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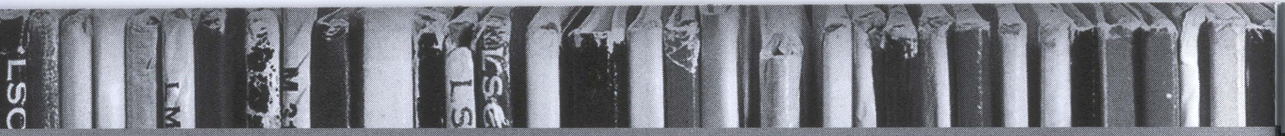
PUCCINI

TURANDOT

Nilsson • Tebaldi • Bjoerling • Tozzi

Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Erich Leinsdorf, *conductor*



TURANDOT

Opera in three acts
Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni
Last duet and finale of the opera completed by Franco Alfano

Based on Carlo Gozzi's drama of the same name

First performed at La Scala, Milan, April 25, 1926

THE CAST

Princess Turandot	Birgit Nilsson, *soprano*
Liù, *a young slave girl*	Renata Tebaldi, *soprano*
Timur, *the dethroned Tartar King*	Giorgio Tozzi, *bass*
Calaf, *his son (The Unknown Prince)*	Jussi Bjoerling, *tenor*
Emperor Altoum	Alessio De Paolis, *tenor*
Ping, *the Grand Chancellor*	Mario Sereni, *baritone*
Pang, *the General Purveyor*	Piero de Palma, *tenor*
Pong, *the Chief Cook*	Tommaso Frascati, *bass*
A Mandarin	Leonardo Monreale, *bass*
Prince of Persia	Adelio Zagonara, *baritone*
Attendants of Turandot	Anna di Stasio, *soprano*
	Nelly Pucci, *soprano*
	Myriam Funari, *soprano*

Imperial Guards ▪ Executioner and his men ▪ Children ▪ Priests
Mandarins ▪ Dignitaries ▪ Eight Wise Men ▪ Attendants
Soldiers ▪ Heralds ▪ Musicians ▪ Shades of the Dead ▪ The Crowd

In Peking in Legendary Times

Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus
Erich Leinsdorf, *conductor*
Luigi Ricci and Ugo Catania, *assistant conductors*
Giuseppe Conca, *chorus master*

Recorded July 3–11, 1959, Rome Opera House

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DISC 1

ACT I

1 Popolo di Pekino! 5:31
2 Gira la cote, gira, gira! 2:29
3 Perchè tarda la luna? 4:02
4 O giovinotto (Funeral March) 3:07
5 O divina bellezza! 1:27
6 Figlio, che fai? 1:40
7 Fermo! Che fai? T'arresta! 3:57
8 Non indugiare! 2:06
9 Signore, ascolta! 2:34
10 Non piangere, Liù! 2:34
11 Ah! Per l'ultima volta! 2:44

ACT II

Scene 1

12 Olà, Pang! Olà, Pong! 3:20
13 Ho una casa nell'Honan 3:01
14 O mondo ... O mondo ... 3:42
15 Non v'è in China per nostra fortuna 2:01

Scene 2

16 Gravi, enormi ed imponenti 3:55
17 Un giuramento atroce mi costringe 4:17
18 Popolo di Pekino! 1:41

DISC 2

1 In questa Reggia 6:10
2 Straniero, ascolta 2:17
3 "Giuzza al pari di fiamma" 2:11
4 "Gelo che ti dà foco" 3:15
5 Figlio del Cielo! 3:10
6 Tre enigmi m'hai proposto 1:48
7 Ai tuoi piedi ci postriam 2:12

ACT III

Scene 1

8 Così comando Turandot 3:20
9 Nessun dorma! 3:20
10 Tu che guardi le stelle 2:25
11 Straniero, tu non sai 1:36
12 Principessa divina! 3:52
13 Chi pose tanta forza 3:24
14 Tu che di gel sei cinta (Death of Liù) 2:42
15 Ah! Tu sei morta 4:59
16 Principessa di morte! 3:33
17 Che è mai di me? 2:38
18 Del primo pianto 4:57

Scene 2

19 Diecimila anni 3:03

THE RIDDLE OF TURANDOT
BY GEORGE R. MAREK *(1962)*

Turandot is the quiz opera par excellence.

