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Analysis of ten operas in terms of music education relevant to the aesthetic and laryngeal development of early adolescence

Margaret Egine L'Eeveque

The University of Montana

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AN ANALYSIS OF TEN OPERAS IN TERMS OF MUSIC EDUCATION
RELEVANT TO THE AESTHETIC AND LARYNGEAL DEVELOPMENT
OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE

by

MARGARET EGINE L'EVEQUE

B.M.___________Hurón College, 1952

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degree of

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1958

Approved by:

[Signature]
Chairman, Board of Examiners

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

AUG 21 1958
Date
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of terms used</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laryngeal problems of junior high choral work</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic problems of junior high choral work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. AIDA--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CARMEN--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. HANSEL AND GRETEL--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. LOHENGRIN--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. MADAME BUTTERFLY--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. PAGLIACCI--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. PORGY AND BESS--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. ROMEO AND JULIET--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. WILLIAM TELL--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the opera</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man who wrote the opera</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of the opera</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX (Bound separately)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERATIC SONGS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDA—Giuseppe Verdi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard the Nile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavenly Aida</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARMEN—Georges Bizet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habanera</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toreador Song</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANSEL AND GRETEL—Engelbert Humperdinck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Song</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOHENGRIN—Richard Wagner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here Is a Knight</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding March</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADAME BUTTERFLY—Giacomo Puccini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Fine Day</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki's Prayer</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE—Christoph W. Gluck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Is Gone and Gone Forever</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The God of Love Has Prevailed</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGLIACCI—Ruggiero Leoncavallo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Song</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On with Your Costume</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORGY AND BESS—George Gershwin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Got Plenty O' Nuttin</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summertime</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMEO AND JULIET—Charles Gounod</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arietta</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Capulet's Ball</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAM TELL—Gioacchino Rossini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Hardy Nature</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Tell Overture</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The great struggle to conquer a continent has taken place, and now Americans at last have the time to create a native culture. One of the tremendous seed beds of this potential power is the vast system of music education in the public schools of the nation.

In the process of general education, educating the child for earning his living, contributing to his society, and making profitable use of his leisure time, music has long held an integral place; and if the musical advancement in American culture is to grow ever and ever mightier, the aesthetic powers of the young must be cultivated.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to deal with the educational factor that may best promote the growth of a native culture, worthy use of leisure time for all people through the arts. The other objectives of human growth are inevitably touched upon as all patterns of human life are interwoven in the over-all fabric of existence. One cannot deviate from a grasp of general principles when dealing with specifics, or the specific becomes
a prison of esoteric terror, and finally a vacuum. This is a principle that will and must permeate this study in its dealing with the field of music, and in music, opera.

The stage has been set for the project, the stage of philosophical generalization, now specifics of the study:

(1) To choose ten operas for their beauty, power, and appeal to the junior high level, and prepare presentation of them in a manner calculated to promote interest and appreciation in the students.

(2) To choose excerpts from these operas that are of appealing calibre and possible for junior high performance, bearing in mind the laryngeal variables of early adolescent pupils, with particular concern for the cambiata range in junior high school boys.

Importance of the study. The importance of raising the cultural level of all the people is obvious if the fruition of the democratic way of life is to take place for the cultural edification of mankind, not only for the gifted few, but ultimately for the average man.

This study makes an attempt to present the stories of the operas and preparation of the music in a manner which perceives first those understandings that the student already has, and expands that area of understanding.

The other main factor the study touches upon besides
aesthetic grasp of operas is the factor of laryngeal development among adolescent boys. The problems of the changing voice are considered met and dealt with in the arranging of melodies from operatic works.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Laryngeal problems of junior high school choral work. It has been estimated that ninety percent of boys pass through the voice-change period between admission to grade seven and the end of grade nine, or what is generally termed as the junior high era of adolescent education. The junior high school teacher is faced with the problem either of harnessing the changing voice of the male adolescent and integrating it with the better known vocal types, or eliminating the changing voice entirely from the music program. In any respect these problems are, besides danger to musical enjoyment, extra-musical dangers, the most potent of which is the psychological impact. In combating one of the psychological problems, modern music educators have given the changing-voice quality of the adolescent male a special name. Having been termed for years as an "alto-tenor," the boy with the changing voice felt the psychological irritation of being in a vocal "no-man's land" plus the added pain of the pseudo-feminine name, alto-tenor. The new
pride to the adolescent male in the term, cambiata. Nor
is this pride unjustified. Mr. Irvin Cooper, prominent
junior high school authority, says of the cambiata, "The
rich, sonorous tone of the cambiata gives a beautiful tex­
ture to the inner parts, and the warm, wooly tone of the
young baritones is a delight to the ear."

In this particular study, it is the aim of the writer
to bear in mind at all times, not the barrier, but the
potentiality of the cambiata for active use. In excerpts
from the operas presented, care has been taken to stay
within the capacities and limits of junior high vocal
ranges which are generally considered by music educators to
fall in the following categories, as Figure I shows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{GIRLS} & : & \text{BOYS} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\includegraphics[width=2cm]{guitar.png}} \\
\text{\includegraphics[width=2cm]{guitar.png}} \\
\end{array}
\end{align*}
\]

**FIGURE I**

MAXIMUM VOCAL RANGES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Aesthetic problems of junior high choral work. The
main objective of the aesthetic factor involved is to

Irvin Cooper, *Letters to Pat Concerning Junior High
School Vocal Problems* (New York: Carl Fischer Inc., 1953),
p. 11.
instill the seed of life-long appreciation for music, in this case, specifically, opera, in the intellects and souls of children in early adolescence. This is no easy task, and the factor of drama, drama that is intelligible to early adolescent grasp, must be instilled in the presentation. In other words, the outglow of art, of the living drama in art, must make the educational principle gleam with living interest for the average and especially for the above average mass of children if environmental vacuums relevant to the students' wider field of living are to be counteracted.

The familiar must be touched upon as a stepping stone. Esoteric principles of art, abstract functions of intellectual sword-play, flood-light of advanced knowledge, superiority of great music, awareness of cultural vacuum—all that a professional musician or educator clings to with the tenacity of a prophet's heart-beat, must not be flooded into the minds of the students in a tidal wave that will completely drown the ultimate objectives that lie as dormant seeds in their interior beings. Care and wisdom must be observed in manner of presentation, working upon what the child already knows and building from there.

Drill at the junior high level, at least excessive drill on the technicalities of music, should be generally frowned upon by music educators. This age level is an age
of change and ferment, an age vital for the planting of appreciation, an age vital for welding aesthetic principles into the emotional stream in a way that will enrich that stream that is bubbling with the essence of future attitudes.
CHAPTER II

AIDA--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

From the stony face of the sphinx to the awesome treasures of the pyramids--from all the ancient mysteries of Egypt come magic and history.

Thousands of years after the old pyramids were built, a ruler of Egypt, in the year 1896, was celebrating in that land, the building of the Suez Canal and the building of a beautiful new theater at Egypt's capital city of Cairo. In order to have an impressive first night performance, the king of Egypt wanted a play that would be about Egyptians; and he didn't want just a play. He wanted a lot of music and color too, in other words, he wanted an opera. The king didn't want an opera by just anybody, he wanted an opera about Egypt written by the most popular opera composer in the world at that time.

As politely as possible, the Egyptian diplomats asked the great Italian composer, Giuseppe Verdi, if he would write an opera about old Egypt for new Egypt's big celebration. The composer replied that he didn't think there would be anything interesting enough to write an opera about, so the diplomats were sad and went away.
thinking how angry their king would be.

Meanwhile Verdi kept on writing Italian operas about Italians until a Frenchman who went around digging in old Egyptian graves (an Egyptologist), told Verdi a very interesting story that he had found written in one of the old graves. This story was so interesting that Verdi decided to write an opera about Egyptians after all, using this story that the Frenchman had found written in one of the old graves. This pleased the king of Egypt so much that he gave Verdi a huge sum of money for the opera. Verdi, who was already rich, didn't particularly need it, so he gave a large part of it to the "poor, brave, wounded French soldiers" who were fighting the Germans at the time.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

There was once a grocer in Italy who had a little boy. He seemed a rather average little boy who was particularly fond of music; so his father bought him an old second-hand spinet. The boy played the spinet so vigorously that he broke the strings. By the time he stopped breaking spinets, the boy played so well that his father sent him away to Busseto, a larger town not far away. Here the boy played the organ at the town cathedral, and all the citizens who heard him at church admired him so much that they collected
a scholarship fund to send him to the music conservatory at Milan, Italy.

Eagerly the teen-age boy left the country town for the great city of Milan, clutching the scholarship money given him by the small-town folk of Busseto. The professors at the Milan conservatory turned down the boy, Giuseppe Verdi, because he was a little too old for music-study, and because, as they put in their official ruling, he was "lacking in musical talent." The teen-age boy was almost heartbroken with disappointment. Yet, down-deep, the boy had confidence in himself, and, after a time, he studied with a private teacher.

For a short while during and after his studies in Milan, Verdi worked at his profession, music. But he was lonely in the city, and he went back to his home town to marry the lovely Margherita. Several years later he, his wife, and small son went to Milan where Verdi worked very hard trying to write a comic opera. The comedy turned into blackest tragedy, however; for during this time, Verdi's wife and son died. In such a setting the opera was a failure.

Verdi wanted to give up composing. He was a failure. Had it not been for a group of carpenters who shouted for and applauded his music when they heard it rehearsed, the world might have lost the shimmering genius who became the
king of Italian opera.

Perseverance finally won out, and more and more of Verdi's works were heard by the public, and met with cries of "bravo," although one of his great operas, La Traviata, was at first a failure.

The boy who was refused entry at the Milan conservatory became rich and famous. He was known all over the world. The king of Egypt paid him a fabulous sum to write an opera about his country; and in the height of his success, Verdi became a farmer, something he had always wanted to be. He bought a large farm, and when he was not composing, he supervised the raising of his crops, and the breeding of his horses. To this farm he brought a lovely lady whom he had married. She was always gentle and kind, and made his life with her a happy one.

Although he became rich from his composing, and ran his farm so successfully that he gained a fine profit from it, music and farming were not Verdi's only interests. He was elected deputy to the first Italian parliament, and later he was appointed a senator by the Italian king.

The great man passed away on January 27, 1901, and the people of his country grieved over his death. Schools throughout Italy were closed and the Italian senate held a special session to mourn and to praise the grocer's son who had been a genius.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

During the time when the giant pyramids were being built, the Egyptians on the banks of the Nile were considered among the most intelligent people on earth. They often carved story-pictures on the walls of old tombs; here is one of the story-pictures that really happened, the story of Aida, a beautiful slave girl.

The sun light glinted on the elaborate stones of the great temple, and a sunbeam or two glanced on the anxious face of a young Egyptian army officer who was hurrying through the great hall to meet an important person.

At last the young officer bowed in a courtly manner as he met the high-priest of the temple. Ramphis, the priest, was dressed in long, flowing white and golden robes. He was very tall and solemn-looking, and in a deep, low voice, he talked to Radames, the young officer.

"Oh, noble young Radames, our bitter enemies, the Ethiopians, are again attacking the city of Thebes and little farms all over the valley of the Nile. Once again the courage of Egypt must answer the savagery of Ethiopia blow by blow, and you, young man of fortune's star, have been chosen as the mighty one who must lead the noblest of Egypt in battle."
Radames was filled with conflicting emotions upon hearing this news, and before he could command his senses for a sensible reply, the high priest spoke again.

"You have been chosen, Radames, and now you must report to the king at once."

With these words ringing like bells of death and glory in the ears of Radames, the high priest turned and proceeded down the great hall into the darkly mysterious rooms of the goddess, Isis.

Radames stood alone as the priest's footsteps echoed down the hall. The walls of the temple seemed almost to close in on him as emotion fought with emotion in his heart. How could he, Radames, of all people, hope to lead the Egyptian armies to victory against the Ethiopians when he, himself, was so deeply in love with an Ethiopian girl. Oh, it was strange that a dashing young officer would love a slave girl of an enemy people.

"But the heart," thought Radames, "has its own rules and its own kingdom."

Radames became lost in his dream of Aida, the beloved slave girl, and he became so lost in his joy of thinking, that he did not hear the dainty footsteps entering the temple until the beautiful girl spoke.

"You seem to be thinking deeply, and joy transfigures your face," said Amneris, the lovely Egyptian
princess who had just entered.

Radames turned abruptly, startled, "I am thinking of the joy of being chosen general of Egyptian armies," said he.

"Isn't there some gentler desire that you have right here?"

A dart of fear caught at Radames' heart, and he wondered for a moment if the Egyptian princess suspected his love for Aida who was the personal slave of the princess.

The suspicions and feelings were bound to grow, for soon Aida herself entered, and the lovely slave was welcomed very kindly by the clever princess who secretly knew and hated her rival, but who openly brushed away the girl ' s tears.

The weeping of a young maiden, however, was of little importance when the gleaming, golden trumpets announced the entrance of the high priest, the king and the top men of the army and the priesthood.

With a shaking voice, the king declared vengeance on the vile Ethiopians who were burning and plundering Egypt. His hatred was especially aimed toward Amonasro, their leader. A powerful man, Amonasro was king of the Ethiopians, leader of the armies and known as the Lion of Ethiopia. He was also Aida ' s father; but the Egyptians
did not know this, and thought Aida to be a commoner.

Upon completing his fiery speech, the king of Egypt ordered Radames to go to the temple of Vulcan, god of weapons, there to arm himself for holy battle as general of the armies.

All Egypt was excited for glory and revenge. Only Aida sobbed in the shadow of the temple and asked the gods to have mercy on her; for hers was a heart torn two ways—one for Egypt, her lover led its armies; the other way for Ethiopia; it was her homeland, and there her father, Lion of Ethiopia, was king.

His heart, filled with similar feelings to Aida's, Radames obeyed his king's command and proceeded to the temple of Vulcan. Pillars stretching almost without end could be seen in the dimly lit mysterious temple; and as Radames walked in to the darkened halls, he could dimly see priestesses clad in flowing white and singing strange prayers to the accompaniment of little harps. As Radames came closer, the priestesses continued their singing and dancing before the altar. As he came to the altar, they placed a silver veil on his head, and the high priest gave him an anointed sword with which he must swear to protect Egypt's soil.

Time passed—days of war, bloodshed and glory. Victory was on the side of the Egyptians while the
Ethiopians were defeated and made slaves.

In the palace of the Egyptian king, an elaborate beauty parlor was put in operation; and in the center of this beautifying was the princess. She was determined to be more beautiful than any woman alive for the return of the victorious young general of the armies.

Some of the palace slaves were dancing for the princess while others were applying eyeshadow, false eyelashes, lipstick, rouge, curlers, toenail polish, and all things that are supposed to make women beautiful.

In the midst of all her preparations, Amneris decided to send for Aida and find out once and for all whether or not Aida truly loved Radames.

"Greetings, young handmaiden," said the princess when Aida was called into her presence.

I am sorry that our countries had to war with each other, and now your nation is suffering in defeat; but even though Egypt is victorious, she suffers the burden of loss, for Radames, general of the armies has been killed."

Upon hearing this news, which was, of course, not true, Aida burst into such a cry of sorrow and agony, that she did what the princess wanted her to do, she revealed her love for Radames.

Amneris' pretense of kindness shattered like glass on a marble floor.
"So this little slave quivering at my feet is the
grand rival for Radames' love. Radames is not dead, but
your hopes for his love are."

The emotions of Aida may have been twisted in a dark
corner of her soul; but outside on the streets of Egypt's
capital city, all was color, light, and excitement that
defied the very sight of the eyes and hearing of the ears.

All Egypt was celebrating victory over the dreaded
Ethiopians. The streets were alive with scarred but gloriously victorious Egyptian soldiers. Gold and silver
treasure, loot from the fallen land, was drawn by prancing horses. Beautiful women waving palms and feathers danced through the streets in flowing costumes. Elephants charged grandly forth, their leathery skins decorated in bright brocade and golden ornaments. Brass bands and throbbing drums made the heart-beat of the parade. Very fascinating in the parade were the blood-stained, dark-skinned Ethiopian prisoners moving in sorrowful rhythm to the clanking of their chains. The exciting procession paraded through the streets of Thebes until a handsome young man in a glorious chariot brought up the rear of the parade and halted before the king of Egypt. This splendid young man with the sunlight glinting on his armor was Radames, Hero of the Land.

The king descended from his throne while the king's
lovely daughter, Amneris, placed a crown upon the heroic head of Radames.

"Well pleased am I," said the king, "and you have only to state your request and it will be granted."

"Then I request first," stated Radames "that the Ethiopian prisoners be brought forth."

