

# **TURANDOT**

Giacomo Puccini

## **Synopsis**

In Peking, in legendary times, Princess Turandot has decreed she will marry a prince capable of answering her three riddles. The failing candidate is beheaded. As yet another suitor is to be executed, the crowds mill around. Among them is the blind ex-king of Tartary, Timur, who runs into and recognizes his long-lost son Calaf, who keeps his identity secret for fear of being set upon by his enemies. The slave girl Liù, who helps Timur in getting around, is secretly in love with Calaf. He, however, falls in love with Turandot at first sight and decides to win her, in spite of pleas and warnings from his father and Liù, as well as the three Imperial Ministers, Ping, Pang and Pong.

Just before the beginning of the riddle ceremony, the aged Emperor Altoum, Turandot's father, tries to persuade Calaf to abandon the enterprise, while Turandot proudly announces that no man shall ever possess her. She asks the riddles; Calaf answers all three, causing Turandot to beg Altoum to release her from her oath. Seeing her turmoil, Calaf offers her one riddle: if she can discover his name by dawn of the next day, she can have his life.

All of Peking is trying to find out the stranger's name. Timur and Liù are captured, and after Timur is threatened with torture, Liù confesses that she alone knows the stranger's name, but will not disclose it. Her torture is interrupted by Turandot, who asks what gives her such courage, to which she answers it is the love for Calaf. On her way to execution, she grabs a knife from one of the guards and commits suicide. Calaf declares love to Turandot; she asks him to leave, but he refuses and reveals his name. Moved by his ardor, she relents and proclaims to her father that she knows the stranger's name: it is Love.