The asking of riddles, the test by questioning, the challenge by conundrum – these are devices used in the arts from time immemorial. Almost always the game is played for high stakes. It was fortunate for Oedipus that he knew the answer to the Sphinx's riddle – "What is it that walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?" – for had he not replied "Man" the Sphinx would have devoured him alive. In mythology and legend, in drama and novel, the hero is confronted with some sort of quiz: he must know a recondite fact, interpret an arcane meaning, or choose the right casket. (One suspects, however, that Portia led Bassanio to the lead casket by winks and hints and sighs.)

Nor is the quiz unknown in the operatic field. Mime is allowed to ask Wotan three questions. Wotan retaliates by asking three, knowing perfectly well that the dwarf cannot answer the last question. Here is a fixed quiz if ever there was one.

At least the quiz in *Turandot* is an honest one. The prize is the Princess and the stake is the stake on which is impaled the head of the unfortunate suitor who cannot solve the riddles. The results are frightful. Not only does the Prince of Persia lose his head (at the beginning of the opera), but later, as the courtiers Ping, Pang and Pong reminisce, they draw up a list of no fewer than twenty-six previous victims, all princes, all unable to answer the questions, all dead.

Three enigmas are propounded. "The riddles are three – death is one." But outside of the opera itself, in the history of its creation, there lies a further enigma, the solution to which we can only guess at. The question is, why did Puccini take so unconscionably

Puccini kept revising *La Bohème* up to and even after its premiere. Consequential revisions were made in *Madama Butterfly* after its initial failure.

long a period to compose this work? What was it that held him back? Why did he, a careful but certainly not a dilatory craftsman, require more than three years to create three-quarters of an opera, in total length a little shorter than *La Bohème*, which he completed in about two and a half years? What were the difficulties which so protracted the task that death intervened?

The question is not an idle one. For had the work not progressed at a snail's pace, had he taken no more time with *Turandot* than with the preceding work, the "Triptych," Puccini might have lived not only to finish the opera but, what is equally important, to make the corrections, the shaping and smoothing and cutting, the adjustments in balance, the clarification of the character of the Princess, in short the creative improvement of detail which a masterpiece requires to make it a masterpiece. *Turandot* could have been, as Puccini intended it to be, the capstone of his edifice. As it is, it is an opera containing astonishing greatness. But it is a capstone with rough edges.

The answer that while Puccini worked on *Turandot* he was a sick man, that the labor proceeded under the shadow of death, is not satisfactory. Health is not a requisite for the completion of great works, as innumerable examples – Watteau and Renoir, Robert Louis Stevenson and Friedrich Schiller – can testify. On the contrary, ill health often acts as a spur. What, then, is the answer?

We must examine the many letters which Puccini wrote to his two librettists, Giuseppe Adami, a successful playwright, and Renato Simoni, another playwright and something of an authority on China; we must read carefully Puccini's other statements about his final aims and ambitions. He wanted to go beyond the "slight" music

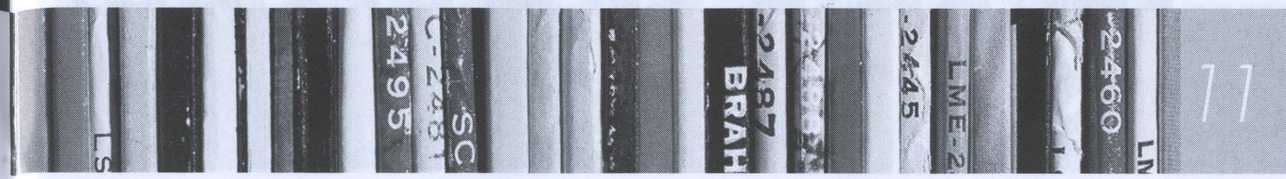
(the word is his own, spoken in one of his frequent self-deprecating moods) he had composed and produce a work of grand proportions, a new kind of opera, one of epic breadth and seriousness. That seriousness was to be leavened, contrasted with and relieved by comic elements taken from the *commedia dell'arte*. Both elements, the heroic and the comic, were present in the original play of *Turandotte*, written by the eighteenth-century playwright Carlo Gozzi. There the comic figures are four, because the company of actors for which Gozzi wrote included four actors who specialized in comic parts and were masters of improvisation. Puccini reduced the four figures to three and instilled in those three traits of modern nervousness and melancholy, traits which characterized the composer himself.