The dark-skinned captives sadly dragged themselves before the conquering king, and notable among them was a noble-looking man dressed in a lion-skin, and wearing two horns on his head. Aida, miserably looking at the prisoners, let out a muffled cry of, "father" when she saw the big man dressed in lion-skin. With a small sign he showed her not to betray his true rank.

The king, unaware that the big Ethiopian was king of Ethiopia in disguise and Aida's father, questioned him about his crime. Amonasro replied that if fighting for one's fatherland is a crime, all of the prisoners are ready for death.

"Yet," said Amonasro, "I would ask warmly for mercy, for life is sweeter than unknown land of death, and who knows what tomorrow might bring."

The other prisoners and Aida chanted Amonasro's plea for mercy but were drowned out by the harsh cries of the high priest.

"We demand death," cried Ramphis, "death for the vile
murderers of Egyptians,--kill all the Ethiopian prisoners. Let their blood be a sacrifice to the gods of Egypt."

It became obvious that the king of Egypt was waver­ing in his decision of "to kill or not to kill;" and at this important moment, Radames stepped forward. He had seen Aida in tears, and the tears had secretly become his own. His heart could not keep him from making the request that all Ethiopian prisoners be freed.

Shouts and cries shook the walls of Thebes and the priests demanded death, while the common people and Radames asked for freedom for the prisoners.

Great argument arose with viscious words filling the air on both sides. Finally, however, the crafty high­priest, Ramphis, proposed a compromise; "Let the common Ethiopian prisoners be set free," he shouted, "but keep the big man in the lion-skin, and take his life, for he is apparently their leader."

Much joy greeted this compromise, and most of the Egyptians agreed that it was wise, but Aida, hidden in the shadows of the city, wept many tears because the captive in the lion-skin was her father.

The great thirst of the Nile River was drinking in the black wine of the night and eating of the silver apple of the moon. Sliding down the river was a carved and guilded boat in which the Princess Amneris was riding.
Her destination was the temple of Isis in which she would pray for her forthcoming marriage to Radames the next morning.

"Oh, goddess of the night," she prayed, "I only ask that Radames may learn to love me as I love him."

In the mean time, on the banks of the river, a girl, her face hidden by a heavy veil, was hiding beneath the protection of tall, graceful trees. The girl was Aida and she was keeping watch for the hero, Radames, bridegroom-to-be of Amneris. They would have one last, secret, sorrowful meeting; but instead of Radames, the giant figure of another man came hulking out of the shadows. Aida's heart was filled with strangling terror until the great, strong man beneath the trees made himself known to her as her own father, Amonasro, Lion of Ethiopia.

"My child, I have escaped, for the moment at least, from my captors," he said, "and I know the reason that you wait, hidden beneath the trees and the moon."

He paused, and in his brown eyes were the flecks of a smoldering fire. "You wait to meet your lover, Radames, enemy of Ethiopia, murderer of Ethiopians."

"But he begged Ethiopian prisoners to be freed," sobbed Aida.

"As general of Egyptian armies he has shamed our altars, murdered our children, destroyed our homes."
"Oh, father," cried Aida, "I pray that we may return to a happy homeland one day."

"Yes, my child," he whispered, "and we shall, here is how you will help."

With those words the Lion of Ethiopia unravelled his plot to his daughter. He told her that an uncaptured force of Ethiopians were ready to strike again. Only one thing did they need to know, the secret pass by which the Egyptians would next march. This secret known to the Ethiopians would mean ambush and massacre for the Egyptian army, and Aida must discover this secret path by tricking her lover into telling her.

Aida recoiled in horror when this plan was made known.

"Betray my beloved, never!"

Then indeed did the voice of the Lion of Ethiopia raise in violent anger.

"Look, Aida," his voice uttered in a deep, horrible cry; "Look into the voiceless Nile and see the ghosts of your murdered fatherland. See the land and the fires, the cries, the deaths wrought by Egypt, and look, unfaithful daughter—see, white in the pallor of the moon and red in the fire of revenge, see your mother's bony arm at your head, cursing you!"

It was more than the heart of Aida could stand. She threw herself at her father's feet.
"My father," she murmured, "I shall do your will, I shall discover the secret pass from Radames, you will hide in the shadows while I talk to him and hear the betrayal of this secret."

Amonasro hid beneath the trees, and Aida's heart was eating itself out with fear, love, sorrow, and regret as Radames tenderly approached her.

"True captor of my heart," he whispered, I shall not marry tomorrow, for an army of Ethiopians has arisen again; I won't have to marry the king's daughter because I must hurry off to fight the enemy. I shall win the battle and demand the king to give me you as my fair and just reward."

"Oh, my foolish, brave soldier," smiled Aida, "You forget the power of Amneris' hatred, her revenge would never allow you to marry another woman, least of all an Ethiopian slave girl."

"But my life, my heart, my soul, can give allegiance to no one but you, Aida; a marriage to Amneris would be unfair to her as well as to us."

"Yet I know what we must do," answered Aida. "We will flee to a strange new land, far away from Ethiopia, far away from Egypt, and there in peace and beauty we shall begin a new life, a new world."

Radames' face grew very pale, "I cannot leave and
betray the country that has given me birth, nourishment and glory. I cannot leave my armies, betray the trust, the honor that has been given me."

Aida became excited and the spirit of Ethiopia rose in her own breast, "It is not the trust of your armies you are in fear of betraying. It is the clinging love of Amneris which ensnares your heart in its great web, and for me your love shines only in hiding where none of the world can see."

Radames struggled with himself, and his great and real love for Aida was overpowering." I shall go with you to a new land," he cried.

For a moment torn out of time, the lovers were happy with each other; then Aida spoke once more. "We must leave for this new land at once," she paused, then said, "only by what path shall we go in order to avoid your armies?"

"By the secret path our armies will take tomorrow. It will be deserted until then."

"What path is that?" breathed Aida.

"The gorges of Napata."

Suddenly the Lion of Ethiopia leaped out of the shadows and he confronted the astounded Radames and announced that he was the king of Ethiopia, who would use this revealed secret to destroy the Egyptian armies.

Radames was weak and horrified, "I have lost my most
precious possession, my honor," he cried.

"No, it was not you but merely the will of fate," said Amonasro as he tried to drag Radames off with him and Aida. Radames was resisting and the two men were having a great struggle.

Suddenly Amneris, followed by the high priest and the guards, rushed from the temple from which they had heard the noise of the action outside. In the excitement daggers were drawn, and Radames urged the Lion and his daughter to flee. Guards rushed off to chase them while desperately but heroically, Radames offered his sword to Amneris in surrender, saying that he had betrayed his people.

Several days passed. All Egypt had become dazed in shock over the betrayal of its hero, and the day came to pass on which his trial was set. It was only briefly that the judges deliberated on Radames' sentence. Like thunder from the coils of the earth itself the fallen hero heard his sentence.

"Radames, you will be buried alive beneath the temple of Vulcan, there to lie in the darkness without food or water until your bones become one with the earth."

Clinging to the remains of his honor, Radames took the sentence bravely and calmly; but there was one who had desired his death in her rage who now sorrowed in her
innermost heart. Amneris could bear the strain no longer and asked to be taken to Radames' prison cell before he was to be taken to his death. Once at his cell her tears streaked like diamonds down her cheeks and she begged the fallen hero to marry her and thus save his life.

"You have lost your country and honor for Aida," she said, "and I would give up my own country and honor for you."

Radames whispered that he loved only Aida.

"Then you shall die," said Amneris, "for I would give you life if you would swear never to see Aida again as long as you live."

"I would gladly go to death if I could give my life for Aida," cried the prisoner.

Overcome with grief, Amneris sank to the ground, covering her face with her hands. In her misery she heard the low, solemn chanting of the priests coming to take Radames to his death.

"In my jealousy I have sealed his doom," she sobbed.

As the priests condemned Radames to death, the fallen princess screamed curses at them and begged them to save his life, but hands folded across their chests, the priests only called, "traitor, traitor," more loudly.

Slowly to the muffled roll of drums, Radames marched beneath the temple of Vulcan. Brawny soldiers sealed his
underground tomb with a great rock and left him in the darkness to die slowly.

"I am alone," thought the condemned man. I shall die only hoping that Aida will have sunshine over her head and sunshine in her heart."

"Aida," he whispered, "beloved, how strange it is being in the darkness and soon to die, one sees visions, like that heavenly vision of you which I see now."

But it was not a vision which he saw. Aida was actually present. In some way, determined in her love, she had managed to steal into the underground tomb ahead of Radames. She told him that so great was her love that she could only be happy by dying with him.

"That one so beautiful must die," said Radames.

"Do not feel fear, only joy, my prince," said the girl, "I see the bright angel of death leading us, hand in hand, to heaven."

With all the strength of his young body Radames tried to move the stone sealing the tomb—to no avail.

Above the underground tomb in the temple, Amneris chanted to the gods; and while she was saying her sorrowful prayers, the true and rightful lovers waited together the arrival of the angel of death who would lead them into a beautiful, unknown land where they would be together in all the centuries of time.
CHAPTER III

CARMEN--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

The opera, Carmen, is taken from a story by a famous French literary man, Prosper Merimee. The Carmen in the Merimee story is a much more wicked character than the Carmen in the opera who has become accepted as a dramatic character in operatic literature. Several movie versions of Carmen have been produced. The Russians presented a version called Carmencita, and the American Negro version, Carmen Jones, has entertained millions.

The actual performance of the opera, Carmen, at opera houses has not been without its moments of living drama. At one performance at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York, the star playing Carmen became so wrapped up in her part that in the stage fight she had with Manuela, she actually knocked Manuela out and the actress playing this part had to be carried unconscious from the stage.

Carmen has many lovely tunes, the most famous of which is the flirtatious song sung by Carmen to the rhythm of a Cuban dance, the Habanera. This entire song is taken from a composition by a fairly unknown Spanish composer, Yradier. Another of the most famous songs in the opera is
the Bull-Fighter Song, the Toreador Song. Bizet didn't like this most famous of all baritone solos very well and wrote it against his better judgment. He had written what he considered a more proper aria for the baritone, but finally presented the Toreador Song with the remark, "Oh, well, they want filth. Here it is."

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

Three months after the first performance of the opera, Carmen, its composer died. As this most famous of operas was too realistic for opera audiences in Paris at its first performance, it was not generally considered a great success, and some legends say that Bizet died of a broken heart because his opera was a failure. Long before the premier of Carmen, Bizet had been overworked, ill, and suffering from an infection of the throat said to be cancerous. He died because of this condition and a heart attack.

There was sadness in the life of Bizet, and when the composer saw that Carmen was being received coldly, he left the performance in tears before the opera's end. His misery was justifiable. He had written several previous operas which had met with more or less failure. His whole heart and soul had been poured into Carmen, so his disappointment was overwhelming.
Actually the opera was not such a failure as Bizet had first assumed. The opera's exquisite perfection did not shine with initial stardom because of its realistic punch, realistic, at least, for 1875. The story of the flirtatious Carmen was considered not quite proper; women working in a cigarette factory was shocking as well as the fact that Carmen was stabbed at the conclusion of the story. Paris audiences were used to seeing characters live happily ever after.

After a few public performances the Paris opera company forgot about Carmen. The opera was shelved for seven years until Carmen's success in the rest of the world forced the Paris opera company to present Carmen again.

The composer of the most perfect of operas came from a family of musicians. He was a fine pianist, especially an expert sight-reader, and he won a great prize for composing, the Prix de Rome. In spite of his composing abilities, Alexandre Cesar Leopold Georges Bizet was forced to live quite scantily, and make his living by the arrangement of popular tunes. He worked very hard and was not satisfied with many of his creations. After months of labor, he burned the score of his opera, Ivan the Terrible, wasting heartbreaking labor of which he did too much. Broken in health, he died of cancer of the throat, and did not live to hear Carmen described as the perfect opera.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

Many years ago in romantic, sunny Spain, large bands of Spanish gypsies danced and sang, played their violins, tambourines and castanets in the mountain passes or on the plains and prairies of Spain's prime cattle country. Some of these wild, picturesque characters even resorted to smuggling and had to hide from the law. With dark eyes, flashing tempers, and rippling laughter, these wild, Spanish gypsies were as ignorant and untamed as the little wild animals of the forest.

The most fascinating gypsy of all was Carmen. She was lovely, a woman of great beauty with dark eyes, long black hair, and a rose which she almost always wore in her hair or on her blouse. She had many lovers but her own heart was fickle, free, wild and gay. She could love none of them deeply or truly or for a long period of time, and she laughed at their broken hearts and went dancing and clashing her castanets at the call of the wind that wafted the torn rose petals of her latest romances.

The hot Spanish sun shone down brightly on the large square in the Spanish city of Seville. There were people bustling busily about the cigarette factory, the guardhouse, and the bridge nearby. Bright red and yellow uniforms of Spanish soldiers with great shiny buttons almost blinded
the eye and made one think that indeed these uniforms must have made wonderful targets of the poor soldiers when they were in battle.

Soon upon the busy city square before the appreciative eyes of the soldiers appeared a pretty little country maid with long, blond hair and a dainty dress of blue. She was lovely, and the soldiers treated her gallantly.

"I am looking for a soldier," she said, "a corporal."

The corporal on guard smiled admiringly and said, "Will I do?"

Micaela, however, very bashfully turned away and said that it was another corporal she was seeking, Don Jose.

Not finding Don Jose, and being terribly bashful when the soldiers spoke to her, Micaela hurried away.

The golden breath of the afternoon air was pierced by a bugle call announcing the changing of the guard. Captain Zuniga, a rather pompous sort of military man, his shy and boyish corporal, Don Jose, and their troop of dragoons came to relieve Corporal Morales' company. The military formalities of the changing of the guard took place while a gang of boys from the slums poked fun of the military drill by imitating it.

Corporal Morales smiled at Corporal Don Jose and told him appreciatively about the pretty little blond who was looking for him. The thought of Micaela was pleasant and
sweet to Don Jose, but the thoughts of the other soldiers turned to a fiery gypsy when Captain Zuniga, who very much admired a pretty face, told the soldiers of Carmen, most beautiful of women. Don Jose told the men that he wasn't interested in any gypsy. He was quite, quite in love with his pretty little Micaela.

Suddenly a loud whistle was heard. It was time for the noon-day meal. The girls smiled at the young soldiers and compared the vaporous, fleeting smoke of the cigarettes to the fleeting love of their young gallants. Suddenly all eyes turned in one direction and the soldiers, enchanted, cried the magic name, "Carmen."

Adoringly, the soldiers gathered around Carmen.

"When are you going to like us, Carmen?"

Carmen laughed, her eyes flashing tender contempt; sparks of hidden fire danced from them. She said, "I don't know. Maybe never, maybe tomorrow, but not today."

Only one of the soldiers had no eyes for Carmen, the young corporal, Don Jose. He was whittling on a piece of wood and trying very, very hard not to pay her the least attention. This was especially difficult for him to do as Carmen, seeing that he wasn't falling all over his feet in admiration of her, tried especially to get his attention. Her eyes twinkled with challenge and she danced a fiery Cuban dance, the Habanera, and sang that she loved a
certain soldier, and even though he didn't love her he had best beware of her. Close to Don Jose her dancing feet took Carmen. Don Jose whittled on his stick of wood with extreme industry while Carmen finished her dance, and in a last attempt to gain his attention she laughed, took a rose from her blouse and threw it at poor Don Jose.

Again the factory bell split the air and reluctantly the girls went back to the factory to work. Don Jose was very, very embarrassed. He picked up the flower Carmen had thrown at him, shook his head dismally and sighed, "What a witch!"

Soft blond hair, gentle loveliness momentarily blotted the vision of Carmen, and a sweet breath from homemade Don Jose feel good once more as sweet Micaela came to the square in search of her fiancee, Don. They were happy to meet each other and Don Jose asked eagerly about his mother who lived back in a little country village. Micaela said that she brought the love of his mother to him.

Horrible screams made blood curdle, the soldiers shuddered and raced to the rescue of the person obviously being killed in the cigarette factory. The center of attention was, of course, once again Carmen. She had become involved in a vigorous hair-pulling match with a girl named Manuela. Captain Zuniga of the dragoons was beset by excited women who told him a dozen different versions
of the fight. The captain nobly turned his attention away from the attractive girls, and ordered the soldiers to the task of clearing the square. Carmen was having a delightful time enjoying the excitement and attention. She laughed and winked at Captain Zuniga when he tried to question her, and the captain rather pleasantly hesitated arresting the gypsy; but finally decided he must for the benefit of society. Don Jose was the soldier ordered to take her to the guardhouse, and poor Don Jose shivered in his boots at this prospect.

"Because of the flower I threw at you, you are going to set me free," Carmen told Don Jose with tender confidence.

Hearing these words, Don Jose became angry and embarrassed and told Carmen in no uncertain terms to be quiet.

