARD / SANTA FE OPERA





stranger bursts into the bar, introducing himself as Dick Johnson from Sacramento. Minnie recognizes him as a man whom she once met on the road. The jealous Rance orders Johnson to leave town, but when Minnie declares that she knows him, the others welcome Johnson. As he and Minnie dance, the miners drag in a man named Castro, one of Ramerrez's band. Castro pretends that he will lead them to their hideout. He then whispers to Johnson—who is in fact Ramerrez—that he let himself be captured to lure the miners away from the saloon, in order for Johnson to rob it. The men depart with Castro, and Minnie and Johnson are left alone. She tells him about her simple life and that she is still waiting for her first kiss. When she shows him the hiding place where the miners keep their gold, he replies that as long as he is nearby, nobody will harm her or touch the gold. She shyly invites him to visit her in her cabin later that evening.

ACT II. In Minnie's cabin, the Native American woman Wowkle sings a lullaby to her baby and **bickers** with the child's father, Billy Jackrabbit. Minnie returns and excitedly prepares for her meeting with Johnson. He arrives, and when they are alone, she gives in to his declarations of love, and they kiss. Johnson, full of doubt as to how to tell her about his true identity, is about to leave, but she asks him to stay for the night as it has begun to snow. When several shots sound, Johnson hides. Rance appears with some of the men and tells Minnie that they are concerned for her safety—they have discovered that Johnson is Ramerrez. Minnie claims to know nothing, and the men leave. She then angrily confronts Johnson, who confesses his past but declares that, when he met her, he decided to give up his former life. Deeply hurt, Minnie sends him away. Another shot rings out. Johnson, wounded, **staggers** back into the cabin, and Minnie hides him in the attic. Rance returns, certain that he has found his man, and demands to search the room. Minnie refuses, and the sheriff almost gives up, when a drop of blood falls on his hand from

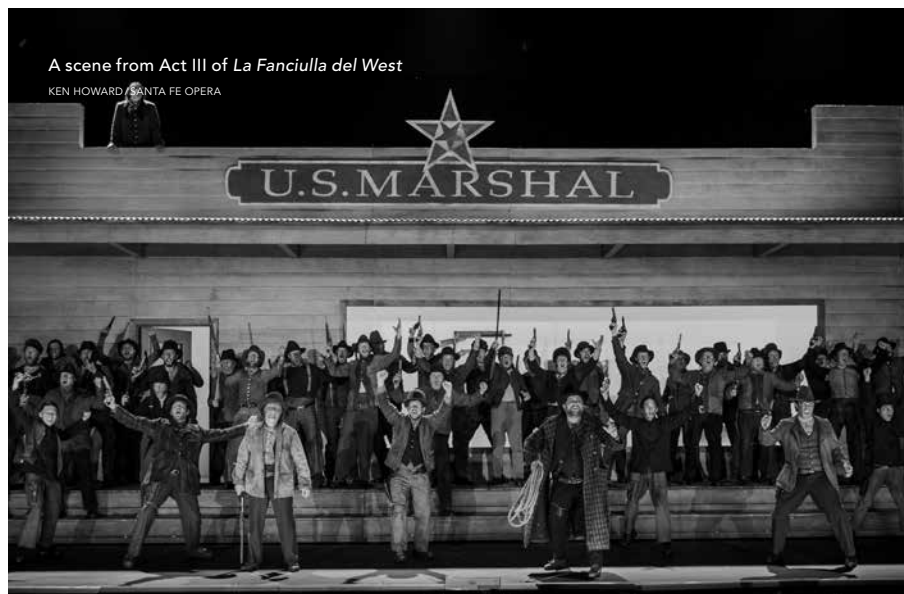
FUN FACT

After the premiere of *Madama Butterfly* in 1904, Puccini struggled to find a subject for his next opera. Before deciding to adapt David Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West*, he considered writing a work about Marie Antoinette, adapting Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, composing a triptych based on short stories by Maxim Gorky, and setting either of two plays, *A Florentine Tragedy* or *The Duchess of Padua*, by Oscar Wilde.

GLOSSARY

Bicker (*v.*): to argue or quarrel

Stagger (*v.*): to walk unsteadily



above. He discovers Johnson's hiding place and prepares to take him away, but Minnie stops him—she challenges Rance to a game of poker. If he defeats her, she will give herself to him; if he loses, Johnson will be hers. When Minnie cheats and wins, Rance hurriedly exits into the cold night.

ACT III. Johnson has been nursed back to health by Minnie. Again on the run from Rance and his men, he is eventually captured in the forest. As the miners prepare to hang him, Johnson asks for one last mercy—that Minnie believe him free and far away. Rance is enraged, but the men hesitate. At that moment, Minnie rides in, **wielding** a pistol. When her pleas to spare Johnson prove **fruitless**, she reminds the men how much they owe her. The miners finally give in and release Johnson. He and Minnie ride away to start a new life together.

GLOSSARY

Wield (*v.*): to handle, hold, or use

Fruitless (*adj.*): producing no effect or result



The Play *The Girl of the Golden West* by David Belasco

David Belasco (1853–1931) was an impresario and playwright who brought theatrical **naturalism** and technological innovation to the American theater. His stage play *The Girl of the Golden West* (1905), set during the California Gold Rush, included such spectacular scenic effects as the cinematic projection of the region's sprawling forests and mountains. Belasco's own father was an original "forty-niner" who emigrated from England to California—where Belasco was later born—at the height of the gold **craze**.

Giacomo Puccini saw Belasco's play on Broadway in 1907 and set about obtaining the rights to adapt it as an opera. Puccini's publisher, Ricordi, recommended the Italian poet Carlo Zangarini as a collaborator, perhaps because Zangarini's mother was American and he spoke English well. Puccini later engaged Guelfo Civinini to polish the libretto when he became frustrated with Zangarini's slow pace of work. Belasco himself remained involved, directing the premiere at the Metropolitan Opera and coaching the predominantly Italian cast how to act—and even kiss—like Americans.