Ping, Pang and Pong, the three ministers who take so lively a part in *Turandot*'s action, emerge as ambivalent characters. Some hint of this development is to be found in a later play, based on Gozzi, by Schiller. The German poet added philosophic seriousness to the comic figures. Puccini knew Schiller's play. But the composer goes further: his three courtiers are mercurial fellows: now sentimental and gentle, now harsh and cynical. They berate Turandot, yet do her bidding; they try to save the Prince, yet do their best to make him betray his secret. They are mystics – and contradictory. Not an easy challenge to meet for a man who had never before created contradictory characters, nor composed music in divided styles, nor attempted to juggle the comic and the tragic masks (which Strauss and Hofmannsthal had done in *Ariadne auf Naxos*).

But there is more: Puccini required a third element. Neither the heroic nor the comic sufficed. He could not altogether abjure the theme which in his previous operas had served as the mainspring of his inspiration. Call her Manon or Mimì or Cio-Cio-San, it was always the same character who accelerated his romantic pen. Without her he could not compose, the charming fragrant little creature who meets love, is destroyed by it, suffers melodiously, and expires not with a shout but with a sigh. So he added to the old fable of the man-hating goddess the character of Liù, the faithful and loving slave girl with her full heart and blind adoration. Liù is his invention: you will not find her in Gozzi.

When we have said all that, we still have not catalogued the task. For the first time in any of his operas, Puccini made the crowd, the chorus, a protagonist. It is possible that he was inspired to do so by Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, with which he had become acquainted late in life. Puccini had previously used choruses for musical effects: he had used them well in the third act of *Manon Lescaut* and the second act of *Bohème*. But up to *Turandot* they had always been incidental or atmospheric additions. For the first time the chorus takes part in the action itself, and indeed in the first act of the opera it has the leading role.

Four themes there are: the legendary-icy, the cynical-comic, the softly romantic, and the theme of the people, exotic and barbarous. Two of the themes were new to him, one was familiar, one only half familiar. We can understand why he proceeded so hesitatingly. He may have known that it was the last composition he was to undertake; even before he began it he



told his wife that he was suffering strange pains in his chest and had lost his voice. If then it was to be his swan song, Puccini, always exigent with his librettists, turned into a despot who demanded the impossible, scowled at every word and regarded every line of the text with hypercritical eye, changed his mind, fumed, fretted, complained, stopped the work, put it aside, could not rest, started over again. He begged Simoni and Adami: "Put all your strength into it, all the resources of your hearts and heads, and create for me something that will make the world weep." He asked Simoni to drink coffee at night. "You won't be able to sleep and you'll think of *Turandot*." To quote but one letter out of many:

> If I touch the piano my hands get covered with dust. My desk is piled up with letters – there isn't a trace of music. Music? Useless if I have no libretto. I have the great weakness of being able to write only when my puppet executioners are moving on the scene. If only I could be a purely symphonic writer! I should then at least cheat time ... and my public. But that was not for me. I was born so many years ago – oh, so many, too many, almost a century ... and Almighty God touched me with His little finger and said: "Write for the theater." And I have obeyed the supreme command. Had He marked me out for some other task perhaps I should not be, as now, without material ... I get such nice encouraging letters, but if, instead of these, one act of our glittering Princess were to arrive, don't you think it would be better? You would give me back my calm and

my confidence, and the dust would not settle on my piano any more, so much banging would I do, and my desk would have its brave array of scoring sheets again. O you of the city, think to more purpose of one who is waiting in the country! *(Undated letter to Adami, 1920)*

Though Puccini took an active part in the shaping of all his librettos, it is truer of this one than of any other that he virtually wrote it himself, and it might have been a lot easier had he in fact written it himself. As it was, he used to send Adami detailed prose versions, and when the poets returned the verses he was not satisfied or wanted to alter a particular dramatic situation. Ping, Pang and Pong gave him especial trouble. He instructed Adami: "Do a little of what Shakespeare often does, when he brings in three or four extraneous types who drink, use bad language, and speak ill of the King. I have seen this done in *The Tempest*, among the Elves and Ariel and Caliban." It is significant that for the first time in his life Puccini mentions Shakespeare in connection with one of his own operas.

The dramatic plan pivoted on Turandot's conversion into a human being. This was to be accomplished in a final duet, to which the composer attached the utmost importance. "It must be a great duet. These two almost superhuman beings descend through love to the level of mankind, and this love must at the end take possession of the whole stage in a great orchestral peroration." This he did not live to accomplish.

What a pity! What cause for regret that libretto and music were so long in the making! For had the opera – begun in the summer of 1920 and left unfinished by the winter of 1924 – been truly finished and revised by this genius of the theater, we might now be in possession of one of the greatest of the music dramas of the twentieth century. Francis Toye says that *Turandot* "brings a particularly vivid realization of what the world lost by Puccini's premature death."