Carmen, however, was not easily ignored, and with her hands tied behind her back, she invited Don Jose to come to the inn of her friend, Lillas Pastia, and join the festivities and fun, the dancing and music at that place, and above all, she, Carmen, would herself be this handsome young corporal's girl-friend.

Don Jose pretended to be angry, but he looked at Carmen and more and more clearly saw how beautiful she truly was, and now she was throwing herself at his feet. He was truly flattered by her attention.
"Will you really love me, Carmen, would you truly be faithful?" asked the fascinated Don Jose.

"Yes, oh yes," said Carmen, her heart beating with the exulting throb of triumph.

The captive girl and the young dragoon formed a plot by which Carmen could escape, and when they reached a bridge on the way to the jail, Don Jose let himself be conveniently pushed off the bridge by the escaping prisoner.

After Don Jose let her escape, Carmen hurried away to join her gypsy friends; and while Carmen was enjoying her freedom, Don Jose was longing for his, having been put in prison because he had allowed Carmen's escape.

It sometimes served as a rendezvous for a gang of smugglers, but Lillas Pastia's inn was also often a scene of gay gypsy music, dancing, and singing. A lively gypsy party was in progress when Captain Zuniga entered with the purpose of trying to make a date with Carmen. The captain was especially charmed by the exciting Spanish dance that made the rafters ring; and trying to please Carmen, he told her that he had released Don Jose from prison. After she heard this news, Carmen was no longer interested in Captain Zuniga, and impudently bade him farewell.

With swagger and glamour, amid cries of acclaim and adoration, the dashing bull-fighter, Escamillo, entered
Lillas Pastia's inn just after having won a famous victory over a bull at Granada. After bragging of his exploits, the toreador told that there were dark and flashing eyes awaiting the brave, and he especially indicated that the possessor of these eyes was none other than Carmen!

Escamillo tried to make a date with Carmen, but she had in her heart, probably for the first time, little echoes of affection for a certain corporal of the guard, and she rejected the glamorous hero.

No sooner had Escamillo left, than Carmen heard the soldier song of Don Jose in the distance. The other gypsies stared out of the window at him, and told Carmen that he was a handsome fellow indeed.

"At last! Carmen!" Don Jose cried out, and the vision of her beauty gleamed with great loveliness to the soldier who had been shut up in prison for two months.

Far off in the distance bugles were heard, and they turned the thoughts of Don Jose from visions of love to visions of duty.

"I don't want to go, but I must. I have never loved another as I love you," pleaded Don Jose piteously.

Carmen became very angry at these remarks. She took Don Jose's cap, sword, and ammunition box, and hurled them to the other side of the room.

Jose quieted her down, dramatically drew her rose
from his vest, and declared his undying love.

Carmen became more gentle and told Don Jose that if he truly loved her he would flee the army, and with her escape to the lovely, free gypsy mountains.

"I must listen to the whisper of honor in my soul," said Don Jose, desperately torn between love and duty.

"I hate you!" cried Carmen.

Don Jose heartbrokenly said goodbye and bravely turned to go; but fate stepped in by knocking at the door and stepping into the room in the person of Captain Zuniga.

"Your taste isn't very good," he told Carmen, "taking a plain soldier in preference to an officer."

Angrily and pompously Captain Zuniga ordered Don Jose out of the room; whereupon the outranked corporal flatly refused. The swords of the captain and the corporal flashed, and they were in the process of cutting each other to death when Carmen cried for help. The gypsy men disarmed the captain and very politely bade him leave.

Honor or no honor, Don Jose now had no choice left but to join the band of gypsies. With them he made his home, for in the outside world he was hunted as an outlaw and deserter.

After joining the gypsy band, Don Jose was able to go with them to their hideouts in the mountains. Here he accepted their way of life until he and Carmen began to
quarrel. Poor Don Jose's conscience had begun hurting him and nagging at him the way consciences do, and he felt very badly about deserting the army and joining a band of gypsy smugglers with Carmen.

Carmen became angry at Don Jose's worrying about disgracing his mother.

"You'd better go back to mama right now," she said with thorough contempt.

"Carmen, listen," cried Don Jose," if you say that again--"

"Then perhaps you'll kill me. So what? It's all a matter of destiny."

Meanwhile, Carmen's girl friends, Frasquita and Mercedes were seated on a bale of hay telling fortunes with cards. They told of a fabulous future for Carmen. She would marry a rich old man who would conveniently die and leave her his fortune. Carmen, however, read her own fortune in the cards and found it not so pleasant. She laid out a diamond and then a spade and read into them the meaning that she had not much longer to live. Carmen's mood of love and laughter gave way to dark fears and feelings of death.

The mood of grim warning, however, had little time to endure. The gypsies, including Don Jose, shouldered bales of hay in which they were smuggling goods past the
customs officers.

With her heart beating like a frightened fawn, little Micaela from Don Jose's home village had found her way into the mountain fastnesses. She saw Don Jose who did not recognize her, while he aimed a gun in her direction. In terror she fled. The person that Don Jose had really been aiming at was Escamillo, the bullfighter, who had come to the gypsy hideout in search of Carmen. Escamillo told Don Jose that he had come to the hideout in search of his girl friend, Carmen.

Escamillo and Don Jose became violently angry at each other. In the manner of the Spaniards, they wrapped their cloaks about their left arms and drew their knives. Back and forth the two men dodged and struck furiously until the hero of the arena tripped, lost his knife and was helpless before the oncoming knife of Don Jose. The toreador did not lose his dignity in the face of death and waited calmly for the knife to strike; yet fate hadn't scheduled death for the toreador because Carmen, leaping with the grace of a panther, grabbed Don Jose's arm and the other gypsies followed to separate the fighters.

Escamillo was finally persuaded that the wisest thing to do was to leave. He told the gypsies that he intended to perform in a bull-fight in Seville, and looked directly at Carmen saying that anyone who loved him would be there.
Another surprise was in store for the gypsies. Hidden among the rocks they found Micaela, frightened and tearful. She asked to speak to Don Jose and begged him to leave the gypsy band and come home with her. Carmen and the other gypsies also advised him to leave saying that his life would now be worth nothing if he were found in their camp.

At this new advice, Don Jose only swore that nothing would make him leave; but his determination was shortlived, for Micaela told him with all gentle pleading that truly his mother was dying, and would see her son and pardon him before death took its final hold on her.

Torn between conflicting emotions, Don Jose decided to leave with Micaela to see his mother, but with all the power he could summon, warned Carmen that he meant to return. His moment of departure was delayed because Carmen, hearing the Toreador Song of Escamillo in the distance, started to run down the hill after the bullfighter, and was halted by Don Jose who grabbed her arm and threw her angrily to the ground.

Time passed and the life of Carmen became more luxurious and gay. She had come to the conclusion that the handsome toreador was precisely her type and she had come to the great bullfight at Seville in the most beautiful of gowns, as befitted the girl friend of the great toreador.
The streets of Seville were alive with the atmosphere of gayety. Peddlers and entertainers of all types mixed with the excited soldiers and citizens. Spanish music made the very air magic, and the procession to the arena began. The hero of the procession, naturally, was Escamillo who was with Carmen. She was enjoying the luster, the glamour, and the romance of being the great bullfighter's girl friend.

The glory, however, did not shine long with full luster. Hurriedly Carmen's girl friends, Frasquita and Mercedes, whispered to Carmen that Don Jose was nearby, looking for her and dressed like a bum. They warned Carmen that it would be wise for her to hide from the heartbroken and desperate ex-soldier. Carmen, however, was not in the least afraid of Don Jose, and said she would not run away from her former boy friend, but would walk over to him and face him right in the square in Seville.

"I heard you were around," Carmen told Jose when she saw him. "I should run for my life, but I'm not afraid." Carmen's eyes sparked with pride and defiance.

Don Jose was tearful, humble, loving. With the utmost humility he begged Carmen to come with him and renew their love. He had given up all honor, all other love, he lived in constant danger of his life—for her.

To all his pleading Carmen was firm, completely
devoid of any feeling for the pitiful man.

"Carmen never lies," she said, "all is over."

"I will do anything for Carmen--anything," Don Jose pleaded.

Carmen, disgusted, ignored him; and her face lit up with love as she heard the cheers for Escamillo resounding in the arena.

With inexpressible sorrow, Don Jose asked if she really loved the bullfighter.

Carmen shouted, "Yes, I love him, even in the face of death. I love him!"

Jose desperately tried to keep her with him, but she tore herself from him angrily and cried, "kill me now, or let me pass."

Another cheer in the arena resounded from the crowd, and Carmen tore a ring from her finger that Jose had once given her. She threw it violently away.

With another lunge, Carmen tried to break away from Don Jose, but the enraged man drew a knife, held her, and plunged it in. The people coming out of the arena found the heart-broken man on his knees beside the body of Carmen.

"You can arrest me. I killed her," he sobbed bitterly, "Oh, Carmen, my adored Carmen--!"
CHAPTER IV

HANSEL AND GRETEL—BACKGROUND, COMPOSER,
AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

By 1890, the strict realism of new Italian operas was in style. Crude, rugged, and rough was the order of the day, and people were enjoying the new type of operas. Mostly these operas were coming from Italy, and if the composer wasn't Italian, he tried to write just like this new school of Italian composers.

Many people in Germany did not like these Italian operas; and were delighted when a German composer came out with a charming, unrealistic folk-opera built on an ancient fairy tale. It was Hansel and Gretel.

One spring day in 1891, Mrs. Adelheid Wette, had the idea of producing a children's play—just in the family. She asked a brother, Engelbert Humperdinck, to help her with the music. The little home-opera became fun to write; and Humperdinck expanded it into a full opera.

Humperdinck liked his opera so well that he offered it to the Gotha Theater. Here, however, it was not thought suitable. Humperdinck did not give up, and finally it was produced, becoming a firm success.
Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921)

Always admiring the beautiful cathedrals and palaces in his native Germany, always liking to build things, little Engelbert Humperdinck wanted to be an architect when he grew up. His father and mother thought this to be a fine ambition until his first piano teacher discouraged the plan. It wasn't that Engelbert wouldn't have made a good architect. It was just that he would have made a better musician. His piano teacher thought the boy had talent. He did, and he wanted to compose music.

One of the reasons Humperdinck became a musician was that he admired the great composer, Richard Wagner, so much. He was shy and felt unworthy, but he desperately wanted to meet the master. How could he get acquainted with the genius? He had no personal introduction. Getting to know the great man was like storming the walls of a fortress. Humperdinck would not give up. He wrote a card to Wagner, and said that he was a companion of the order of the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail, or cup used by Jesus at the last supper, was an important part of some Wagner operas; and even though the servants wouldn't let the young man in, Wagner was amused by the card, and admitted Humperdinck himself.
The great master of music took a liking to Humperdinck, and took him into his home where the young man assisted the great artist and in return learned many of the secrets of composing for himself.

Humperdinck enjoyed working with boys, and in 1882 he took over the training of Wagner's Grail choir, which was composed of the finest voices of young schoolboys. He helped Wagner in many ways, especially in the production of Wagner's operas. Once when Wagner flew into a temper over the music not fitting the stage-action, Humperdinck composed some extra bars that saved the day.

The time spent with Wagner proved profitable to Humperdinck, and he won many prizes in music-composing contests.

In the twentieth century, good composers work very hard writing background music for the movies. The "picture shows" would be vitally hurt without this background music. In Humperdinck's time good composers wrote background music for plays that were presented in the great theaters. Humperdinck spent much of his energy doing this, and wrote music for many productions including plays by William Shakespeare.

A friendly fellow, Humperdinck was well-liked by everyone; and it could be truly said at his death that he left no enemies.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

Hansel sat outside the cottage door trying to make a broom. His heart was heavy and his stomach was empty, for food was not easily come by. To make matters especially miserable, Mother was unhappy because Father could not sell his brooms. He looked at the sturdy trees of the forest. Why couldn't he be contented like they always seemed to be—only ruffled slightly by the wind. He wished his sister, Gretel, would stop knitting, and stop singing that silly song about the geese who had no shoes. If she would come out and play with him, perhaps he would forget the gnawing howl of hunger that roared in his stomach.

Suddenly Hansel angrily threw his broom aside. He was almost disgraced by a tear as he said, "Oh, if only mother would come home."

"Please don't feel badly Hansel," said Gretel. "When need is greatest God stretches forth his hand to help us. Everything is going to be all right."

Gretel's long blond braids did a jig of their own as she took up the broom and proceeded to dance with it along the floor, sweeping away all their troubles in the process.

Hansel was charmed as he saw Gretel's light, graceful steps. He wanted to learn the dance also, and begged
Gretel to teach him. Forgetting their hunger, the two children lost themselves in the dance, and danced faster and faster until they tripped over each other and fell in a laughing heap on the floor.

"Shh, oh Gretel, be quiet! Here comes mother," cried Hansel. The children cowered in fear on the floor; for they realized that their mother would be very angry at seeing no work done.

Like a gale of angry winter breeze the mother tore into the house. She saw that the children had been idle, and in her haste to get a stick with which to beat them, she knocked a precious pitcher of milk from the table.

The mother wailed in a loud voice as she saw the last bit of remaining food making a pool of white on the floor. She sent Hansel and Gretel to the woods to gather strawberries. "If you don't come back," she said, "with a full basket, you will get the worst beating of your lives!"

The little figures of her children seemed to melt under the weight of their misfortunes, and, feet dragging, they plodded their way toward the forest.

When she could no longer see the glint of the sun on their golden hair, the mother sank sobbing into a chair until she had sobbed herself to sleep.

A man's booming voice could be heard from the distance; and the masculine roar of it woke Gertrude, the
mother, from her sleep. As the melodic roar came closer, Gertrude knew it to be the voice of her husband. "Strange," she thought, "he hasn't sung for months. Times have been so hard." As he grew closer, she thought, to her amazement, that he sounded happy, very happy; and when he stepped into the door, he greeted his wife with a kiss and a great big hug.

"What—what has happened," gasped Gertrude.

"Unpack the basket," said Peter proudly.

Quickly Mother Gertrude delved into the secrets of the basket. There, truly enough, was food and drink for the makings of a proud feast.

Gertrude was so happy that she almost cried all over again, and, hand in hand, she and her husband danced around and around the room. They danced to describe the pure joy that was welling up in their hearts. Food at last. Peter had actually been able to sell his brooms, and at a profit.

"We must tell the children of our good fortune," said Gertrude excitedly. Then she remembered. She had sent the children deep into the forest, and told them not to come back until they had a good supply of berries.

Upon telling where she had sent the children, Mother Gertrude saw a look of great fear darken the eyes of her husband.
"Wife," he whispered, in hushed tones, "Haven't you heard of the spot deep in the forest where the fiend of witches has her headquarters?" He paused and went on even more intently, "Here the wicked one lures little children into her crust cottage and bakes them into gingerbread. This gingerbread is her main diet."

For one awful moment, the husband and wife stared at each other silently; then they turned and ran into the forest as fast as their legs could carry them.

Deep in the forest, and close to the lap of a great mountain, Gretel sat on the mossy trunk of an ancient tree. Her eyes were looking at beauty and her fingers were working swiftly, for she was making a garland of pink roses. Nearby Hansel was gathering strawberries; but finally his work had to come to a halt for the sun was winking its last beams from behind the mountain, and darkness was creeping through the earth and trees of the forest.

The children halted their activities, for the darkness had become so dense that the children could no longer see, and as night lent its cloak of mystery over the world, Hansel and Gretel became frightened.

Gretel's shoulders shook and the tears trickled down her cheeks, for in the darkness she thought she saw a ghost among the trees. Hansel tried to appear brave.
but he clasped Gretel in fright; and their two pair of eyes stared wildly into the shadows.

Through the mists and shadows of the night, a little man in gray stepped closer to poor, frightened Hansel and Gretel; but when the little gray man stepped closer, his smile was so warm, his eyes were so kind that fear melted and the children smiled back at the little gray man.

The gray of the little gray man seemed to shine out of its grayness and twinkle. The little man stood on his tiptoes and looked proud. Like little dancing music his voice uttered the words, "I am the Sandman."

Hansel and Gretel accepted this announcement calmly, and for some reason it seemed like the little man was the most natural thing in the world.

"I love little children," he went on to say, "and I have come to drop the magic sands in your eyes so you can have a happy, restful slumber."

Soon after the little twinkly gray sandman came, Hansel and Gretel fell asleep. While they were sleeping, something very wonderful happened. Fourteen angels in heaven-silver robes descended from a staircase of diamond-studded clouds. They clasped heavenly hands and danced in dreams of protecting beauty around the children.

All night long Hansel and Gretel dreamed the love-liest dreams and slept the sweetest sleep in the world.
When dawn shone pink and silver and golden, the forest knew that it was time for Hansel and Gretel to awaken. From out of the fresh morning air, the Dewman appeared as if by magic. He looked all light blue and ivory pink and pale gold, and he carried a beautiful large blue-bell. He sprinkled the drops of dew from the blue-bell on the eyelids of Hansel and Gretel; and lo, joyously and completely they awoke.