The opera largely follows the structure of Belasco's play, though Puccini condensed the drama from four acts to three and shifted the placement of key scenes. The "academy" scene, for example, when Minnie leads the patrons of the **saloon** in Bible study, was moved from Act IV of the play to Act I of the opera. In Belasco's version, moreover, Minnie reads from *Joe Miller's Joke Book*—hardly a moment of religious instruction. The opera's Act III, which finds Minnie riding in on horseback to save Dick Johnson from the **gallows**, was largely Puccini's invention. He also decided that the final act should take place not at the saloon but rather in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, an "open space surrounded by the enormous, straight, and bare trunks of centuries-old **conifers**."



Poster for David Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West*, 1907

WIKICOMMONS

GLOSSARY

Naturalism (*n.*): a style characterized by detailed representation of reality

Craze (*n.*): obsession, excitement, or enthusiasm

Saloon (*n.*): a bar or place where alcohol is sold and consumed

Gallows (*n.*): a structure used to execute criminals by hanging

Conifer (*n.*): a tree bearing cones



TIMELINE

The Creation of *La Fanciulla del West*

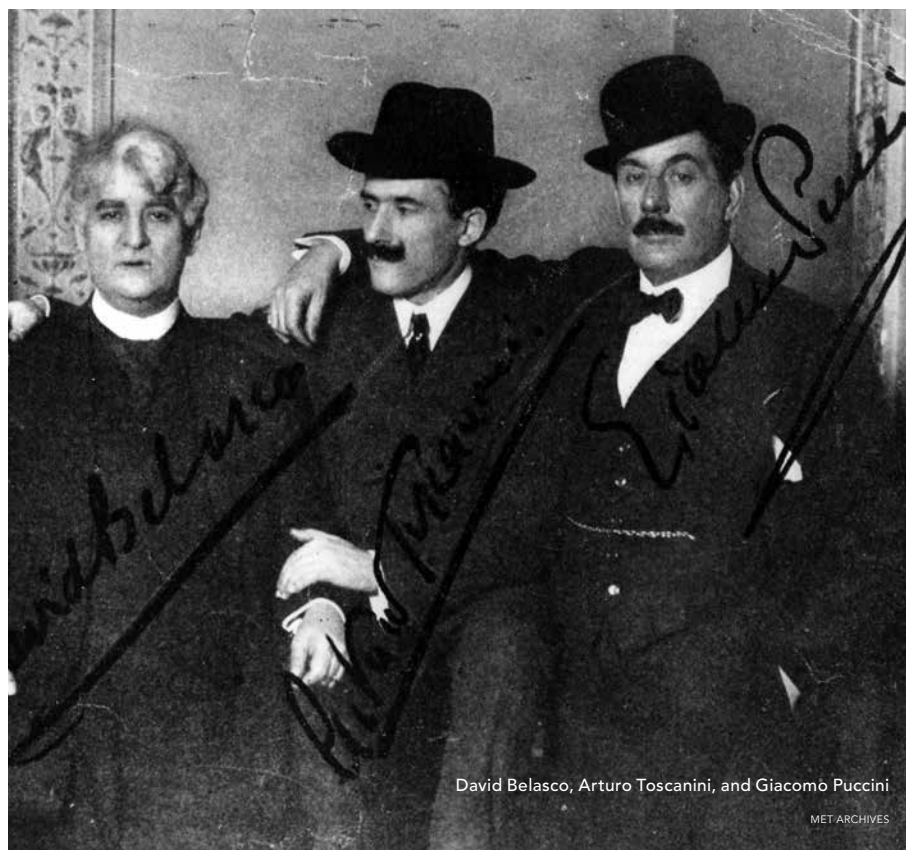
1858 Giacomo Puccini is born on December 22 in Lucca, Tuscany, to a family of church musicians.

1874 Puccini begins training in music at the local music institute, studying with his uncle, Fortunato Magi.

1880 Puccini's exemplary musical gifts earn him entry to the Milan Conservatory, the most prestigious musical academy in Italy. In addition to his formal studies, he encounters the **bohemian** and anti-conformist group of artists known as the Scapigliati (literally "the disheveled ones").

GLOSSARY

Bohemian (*adj.*): unconventional in a way considered characteristic of artists



David Belasco, Arturo Toscanini, and Giacomo Puccini

MET ARCHIVES



1883 Puccini composes his first opera, *Le Villi*, which is first performed in a private recital at the home of a member of the Scapigliati. Impressed with Puccini's talent, the music publisher Giulio Ricordi signs an exclusive contract with the composer and provides him with a monthly stipend to concentrate on composition.

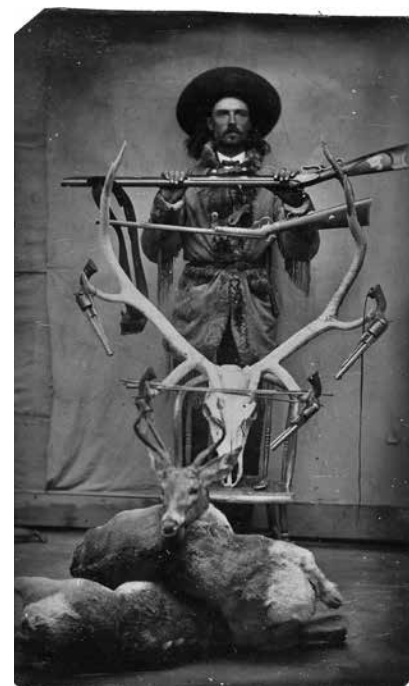
1890 In Milan, Puccini attends a performance of Buffalo Bill's *Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*, an outdoor theatrical spectacle featuring sharpshooting tricks, reenactments of skirmishes between cowboys and Indians, buffalo hunts, and re-creations of stagecoach captures and a Pony Express ride.

1900 While visiting London for the Covent Garden premiere of *Tosca*, Puccini becomes acquainted with the work of the American impresario and playwright David Belasco, attending a performance of *Madame Butterfly*, Belasco's stage adaptation of a short story by John Luther Long.

1904 Puccini's sixth opera, *Madama Butterfly*, based on Belasco's play, premieres at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy.

1905 Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West* premieres at the Belasco Theatre in Pittsburgh and transfers to the Belasco Theatre in New York, where it runs for 224 performances.

1907 Puccini visits New York to supervise productions of his operas *Manon Lescaut* (1893) and *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera. While in New York, Puccini sees three of David Belasco's plays on Broadway, including *The Girl of the Golden West*.