Even as it is, *Turandot* is a wonderfully fascinating work and contains some of Puccini's finest music. Ernest Newman thought that it was the composer's masterpiece. Similarly, Mosco Carner, who recently published a critical biography of the composer, believes that *Turandot* "represents the consummation of his whole creative career."

The consummation, yes; but to repeat, not a "finished opera," neither in the actual nor the psychological sense. Because the conversion of the Princess from an iciness which is so inhuman as to be symbolic to a humanity which Puccini no doubt intended to be as warm and loving as are the hearts of his other heroines – because that conversion is insufficiently motivated and occurs too suddenly, it leaves us but half-convinced. Because that all-important last scene, which must "take possession of the whole stage," was never finished, we leave the performance with a sense of frustration. Yet *Turandot* is an opera we would not willingly do without. The unfinished can offer artistic satisfaction, as works by Dickens or Schubert, Leonardo or Michelangelo prove.

TURANDOT SYNOPSIS
BY GEORGE R. MAREK *(ABRIDGED BY LUCY CROSS)*

ACT I

Peking, in fabled times. Before the wall which surrounds the city stands a silent, sullen crowd in the light of the setting sun. On the right is a huge bronze gong, which any suitor for the Princess Turandot's hand must strike. Here and there are erected long poles on which the heads of Turandot's unsuccessful suitors are impaled.

A Mandarin appears who recites an oft-heard formula: Turandot is to be the bride of a prince of royal blood, provided he shall answer three riddles. If he fails, he must lose his life. The Prince of Persia was the last who failed; he will die tonight at the rising of the moon. The frenzied crowd surges forward and cries for the executioner: more blood is what they crave. The guards hold them back with whips.

Out of the confusion a young girl cries out for help. Her companion, an old man, has been pushed down by the mob. A youth hurries to her aid, bends over the old man, and recognizes his long lost father, Timur, deposed King of Tartary. Both father and son are fugitives, scattered by a usurper to their throne; their identities must remain a secret. The old king relates that he would have perished had not little Liù fled with him, dried his tears, begged bread for him and been his constant companion. "Who are you, Liù?" asks the astonished Prince. "I am nothing," she answers, "a slave." "Then why have you shouldered so great a burden?" "Because one day in the palace you smiled at me."

Renata Tebaldi and Giorgio Tozzi recording the opening scene.

Maestro Leinsdorf conducting the Act II finale

As the sky darkens, the fury of the crowd increases. The women murmur, "Sharpen the knife!" ("Gira la cote!"), and the rest of the chorus takes up the cry in a tremendous crescendo. Then suddenly, as the silver moon appears, the mood changes and silence falls upon the people. Awestruck, they apostrophize this pale visage, this head without members, this silent planet, this mistress of the dead.

From afar a procession of boys sings a melancholy chant (the melody is one of genuine Chinese origin). The funeral cortege begins, led by the executioner's assistants, priests and mandarins. Last of all appears the executioner with the young and handsome Prince of Persia, lost in a dream. At the sight of the victim, the blood-lust of the people dissolves into pity. Now the mob asks for mercy for the doomed young man, the people calling out to the Princess to spare him. The Unknown Prince, too, moved to pity, exclaims, "Oh! That I might see you, that I might curse you!"

Suddenly Turandot deigns to show herself on the Imperial balcony. The crowd falls prostrate, and only the Prince of Persia, the Unknown Prince, and the executioner remain standing. Turandot's beauty so dazzles the Prince that he covers his eyes. With a wave of her hand the Princess bids the executioner to proceed and disappears. The cortege moves on, as the Unknown Prince, quite beside himself, sings of her divine beauty: in an instant horror has turned into love!

The Prince hardly hears his father's urgent plea to flee. He cries out Turandot's name three times, and from behind the scene the Prince of Persia's dying cry echoes: Turandot! In spite of this *memento mori*, the new suitor hurries toward the great gong.

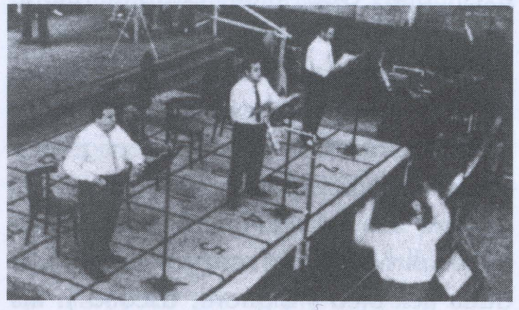
Abruptly the three comic ministers, Ping, Pong, and Pang jump in and bar his way ("Fermo! Che fai?"). They advise the Prince to go back whence he came, and if he wishes to lose his head, to do so in his own country. "Let me pass!" the Prince demands. "For a Princess? What is that? Merely a woman with a crown on her head. Undress her, and she appears as do all the others, with but one face, two arms, and two legs."