Almost at once upon awakening, Hansel and Gretel told each other about their dreams of the guardian angels. They were surprised that they had had the same dream; and then they decided that perhaps it had not been a dream.

Suddenly the children cried out in amazement. Through the early morning sunshine and dewy mist, they could see a most fascinating sight; for in the center of a clearing in the forest, stood a remarkable house. This was no ordinary house made of wood and stone; for glistening in the sunbeams, it showed itself to be made of gingerbread, solid gingerbread topped off with a roof of luscious pink frosting and sending off such a good smell of baked goodies that Hansel and Gretel almost fainted from the very deliciousness of it.

Clasping each others hands, Hansel and Gretel tip-toed toward the delicious house; and as his stomach was so empty, Hansel chipped off a little piece of pink
frosting and ate it! My, how good it tasted! But the goodness did not last long; for a shrill, cackly voice jiggled the morning unpleasantly, and the voice said, "Who is nibbling at my house?"

Hansel was so startled that he dropped his piece of cake. The children listened intently, but heard no more; and they were so hungry that they decided it was only the wind that they had heard. They were eating hungrily on the house, and did not notice the witch until she threw a lasso, and laughed with fiendish glee as she caught Hansel securely in her rope.

Hansel fought wildly and managed to free himself. He grabbed Gretel by the hand and both of them ran away from the witch as fast as their legs could carry them. The witch, however, was not to be halted in her plans; taking her magic wand, she uttered some magic words, "Hokus, pokus, hexenschuss!" Instantly the children were stopped as still as statues because the witch's magic was very powerful. The end of her wand glowed with an eerie green glow as she led Hansel to a cage and locked the door. Shaking a finger at Gretel, who was standing like a statue in a spell, the witch hurried into her house. Hansel, who was no longer under the spell as he was in the cage, told Gretel to do as the witch told her, obey, and watch carefully everything the witch did.
When the witch returned to the children, she freed Gretel from the spell so Gretel could help her in the housework. Then the witch became very busy preparing her meal, a delicious meal consisting of Hansel. My, how good that cute little boy would taste as a big gingerbread cookie!—The witch worked faster and faster and became busier and busier. She threw wood on the fire in frantic haste and rubbed her hands in evil delight.

"I will coax Gretel into the oven," she chuckled. I'll tell her to bend down and look in. Then I'll push her in. Ha! Ha!" The witch became so delighted at her own cleverness that she climbed on her broom and rode madly around the house, bumping her head first on the ceiling, then crashing to the floor. The witch suddenly stopped her wild inside-the-house flying and asked Hansel to stick out his tongue. This Hansel was willing to do, but he also held out his finger and told her it was much too bony to eat.

The witch was irritated. "Gretel," she cried, "Go fetch more raisins and almonds for Hansel to eat." Gretel obediently brought the food, and the witch proceeded to stuff Hansel's mouth with the goodies. While the witch's back was turned in eagerness to feed Hansel, Gretel silently grabbed the magic wand. Very softly Gretel repeated the words, "Hokus, pokus, hexenschuss." These
words would free Hansel completely from his spell, and help him escape.

When the witch turned, Gretel stood humbly by and acted very stupid.

"Look in the oven," chuckled the witch.

"How do you look in an oven?" said Gretel, her eyes looking blank.

"Idiot," said the witch, "anybody can look in an oven."

As she said these words, the witch bent over and peered dramatically into the oven. While she was doing so, Hansel, who had slipped out of the cage, and Gretel sneaked up behind the witch, and with a great shout, pushed her into the big deep oven and slammed the great iron door shut.

Hansel and Gretel were so relieved at not being eaten up as gingerbread, that they danced in joy.

 Barely had the joyous dancing started, however, when the big oven began to crack and hiss and smoke furiously. Hansel and Gretel were frightened and even more confused, when out of the misty smoke appeared a crowd of creatures, half gingerbread and half children. Before the very eyes of Hansel and Gretel, the gingerbread pealed and turned into flesh and blood. The giant gingerbread cookies became children once again. Somehow all the witch's evil work had been undone with her destruction.
The gingerbread-less children seemed unable to move, and stood still, their eyes closed and their voices speaking softly.

"Touch us," they chanted, "and we will waken immediately and be able to move about."

Timidly Gretel touched the nearest child who opened his eyes and smiled at her happily. Hansel lost no time in waving the magic wand and repeating the magic words. Instantly all the children were completely awake and freed from the spell. They rushed to Hansel and Gretel and joyously clasped their hands. All the children began to sing and dance, their music and laughter reaching above the forest toward the sky.

It was this happy scene that Father Peter and Mother Gertrude came upon when they found their children. Their offspring rushed into the arms of their parents, overcome with gladness.

At last, as the joyousness calmed down, two boys dragged from the oven the figure of the witch. The old spellbinder was herself now turned into a giant gingerbread cake.

"That is how heaven punishes evil," said Father Peter pointing to the great ginger cake. At these words the children said a beautiful prayer, and their faces lit with happiness, they started through the forest to their homes.
CHAPTER V

LOHENGRIN—BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

The opera, Lohengrin, has always been popular as a good, dramatic production with fine music; and the origin of its story goes far, far back in the beginning of German folk-legends.

The folk-story of Lohengrin was said to be set in a fine poem by a German poet-knight of the thirteenth century who was highly acclaimed and honored in his time.

Richard Wagner, some centuries later, was reading the old poem about Lohengrin and thinking about it so strongly, that one day, while taking his bath, he was inspired. Leaping out of his bathtub, he ran, half-dressed, to write his ideas down on paper.—From these ideas sprang the great opera, Lohengrin.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

Richard Wagner always believed himself to be a genius; and no matter how people laughed at him, he would tell them it was so. When he was in his early twenties he bought a huge notebook in which he planned to write the
story of his life.

Little Richard started life quite normally. When he was little he didn't show any particularly great musical talent. Neither of his parents were musicians; his father was a policeman and his mother was the daughter of a baker. When Richard was still a young boy, his policeman father died, and his mother married a man who was an actor and a portrait painter. This man loved writing, art, and music, so he implanted the love for these things in his step-children. When Wagner was about eleven or twelve, he decided to be a great writer and he wrote a gruesome play that was quite long. Forty two characters met horrible deaths in the first four acts of the play; and many of them reappeared as ghosts in the fifth act. But after Wagner heard Beethoven symphonies, he was not so interested in literature. To the indignation of his teachers, Richard neglected all other studies except music, became a truant from school for six months, and was expelled. Richard finally went to a university where he spent all his time dating girls and having fun instead of studying. He became in debt and had to work very hard to recover.

Richard acquired a job as a conductor of a small opera house, and fell in love with a pretty actress whom he pursued for two years before she finally married him. As time passed, Wagner grew deeply in debt, and to avoid
jail he found out a secret smuggler's route, and fled to Russia. From there he fled to Paris, France, where he and his wife were now very poor, so poor that several times they almost starved to death. Twice Wagner was put in jail for debts and when out of jail, he had to do any labor he could in order to earn a living.

Still he kept composing, and finally acquired a good job with the Dresden Opera Company. Life at last went more smoothly, and Wagner's operas were being accepted by the public.

Toward the end of his life, Wagner achieved much honor and recognition. The king of Bavaria, Ludwig II, became his patron; and sent him all the money he needed as long as he would continue to compose great music.

Richard Wagner and his first wife were divorced, and he married Cosima, the daughter of a great composer and pianist, Franz Liszt. They had several children, and Cosima took care of him in his old age. Richard had long suffered from eczema, his skin was so sensitive that he could wear only silk. He also had a bad heart, and on February 13, 1883, he died from a heart attack.

Each year a great musical festival is held in Bayreuth, Germany. It is the famous Wagner Festival. Throughout the years it has been supervised by Wagner's children and grandchildren.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

During the early part of the tenth century by the bank of a beautiful river in Germany, a German king was holding court beneath the shade of great oak trees. Hung upon the oak trees were large shields of the German and Saxon knights who were sitting in judgment upon one who was accused of murder.

King Henry of Germany, seated upon a great stump of an oak, his royal shield shining in the sun above him, spoke, "Will Frederick, Count of Telramund, a worthy knight, tell the story of the accused?"

Telramund, a tall, slender knight with dark hair and brooding features, spoke, his attitude full of pious righteousness.

"Your majesty, allow me to tell the story of the accused, Elsa of Brabant. I swear upon my sword and upon the sacred cross to tell the truth."

He paused and looked at the other knights with growing excitement in his eyes.

"Some time ago the good Duke of Brabant died and made me guardian of his two children, Elsa and Godfrey. One day the girl, Elsa, came back from a walk in the woods alone. She said that her brother must be lost, for she could not find him. I sent all the servants to comb the
woods, but her brother could not be found. Anxiously I questioned Elsa again. She grew so pale and trembling that she betrayed her own guilt. As the days passed, her actions grew more and more suspicious; and I gladly gave up the idea of marrying her which was a right given me by her father before he died."

At this point Telramund motioned to a tall, dark woman who stepped beside him. He spoke, "Your majesty, I present the noble woman whom I married, Ortrud, my wife, Princess of Friesland."

The pair bowed before the king and Telramund spoke again. "You hear the charge against Elsa of Brabant, oh King. I leave my case in your divine judgment."

The charge was grave and lay heavily on the minds of the knights. The king was doubtful about the story, and Telramund felt need of speaking again before the prisoner was brought in to speak in her own defense.

His voice rang with humble sincerity as Telramund changed the order of his story somewhat. Upon the advice of his darkly beautiful wife, he knew he must give Elsa a motive for killing her brother.

"Your highness, before my heart turned in distaste at knowledge of the truth, I asked the fair murderess, Elsa, to be my wife, not realizing the evil that her beauty only hid. She refused my offer, believing that by killing
her brother, she could deliver her dead father's dukedom to a secret lover."

The king frowned, stopped Telramund's story with a sharp gesture and demanded the accused girl to be brought forth.

So lovely was the maiden brought forth that the assembled knights shuddered in disbelief at the possibility of murderous evil in the girl. They saw a maiden in a snowy white dress, her hands folded, and her long golden hair glistening in the sunlight.

She nodded when the king asked if she were indeed Elsa of Brabant.

"What do you answer to the charge of murder?" he said.

"Nothing."

"Then you admit your guilt?" asked King Henry.

Her only answer was to half-sob: "My poor brother!"

Seeing that the girl was crazed with grief or evil, the king asked her to speak further.

Like one in a dream Elsa looked into the empty space before her; and her voice echoed faintly, as if coming from another, inner world.

"In my sorrow I prayed to God," she said, "and my prayer was answered by a dream. In this dream appeared a wonderful knight leaning on his great sword. He told me he pitied me for he knew I was innocent, and he said he
would be my defender."

The knights became very interested in Elsa's story. Seeing this, Telramund leaped up and shouted: "I will hear none of this dreamy foolishness. She only talks about her lover for whom she killed."

Then with an heroic gesture, Telramund knelt before his king.

"My sword has always been at your majesty's service. Remember how I served you in the war against the Danes?"

"You served nobly and well, Telramund," acknowledged the king.

"Then," continued Telramund, "let me fight whatever champion braves the cause of this foolish girl; and let God give victory to the man fighting for the truth.

The king stood, looking as tall and firm as the oak trees behind him. He spoke:

"So be it. Trial by combat will declare Elsa's innocence or guilt."

He turned to Elsa. "What champion will you have?"

Still in her faraway dream, Elsa answered. "My champion will be the noble, unknown knight who appeared to me in a dream."

She paused, then said firmly, "For reward I shall give him my father's ducal crown, and if he thinks me worthy, I shall become his wife."
There was some laughter among the knights as four trumpeters played the royal command, and a herald cried out for the champion of Elsa Brabant to appear.

Nothing happened. The air was still and only a few leaves fluttered down from a nearby tree. Elsa became more and more nervous; and Telramund snickered sarcastically. "Have the trumpet call again. Perhaps he is far away and can't hear," Elsa said sadly.

Once again the herald cried out for Elsa's champion in a mocking voice, and people made motions that Elsa was touched in the head as the trumpeters roared out again.

Impossible!! Was Elsa's madness touching everyone? Or was that really a beautiful carved boat drawn by a giant swan coming up the river? Eyes were strained as they saw that the occupant of the boat was even more incredible. Commanding the movements of the big swan was a handsome knight in shining armor just as Elsa had described.

The onlookers on shore could not speak as the bright knight stepped foot on shore and told the beautiful swan to leave with the boat. They clothed their tongues in amazed silence while Elsa was on her knees scarcely daring to breath. It was almost as if a strange melody played in their hearts while the knight spoke.

"An innocent maiden has been accused of serious crime, and for this maiden I have come to fight." He looked at
the trembling Elsa, her golden hair flowing and tears in her eyes as she threw herself at his feet. "Will the lovely Elsa put aside all fear if I become her champion?" said the knight. Elsa answered that she had only confidence in him and that her heart and love would belong to him. Upon hearing this, the knight, in a low, tender voice asked Elsa if she would be his wife, providing his sword was swiftest and truest.

"Oh noblest of knights, as surely as I kneel at your feet, you may claim me as your bride."

"No greater joy than mine if this be so," said her champion, but if this be true, there is one demand I have to make." He looked very seriously at Elsa and spoke again. "As my bride you must promise never to ask where I come from, what my name is, or what sort of man I am."

The request did not seem too strange to Elsa. Her heart knew only amazement and love. I promise never to ask these things," she whispered. "I promise anything you wish."

The knight seemed to take his requests very seriously and was still not satisfied with Elsa's answer. Very solemnly and firmly he repeated his demands again. "Never ask my name, where I come from or what sort of man I am."

"I promise never to ask," Elsa said warmly. At last her champion seemed satisfied, and very tenderly the strong,
handsome defender, took the maiden's hand and told her of his love for her.

Abruptly he left the girl and marched before the king, the court and the warrior knights.

"Before God," he roared, "Telramund is a liar, and I have come to defend an innocent girl from the evil that surrounds her."

Everyone was impressed with the unknown stranger, and several of the other warriors warned Telramund to give up the fight, but Telramund was a true knight, if an evil one, and would not at this point give up the fight.

"Very well, stated the king, "We will let the trial by combat begin." Upon speaking these words the king ordered six men to measure out the fighting ground. He warned the crowd not to interfere with the fight. If a free man interfered he would lose his hand, if a slave interfered he would lose his head.

The king then sat under the great tree known as the judgment oak, struck three blows on his royal shield, commanding the signal of the trumpeters, and the fight was on!

The battle was short, but the strange knight was swift as lightening, and strong as an ox; and after toying with his enemy for a while, he easily disarmed him and knocked him to the ground. Telramund bravely waited the
death blow—which didn't come. The stranger was sparing his opponent's life.

As victor, the knight had proven Elsa's innocence according to trial by combat, and the crowd of knights, servants, and noblemen seemed happy over the outcome. With a shout of joy they lifted the champion on his shield, and carried Elsa off on the king's shield.

While everyone throughout the land was rejoicing over the victory of the strange knight, Telramund and Ortrud hid in the shadows of a great cathedral.

Telramund was the first to break the silence of the shadows. "We have lost, and we must leave the country as ordered."

Ortrud darkly replied that she could not bear the thought of leaving; and when Telramund accused her of being a liar, she swore once again that truly she had seen Elsa drown her young brother in a pool.

"You are a fool to believe that God gave Lohengrin victory because he fought for truth," she cried. "Why does the strange knight refuse to let his own bride learn his name or home-place?" Ortrud paused. Her fury and cunning mounting. "I'll tell you why—I'll tell you the truth—because he is an evil man who uses black magic."

The woman smiled and seemed to be deliciously tasting her words. "I ought to know these things. I know a little
about black magic myself," she said scornfully, "You fool, if you had shed just one drop of his blood, victory would have been yours."

The idea that he had been tricked into defeat appealed to Telramund, and he had new thoughts in his heart of getting revenge and winning back his knighthood. With these new hopes of black vengeance to be fulfilled, Telramund and his wife swore a solemn oath of revenge and went off to see about their evil deeds.

Ortrud lost no time in putting her plans for revenge into operation. She hurried to the palace where Elsa was preparing for bed and stood beneath the balcony bedroom window. A smile played upon her face as she summoned all her acting skill. She waited until the wind was just right, then in loud tones she shouted up to the balcony.