Young Buffalo Bill Cody Posed with Guns and Game, 1871, published in Wilson & Martin's *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: An American Legend*
WIKICOMMONS



1908 Puccini begins work on the new opera but becomes frustrated with his librettist Carlo Zangarini, who is slow to respond to the composer's edits. Puccini **enlists** Guelfo Civinini to help finish the libretto.

Progress is further delayed when Puccini is **embroiled** in local scandal. His wife, Elvira, accuses him of having an affair with Doria Manfredi, the couple's housemaid. Puccini leaves for Paris; meanwhile Elvira's campaign against Doria leads the girl to attempt suicide by drinking poison, resulting in her death several days later. Doria's family sues Elvira, who is found guilty of **libel** and **defamation**. Puccini settles with the family for 12,000 lire (around \$80,000 today) and pursues a formal separation from his wife, though they remain married.

1910 In June, Puccini travels to Paris to oversee a production of *Manon Lescaut* presented by the Met at the Théâtre du Châtelet. While there, he signs a contract with the Met to present the world premiere of *La Fanciulla del West* in New York in December. According to the agreement, Puccini receives 20,000 lire (more than \$100,000 today), as well as room, board, and transportation in New York while supervising the production.

La Fanciulla del West premieres at the Met on December 10.

1915 Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West* is adapted into a black-and-white silent film by Cecil B. DeMille. Over the next 23 years, Belasco's story will be adapted into three subsequent films.

1924 While in Brussels for treatment of throat cancer, Puccini dies on November 29. His funeral at Milan's cathedral is attended by fellow musicians, **dignitaries**, and ambassadors from around the globe.

GLOSSARY

Enlist (*v.*): to secure someone's help for a project

Embroil (*v.*): to involve or entangle someone in conflict

Libel (*n.*): a published statement damaging to someone's reputation

Defamation (*n.*): the act of damaging someone's reputation by making false statements

Dignitary (*n.*): a person holding high rank or office



The California Gold Rush

1769 An expedition led by Gaspar de Portolá and Junípero Serra establishes Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá, officially launching the Spanish **colonization** of California.

1821 Following the Mexican War of Independence—which had begun in 1810—the Declaration of Independence of the Mexican Empire is drafted, signaling the end of Spanish rule. The newly independent Mexican territory extends into present-day Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, and California.

1826 Jedediah Smith leads a group of **trappers** across the Mojave Desert, becoming the first United States citizens to reach California by land.

1834 The Mexican republic privatizes land formerly held by **missions** and begins providing **land grants** to individuals and families across California.

1839 German-born Swiss immigrant John Sutter arrives in California, near present-day San Francisco, where he establishes New Helvetia, an agricultural settlement on 48,000 acres of land.



Carleton E. Watkins, *View of Yosemite Valley*, 1865, albumen print
RIJKSMUSEUM

GLOSSARY

Colonization (*n.*): the process of establishing a colony to assert political control over a place or group of people

Trapper (*n.*): someone who hunts wild animals for their furs

Mission (*n.*): an outpost established by the Catholic Church to convert Indigenous people to Christianity

Land grant (*n.*): a gift of real estate made by a government to promote a particular goal or project



The Marshall First-Find California Gold Nugget
AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM/SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

GLOSSARY

Emigrant (*n.*): someone who leaves their own country or region to settle permanently in another

Annex (*v.*): to add, attach, or incorporate

Expansionism (*n.*): advocacy for a policy of territorial expansion

Squadron (*n.*): a small unit of soldiers

Encompass (*v.*): to surround or contain

1841 The Bartleson–Bidwell Party, comprising 32 men, one woman, and a child, becomes the first group of American **emigrants** to travel overland from Missouri to California by wagon.

1845 The United States **annexes** Texas from Mexico, and the territory is admitted as the 28th state.

1846 Having been elected on a platform of U.S. **expansionism**, President James K. Polk sends a diplomatic mission to Mexico intending to purchase the California territory. Mexico refuses the offer, and Polk sends a **squadron** into disputed territory. The American troops do not withdraw at Mexico’s request, which is taken as an act of aggression. Polk then seeks approval from Congress to declare war against Mexico.

1848 On January 24, James Marshall, a carpenter working for John Sutter, discovers a gold nugget in the American River while building a sawmill.

On February 2, the Mexican–American War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexico cedes more than half of its territory to the United States—land **encompassing** present-day California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Texas; most of Arizona and Colorado; and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming.

On August 17, Colonel Richard Mason, the military governor in California, publishes a report—complete with maps and samples—on the discovery of gold in the region.

On December 5, President Polk announces the discovery of gold in California during his State of the Union address.

In 1861, the Marshall Nugget enters the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.



1849 By the end of the following year, more than 80,000 “forty-niners” (as the newly arrived miners are called) arrive in California seeking their fortunes. In total, the miners extract \$10 million worth of gold from the land.

1850 California becomes the 31st state admitted to the Union. In April, the California State Legislature enacts the Act for the Government and Protection of Indians, which facilitates the removal of Native Americans from their traditional lands, enables settlers to capture Native Americans for **indentured servitude**, and punishes “vagrants” by hiring them to the highest bidder.

1851 California’s first governor, Peter Burnett, states in an official address, “that a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected.”

1852 The population of San Francisco, around 200 just five years earlier, nears 35,000.

1853–55 By the tail end of the gold rush, more than 300,000 people settle in California, and the miners extract more than 750,000 pounds of gold, worth \$20–25 billion today.

By 1900, approximately 120,000 Native Americans in the region, out of a population that once stood at roughly 150,000 in 1848, die of disease, starvation, and homicide.

Think about it!

The Mexican–American War ended in 1848, but California was not admitted to the United States until 1850. The events of the opera, then, take place in a region that is neither strictly Mexican nor American. Minnie and Dick Johnson are “Californios” who descend from Hispanic settlers of that territory. The other miners are largely emigrants of European descent from the eastern U.S.

- Do these geopolitical factors impact the opera’s story?
- Do these differences change how you understand the characters and their relationships?
- Does this context reframe the opera’s themes of law, justice, community, and redemption?