Voices floating down from the palace balustrade bid the cynical ministers to be quiet, for it is time for Turandot to rest. But the three renew their noisy arguments: he cannot win, for Turandot's riddles are quite insoluble. Out of the darkness, far in the distance, the voices of dead suitors encourage the Unknown Prince to attempt the trial. "We still love her," sing the ghosts. "No!" the Prince protests, "I alone love her!" The ministers, undeterred, try one more approach: Turandot does not exist. She, God, man, people, rulers, are all illusions. Who would gamble reality for an illusion? Reality is the severed head of the Prince of Persia, now displayed, kissed by moonlight, on the executioner's pole.

Now it is for the Prince's father Timur to recall his son to reality. Liù tearfully adds her plea ("Signore, ascolta"): his image has stood before her wherever

she has wandered, and if he is now to perish, both she and Timur will die on the road of exile. He replies gently, "Do not weep, Liù! I beg you not to abandon my father."

All the pleaders now unite their voices in a crescendo of great intensity. But nothing can stop the Prince. He tears himself loose from Ping, Pong and Pang. Thrice he pronounces the name of Turandot and, seizing the hammer, strikes the gong thrice. The ministers exit, laughing.



Pong, Ping and Pang—Tommaso Frascati, Mario Sereni and Piero de Palma recording the opening of Act II.

ACT II
Scene 1

A great curtain forms a pavilion curiously decorated with Chinese symbols and fantastic figures. Ping, Pong, and Pang are making arrangements for an Imperial celebration – whether for the Unknown Prince's funeral or his wedding seems immaterial, for the preparations are essentially the same: white lanterns or red, coffin or wedding carriage, sweet tea or incense.

They fall to musing on old China, the land they love, which had been sleeping tranquilly for seventy thousand centuries until Turandot was born. They read aloud the catalogue of death: in the year of the Mouse, six suitors died; in the year of the Dog, eight. In this terrible year of the Tiger, thirteen will have perished, including the Unknown Prince.

All their work seems senseless and intolerable: they have become nothing but ministers of the executioner.

In a reverie, Ping recalls a little house he owns on a Lake in Honan. The lake is blue, the house is surrounded by bamboo and filled with a collection of sacred books. How he longs to recapture his lost tranquillity there! Pong has forests near Tsiang; Pang a quiet garden at Kiù. Will they ever have a chance to retire? All Peking seems to be full of blood and frenzy, populated with lovers who have lost their minds. They envision a wedding day for Turandot, when their duties would be to prepare the nuptial couch and sing in the garden until morning!

Trumpets, trombones and drums from within the palace interrupt their fantasies: the people are assembling for the next contest. With heavy hearts they go out to join the others.

Scene 2

In the center of the square in front of the palace, a great marble staircase stretches to the very top. Amidst the clouds of incense blow the white and yellow standards of the Emperor. Eight tall scholars line the stairs, carrying sealed scrolls which contain the solutions to Turandot's riddles. The Unknown Prince stands to one side; on the other, Timur and Liù are lost in the crowd. The people gather, among them Ping, Pong and Pang, now wearing their state robes. At the highest point of the staircase the Emperor Altoum, all white and very ancient, is revealed on an ivory throne. The prostrate crowd greets him: "May you live ten thousand years!" Then all is silence. In the high, almost toneless voice of extreme old age, the Emperor addresses the stranger: "Enough of blood! Young hero, desist!"

Timur (Tozzi) and Liù (Tebaldi) try in vain to dissuade Calaf (Bjoerling) from attempting to solve the three riddles.

The Prince, in a firm voice, demands to be put to the task. Three times the Emperor tries to dissuade him, and three times the Prince insists. So be it, then! This stranger who seems so determined to die must fulfill his destiny.

The Mandarin repeats the formula he intoned at the beginning of the first act. The chorus of children in the distance sing once more the song in Turandot's praise. Finally Turandot appears, approaching the throne dressed entirely in gold. With an ice-cold glance she scans her suitor and then explains the genesis of her edict.