"Oh, Elsa of the kind and gentle heart, hear me." Satisfaction almost melted her steel-like character as she heard Elsa coming to the balcony. "I come before you in rags and ask your pity. My husband and I are filled with great remorse. We were misguided and did not understand the truth." As Elsa remained silent, she continued. "You are happy after your period of blameless sorrows. Give but one word of forgiveness before we are banished forever from your land, and the mercy of that forgiveness will ease our pain and make life worth further living."
Elsa could not resist the sorrowing voice of Ortrud. She spoke to her tenderly.

"If you wait a minute, Ortrud, I shall let you in here myself."

While Elsa made her way downstairs, Ortrud quickly asked the pagan German gods, Wotan and Freia to help her in her evil plans. To make herself look more humble, she fell down on the ground before Elsa's feet.

Elsa was very embarrassed and sweetly concerned at this unusual show, and she made haste to lift the fallen one up and to promise her a kind word, and an understanding ear.

Ortrud knelt and thanked the blond maiden for her generosity.

"If I only could repay your kindness," she whispered. Her thoughts leaped quickly inside her head. She spoke again. "Maybe I could prevent some future unhappiness for your gracious self." Her tone became almost confidential as she looked into Elsa's eyes. "Did it ever occur to your gentle heart, Elsa, that one who came to you in such a mysterious way, might leave you in a mysterious way?"

Elsa laughed off the misgivings of her former enemy, and with a girlish rush of happiness and joy, she took Ortrud's hand and invited her to come and dress in a fine gown for the wedding.
Day dawned—a beautiful day, pink and silver and gold. Trumpets burst forth a noble melody, and a royal herald came forth to shout the latest news to the world.

"Hear ye, hear ye, Telramund the challenger has been banished by a God-sent messenger. Elsa, Duchess of Brabant, proven innocent, takes for bridegroom, he who was victorious in battle."

Everyone was happy over these announcements, and the little people of the kingdom made ready for the wedding with great joy and feasting.

A glorious moment arrived. As was the custom, the first part of the bridal procession toward the cathedral began. All was joyous and magnificent until a shadow like a great evil bird cast itself over the happy place. To Elsa's astonishment, Ortrud, in a regal gown, stepped forward, and halted the procession with a dramatic cry.

"Before the strange, mysterious knight appeared, Telramund, my husband, was honored above all, and now he is banished, exiled because of a knight who doesn't even have a name." Her lips curled in contempt and she proceeded. "Can anyone name him who is here in this noble procession?" Her voice was bitterly sarcastic and she looked like a coiled snake as she turned to Elsa. "Can you name him? Do you know if he is of noble birth, if he is really bad or good, or why he is really here?"
There was a terrible stillness on the morning air as no one was able to answer her questions.

"Of course you can't answer these questions," she screamed, "because the answers would show him for the evil he is. That is why he has forbidden your asking!"

There were cries of derision from the crowd, but Ortrud shouted further, "You do not know his name because of black magic. It is black magic which has given him victory, not the justice of God, otherwise he would glory in having his name honored by all people, instead of hiding it in threatening fear.

Elsa, her heart wounded as if by a great flying arrow, could only weep and put her head on the strange knight's shoulder. Her beloved knight demanded Ortrud to go into the exile where she belonged.

The trouble, however, was not over, and the people bent anxious ears to the argument. All eyes turned interestedly on Telramund as he too stepped righteously to the side of his wife and repeated her demands.

"To make my ill-fated duel really official I demand to know the name and rank of my antagonist, and exactly why he travels with such strange companions as giant swans.

Again there was a deep, ominous silence and all eyes turned to see if the king would form an answer.

Before the king was able to reply, the strange knight
answered that he was bound to reveal his identity to no mortal king. Only to Elsa must he answer, were she to ask him.

The air was electric with suspense as with one breath everyone seemed to wait for Elsa to ask the critical question. She cast her eyes on the ground and for a moment her heart was filled with a terrible curiosity, but she held her tongue and did not ask the fatal question.

The king ended the suspenseful moment by asking the knights for a vote of confidence in the strange knight which they gladly gave and the procession proceeded as before to the cathedral where the marriage of Elsa and her strange knight took place while shimmering sunlight danced through the ancient stained-glass windows. For a moment, at least, happiness crowned the lives of the young couple who were so dramatically brought together by fate.

The crowd had faded away. The music was no more; Elsa and her knight were at last alone in the palace that was now their home. Her champion tenderly drew Elsa to him and asked her if she were happy to be his bride.

"The glory of heaven that I feel cannot be expressed in mere words," said Elsa, "how can I name this lovely feeling--how can I name this mystery of love any more than I can name your own name."

The young man lovingly pronounced Elsa's name and
didn't realize that it was woman's curiosity that shone in her eyes. She spoke quickly and softly:

"In the privacy of our own dear home, my husband, can't you tell me your name? It shall be an extra secret bond of love between us, and shall never leave the privacy of my heart."

A terror, sad and deep as the sea ran like quicksilver through the soul of Elsa's champion. "Oh, keep this sadness from me, Lord," he prayed, "give Elsa strength to keep her vow never to ask my name."

While the knight clung desperately to the hope that Elsa's curiosity would not win over her love, Elsa's good intentions began weakening like pieces of the shoreline breaking off and washing into the ocean. The tension in the air was painfully tight as the knight waited for the blond girl to speak.

"You once told me that you came from a happy land," she said, "if it is such a happy land, how can I be sure that you will stay here, you may want to go to this pleasant place with the great white swan who brought you here."

The pain of his heart shone on the knight's face. Some ancient horror and loneliness seemed to light up his wrinkled brow, his hands clenched in an imploring gesture, and he waited in agony for the forbidden question that was almost sure to come.
Like a quick rush of a million little demons in the mind, the fatal words came from Elsa's lips.

"What is your name, where is your happy land? Please, please tell me." Tears glistened on her cheeks and she cried, "I can bear it no longer!"

The question remained unanswered, for at that moment great silver swords and the hot breath of hatred flashed into the dim light and musty air of the palace. With a loud scream Elsa warned her knight that Telramund and several warriors were approaching to kill him. With a fierce leap the strange knight grabbed his broadsword in his powerful right hand. Turning on Telramund who was slightly in advance of the other fighters, the mysterious knight with all agility and power of his muscular body thrust his thick bladed weapon into the body of his arch-enemy, and killed him with one blow. Upon seeing this, the other soldiers, like frightened weasels turned and fled from the portals of the palace.

"All misery upon us!" cried the sadly victorious stranger, "all our luck is gone."

He turned to find that Elsa had fainted, her long blond hair looking like a pool of gold on the floor. With great tenderness he picked Elsa up, and after placing her on a couch, he called for servants to bring Telramund's body to the king's judgment seat.
How long the hours passed while the populace heard of the second victory of Elsa of Brabant's champion. The people were pleased over the heroic stranger's second victory, and only as a formality, a brief trial must be held before the king to settle officially the cause of Telramund's death.

At the place by the river where the white swan first appeared, the shields of the nobles were once again hung upon the branches of the great oak trees. Once again the king held court, and once again Elsa's champion came in all strength and manhood in full armor. He defended himself quickly and simply. He asked if he were not justified in killing the man who had attacked him. Loudly, the crowd, the king, the nobles all agreed, and he continued further as he stood tall and straight and spoke honestly and calmly.

"You have all heard Elsa of Brabant promise never to ask who I was. Falling to the lure of bad advice, she has broken her oath, and I have no choice according to the law of my land but to tell everyone present my real identity."

He paused and seriousness mixed with sadness on his handsome face. He spoke further.

"You may judge whether or not I am the equal of anyone present. My home is the castle of Montsalvat. It
is here that the Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus at the last supper, is guarded by a band of holy knights. Every year a dove from heaven comes to strengthen the powers of the Grail. The knights who guard the Holy Cup receive mystical powers; and as they must be pure and good in the eyes of God, they are able to defeat those whose hearts are evil. Their extra powers hold true as long as the knights remain unknown; but once out in the world if they are recognized, they must return."

The silence of the people was mystic and like the first breath of dawn as he continued.

"My name is Lohengrin, I am a knight of the Holy Grail, the cup of Our Lord, and oldest son of King Parsifal, ruler of Montsalvat."

From the far distant silver thread of the river, divine music seemed to be coming closer and closer. Elsa was about to faint, so great was her sorrow over the tragedy of her heart. Lohengrin caught her in his arms, gently and sorrowfully spoke of the wrong she had done him. Bleeding of soul, Elsa could hardly understand what was happening, and begged to suffer any torture, and punishment, if she could only stay with her husband.

The divine music came closer and closer; and the great white swan appeared once again upon the horizon. Elsa cried in horror and clung to the knight who kissed
her goodbye and told of the pain of his longing.

Only Ortrud, of all the people on the river bank, was filled with a fiendish joy.

"Sail home, proud knight," she screamed, "and take with you the great white swan who is the rightful heir of Brabant." Her cackling became louder and she yelled in joy, "With black magic I change Elsa's brother into the great white swan and the vengeance of the gods is on you." Her high, piercing laughter was like a fiend dancing at the gates of the underworld.

Lohengrin listened to her words and sank down upon his knees. His prayer was sincere; and soon the divine music was heard with greater strength as from silver clouds a white dove descended to a spot above the great white swan. Slowly the swan began to sink into the water, and in his place Elsa's brother, Godfrey, rose from the water and sprang ashore.

"Behold the Duke of Brabant who will be your leader!" cried Lohengrin who then stepped into his boat and was drawn down river by an invisible force.

Once more Elsa cried desperately after her beloved champion; but his head bowed and leaning on his shield, he disappeared into the distant unknown.

Her heart broken by the tragedy of her love, Elsa sank lifeless into her brother's arms.
CHAPTER VI

MADAME BUTTERFLY--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER,
AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

An Italian musician saw an American play called Madame Butterfly. The musician liked the play very much. He felt sorry for the pitiful heroine in the story, and he admired the whole play for its theatrical effects. What music such a story could have if it were set in opera form!

Madame Butterfly became an obsession with the composer, Giacomo Puccini. He had always had sympathy for suffering women, and Madame Butterfly's oriental delicacy and heroism fascinated him. He was determined to make an opera of Madame Butterfly. He set about consulting all the Japanese authorities he could find; and he studied Japanese music in great detail, transcribing original Japanese melodies and keeping them in his files.

When Madame Butterfly, the opera, was first presented in Milan, Italy, it was a failure. The audience behaved badly and showed their dislike of the opera. Puccini was so furious that he took the score so the opera could not be presented again. Then he fled, taking his bitterness with him.
After revision of his opera, it took performances in other places to put Madame Butterfly on the musical map. Once established, this touching opera with the beautiful music became one of the all-time favorites of the world.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Often if a boy's father is a doctor, the boy wants to become one also; or sometimes if a boy's father is a farmer, the boy too yearns for that life. Giacomo Puccini's father was a musician; so was his grandfather and his great grandfather. Young Giacomo wanted to become a musician also. If he could be as good a musician as his father he would be happy.

As a boy, Giacomo Puccini's talent was recognized by his elders. That he liked fun and mischief was also recognized. He loved to sing horrid, wrong notes in singing class, not because he didn't know better, but because of the fun the trouble caused. As organist in the cathedral he would shock the priests by playing flashy opera arias during the church service.

Yet life was not all naughtiness. He studied too, and a great-uncle helped him financially (he also received a small scholarship from the queen's fund) so he could continue his music studies at the conservatory at Milan.
When he graduated from the conservatory, Giacomo had to make his own living. He tried to make this living by composing. He became the classic example of a starving composer in an attic. He had nothing else to eat but beans! Beans for breakfast, beans for lunch, beans for dinner. How he hated them!—But they kept him from starving. Sometimes when the beans ran out, there was a restaurant in Milan that let him run up a bill. This too kept him from starving. And the only reason this restaurant, The Aida, is now immortal, is that it kept Puccini fed.

The composer almost went adventuring to South America, but decided to stick it out and try a little bit more at his composing. He wrote an opera called *La Bohème* which has become beloved the world over, but which was at first considered a failure. Perseverance will win out, however, and eventually Puccini became wealthy and famous from his composing.

The enemies of Puccini tried to make *Madame Butterfly* a failure; but this work was destined to become a great star in the operatic world. In America it received a standing ovation from the audience, and Puccini liked America so well that he wrote an opera about the west.

On November 29, 1924, death claimed Giacomo Puccini; but in the land of the living, he left a deathless heritage of great operas for the world to enjoy and cherish.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

Real Madame Butterflies have probably existed; for there have been many soldiers and sailors who have fallen in love with dainty Japanese girls, especially since America's great war with Japan and the subsequent occupation of Japan by American forces. That is what the story of Madame Butterfly is about—an American sailor who falls in love with a beautiful little Japanese girl.

There are times when the landscape of Japan looks like an exquisitely dainty painting. In the spring the air is heavy with the scent of blossoms and the pretty houses look like they were drawn on the face of dawn, half mystical and half real. It was near such a scene as this, when the nineteenth century was turning into the twentieth, that a great American ship sailed into Nagasaki harbor. The sailors had been working long and hard hours at sea, and were anxious to go ashore in this strange country, and have some exciting and pleasurable times.

One of the officers of the ship was a handsome fellow—tall and strong. Few girls could resist his captivating smile and his noble bearing in the white summer uniform with gold braid. Lieutenant Pinkerton as well as his men wanted to have fun in Japan, so he set out to find Goro who had been recommended to him by other Americans.
Goro was a funny little man. He had a wrinkled little face and cunning eyes that seemed to be laughing at people even as he was bowing to them politely, at least that was the odd feeling Lieutenant Pinkerton had when he spoke to him.

"As a successful marriage broker, I can assure you a good deal, honorable lieutenant," said Goro. "The contract says you've leased a Nagasaki home for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, and a Japanese bride along with it."

Lieutenant Pinkerton had found Goro after some careful searching in Nagasaki, and now he had arrived with Goro at the Japanese house which he had leased for such a long period of time.

The lieutenant was somewhat disgusted at the way Goro was bowing and scraping, while his eyes were secretly laughing, and he asked him to show him the house.

Jumping at Lieutenant Pinkerton's irritation, Goro clapped his hands three times, and almost as if by magic servants appeared from behind sliding doors and hurried to the American's feet where they knelt with bowed heads.

Goro smiled proudly. "These are your servants," he said, "This one is Miss Gentle Breeze of Morning, the one in the middle is Ray of the Golden Sunbeam," Goro paused, looked at the lieutenant who was confused, and introduced the last servant. "This is Sweet-scented Pine Tree."
Lieutenant Pinkerton laughed crudely. "Those are crazy names, they take too long to say." The sailor thought for a minute and came up with a bright idea. "I'll call 'em Scarecrow First, Scarecrow the second, and Scarecrow the third," he said.

One of the servants whose real name was Suzuki looked up at the American. What was secretly in her mind at being called a scarecrow did not show on her little face, for she smiled prettily and said, "a smile conquers all, and defies every trouble. Pearls may be won by smiling."

The lieutenant thought Suzuki to be rather peculiar with her poetic Japanese sayings and he decided to ignore her and look around his house some more. Goro thought that his master was bored, and he clapped his hands signalling for the servants to get up from their knees and disappear.

After the disappearance of the servants, Goro hurried to the large, sliding front window of the house. He craned his scrawny little neck to look as far down the hill as he could possibly see.

"What do you see?" said the lieutenant. Goro smacked his lips in excitement and a happy little gurgle escaped from his throat. He spoke, "Oh honorable one, I am watching for the arrival of your bride, and with her will be a procession of people, the American consul, the registrar,
the bride's relatives." Goro turned in the American's direction, "She has notable relatives including a bonze."

"What in the world is a bonze," said Pinkerton.

Goro was almost scornful of Pinkerton's ignorance. "A bonze is a Japanese priest, and he isn't likely to be overjoyed about his niece's marrying an American."

"Aiyee," said Goro, there is someone puffing and panting and trying to climb the hill now.--A portly gentleman who isn't too young," added Goro thoughtfully.

Lieutenant Pinkerton looked out the window and said to himself that this was indeed the American consul.

The two Americans greeted each other enthusiastically, and Pinkerton had his servants bring chairs and refreshments to a small table in the heavily-scented, beautiful Japanese garden.

After they were settled and enjoying their refreshments, Pinkerton settled back on his wicker chair and smilingly surveyed his property with his eyes. "You know, Sharpless," he said, "This is the life--the life of a Yankee who likes his adventures while he's young. Here I am in a strange country where I own this house and garden and servants for ninety nine years," he paused and his eyes twinkled, "and a Japanese bride also." "God bless America," he laughed, "Yanks know how to have fun."

The consul sat silently and watched the young man
enjoy his scheme. Pinkerton went on. "The nice thing about my bride and house, is that I can be legally free of them whenever I choose." He laughed, "If I get bored I don't have to suffer through the boredom."

Upon hearing these words, there was no lightness or humor in the consul's eyes, and he asked the officer if the Japanese bride were pretty.