GLOSSARY

Indentured servitude (*n.*): a labor system where individuals work for a set period without pay



New York or Nowhere



In the present day, the Metropolitan Opera is the preeminent opera house in the United States. In the first decade of the 20th century, when Puccini was composing *La Fanciulla del West* and considering where its world premiere might take place, the circumstances were quite different. The Met had risen to prominence in the opera world, but at just more than 20 years old, it was still **vying** with other New York-based companies for a spot in the upper **echelons** of culture. The Met's direct competition was the Manhattan Opera Company, which specialized in French and Italian repertoire. The Met, on the other hand, was known for producing operas in German. Landing a world premiere by the world's most famous composer—and an Italian, no less—would be a slam dunk for the **nascent** Met.

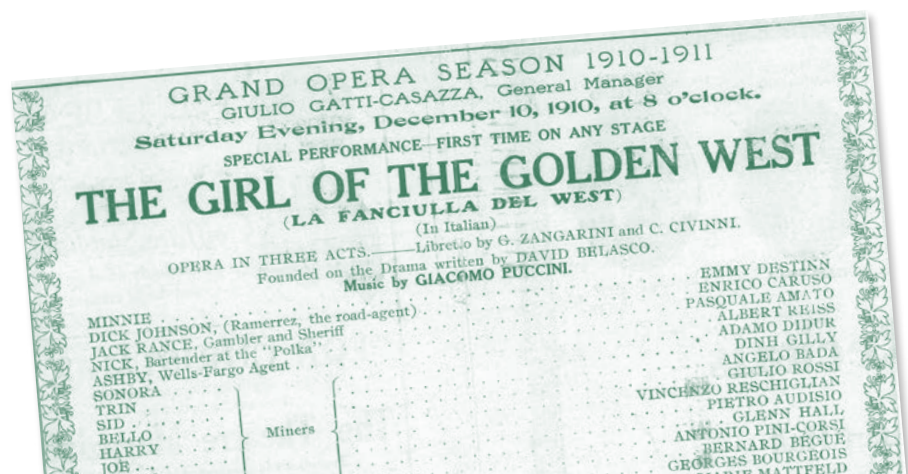
Enter Puccini. The 1904 premiere of his previous opera, *Madama Butterfly*, at the prestigious Teatro alla Scala in Milan had been an utter catastrophe. The composer pledged never to have his work performed there again. Given the subject of *Fanciulla* and the Met's eagerness to land Puccini's next premiere, the choice of New York was fitting. In 1910, the Met shipped out to Paris to present a season of French operas at the Théâtre du Châtelet, and Puccini arrived to oversee their production of his opera *Manon Lescaut*. With both parties in Paris, the composer signed a contract with the Met to present the world premiere of *La Fanciulla del West* in New York later that year. According to the agreement, Puccini was to receive 20,000 lire (more than \$100,000 today), as well as room, board, and transportation in New York while supervising the production.

GLOSSARY

Vie (*v.*): to compete or enter in a rivalry

Echelon (*n.*): a grade, level, or rank

Nascent (*adj.*): beginning to form, grow, or develop





FUN FACT

The score of *La Fanciulla del West* calls for an instrument that Puccini had made just for the opera—an electronic percussion instrument called the fonica, to be played offstage just for the last three bars of Act I. Puccini’s publisher, Casa Ricordi, stopped renting out the new instrument shortly after the opera’s premiere (largely due to its loud and harsh sound), and the part is now typically played on a marimba.

GLOSSARY

Far-flung (*adj.*): extended to a great distance

Concerted (*adj.*): done with purpose or determination

Anthology (*n.*): a published collection

Cakewalks and Indians

Of Puccini’s 12 operas, only three take place in his native Italy: *Tosca*, *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Suor Angelica*. The composer was fascinated by foreign cultures and distant historical periods, from ancient Peking (in China) to medieval Flanders (in Belgium) and contemporary Nagasaki (in Japan). Early in his operatic career, he even briefly toyed with the idea of composing an opera about the life of the Buddha. Although Puccini faced considerable limitations when it came to learning about these **far-flung** lands—he had no access to Google, after all—he made a **concerted** effort to study, collect, and represent foreign or “exotic” musical cultures with some degree of authenticity. In some respects, he succeeded; in others, he fell short. *La Fanciulla del West* is a case in point.

While composing the score for *Madama Butterfly* (1904), for example, Puccini consulted Japanese folk songs that served as the basis for key melodies, met with Japanese speakers, incorporated musical references to the Japanese national anthem, and strove to mimic East Asian instruments through his orchestration. The same goes for his unfinished *Turandot* (1924), which prominently features a melody taken note-for-note from “*Mo Li Hua*,” a Chinese folk song describing the beauty of a jasmine flower. For Puccini, a man born in Tuscany in the mid-19th century, the American West was similarly distant. He had visited New York City before composing *Fanciulla*, but he never got anywhere near California.

Still, Puccini sought—as he did first with *Butterfly* and later with *Turandot*—to study and represent musical cultures appropriate to the setting of his new opera. For *Fanciulla*, that meant two things: Native American music and Black American music. In 1907, after he had decided to adapt David Belasco’s play, he wrote to his close friend (and possibly lover) Sybil Seligman to ask that she send some materials related to American music. We can be almost certain that one of the items Seligman sent Puccini was *Traditional Songs of the Zunis* (1904), an **anthology** of selections transcribed and arranged by



Chorus members portraying gold miners in the 1910 world premiere of *La Fanciulla del West* at the Met

MET ARCHIVES

American composer and **ethnographer** Carlos Troyer. One of these pieces, “The Festive Sun Dance of the Zunis,” contains a section called “Chorus of Virgin Maidens,” whose melody Puccini adapted nearly **verbatim** as “*Che faranno i vecchi miei*,” the Act I aria sung by the wandering minstrel Jack Wallace, who accompanies himself on banjo.

This setting is an odd one: The character Jack Wallace is not Native American, and in the first production of *Fanciulla*, the role was performed in **blackface**—an imitation of the minstrel performers whose **derogatory** caricatures of Black Americans were immensely popular throughout the United States between the end of the Civil War and the First World War. (This makeup was not used in subsequent productions.) But *Fanciulla* does include Native American characters, Billy Jackrabbit and Wowkle, whose dialogue is rendered in broken English—as recreated in the Italian libretto—and whose expressive capacity is largely confined to a single, unrefined grunt: “Ugh!” Why Puccini elected not to employ Native American music in the service of these characters remains an open question.