Once long ago in this very palace, in joy and serenity, lived her ancestress the Princess Lo-u-Ling. One night, barbarians entered China and fought their way to the capital. A man, "just like you, stranger," seized Lo-u-Ling and carried her off. In vain did the princess cry out in that terrible night! That cry and her death resound forever in the mind of Turandot, who has sworn that no man shall ever possess her. Turning to the Prince, she finishes: "Stranger, do not tempt fate. The enigmas are three, Death is one." The Prince replies, "No! The enigmas are three, Life is one!" The trumpets demand silence and Turandot begins to pose her riddles.

What is it that floats over humanity as a phantom in the darkness, that disappears with the dawn, but every night is born again in the heart? Immediately the Prince answers, "Yes, it is born again, exultantly! It is Hope!" The eight wise men break open their scrolls and confirm that the answer is correct. Turandot, shaking with fury, must acknowledge: "Yes. Hope always deceives." Nervously she descends to the landing of the staircase for the second riddle.

What is it that flickers like flame yet is not fire? It grows cold when life is gone

and burns when victory is won; it is silent yet has an audible voice. The Emperor and the crowd encourage the hesitating Prince. Out of the crowd the voice of Liù is heard, "Answer, for the sake of Love!" The Prince gives another correct answer: the mysterious substance is Blood.

The people are pleased, but Turandot descends to the Prince's level and defiantly delivers her last riddle to his face: "What is the ice that burns you? What is it that enslaves you by setting you free, and that by enslaving you makes you a king?" Though the Prince seems to hesitate, he has no doubt of the answer: Turandot! The ministers concur, and the crowd erupts in immense jubilation.

Turandot will not accept defeat, and appeals to her father, but the Emperor upholds his oath. She has vowed never to submit to a man; would the Unknown Prince take her by force, against her will? No, he answers, he wants her ardent with love. The Prince himself will give her another chance: whereas he has answered her three riddles, he will propose only one to her. If before dawn she can tell him what his name is, she is released from the bargain and he will accept defeat and death. Turandot acquiesces, and the Emperor and the crowd unite in singing the praises of this generous victor.

Playback session: Richard Mohr, Erich Leinsdorf, George Marek, Giuseppe Conca; in the background, Birgit Nilsson, Jussi Bjoerling and two members of the orchestra.

ACT III
Scene 1

It is still night in the great garden of the palace. The voices of heralds are proclaiming a new edict: no one is to sleep this night. The name of the stranger is to be found out, or else every citizen will die. The Prince, alone, muses upon the proclamation ("Nessun Dorma!"): Turandot herself will not sleep this night, but will spend it gazing at the stars shimmering with love. She will not discover his name, but she will learn it from his own lips in a kiss at dawn.

The dim figures of Ping, Pong, Pang and the mob creep in through the darkness. They try to bribe him: what would he take to leave Peking? Love? Ping surrounds him with scantily-clad seductresses, but he is uninterested. Perhaps he prefers riches. Pang brings chests of gold and jewels, but these make no better impression. Fame and glory? The military might of China to conquer empires? The Prince is unmoved, so they turn to threats of torture and death – China is expert in this, they say. The mob begins to threaten him with their daggers, but he insists: "I want Turandot!"

A sudden commotion, and shouts of "We have found the name!" are heard, as the guards drag in Timur and Liù. The three ministers and the guards, ignoring the Prince's protests, call for the Princess, who appears on the threshold of the pavilion.

Bowing, Ping informs her that if anybody knows the secret, these two do. Turandot orders Timur to speak, but the frightened old man remains mute. The ministers are about to seize and torture him when Liù steps forward and asserts that she alone knows the

stranger's name. The crowd demands that she be put to the rack. The Prince throws himself in front of Liù to protect her, but Turandot has her guards bind him hand and foot.

Under torture, Liù can resist no longer, but still would rather choose death than reveal her secret. Suddenly something in Turandot's heart seems to melt. For the first time she asks a human question in a human tone: "What is it that has given you the strength to suffer like this?" "Love, Princess." "Love?" Love, Liù confesses, which is secret, unspoken, offered without recompense. She bids the guards to bind and torture her. However dreaded the pain, it is only a last tribute to the love she feels.

Her icy self again, Turandot commands the guards to tear the secret from the girl, while the crowd summons the executioner. Under the looming figure of the headsman, Liù turns once more to Turandot and begs to be heard. "You who are bound by ice," Liù prophesies, "will be overcome by flame. You will love him as I did. Before the sun rises, I will have closed my eyes so that he may be victorious." She snatches a dagger from the belt of one of the guards and plunges it into her heart. The crowd cries, "Speak, speak! The name! The name!" but Liù is forever silent. As they carry her body away, old Timur grasps her hand, promising soon to follow where she has gone.