Pinkerton couldn't answer as he hadn't seen the girl, but Goro, overhearing the conversation, hastened to answer for him. "Is she beautiful?" he said, "Oh, most honorable one, she is like a garland of fresh flowers, like a star in the sky, and all for a mere hundred yen." Goro hurried over to the consul, and bowed humbly. "Would your honor like to order a Japanese bride too?"

Consul Sharpless showed no interest in acquiring a bride from the little marriage broker, and Pinkerton impatiently asked Goro to go find Butterfly.

As Goro hurried down the hill, Consul Sharpless turned seriously to the young lieutenant, "Have you lost your mind, Pinkerton?" A note of anger entered into his voice, "With your trickery you are being very cruel to this little Japanese girl."

Lieutenant Pinkerton laughed, and said that he was hopelessly fascinated by the charm and daintiness of the little Japanese girl. He said he hadn't seen her, but he
had heard her speak. Pinkerton seemed to become serious for a moment. "The mystery of her voice touched my soul. It really did." The lieutenant stared off into the garden for a moment as if he were seeing someone's face in the flowers. But his moment of reflection did not last very long and the sailor soon proposed another toast, this one to the day when he would go back to America and acquire a real wife--this one an American in America.

An excited, cackling voice interrupted the toast to an American wedding, and Goro excitedly shouted that Butterfly and the wedding party were approaching the summit of the hill.

All eyes strained in the direction of the wedding party, and like the first showing of sunrise, Butterfly and her friends appeared carrying brightly-colored sunshades. Butterfly recognized her husband-to-be and, upon closing her sunshade, introduced him to her relatives and friends, all of whom approached him in a ceremonious Japanese manner.

While the relatives and guests babbled politely in the background, the consul, Sharpless, asked Butterfly questions about herself and her family. As she talked, the men sat fascinated with her beauty and daintiness.

Butterfly said that she had come from Nagasaki where her family had once been wealthy, but now were poor.
The consul asked what her father did, and a great embarrassment seemed to pass like a cloud over Butterfly and her friends. When the silence became unbearable, Butterfly ignored the question about her father, and instead told about her important uncle, the Bonze, who was a Japanese priest. She told of another uncle who was very nice, but unfortunately, a drunkard.

The American sailor suddenly burst out into laughter, "That's a good one, he roared, "One uncle a bonzo, the other a gonzo, one a thinker, the other a drinker."

The guests did not seem too amused at the joke, and Consul Sharpless asked Butterfly her age. She answered that she was sixteen years old and seemed embarrassed at being an old maid at this ancient age.

Lieutenant Pinkerton was getting into a better and better mood, so pleased was he over Butterfly's beauty. He turned to Goro and said, "Tell the three Scarecrows to bring more good food and drink for the guests."

Everyone seemed very gay and happy over the arranged wedding. Butterfly was obviously in love with the handsome American, and overjoyed about her forthcoming marriage, not realizing that it wasn't going to be a real marriage.

At the height of the festivities there was one thing about Butterfly that seemed to confuse Lieutenant Pinkerton.
He wondered why she didn't eat refreshments like everyone else. She smiled coyly and gave him a curious answer, "You see, this kimono that Japanese women wear has very long sleeves, and instead of a pocket-book or purse that women carry in some countries, Japanese women use their sleeves to carry all sorts of things that women need to carry with them." Butterfly laughed daintily and impulsively spread out the contents of her sleeves before him. The sleeves had contained handkerchiefs, a pipe, little bits of ribbon, a buckle, a fan, a mirror, a little bottle of perfume. Finally she drew out of her sleeve a long narrow sheath. Her voice trembled a little bit as she handled it with great reverence. "This I hold most holy," she whispered. She almost went into a trance as she stared at the sheath reverently. Pinkerton was afraid to ask her what it was, so Goro whispered that it was a knife sent by the Mikado to her father, who, as an obedient subject was supposed to do when the emperor sent him a knife, committed suicide.

Butterfly put the knife away very carefully, and with a happy little smile, looked up at her husband. "I have thrown away the little god-statues of my ancestors, and will give them up to worship the god of my husband." As Butterfly was thus giving more proof of her love for the American, Goro, the marriage broker, commanded silence.
As everyone listened intently, he read the marriage contract between Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton of the gunboat, Abraham Lincoln, of the United States Navy, and the lady, Butterfly, of Omara, Nagasaki. Everyone signed the contract, and when someone called out 'Madame Butterfly,' she said, "Not Madame Butterfly, but Madame Pinkerton."

Everyone was feasting and drinking, celebrating the marriage when a deep bass voice crying "Cho-Cho-San!" was heard in the distance. It was the voice of Butterfly's uncle who was a Buddhist priest. He had heard that little Butterfly was giving up the gods of her father for the gods of her husband, and he had come to her wedding to curse her, and to assign her soul to everlasting torture in the other world.

As the priest stood cursing Butterfly in great tones of rage, Pinkerton lost his own temper, and, shaking his fist in the face of the Buddhist holy man, ordered him away under threat of physical violence.

As the priest left, he took the rest of Butterfly's relatives with him and Butterfly was left, frightened and sad. Feeling great love for his Japanese bride, Pinkerton comforted her tenderly, and his kindness made her all the more the adoring bride. She begged him to love her just a little as he would love a child, and she would be so grateful for just a small bit of love.
The American looked at her; she was so dainty and beautiful, "The name Butterfly is just right for you," he whispered; but when he said these words a little thought of fear came to Butterfly. She said that she had heard what happened to butterflies in America. In her husband's country, a man caught a butterfly and pierced its heart with a needle, and then left it to die. Her voice rose in terror at the thought until Pinkerton comforted her and promised to take care of her with great tenderness.

Pinkerton and Madame Butterfly were very happy in their lovely little Japanese house until one day the American sailor had to sail on the gunboat, Abraham Lincoln, back to America. His promise to his Japanese bride was that he would return.

After the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln departed, a whole year passed in which the lovely Japanese garden by Pinkerton's house changed color and shape with the seasons. A year passed while Butterfly waited for her beloved to return—a year in which Butterfly had become a mother. She waited and prayed for his return, and Suzuki, the maid, waited, noticing how much paler Butterfly became with each passing month. Suzuki prayed before the altar of Buddha, and rang the prayer bell which was supposed to attract the attention of the gods. A year passed, then two years; Pinkerton did not return. A third year passed, with not
even a letter from Pinkerton. Butterfly, her little boy, and Suzuki, were becoming very poor. They did not have enough to eat, and their house was cold and sad. Still Butterfly had faith that the American sailor would return.

"One day a thread of smoke will appear far out on the sea," she said, "A ship will glide into the harbor; I will wait on the brow of the hill; Pinkerton will call, "Butterfly," and I shall almost die of joy."

As Madame Butterfly was dreaming of this happy day that she was sure would come, Goro, the marriage-arranger, and Sharpless, the American consul, appeared in the garden. The American consul had a letter from Pinkerton telling of his marriage to an American girl; but Butterfly thought it was a letter telling that Pinkerton would return, and was so happy, and was making so many joyful plans that the American diplomat did not have the heart to tell her differently. Goro, knowing that Pinkerton would not return, had come to carry out his trade once more.

"Butterfly," he said, "Yamadori wants to marry you. He is simple-minded, but he is very wealthy." Goro spoke more and more eagerly. "What a commission he would get if Butterfly would marry Yamadori! He continued. "You are just as good as a widow. Pinkerton hasn't sent you any money. How else will you escape more and greater poverty if you don't marry Yamadori?"
After Goro spoke for Yamadori, the rich, but simple-minded suitor came to see Butterfly himself, followed by two servants carrying flowers.

Butterfly was gay and nice to Yamadori; she admitted that desertion gave the right to divorce under Japanese law, but said that this did not work in the U. S., where a husband who tried to get rid of his wife by desertion, was thrown in prison.

Goro whispered to Sharpless that Pinkerton's ship had already been signalled, and the consul bitterly said that was his reason for seeing Butterfly. He wanted to break the news of Pinkerton's marriage to her before Butterfly had the sudden shock of realizing that Pinkerton was married to an American woman.

The consul took Pinkerton's letter and showed it to Butterfly. He tried to break the bad news to her, but she took the letter from his hand and covered it with kisses. The consul felt sorry for the poor trusting little thing, and didn't have the heart to tell her the truth. Not knowing what else to do, the American diplomat advised Butterfly to accept Yamadori's offer. Over this Butterfly was puzzled and insulted. As if to show how silly it was to marry another man, Butterfly hurried to another room where she got her child and brought him to show the consul. Here was a beautiful little boy with golden hair.
Butterfly said that when Pinkerton found out about the incomparable son that had been born to them, he would rush across the sea.

Consul Sharpless, believing that it was impossible to tell her the truth, bade a sad and kindly farewell to Butterfly and her little son. When the consul left, Goro came back and said that Butterfly had better marry Yamadori, that her child would not be cherished in America, but would be an outcast. In a rage, Butterfly grabbed her father's dagger, and with it chased Goro out of the house while Suzuki took the terrified child into the next room. After Goro was frightened away, Butterfly put the dagger back in its place, and promised the child that soon his father would come to take them both back to his own country.

Suddenly a shot was heard in the harbor. It was cannon that announced the arrival of a man-of-war. Everyone hurried to the window where they could look down into the harbor. The stars and stripes could be seen flying from a ship newly arrived. Butterfly, very excited, looked through a telescope and managed to make out the name of the ship. It was the Abraham Lincoln. She was beside herself with joy. All the others had been liars! Her American sailor had come back to her!

While Suzuki watched, unable to do anything about it, Butterfly made preparations for her husband's homecoming.
She put rouge on her own pale cheeks and the cheeks of her son; she put on her wedding dress and a scarlet poppy in her hair. She went into the garden and gathered flowers from the cherry trees with which to decorate her house. After all the home-coming preparations had been made, Butterfly and Suzuki prepared to wait the whole night through until the morning when Pinkerton would come. Butterfly stood all night staring at the dark shape of the ship in the harbor; Suzuki sat in the corner with the child, the lanterns in the center of the floor making eerie shadows while Butterfly watched the night turn into dawn, and the dawn turn into bright sunlight. Suzuki and the baby finally fell asleep; but Butterfly stood still as a statue—watching.

When morning came, Butterfly took the baby, and singing a sweet little lullaby to it, carried it off to rest. While she was gone there was a knock at the door, and Suzuki, opening it, gasped when she saw Pinkerton who told her to keep silent. He entered the house on tiptoe and looked very foolish when Suzuki told of Butterfly's long and faithful wait in which she had been poor and hungry.

While telling of Butterfly, Suzuki heard a noise in the garden. She looked out, and saw a tall, blond lady standing there. She guessed the truth without having to be told. It was Pinkerton's American wife.
Suzuki cried out wildly, and fell to the ground. The American consul lifted her up and tried to comfort her, saying that the American lady wanted to take Butterfly's child back to America where she would give it a mother's care and every luxury.

Suzuki sobbed out her sad feelings to Pinkerton who was himself feeling quite miserable by now. He said he didn't have the courage to meet Butterfly again after what he'd done, and he sadly left the little Japanese house where he had known such happiness.

While Suzuki was talking to Kate Pinkerton in the garden, Butterfly was happily hurrying down a staircase and calling for Suzuki. She had a feeling that Pinkerton had come, but seeing only the consul Sharpless, she became alarmed. After searching further, she saw Kate Pinkerton who was crying. She asked the tall, strange lady who she was, but received no answer. Thus, gradually, poor little Butterfly began to understand everything. To Suzuki she pitifully asked, "Does he live?" Suzuki muttered, "Yes," but couldn't answer Butterfly's next question, "They have told you he will come no more?" Butterfly finally understood Kate, and stared at her in fright and fascination. Kate said, "Through no fault of my own I am the cause of your trouble. Forgive me."

"How long have you been married to him?" said
Butterfly. Kate answered that she had been married a year, and with blundering sympathy offered to do everything for the child; but Butterfly, now calm, with the calmness of despair, congratulated Kate and said she would give the child to Pinkerton if he would come in a half-hour from then. With this statement, simply, effectively, Butterfly asked them all to leave her.

Inside her little house, Butterfly went alone. She lit a lamp in front of the altar where a statue of the god Buddha stood. She took a white veil and the sacred dagger from the wall. She kissed the dagger which had engraved on the blade, "If you cannot live with honor, die with honor." Ready to plunge the blade into her throat, she was stopped by the child who came toddling into the room. She kissed the little boy who had rushed into her arms, and then she took him across the room, told of a game they must play. Playing the "game," she blindfolded the child, gave him an American flag and a doll to play with. Having taken the dagger into her hand once more, Butterfly knelt before the Buddha altar, and while candlelight made bright the face of Buddha, she plunged the knife into her body, the white veil she wore turning crimson.

With her last strength, she crawled toward the child, and fell nearby, her hand reaching toward him.

As she reached for the child with her last effort,
Pinkerton rushed in, and as he watched, she pointed feebly to the child, then died.

As Butterfly had knelt before her god in prayer, and plunged the dagger to die with honor, Pinkerton knelt to his God who had died with honor on a crucifix. Then sobbing unashamedly, he picked up his son, and carried him away.
CHAPTER VII

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

Orpheus and Eurydice is the oldest opera that is still popular today among opera lovers. It is presented year in and year out along with the other ageless favorites. Composed in 1762, this opera was the first of its kind to be a real music drama. It stressed the story more than the showing off of singers' voices.

In its time Orpheus and Eurydice caused a musical war all over Europe. It was said that the battle for or against Gluck's new style of music drama caused friends and even lovers to part.

Gluck's style of writing musical dramas won out in the final counting; and became the new light of operatic writing from then on.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787)

He could almost have been called a tramp, the tall, broad-shouldered and muscular young man who wandered into Vienna in 1736. He had been, for some time, a minstrel, going around from place to place, picking up coins for
what little music he could furnish here and there. He had come to Vienna to settle down in the effort to make music a more profitable profession.

After studying in Vienna for a while, Gluck acquired a job conducting a traveling opera company. He worked at this task for twelve years, and wrote operas on the side. No less a person than the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria was delighted when she heard one of his operas, and Gluck became a favorite of the Empress, and of other great nobles in the courts and palaces as well.

Finally a success, Christoph Gluck married a girl named Marianne, and proceeded to be more daring in his ideas for writing new operas. He thought operas should be more natural, have more realistic stories, more like drama; and he thought music of operas should have a greater simplicity.

Gluck met with much fame because of his new creations, and at the invitation of the queen of France, Marie Antoinette, Gluck went to Paris. Here he knew both success and bitterness.

Gluck spent his last days in wealth, fame, and honor. He died on November 15, 1787, and the inscription on his tombstone read: "Here lies an upright German man. A zealous Christian. A faithful spouse. Christoph Ritter Gluck. Of the Noble Art of Music a Great Master."
Many centuries ago, before the time of Christ, and before the glory of Rome, the Greeks, who lived in a small part of southern Europe, had built a brilliant civilization. They had beautiful cities, lovely statues, literature, great plays, elegant flowing clothes, golden jewelry, exciting sports events; and they even had an interesting religion. They decided that creatures wiser than they must rule up on Mount Olympus, and these must be the gods who ruled mankind's destiny. These gods of the ancient Greeks looked like humans, had all the loves, hatreds, and jealousies of people except that they were very powerful and never died. The Greeks knew that people died, however, even if the gods didn't, and they thought that people went to an underworld place ruled by the god, Pluto. This land had some terrible punishments and gruesome things in it, but parts of this territory were fairly pleasant. The story of Orpheus is about a man on earth who visited the underground world of the dead.

Music so sad as to pluck out the very hearts of the living could be heard over the tomb in the wide meadow. Garlands of flowers were laid on a newly made grave, and a gray, drizzling rain fell on the flowers, and made mud of the dirt as if the eyes of the great gods too were weeping.
A young man unsurpassed in handsomeness of face and beauty of body threw himself on the new grave, crushing the flowers into the rain-soaked earth, and sobbed unashamedly.

Others were around the grave also, weeping young women and warriors of Athens. The young men tried to pull Orpheus off of the grave, but he stubbornly remained and dug his fingernails into the earth.

"Here, where all is dark and silent, Eurydice lies in her solitary tomb." His cries rent the very depths of the clouds causing more rain to weep down. "Can't you see, oh lovely little girl, can't you see how your Orpheus weeps and begs you to return from the dead."

For hours Orpheus had been by the grave, it was useless to persuade him to leave. He would not even play his lyre when it was offered to him.

He looked up to the heavens, and spoke to the gods. "You give me my little lyre to pluck, and with it I make new music. To what use,—will its strains bring back my wife from this grave?" He paused. There was only the sound of the drizzling rain and the sobs of the women. Far off, a wolf howled weirdly. The trees themselves seemed to be drooping in sorrow as Orpheus spoke again. There was bitterness in his voice.