GLOSSARY

Ethnographer (*n.*): a researcher who studies cultures through immersion in everyday life

Verbatim (*adv.*): word for word, exactly

Blackface (*n.*): make-up worn by a non-Black person to imitate the appearance of a Black person, especially as part of a performance and in an exaggerated manner

Derogatory (*adj.*): disparaging or disrespectful



And if the composer set a song for an African American minstrel to a Native American tune, he also strove to incorporate Black musical forms into the score of *Fanciulla*. Indeed, the recurring theme used to represent the notorious bandit Ramerrez (who disguises himself as the elegant Dick Johnson) is a dotted, syncopated figure played by the brass and modeled after the “cakewalk” rhythm. The cakewalk was a **social dance** developed by slaves in the American south and later appropriated by minstrel performers in the 19th century. The cakewalk rhythm became central to the quintessentially American genre of ragtime and eventually found its way into the work of European composers like Claude Debussy—and Puccini.

Again, as with the Zuni folk song, the use of American musical idioms by Puccini is not entirely logical. Why use a rhythm from Black American musical traditions to represent Ramerrez, a Mexican character? We can thus see how, in *Fanciulla* as in *Butterfly* and *Turandot*, Puccini’s application of supposedly authentic musical forms was, at best, well-intentioned and, at worst, **haphazard**.

GLOSSARY

Social dance (*n.*): a form of dance intended for participation rather than performance

Haphazard (*adj.*): random or lacking organization



Mining for Motifs

When developing the score for *La Fanciulla del West*, Giacomo Puccini purposefully **deviated** from the compositional style for which he had already become famous—what he referred to as the “sugary” (“*zuccherata*”), melody-heavy sound of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madama Butterfly*. Still, *Fanciulla* retains some key features of his earlier works, namely the use of leitmotifs or musical themes to represent distinct characters, emotions, or ideas. He had used this technique to great success particularly in *Bohème* and *Tosca*, and *Fanciulla* is no different. What distinguishes *Fanciulla*, however, is the increasingly **modernist** harmony Puccini embraced in the second half of his career, as well as his sophisticated recombination and reworking of thematic material.

Several of the opera’s primary themes first appear in the prelude, an orchestral introduction rarely seen in Puccini. It opens with a **bombastic** statement of what Puccini dubbed the “motif of redemption” (**Track 1**): A brash, *fortissimo* gesture based on the whole-tone scale and its resulting augmented harmonies (the opening chord comprises C–E–G $\sharp$). The following harmonies shift between this chord and another augmented chord of B $\flat$ –D–F $\sharp$, before settling on yet another augmented chord of F–A–C $\sharp$.

Redemption Theme:



A second statement of this opening motif dissolves into the “love theme,” (**Track 2**) which coincides with a large reduction in the

FUN FACT

The opera’s unusual combination of Italian and English was not Puccini’s invention. He had considered titling the work *La Figlia del West* (*The Daughter of the West*) or *L’Occidente d’Oro* (*The Golden West*). Sybil Seligman, Puccini’s close friend and correspondent, was the one to suggest the opera’s ultimate title: *La Fanciulla del West*.

GLOSSARY

Deviate (*v.*): to depart from a standard or established course

Modernist (*adj.*): breaking with traditional forms of expression

Bombastic (*adj.*): grand, forceful, or impressive



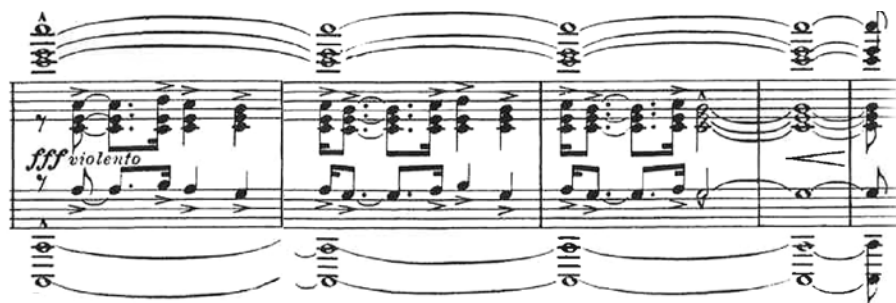
orchestration. This motif—a **yearning** diatonic melody played in a middle string register, punctuated by a harp arpeggio—merges into a rising sequence based on the theme’s quarter-eighth-eighth rhythmic pattern. The dynamics increase as the sweeping nature of the theme takes over.

Love Theme:



After these two themes alternate, along with some connecting passages, we hear the first statement of the “Ramerrez” theme (**Track 3**), a dotted, syncopated repeating figure played by the brass and modeled after the cakewalk rhythm in American ragtime music. With the dynamics marked *fortissimo* and the performance instruction of “*violento*” (“violently”), this energetic gesture emulates the spirit and **frenetic** energy of the American West.

Ramerrez Theme:



GLOSSARY

Yearning (*adj.*): characterized by desire or longing

Frenetic (*adj.*): excited or frantic

There is one major motif, however, that Puccini’s prelude doesn’t contain: the “Minnie” theme (**Track 4**), which announces both her first appearance in Act I and her final appearance in Act III, when she



arrives to save Dick Johnson's life. Recognizable for its characteristic falling seventh interval and unresolved dissonance, Minnie's theme begins by outlining a ninth chord, before sequencing to another falling seventh figure—this time outlining an augmented triad that echoes the harmony of the “redemption” motif.

Minnie Theme:



The theme has a grand, expansive sound, but Puccini was intentional in its application. Minnie never sings her own theme, suggesting that the motif represents how others perceive Minnie rather than her own inner world. Indeed, when Dick Johnson tells Minnie, “You are a creature with a good and pure soul, and you have the face of an angel,” at the conclusion of Act I, the orchestra swells with a development of the theme, indicating his **ardent** admiration for Minnie.

The composer also cleverly mixed and matched these motifs to underscore key moments. When Minnie and Dick share their first kiss at her cabin in Act II, their union is accompanied by a grand statement of the love theme, though this time based on the whole-tone scale—effectively combining it with the redemption theme. When Dick is forced to confess his real identity to Minnie, moreover, he describes his own father's **banditry** accompanied by the Ramerrez theme. But when he apologizes for lying to her (“My lips murmur an ardent prayer, oh God, that she never know my shame!”), a version of the love theme appears in the orchestra. Puccini is thus able to tell us, however subtly, whom and what we can trust—essential considerations for surviving the Wild West.