Turandot's attendants have covered her face with a veil; through the last fearsome scene she has remained rigid, without a word. Now she and the Prince are left alone. The Prince tears the veil from Turandot's face and exhorts her to be a woman. Still she repulses him. She is the daughter of the heavens, free, untouched, and he must not profane her soul. In answer he

Birgit Nilsson recording Turandot's famous aria "In questa reggia."

takes her in his arms and kisses her. This kiss seals her fate. The ice-Princess melts into the warmth of womanhood, and weeps, "Dawn is here and Turandot's sun is setting."

She confesses that at first sight she loved him; her hatred was only the memory of all those she had sacrificed. She has hated him also for his pride, as she foresaw that he was destined to conquer. She begs him to leave, taking his secret with him. No, replies the Prince gently, it is no longer a mystery. He will give her his name and with it power over his life. He is Calaf, son of Timur. Turandot exclaims, "I know your name! I know your name!" At this moment the trumpets sound to signal that the appointed hour has come.

Scene 2

The square before the palace is bathed in the red light of sunrise. The Emperor, the court and the people are assembled as at the Prince's trial. Turandot ascends to the top of the staircase and in a strange new voice speaks to her father: "I know the stranger's name," she says. "It is—Love." Calaf rushes to her, and with a final chorus of joy the opera ends.

TECHNICAL NOTES

JOHN NEWTON, SOUNDMIRROR INC.

Since the earliest days of recording, engineers have strived to make recorded sound as immediate and thrilling as natural sound. The earliest electrical recordings were made with a single microphone positioned in the hall for optimum balance. The signal was fed to a cutting lathe, and with the advent of magnetic recording, to a monaural tape recorder; a copy of that tape was used to produce the LPs which consumers listened to at home.

With stereo, two microphones were placed in the hall. Signals were fed to a stereo tape recorder and consumers, listening back on two speakers, heard a new "depth" of sound. By placing microphones in the left, center, and right of the hall, engineers progressed to 3-channel recordings, which afforded them greater control over the musical balances that ended up in the stereo mix. Even as CDs replaced LPs, this same process was often followed.

Today, with the advent of Super Audio CD and multi-channel playback, the listener can hear the left, center, and right channels exactly as the engineers heard them at the original recording sessions. In this series of Living Stereo reissues on hybrid Super Audio CDs, we have used the 3-channel original tapes whenever they existed; when the material was recorded only in stereo, we used that tape. Some of the Super Audio CDs will therefore contain 2-channel, or a combination of 2- and 3-channel material. We used only two or three of the available six channels on the Super Audio CD disc because that was the vision of the original producers.

In remastering these tapes, we kept the signal path as short as possible. A Studer-Aria analog tape recorder was connected with premium Siltech cabling directly to specifically chosen dCS converters. This DSD data is directly encoded on the Super Audio CD. Thus the listener is able to hear the output of these converters exactly as we heard it in the studio. The DSD program is essentially identical to the analog tape. What you hear are faithful copies of each historic recording — the pure performance, presented in its original splendor. No signal processing was necessary to "improve" these extra-ordinary tapes.

Throughout this very exciting project, history came alive as we heard the voices of legendary engineers verbally slating the tapes with the location and date of each session. We were greatly impressed not only with how little the original tapes were edited, but how skillfully engineers edited with their high-tech tool of the day, namely, a razor blade! Applying the best in 21st-century remastering technology, we believe we have done justice to the best in 20th-century recording technology for a new generation of listeners.

LIVING STEREO

PUCCINI TURANDOT

Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Erich Leinsdorf

NILSSON ■ TEBALDI ■ BJOERLING ■ TOZZI

1

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LIVING STEREO

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Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus
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NILSSON ■ TEBALDI ■ BJOERLING ■ TOZZI