"My father was Apollo, the god of music, my mother was one of the muses whom music is named after. They gave
me this little harp. With it I have made the world's most magic music. I have played upon this lyre and beautiful women have swooned at my feet." He paused and his face seemed to grow dark with anger. "There was once a snake with nine heads, and it rose out of the black, wet swamp with nine heads to hiss and kill. A death of horror awaited me, nine heads to devour Orpheus' weak flesh, but the god of music was my father, my harp was in my hand, and I played music. Oh, I played music such as made the night winds tremble, and the flaming breath of the monster was turned aside, the nine heads of the snake swayed in hideous rhythm to the hurried playing of my fingers." Rising from the grave, Orpheus looked at his friends almost fiercely. "You know that I tamed Hydra, the many headed snake, even before powerful Hercules killed it." He paused and his voice choked for a second in his throat. "Yet with all the power of my music, I cannot stir one sweet breath of my Eurydice to life, cannot bring one tear or smile to a face newly dead, cannot open the doors to the Underworld where all spirits of the dead must forever languish."

The cries of the young women around the grave broke out anew and Orpheus leaped up and asked them to quiet their lamentations. He wanted them to spread more flowers on the sacred spot.

"Now please go, my friends. You would lead me from
this spot, but I ask that rather you go and leave me here with my loneliness." Tears glistened in his eyes, and his voice faded to a whisper. "Alone I will be with my dead bride, and my tears and the tears of the gods will give drink to the flowers on her grave."

Although his friends worried about his state of mind in his overpowering grief, they regretfully left him alone over his little mound of grave. His thoughts were on Eurydice. He and his bride had known the joys of love only for such a short time. How beautiful she had been, running through the long grasses of the meadow, her long hair flowing in the wind and her laughter making music in the afternoon sunlight. Suddenly her distant scream had pierced Orpheus like a knife. Blindly running in her direction, he had found his beloved faint from terror and poison. Then she had died, death coming from the snake she had stepped on while running in the meadow.

The grief of Orpheus grew like pools of agony whirling in his head. With each new thought of Eurydice his great pain became more violent until it seemed that he too would die and join his love.

"Eurydice, thy name I love," he whispered, not aware of the great figure that stood behind him. "Oh, my beloved, the relentless gods of the underworld keep your beauty in darkness forever."
So buried in his grief was Orpheus that he was unaware of the figure behind him until he heard a voice like soft music speak.

"The god of love comes to you, Orpheus. You must listen, and not be frightened, for my message is of great importance to you."

Almost blinded by the light that always surrounded the gods, Orpheus turned his grief-crazed eyes upward and beheld the gloriously handsome god of love.

"Hear me," said the god, "On Mount Olympus, the gods, including your father, Apollo, god of music, have looked down and observed your sorrow. Great is the pity in their hearts, and they are going to allow you passage into the underworld where you may observe Eurydice among the shades of the dead."

Before Orpheus could speak of his amazement, the god of love continued. "Go with your harp and your singing, and ask Pluto, god of the Underworld, to let you return to earth with Eurydice."

Almost unbelievingly Orpheus received this message and asked if it were really true that he would behold Eurydice again. The god answered that this was indeed true, but that he must receive all that Pluto required him to do or suffer. Orpheus, feeling only courage in his breast, nobly declared that he would not shrink from any
great trial.

The god of love smiled at these words gently but a little scornfully. "Hear what the gods command," he said. "When you are returning to earth, walk ahead of your wife, do not once dare turn back and look at her, or she will die a second time and you will lose her forever."

As he would have died of sorrow, now it seemed that Orpheus would die of joy. Words kept going around in his brain making him delirious.

"What did he say? Is it true? Will I really find her again? Can I keep from the double sorrow by not looking at her when we come back to earth? Will she be angry if I don't turn around and look at her." Little spirits of joy made his head ring. "I'll rely on the gods and be happy. I'll take my harp and my joy with me through the gloomy doors of the underworld." Orpheus became bolder. "I'll force the underworld powers to bow to my request."

Only his joy and longing sustained him, as Orpheus mapped out his journey to the Underworld according to the love-god's instructions. In a hollow in a mountain he went, and down, down, down, to the home of the dead; but guarding the entrance to the Underworld was a great black river called the River Styx or the River of Hatred. So ugly and wild was this river that it could not be crossed by swimming. Seeing a ferryboat made of bones, and claws
and snakeskin, Orpheus decided to take it, and gave a coin to Charon, the boatman, a solemn figure in a long black shroud. Once across the river, Orpheus was terrified to see Cerberus, the giant, three headed dog who snarlingly guarded the gates into the land of the dead. Trembling in terror, Orpheus threw him barley cakes which the dog devoured while Orpheus fled inside the gates to the weird land.

On all sides, crying, flying, dancing, Orpheus beheld sights and figures such as no mortal eye had ever seen before. There was Medusa, wicked of heart, beautiful of face, who had growing from her head snakes in place of hair; there were wood-nymphs and water nymphs who came to earth only in the spring; there were centaurs, frightening creatures, half man and half horse; there were every manner of strange ghosts and creatures, crying, wailing, flying at Orpheus and asking him what he was doing.

"Mortal, what do you seek?" they cried, "Do you think with your harp to melt our hearts in this sad place?"

Orpheus, knowing not what else to do, told the story of his great loss; how his bride had died from the bite of a snake, and he asked them to have pity and direct him to Pluto, god of the Underworld, who might hearken to his message from the love-god.

In answer to his request, the three Furies, three
lesser goddesses who punished sinners with their secret
stings, and who wore snakes for hair as did Medusa, leaped
and whirled before Orpheus in a wild and fierce dance.
They beckoned him to follow and led him to the flaming
throne of Pluto who sat in judgment on this mortal's
request.

While Orpheus struggled with the creatures of the
deep, Eurydice was weaving garlands in the Happy Meadows,
a part of the Underworld where stayed the souls of the
blessed. She sang a song of the happy-hearted meadows
where the light was pure and the music angelic. Only dimly
did she recall an earthly lover.

She was unable to hear Orpheus, and knew nothing of
his pleading with the god of the Underworld; that at the
command of this god, Orpheus had taken his harp and had
played music of such sorrowing beauty that the Furies them­
selves had wept, the vultures had ceased to tear a giant's
liver, and Tantalus forgot about his thirst.

Pluto was impressed with the divinely sad music as
were all the creatures of the Underworld, and he finally
spoke when the last vibrations of the harp had disappeared
from hearing.

"For your truth and music, Love will reward you,
Orpheus; and in the realm of the happy souls I will let
you look for your wife." The god looked sternly at
Orpheus and his voice became dark with warning.

"You may lead Eurydice to the land of the living on earth. She may follow, still limping from her wounded foot; but you must not look at her until you reach the land of the living on earth." His voice became even more ominous, and the Furies wailed in a high, eerie melody. The god continued. "If you look at Eurydice, who will follow behind you, you will lose her again, this time forever."

Orpheus was led to the Happy Meadows. Here he once again beheld his beloved Eurydice. But he could not go forward to greet her, and after beckoning for her to follow, he proceeded on his way to the land of the living. Eurydice was overcome with surprise and a rush of love caused her to become even more beautiful. She eagerly ran, limping from her snake-bite, in the direction of Orpheus. He, according to the orders of the gods, was proceeding onward silently, without looking back at her, and hoping that she would understand and keep following.

By all of these unusual events, the living invading the land of the dead, Orpheus coming to her, but ignoring her, Eurydice was confused beyond reason.

"My dearest Orpheus," she pleaded desperately, "Are you leaving me so soon after you have found me. Do you no longer love me, now that I have passed to the land of the dead?—She stumbled, so quickly was Orpheus hurrying."
"Turn and look at me, or you shall break my heart."

"I can't turn around, Eurydice," cried Orpheus, "I can't look at you. Just take heart, I cannot explain now. Only later."

Tears fell on the face of the maiden who was dead yet alive. "My Orpheus," she sobbed, "You have braved the dangers of coming into the land of the dead—to see me; and seeing me your love has turned to stone; my face you cannot bear to look upon."

"I cannot look at thee, Eurydice," Orpheus cried, and walked quickly onward, fighting desperately the temptation to turn around and take her in his arms.

"Then goodbye, think of Eurydice who loves you, I return to my meadows of the dead before I faint with longing."

"Eurydice, please, trust me," Orpheus paused, and unable to keep his vow to the gods, turned to embrace his wife. Instantly Eurydice breathed farewell to Orpheus, and died a second time.

Orpheus stumbled on looking only forward, and his grief doubled; the loss seeming more frustrating and agonizing then at first. "I have loved and lost her twice," he cried in agony. Blindly he stumbled on in brute obedience to the gods' command. His heart was desolation, his body was chains that he dragged, his soul was drops
of blood, and his mind a furnace of agony. He clutched his heart in dumb desperation and was beyond prayer.

Once again Orpheus had somehow made his way across the Black River of Hate, to earth. He stood in desperation and planned to plunge his dagger into his breast.

"Stop," cried a great deep voice, "and hear me."

Orpheus turned his almost senseless eyes and beheld the god of love. Orpheus sank speechless to the ground and waited for the god to speak.

"Your constancy and faith have been tried enough," the god of love smiled, the smile almost blinding the eyes of Orpheus, and walked to the flower-strewn grave of Eurydice. As the god called forth, thunder rolled even through the sun's rays.

"Eurydice, awake," called the god. "As the god of love, I command you to give the reward of love to the true and noble Orpheus."

The garlands of flowers above Eurydice's grave rose in the air by themselves, the earth parted like waves of a river and, behold, more beautiful than ever, Eurydice stepped from her grave to greet her beloved, faithful and true in the eyes of the gods.

So triumphed the god of love, and choirs of mystic voices sang praises from the glory of Olympus while Orpheus played his harp to honor his beloved.
CHAPTER VIII

PAGLIACCI--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

The opera, Pagliacci, is the only work of Leoncavallo that became a real success. The story of the opera was based on fact. Leoncavallo's father was a judge in a town in southern Italy. One of the cases he tried was about a group of traveling actors or pagliacci as they were called in Italy. One of the actors had committed a double murder over a love affair. The actor showed no remorse, and said he'd do the whole thing over again.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Ruggiero Leoncavallo (1858-1919)

There was once a man of law in Italy who presided as judge in a small Italian town. His son was a bright boy, but he did not follow the path of law as a profession. He wanted to travel, and he achieved this ambition by traveling all through England, Holland, France, Germany, and Egypt, earning his living by playing piano in cafes.

Leoncavallo finally settled down to composing operas which were popular successes of their day; but his immortality rests on only one work, the opera, Pagliacci.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

It was in the southern tip of Italy; the date was August fifteenth, the Feast of the Assumption, and in a little village a crowd of people were celebrating a religious holiday.

The hot August sun beat down on the merrymakers who were gathering at the crossroads to meet a group of traveling actors. The players were going to put up a portable stage outdoors and present a play. This was always a happy event in the village because there were not many means of entertainment in the nineteenth century for ordinary folks, at any rate.

The actors were happy to see the crowd, and stopped to advertise their coming play. Out of a curtained door in the back of a big, gilded wagon stepped a crippled and rather ugly little actor. His name was Tonio. As he walked over to the portable stage that was being set up, he was followed by a group of unruly boys who were making fun of him. The leader of the actors, Canio, was clearing the road for a cart drawn by a small donkey. In the cart was pretty, dark-haired Nedda. She was Canio's girl friend and also his leading lady. Canio drove the donkey and cart into the middle of the crowd, at the same time beating on a big drum and shouting loudly in an
effort to get everybody's attention. When the crowd had quieted down enough, Canio stood there, looking funny and pathetic in his clown's costume; and told of the evening's performance, the crowd applauded and Canio turned to step down from the cart as he dismissed the crowd. He turned to find poor little, ugly, crippled Tonio helping lovely Nedda down from the cart. This made Canio very angry. To think that ugly Tonio would dare touch beautiful Nedda, even to help her down from a cart! In a burst of rage, the leader of the actors, gave the cripple a quick right to the jaw that sent him sprawling in the hot dust of the village street. The crowd, thinking it all acting for their benefit, laughed and applauded heartily.

One person was not laughing. In his heart, Tonio was very hurt and bitter; and secretly swore vengeance as he rubbed down the donkey, and said he would follow later after the other actors. Some of the villagers jokingly warned Canio that poor, misshapen Tonio might be lagging behind the other actors in order to get a chance to flirt with Nedda.

The villagers, laughing and still making a joke out of it all, were surprised when Canio took them so seriously. Angrily he turned and said that Tonio nor anyone had better show interest in his sweetheart.

"On stage I'll always act the easygoing boyfriend,"
he said, "but off stage I am just the opposite."

After making this serious statement to the villagers, Canio turned and hurried to the village with the other actors.

Nedda stepped out of the actor's guilded wagon where she had gone while her boy friend had voiced his jealous thoughts.

His words and his anger for poor Tonio bothered her.

"If he is this angry over Tonio merely helping me down from the cart, how angry would he be if he really knew my secret thoughts," she said to herself. A shadow of fear came into her bright, beautiful eyes, but the spirit of fun in her wouldn't let the shadow stay there very long, and when she heard some birds chirping in the trees nearby, she sang back to them joyously.

Meanwhile the cripple, Tonio, having avoided returning to the village with the other actors, sat beneath a tree admiring Nedda as she sang to the birds.

Nedda, upon seeing him, was irritated and ordered him back to the village with the other actors; but Tonio said that he only wanted to listen to her sing. He said that he was in love with her because she was beautiful and nice.

"Deformed and ugly as I am, I can't help loving you," he said.
Nedda looked at him and laughed, but Tonio only became more adoring. Nedda became angry at his excessive attention and taking a whip, she struck the ugly little man viciously with it. Trying to duck from the whip, Tonic screamed a curse at the girl.

"As sure as there's a holiday today, I'll even things with you," he cried.

As Tonic left, sadness and bitterness bowing his little shoulders still more, a handsome young villager named Silvio leaped over a low wall near the road and was joyfully greeted by Nedda.

"I left the others making merry in the village so I could meet you here," said Silvio.

So happy to see him, Nedda told of the unpleasant incident with Tonic, and hurried to add that Tonic wasn't the only one she didn't like. Her boy friend, Canio, was another, but he was very, very jealous.

"You can trust me and my love completely," said Silvio; so she finally agreed to run away and marry Silvio whenever the right opportunity for her escape from Canio came along.

Meanwhile the misshapen Tonio, bent on revenge, had hurried to the village and warned Canio that his sweet-heart was having a secret meeting with another man. The
two of them returned to the scene just in time for Canio to hear Nedda say she would escape with the handsome Silvio when the right moment came along.

The jealous lover, Canio, burst away from Tonio to leap after the man who was trying to steal his sweetheart. He was too late. Silvio leaped over a wall and ran away before Canio could see his face.

Little crippled Tonio was very happy over what he was causing; and he stood in the background gloating and gleefully rubbing his hands.

Nedda had tried to trip Canio when he went after Silvio, and now, Canio, having lost sight of Silvio, came back to Nedda. In anger, Canio demanded to know who her secret lover was. Nedda absolutely refused to tell, so Canio drew a big knife from his belt and ran toward her. Nedda was quaking in fear; the little misshapen Tonio was laughing with vicious delight. Only Canio's servant's return saved Nedda from destruction. Beppe, the servant, grabbed his master's arms and prevented the attack while Nedda ran away from the scene, crying in terror.

Canio kept raving in anger and it seemed that he would never stop. He was calmed down only when the bitter cripple picked Tonio's knife off of the ground, handed it to him and quietly suggested that Nedda's new boy friend might show up that night at the play and give himself away.
After happy Tonio sneaked away, he left Canio alone to think over his suggestion. This Canio proceeded to do; and some bitter, sad thought must have entered his head, for soon Canio was overcome by a fit of sobbing, and he fell to the ground in absolute misery.

The hours passed and soon nightfall had come over the little Italian village. There was a pleasant buzz of excitement as lanterns were set up around the portable stage in the town square. Tonio was quite charming and he acted as usher by directing the crowd to benches in front of the stage. While Tonio was busy, Beppe and Nedda were collecting admission fees; in the process of this job, Nedda saw Silvio who whispered a word of love to her.

The crowd became impatient for the play to begin and shouted loudly for the curtain to open. At last a great bell in back of the stage rang out its golden tones. This was the signal for the performance to begin, and people in the audience motioned each other to be quiet.