GLOSSARY

Ardent (*adj.*): passionate, intense, or eager

Banditry (*n.*): the practices of robbers, gangsters, or outlaws



Philosophical Chairs

MATERIALS

- Handouts

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Express and defend their point of view on a given topic.
- Listen to thinking different from their own and respond with examples and evidence.

CONNECTIONS

- Delineate and evaluate arguments and claims.
- Evaluate a speaker's reasoning.
- Express ideas persuasively.

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions.

Each topic statement is deliberately open ended yet ties into several of the themes present in *La Fanciulla del West*—including justice, identity, love, and redemption. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or challenging—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *La Fanciulla del West*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each theme shows up in the opera or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
 - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
 - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
- What led me to that decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?



STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that's part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
 - What led me to make my decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?
- What might you not have considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

SILENT OVERTURE If you have timid students and/or a class with several emerging language learners, consider allowing time for students to silently reflect prior to diving into the activity. Post the statements around the room, provide each student with a small stack of sticky notes of two different colors, and have them complete a gallery walk silently reading the statements. As they read the statements, students should write down questions (one color sticky note) and thoughts that came to mind (other color sticky note) and place them around the posted statement.

Set a ten-minute timer for students to complete this activity. Then, set a five-minute timer for students to read their peers' thoughts and questions prior to completing the active class discussion part of Philosophical Chairs.



ACTIVE EXPLORATION

Copyright or Wrong

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Compare two musical excerpts for similarities.
- Form an opinion on copying versus inspiration in a creative context.

CONNECTIONS

- Apply background knowledge from various sources to form an opinion and argue a point of view.
- Analyze multiple adaptations of a source text presented in different formats.

Giacomo Puccini was no stranger to controversies surrounding plagiarism. In 1928, four years after the composer's death, two sisters living in Tel-Aviv claimed that *Turandot* (1924), his final unfinished opera, was copied from an identical score that they had composed in 1896. After the disastrous premiere of *Madama Butterfly* (1904) at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, meanwhile, critics accused Puccini of plagiarizing himself by recycling melodies from *La Bohème* (1896).

But Puccini was not just on the receiving end of these accusations. His estate allegedly accused Andrew Lloyd Webber of plagiarizing a melody from *La Fanciulla del West* (1910) in his musical *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). The matter seems to have been settled out of court. In this activity, students will compare the pieces in question, stage a mock trial between the Puccini estate and Lloyd Webber, and consider broader questions about borrowing or referencing others' works in their own creations.

STEP 1. LISTEN

Begin by playing a recording of “The Music of the Night” from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical *The Phantom of the Opera*. When you reach the end of the first stanza (“Grasp it, sense it, tremulous and tender”), immediately stop the music! Inform students that your class has received a summons letter—the Puccini estate has filed a lawsuit for plagiarism.

STEP 2. PREPARE

Students will be tasked with staging a mock trial to settle the dispute between the Puccini estate and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Distribute the “Facts of the Case” handout included with this guide, which students can read aloud or in small groups. Next, distribute the “Sheet Music” handout included with this guide and have students listen to Dick Johnson’s aria “*Quello che tacete*” (Track 5) from Act II of *La Fanciulla del West*. Once they have heard the excerpt from Puccini’s opera, play “The Music of the Night” one more time in full.





Now that students are familiar with the two pieces and the facts of the case, split them into small groups. Half of the class should be assigned to represent the Puccini estate, and the other half should represent Andrew Lloyd Webber. Provide ample time for each group to form its arguments, brainstorm talking points, anticipate counterarguments, and decide who will speak in each of three rounds: opening remarks, rebuttals, and closing statements.

Below are some guiding questions for students to consider as they work in groups; they can use the “Trial Preparation” handout included with this guide to organize their thoughts.

Opening Remarks

- Are the two excerpts similar to one another? Do they sound like the same piece? On what grounds?
- Do you think someone with less musical knowledge would agree with you? How about someone with more musical knowledge?
- What evidence do you have for your argument?

Rebuttals

- Where is the line between taking creative inspiration from a work and copying it?
- Can you think of how this question applies in other cases? Does the way Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton* includes allusion to other musicals seem like inspiration or copying?
- How might someone on the opposing side of this case reinterpret your evidence in a contrary or alternative way? How might they find other forms of evidence that you haven’t considered?

Closing Statements

- Knowing the facts of the case and a little about the law, what do you think the outcome should be?
- Do you personally agree with how the law might apply in this case? Or would you change the law? If so, how?



Tenor Enrico Caruso as Dick Johnson,
also known as the bandit Ramerrez
MET ARCHIVES



🕒 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3 and 4 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. DEBATE

Once students have prepared their arguments and counterarguments, they will engage in ten-minute mock trials. Begin with the side representing the Puccini estate. Each team will take two minutes to present their opening remarks, followed by two rounds of alternating 30-second rebuttals, and concluding with one-minute closing statements.

The outcome of the trial can be decided by a judge (e.g., a teacher) or jury (e.g., student vote). After reaching a verdict, convene a group discussion about the results: Is there a penalty? What does each party owe to the other?

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

How Do I Feel About My Own Work?

La Fanciulla del West premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 1910—the first world premiere on the Met stage. New York audiences loved the show, but the work did not receive the same level of support and excitement when it was performed around the world. Still, Puccini insisted that *Fanciulla* was one of his greatest operas.

People can respond to our work in different ways. It feels great to receive positive feedback from a teacher or parent, but it is just as devastating when someone expresses distaste at something you worked hard to prepare. How can we learn to find value in our work even when others don't care for it? Is it possible to love what we have created and still receive constructive feedback? See below for a few tips for how to evaluate your work and accept feedback in a helpful manner:

- **Cool off:** After you have created something—like an essay, song, painting, or project—take some time for yourself. Step away from it for at least 24 hours before reviewing it or asking someone for feedback. This fresh perspective will help you be more generous with yourself and allow emotional space to accept feedback.
- **Write your roses and thorns:** What do you feel great about (“roses”)? What do you think needs tweaking (“thorns”)? Try to look at the work as if it belonged to someone else. How does that change your evaluation?
- **Consider whom you ask for feedback:** Hand your work over to someone you respect and know will be thoughtful with their feedback. Be specific about what kind of feedback you're seeking. This strategy will help the person examining your work provide the most constructive feedback.
- **Separate yourself from the work:** Negative feedback on something you have created is not negative feedback on you! It is simply one person's opinion of something you have created.
- **Celebrate yourself:** You brought something into the world! No matter how much work there is left to do, you deserve to feel proud of your work.