2

RCA RED SEAL

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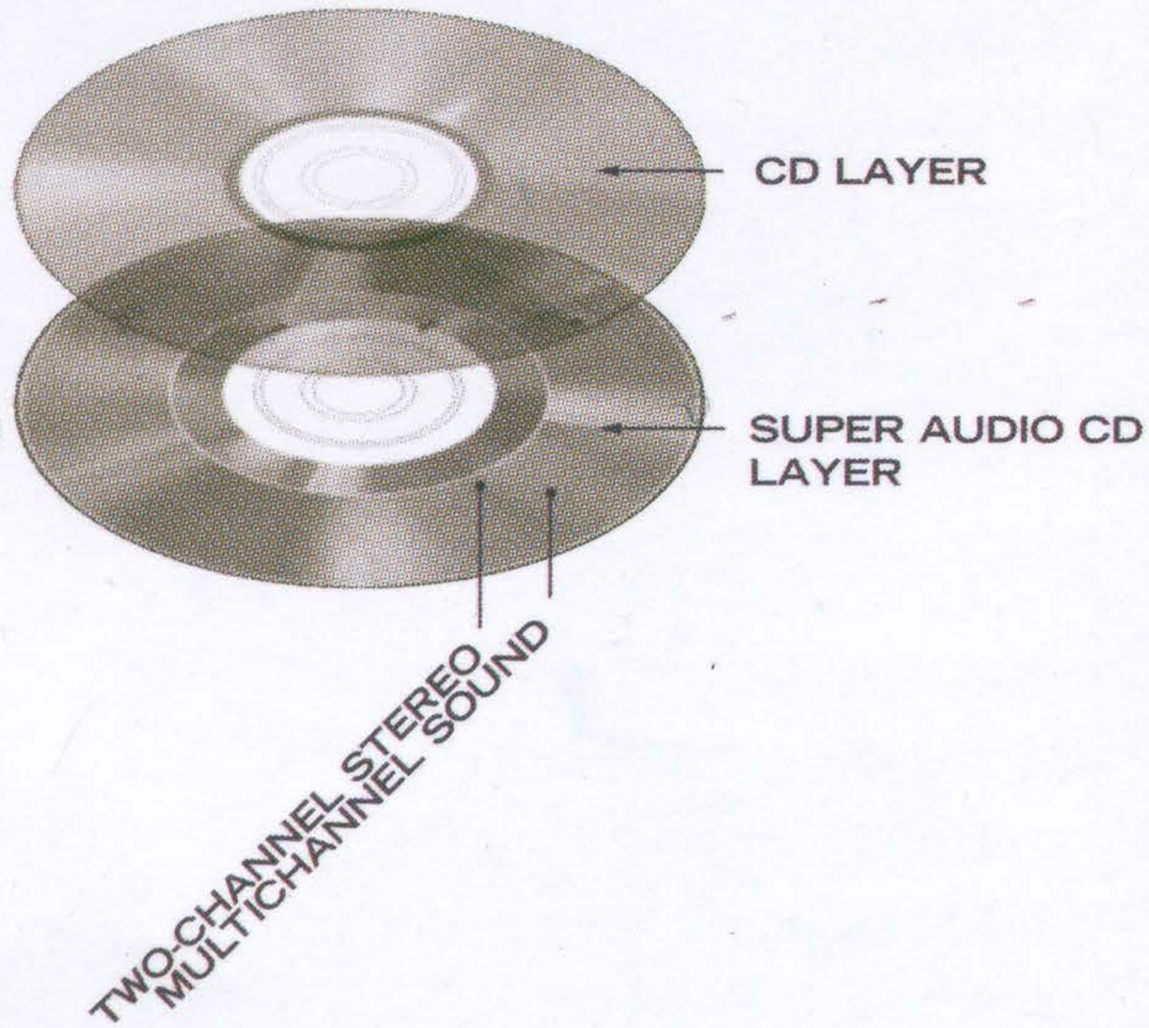

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TURANDOT

Music by GIACOMO PUCCINI *(1858–1924)*

Princess Turandot	**Birgit Nilsson**, *soprano*
Liù	**Renata Tebaldi**, *soprano*
Timur	**Giorgio Tozzi**, *bass*
Calaf	**Jussi Bjoerling**, *tenor*
Ping	**Mario Sereni**, *baritone*
Pang	**Piero de Palma**, *tenor*
Pong	**Tommaso Frascati**, *bass*

Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus
Erich Leinsdorf, *conductor*
(Recorded in 1959)

COMPACT disc DIGITAL AUDIO · SUPER AUDIO CD · DSD Direct Stream Digital

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Produced by Richard Mohr
Recording Engineer: Lewis Layton
Remastered at Soundmirror, Inc.

TOTAL PLAYING TIME:
Disc 1–54:06 ■ Disc 2–60:55

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SUPER AUDIO CD

PUCCINI

TURANDOT

Nilsson • Tebaldi • Bjoerling • Tozzi

Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus
Erich Leinsdorf, *conductor*