STEP 4. REFLECT

Once the trial has concluded and any penalties have been assessed, discuss the following questions as a group or have students complete written reflections:

- Have you ever been unsure of the line between copying and being inspired by someone else's writing, art, music, etc.? Consider how you might get a song stuck in your head, trace an image, match an outfit, or quote a source in an assignment.
- Does intent matter? If copying or borrowing is accidental, can it be considered wrong or problematic?
- Can you think of any other works of art (e.g., book, film, TV show, musical) that borrow from or reference another piece? How do you know if that borrowing is allowed?

SCAFFOLD

- Consider how AI might factor into this conversation. Is it plagiarism when a program creates something based on a prompt you entered? Or are you the creator of the work because you entered the prompt? What if something created with AI from an original prompt copies or borrows from another creator's existing work?
- In legal cases involving music plagiarism, an expert (often a forensic musicologist) is often asked to give testimony regarding the similarities between two pieces of music—sometimes quantifying the relationship with numerical data. Considering the example of *Fanciulla* and *Phantom*, assume that 50% of the given work is the music (i.e., melody, orchestration, accompaniment, harmony) and 50% is the lyrics. How much of the melody is the same? Count the notes. Using division, what percentage of the excerpt would you calculate as being the same or similar? Then look at the harmonic structure and repeat the exercise. Does the outcome change?
- Consider using this lesson as a persuasive writing prompt for a dialectic essay, as an alternative to the mock trial activation.
- Students may use tactile or visual approaches to help them examine the relationship between the two excerpts. They might trace a “melody line” up or down as they listen, for example, or highlight a printout of the lyrics with different colors when they hear similarities and differences.



ACTIVE EXPLORATION

Golden West, Silver Screen

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks (optional)

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Compare and contrast historical and contemporary poster designs.
- Analyze how images, color, text, and layout communicate theme.
- Design a movie poster for *La Fanciulla del West* based on primary-source research.

CONNECTIONS

- Develop criteria to guide making a work of art or design to meet an identified goal.
- Choose from a range of artistic methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices.
- Plan a design to follow or break established artistic conventions.

Puccini's opera is just one of several adaptations of David Belasco's *The Girl of the Golden West*. Indeed, Belasco himself published a novelized version of the play in 1911, one year after *La Fanciulla del West* premiered in New York City. In the ensuing three decades, this story would be adapted as a film no fewer than four times.

In this lesson, students will consider the visual vocabulary of movie posters, examining those made to promote different cinematic adaptations of *The Girl of the Golden West*. Then, they will examine primary source materials about the opera—including archival resources from its world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera—before creating their own designs for a contemporary adaptation of the story.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

Begin by introducing students to the concept of movie posters, which they have certainly seen throughout their lives but perhaps have rarely analyzed closely. Print or project posters for films currently playing in your local movie theater. As a class, create a shared list of features the posters have in common. Film posters typically contain the title of the movie, the date it opens, the production studio name, a tagline for the film, names of key cast members, and more. Encourage students to consider the following:

- Who creates movie posters and why?
- What makes for an effective movie poster?
- What kind of information does the poster convey?
- Are you able to tell what genre the movie belongs to? How?
- Could you create a poster for a film you haven't seen yet? Why or why not?

STEP 2. ANALYZE

Next, display or distribute posters for each of the film versions of *The Girl of the Golden West* from 1915, 1923, 1930, and 1938, all of which were adapted from David Belasco's original play. These images are included on the "Historical Posters" handout included with this guide (in black and white), as well as in the "Additional Resources" section of the *HD Live in Schools* Educator Hub (metopera.org/educator-hub) in full color. Divide students into small groups and ask them to examine the promotional posters to determine if they align with the list compiled in Step 1 of this exercise.



Before it was an opera or a movie, *The Girl of the Golden West* was a hit Broadway play, starring Blanche Bates and Frank Keenan, seen here in the climactic poker scene in 1906.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

After examining both the contemporary movie posters and the four *Girl of the Golden West* posters, guide students in synthesizing their analyses by completing the written section of their “Historical Posters” handout. Combining students’ ideas into one class list of criteria will serve as the rubric for the next section of the activity.

🕒 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3 and 4 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. RESEARCH

Now that they have looked at historical and contemporary examples of movie posters, students will have a chance to design their own. Since students may not have seen the opera yet, they will rely on research materials rather than previous productions or recordings. Possible research materials include:

- The four *Girl of the Golden West* movie posters
- Materials found in this guide
 - Synopsis
 - Who’s Who in *La Fanciulla del West*
 - Timelines
 - Closer Looks
- Archival images from the world premiere of *La Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan Opera, accessible in the “Additional Resources” section of the *HD Live in Schools* Educator Hub (metopera.org/educator-hub)



- Audio excerpts from the opera:
 - Act I: “*Che faranno i vecchi miei*” (Track 6)
 - Act II: “*Una partita a poker!*” (Track 7)
 - Act III: “*Ch’ella mi creda libero e lontano*” (Track 8)
 - Act III: “*E anche tu lo vorrai, Joe*” (Track 9)

As students explore these resources, encourage them to consider:

- What themes are important to the core of the story?
- How has our view of those themes evolved since the 1910 premiere?
- How might we represent these themes visually?

STEP 4. DESIGN

After students complete their research, have them design their own poster for a new film adaptation of *La Fanciulla del West*. They should use only what they have read and researched to inform their design choices. Their posters may closely reflect the historical examples they have consulted, or they might reinterpret the material in a new way. The goal is to design an effective movie poster (aligning with the criteria developed in Step 1) while maintaining the core themes of the story.

Once students have completed their designs, invite them to present their completed posters individually or in a gallery walk. Students should explain how their design choices reflect the main themes of the opera, paying special attention to how our broader understandings of its themes have shifted or evolved since 1910.

SCAFFOLD

- Consider using a gallery walk in Step 2 and/or Step 4 to give students a more active opportunity to observe and discuss poster design choices.
- To extend the lesson for high school students, introduce Ghanaian hand-painted movie poster culture as an additional case study in visual storytelling and audience engagement. Resources from *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, *Hi-Fructose Contemporary Art Magazine*, and *Deadly Prey Gallery* can provide helpful starting points.
- After students attend the opera, lead a reflection in which students revisit their posters. What did they predict accurately? What elements of the opera became clearer after viewing? Where would they revise their designs? Were the main themes from 1910 present in the 2026 production?

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. In order to improve, we must practice! Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

Directions

1. Read the Rules of Engagement
2. Read the Statements
3. Discuss

Rules of Engagement

1. **Be sure you understand the statement.** If something is unclear, ask!
2. **Face each other.** Body language helps show that you're listening carefully and respectfully.
3. **Only one speaker at a time.** Everyone will get their turn to speak.
4. **Think before you speak.** Be sure that what you're going to say is what you really mean.
5. **Summarize the previous person's comments before adding your own.**
6. **Address ideas, not the person.** Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.
7. **Three before me.** To make sure everyone's voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

Philosophical Chairs (CONTINUED)

The Statements

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That’s okay! Remember, changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness.

1. Cheating can be justified.
2. It is okay to hide who you are.
3. Your environment shapes your identity.
4. Your past will always be a part of who you are.
5. Love is risky.
6. Love can change your life’s trajectory.
7. People never really change.
8. Mercy is a sign of strength.
9. Everyone deserves a second chance.
10. Starting over is easy.

Copyright or Wrong | Facts of the Case

Background Information

In 1910, Giacomo Puccini's Western-themed opera *La Fanciulla del West* premiered at the Metropolitan Opera. Coincidentally, that very same year, Gaston LeRoux's novel *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* was published in France. That novel would become the basis for Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *The Phantom of the Opera*, which premiered in the West End in 1986 and on Broadway in 1988, winning the Tony Award for Best Musical and becoming the longest-running show on Broadway. Allegedly, the Puccini estate threatened legal action against Lloyd Webber over similarities between "The Music of the Night" from *Phantom* and "*Quello che tacete*" from *Fanciulla*. The case was settled out of court, and no details were publicly released. We may never learn how the case resolved, but today, you get to decide the outcome for yourself.

Key Terms

Melody: the "tune" or main musical line of the song, often accompanied by words ("lyrics") in operas and musicals

Estate: the legal representatives of a deceased person's property, legal rights, and interests, including their copyrights and the money to be made from them

Copyright: a form of intellectual property, protecting original works and granting their creators the exclusive right to distribute, reproduce, adapt, publish, or sell those works

E.U. Copyright Term: In the European Union, works are copyrighted for the lifetime of their creator, plus 70 years after their death.

Timeline

1910: Puccini's opera *La Fanciulla del West* premieres.

1924: Puccini dies.

1986: Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *The Phantom of the Opera* premieres.

1987: Puccini estate allegedly pursues legal action against Lloyd Webber for musical similarities between "*Quello che tacete*" and "The Music of the Night." The parties settle out of court.

1988: *The Phantom of the Opera* opens on Broadway, winning the Tony Award for Best Musical.

1994: *La Fanciulla del West* enters the public domain 70 years after Puccini's death.

Copyright or Wrong | Sheet Music

JOHNSON *Andante mosso moderatamente* $\text{♩} = 50$
dolcemente

p Quello che ta - ce - te mel'ha det - to il cor,
Andante mosso moderatamente $\text{♩} = 50$

quan - do il braccio.....vof - fersi alla danza con me:
rit.

con - tro il mi - o pet - to vi sen - ti tre - mar;
a tempo

e pro - - vai..... u - na

gio - - ia stra - - na..... u - na

allarg. molto nuo - - va..... *a tempo* pa - - ce..... che dir *rall.* non..... so!
allarg. molto *f* *a tempo* *p* *pp*

Copyright or Wrong | Trial Preparation

Directions

Use the guide below to help organize your arguments for the mock trial.

Representing: (*choose one*) ☐ Puccini Estate ☐ Andrew Lloyd Webber

OPENING REMARKS

REBUTTAL

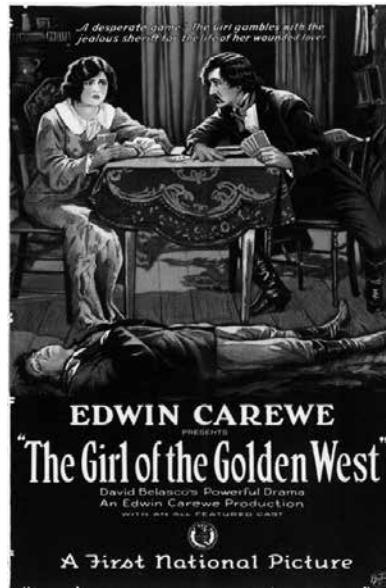
CLOSING STATEMENT

NOTES

Golden West, Silver Screen | Historical Posters



1915



1923



1930



1938

IMAGES FROM WIKICOMMONS

An effective movie poster includes:

Post-Opera Review | *La Fanciulla del West*

Directions

For each character, think about the following: **Main Goal:** What does the character want? **Key Moment:** What was their most impactful moment or scene on stage? **Performance Choice:** How did the singer(s) show the character through voice, movement, and expression?

Use specific evidence from the opera—such as a scene, vocal choice, movement, or interaction with another character—to explain your thinking.

Minnie

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Dick Johnson

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Jack Rance

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Nick

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Post-Opera Review | *La Fanciulla del West*

Rate the following elements of the opera on their effectiveness in communicating the plot and core theme of the opera, five being extremely effective, one being not effective at all. Justify your rating with at least one example from the opera.

CHOREOGRAPHY AND ACTION DIRECTION RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION:

SET AND LIGHTING DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION:

COSTUME, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION:

OVERALL IMPRESSION What is your overall impression of the opera *La Fanciulla del West*? How effectively did it communicate the main themes and emotions?

STANDOUT SCENE Which scene was most impactful? How did the music, performance, and staging work together to make it effective?

PERSONAL CONNECTION Choose a theme (justice, identity, love, redemption). How does it connect to your own life or the world around you?