The play began with Nedda acting as a young girl who was waiting for a secret lover because her regular boy friend wasn't expected to come calling until late. She looked very pretty as she half-danced, half-walked across the stage to the guitar music of Beppe, who was playing the part of the secret lover.
While Nedda was dancing the fastest to the guitar music, Tonio also came on stage and as an actor, he made love to Nedda in his pitiful way just as he had done in real life that afternoon. Tonio's stage love-making became so realistic and earnest that Beppe rushed up and gave him a very realistic kick in his broad trousers. The audience thought this very funny, and Tonio, who had fallen on his knees, stood up, gave his blessing to the secret lovers, and told them that he would warn them when Nedda's first boy friend was coming. Nedda and Beppe then danced an exciting dance to guitar music and in the midst of it, Tonio rushed in to say that Canio (merely as an actor, of course,) was coming in a great rage.

In a rage, indeed, did Canio burst upon the stage, and forgetting he was an actor, he demanded to know the name of Nedda's real lover who was out in the audience somewhere. Nedda became half-frightened and kept calling him by his stage name to remind him he was supposed to be acting. Over and over again she said his stage name. "Pagliaccio, Pagliaccio, Pagliaccio," she cried as Canio grabbed her wrist with rough hardness.

Growing more and more wildly angry, Canio threw his actor's hat on the floor, wiped his sleeve across his face to take off the grease and powder; then shouted, "No, Pagliaccio no longer!"
He passionately declared that he would save his honor from the ungrateful girl he had kept from starvation and promised to marry. His voice became louder as he shouted a terrible curse at the one girl he had pinned all his hopes on.

The audience thought this all to be marvelous acting, and let out their bravos and whistles in abundance.

Meanwhile on stage, Nedda was asking the truth with forced calm. "Why don't you send me away?" she said.

"What good would that do?" yelled Canio. "You would only run off with your secret lover and make a greater fool of me!"

Desperately, Nedda motioned for the guitar players to start the music again, and she made a pitiful attempt to dance, whirling to the broken chords of the guitar. She was unable to continue, however, because Canio grabbed her, shook her roughly and angrily demanded to know the name of her secret lover.

"The name! The name!" he demanded, but Nedda, giving up her disguise of acting, swore that she would never tell him the name of her secret lover no matter what he did.

Still clutching the girl in his powerful hands, Canio drew a large knife and stabbed her twice.

"You'll call your lover's name in your death spasm," he roared, and truly enough, as she lay dying she called
on Silvio for help.

Silvio rushed up to the stage with his own knife drawn, and as he struggled with Canio, the latter, a better fighter, stabbed him in the heart.

Canio turned to the stupefied audience. For fear and amazement the people were unable to move, and Canio spoke to them in a strangely calm voice as he let his bloody weapon drop to the floor. He said, "The comedy is over."
POGGY AND BESS—BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

Porgy and Bess is considered the first really authentic American opera. It was written by an American, and the soul of its music was taken from genuine American Negro folk music.

Gershwin had the idea of writing Porgy and Bess after he had seen an excellent play by that name. The play was rich in all sorts of dramatic situations and striking characters. Like Puccini before him who had seen a play, George Gershwin itched to set it to music. This he did, drawing upon blues songs and jazz melodies for inspiration.

George Gershwin was a perfectionist, and he was not satisfied with merely studying the Negro characters of the play. He wanted to get background and atmosphere, so he traveled to South Carolina where he walked the streets of Charleston; nor was he content with examining the city life, he also traveled to James Island near Charleston. Here he heard primitive religious shouts and music scarcely ever heard by a white man before.

George made friends with the Negroes on the island and joined them in their rhythmic shouts and prayers.
Once he even defeated their champion shouter in a sort of impromptu contest. George was fascinated with the rhythms he heard. The more he listened, the more complex they seemed to become. At the prayer meetings, no matter how many different prayers the people were shouting, or different rhythms they were shouting them in, they ended up having a rhythmic unity that was powerful.

From his experience on James Island, George Gershwin drew heavily in creating one of the finest folk operas in the world.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

George Gershwin was a great composer; but he never studied in Europe and was not brought up in Vienna, Paris, or London. He was born and raised within sound of city streets of lower east side in New York City. His parents were very ordinary people, and his father could never quite make a success. He tried first one business and then another, all the way from Turkish baths to a "booke" establishment.

Little George's early life was that of a normal boy of the city streets. He loved to play punchball, street-hockey, go roller skating, and get into gang fights. He was a strong fan of the New York Giants; and considered
any boy who went out for music a sissy or a "maggie." He first began to like music when he fell in love with a young girl merely because she had a sweet voice. Then one day, barefoot and in overalls, he was playing ball outside Public School 25, when he heard Dvorak's *Humoresque* being played on the violin. Maxie Rosensweig was a local boy who was well-liked, and he was making this beautiful music. George was impressed; so through Maxie he began to learn about the world of music. It wasn't long before George was secretly trying to make up his own music on Maxie's piano.

George acquired an excellent music teacher, Charles Hambitzer, who couldn't understand George's ambition to write popular music; George, however, thought that popular music was "American" and could really be something in the hands of a great composer. George took a job in Tin Pan Alley, and began writing his own popular songs. His songs soon became hits and he was hired to write scores for popular Broadway musicals. He became wealthy before long and used to living in high style, but this did not halt his output of work. He had no girl friends, was never married, mainly because he never took the time to do any serious dating. He was the popular song-writing king of America; yet he was something more than a popular song writer. He had style and power that could create great music.

Paul Whiteman planned to present a serious all-jazz
concert in 1924; and he commissioned Gershwin to write a serious jazz work. For the first time at this concert George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was heard, and it became a great success. The world knew that Gershwin had now made jazz a form of music that could be heard in the concert halls of the great cities.

George liked people, and he liked to have them around. Sometimes he could do some of his best work in a noisy room filled with people. Most of the time when George went to parties or was with people, however, he spent his time at the piano, entertaining others or just entertaining himself. Certain persons complained about his playing constantly at parties, but he said he had to or get "Bored stiff."

On and on George wrote and wrote, working best late at night. Seated at the piano with a cigar in his mouth, he would work all night. He was equally famous in Tin Pan Alley with the pop-song people; and in Carnegie Hall with his dressed-up jazz.

The world knew that George was meant for greater things, especially after the presentation of his American opera, *Porgy and Bess*; but it was tragically discovered that he had a brain tumor. Death stilled the hand of genius while he was still young, leaving the greater things in American music to young Georges of the future.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

At one time Catfish Row had been the scene of grand balls and crinoline gowns, but now its great old mansions had crumbled into dirty hunks of wood and stone barely recognizable as houses. What had once been the homes of the rich had now become Catfish Row, a jungle of crowded tenements in the backward part of Charleston, South Carolina.

The air was close and warm one specially fated summer night in Catfish Row. The poverty-laden Negroes who lived in the tenements were trying to furnish some entertainment for themselves after a day of back-breaking labor. The men were playing games of chance, and here and there a woman was singing or a child was dancing and offering protests at the suggestion that he should go to bed.

One group of men were especially eager and excited over the game they were playing. One man seemed very unhappy over the bad luck he seemed to be having. In a mournful bass voice he said, "Oh, nobody knows when de Lord is goin' to call, roll dem bones, roll."

A fellow named Jake wasn't happy over the game they were playing, and he too turned and said, "Seems these bones don't give me nothin but trouble tonight. It was the same two weeks ago and the game broke me. I don't like
that kind o' luck!"

Mingo, an unhappy looking man, grabbed the dice and shouted, "Blast you, give me dem bones!" Mingo was angry because he figured that someone was cheating by playing with loaded dice. "What you say to these, Jake? Them's the same bones what clean the game last Saturday night; if they rolls in this game, I rolls out."

In spite of the doubts about the fairness of the game, the other men invited a new man to join in the game. His name was Robbin and he had been standing and watching the game with his wife, Serena."

"Come on, Robbin, join us in the game," the men called.

Robbin's wife became very frightened at the suggestion that he join in the game and she said, "Dear, don't play tonight. Do like I say."

Robbin didn't want the other men to think he took orders from his wife, so he said, "I been sweatin all day, now I can enjoy myself."

Robbin joined in the game and the game went on while the men complained about their jobs. Jim said he was tired of picking cotton, and Jake said that to sail on the boat, Sea Gull, as he did was indeed much better than picking cotton.

Clara, a pretty girl, was singing the song, "Summer-

124
time," while the busy hum of the game went on, when sud-
denly a new person was greeted on the little scene. It was
Porgy, a good natured cripple who was well-known in Catfish
Row. The other men laughed and said Porgy brought them
good luck, then as Porgy started to enter the game, they
 teased Porgy about a girl named Bess. Maria, a kind and
gentle girl, spoke up about this teasing. "Bess is Crown's
girl, and you know how mean and cruel Crown is--if he
thought someone was interested in his girl!--Besides Bess
isn't much herself. Porgy is too good for her."

Robbin's wife, Serena, spoke up on the subject of
Porgy and Bess. "Bess ain't a God-fearin' girl, and Porgy
got too much sense to be interested in her!"

Porgy just shrugged off all these arguments, "Why
talk about me and Bess? I've decided to be lonely always
'cause no girls like a cripple." Porgy looked a little
sad, "All de time I got to trabble de lonesome road."

Suddenly a great shout was heard that frightened the
children in the street. It was the cry of Crown, the big
one, the mean one; and as his voice was heard, a sort of
shadow seemed to fall on the little group in Catfish Row.
Soon Crown entered and was accompanied by his girl friend,
Bess. Crown demanded a drink because he said he was
thirsty. Bess grabbed Robbin's drink and gave it to Crown.
This made Robbin's wife, Serena, furious, but Bess just
laughed at Serena and told Bobbin that, after all, a woman was just a sometime thing.

Serena was forced to calm down and Crown, with a dangerous glint in his eye, joined the game.

"I'll kiss that rabbit foot and show these fellows how to play," said Crown with wicked intensity. A tense-ness settled over the game such as had never been there before, and there seemed to be a special rivalry between Bobbin and Crown. The game ended with Bobbin beating Crown. At this outcome of affairs everyone became nervous because they realized that Crown didn't like to be beaten in anything. Crown made sure that he always won, yet now Crown had lost. With a burst of fury Crown roared that he would kill Bobbin. At this announcement Bobbin prepared to defend himself, and a great fight was on. Bobbin fought bravely, but he was no match for the viciousness and skill of Crown; bleeding badly, Bobbin fought on. The women, in pity and fear, begged for the fight to be stopped. But Bobbin doggedly staggered on under Crown's blows, and as Bobbin became weaker, Crown's blows became more cruel until it seemed that no living being could take such a beating as Crown was giving Bobbin. Quite soon no living thing was taking such a beating; for soon Bobbin fell on the dirty street of Catfish Row—dead from the beating. Serena screamed and threw herself on her lifeless husband's body.
She had warned him not to enter the game. In her heart she had felt danger.

In all the excitement that followed, Bess grabbed Crown's bloodstained hands and warned him to run away before the police caught him for murder. As Crown sneaked away, Bess took money from her purse and gave it to Crown, to keep him in food while he was in hiding.

At last the scene in the street was quieted down. Robbin's body was taken by his sobbing wife, and the pals who had seen him such a short time ago, and laid to rest on a worm-eaten cot in his tenement flat. Crown had disappeared, and everyone else ignored Bess with great disgust because she was the murderer's girl friend. One person, however, was not ignoring Bess. This was a rather slick and clever, but evil man with the odd name of Sporting Life. Sporting Life had connections with the underworld, and usually made quite a bit of money; he was now asking Bess to come with him to New York. Bess disliked the man, and refused to go with him. Instead, she asked for lodging at Maria's house; but Maria slammed the door in her face. Bess was now without money or food, so she finally decided to go to the good-natured cripple, Porgy, and ask him for help.

A few hours passed in which the mourners gathered sadly around Robbin's body. They were singing sad
spirituals and putting pennies on a large saucer that lay on the dead man's chest. If enough money was put on the saucer, Robbin could have a decent burial instead of going to a pauper's grave.

One of Robbin's friends had tears in his eyes, and in a mournful voice he chanted, "Seen brother Robbin at noontime straight and tall; but deeth a-come a-walkin in the night time. Wid a silver knife death touched Robbin, and now he's sittin in de garden of paradise."

The mourners turned and looked. Porgy and Bess were entering the room. Bess was helping Porgy walk, for he had befriended her.

Serena looked bitterly at Bess, "I don't need your money for to bury my man."

Bess felt badly about Robbin's murder, even though she had been the girl friend of Crown, who had committed the murder. She said, "It isn't Crown's money or my money; it's Porgy's."

Pete, a man who had been a friend of Robbin's, counted the money in the saucer on the dead man's chest. "Fourteen dollars and fifty cents," he said, "Got enough to bury him right. Praise de Lord! An he goin to make sof' dese people heart for to fill de saucer till it spill all over." Pete became more eloquent and thankful over there being enough money to bury Robbin properly. "De Lord goin'
provide a grave for his children," he said, "De Lord raise
dis poor sinner up out of de grave and set him in de
shinin' seat of goodness. Robbin is risen to heaven, so
overflows de saucer."

Poor Pete had barely finished his righteous talk when
a detective burst onto the scene. The detective was very
businesslike, and decided to arrest Pete as a witness to
the murder. Pete had barely recovered from his surprise
when the detective turned to Serena and announced that if
her husband's body wasn't buried the next day, it would be
handed over to the medical students. This frightened
Serena who wept and sighed even more, and wouldn't be
stilled until an undertaker arrived who was willing to bury
the body for only fourteen dollars and fifty cents. Every­
one was relieved that Robbin was going to get a decent
burial, and Serena spoke softly, "My man's gone now, ain'
no use to listen for his footsteps climbin' de stairs all
tired out. Ole man sorrow's my company now, whisperin
beside me when I say my prayers at night."

Early the next morning Robbin's friends buried him.
As they lowered him into his grave, they could hear the
chimes of St. Michael's striking like the bells of etern-
ity. Jake and the other friends of Robbin were unable to
linger by the grave, for they had to hurry off to work on
the fishing boats.
Jake turned to his friends and said, "Oh, I'm a goin' out to de Blackfish Banks if de wedder say so or not, and when I say I'm goin' it means I leaves when de dawn comes."

Jake was determined to go fishing on the boat, "The Seagull," even though the weather looked like it was going to be bad. Jake's wife sent a warning to him, and asked him not to sail that day. Jake laughed the warning off and said, "How do you think I get my boy off to get college education if I don't work to earn money?" Porgy laughed to himself. He wasn't going out in a storm-tossed sea. "After all," he said, "I ain' got nothin' to lose. I've got plenty of nothin', and that nothin's plenty for me."

Not long after Porgy made his happy-go-lucky talk about nothin' being plenty for him, a buzzard flew low over Catfish Row. This frightened all the people very much as they considered it a bad omen.

"Buzzard keep on flyin' away, and take along you shadow," cried one man. But another shadow appeared in Catfish Row, on the ground. The slick, underworld character, Sporting Life, had come to Catfish Row, and was again trying to flirt with Bess. Bess told him to leave her alone as she didn't like him; and Porgy, in a fit of anger, grabbed Sporting Life's arm in a grip like steel. Sporting Life shivered in fear as Porgy's powerful grip tightened. Porgy spoke, hardly believing his own ears. "Leave my girl
alone, and get out of here, you rat!" With this warning, Porgy let go of Sporting Life who ran away. With a little catch in his voice, Porgy said, "Bess, you is my woman now." With tears in her eyes, Bess said that she was his girl and that she would never go anywhere without him.

The weather still had a note of warning in it, but the next day, the people of Catfish Row had decided to go on a picnic to a nearby island. They had decided to go very early in the morning before it was time to work on the fishing boats. Maria who was now a friend of Bess instead of an enemy, urged her to go on the picnic to Kittiwhah Island. Porgy had work to do and couldn't go, but he too urged Bess to go on the picnic and have a good time.

Off to the Island, the Catfish Row people went, eager in anticipation. They had their picnic bright and early, and then they loaded back on to the boat, for the day's work had to begin. Bess, who had been gathering berries farther in on the island, missed the boat and was left alone. She was not alone for long, however, because soon she was terrified to see Crown, the killer of Robbin and her former boyfriend.

"You ain' looks so dead, you is bigger'n ever," Bess said fearfully.

"Oh, I got lots to eat and am mos' alive," said Crown, "But I got nobody to swap words with. Am I glad for
my own girl friend."

Bess tried to tell Crown that she was Porgy's girl now, but Crown said, "You'd better be my girl unless you want to meet your God."

"It's like dis, Crown," said Bess, "I'se only girl friend Porgy ever had and he'll be lookin' for me back at Catfish Row. You can always get plenty other girls."

Crown grabbed Bess's arm and warned her, "No cripple goin' take Crown's girl away from him!"

Bess, quite sick and frightened, and Crown managed to catch a ride on a small boat, back to Catfish Row. Once on the mainland, Bess managed to run away from Crown, and sick with a fever, she stumbled into Serena's house. "Dere is a rattlesnake in dem bushes, and nobody goin' to help me," she cried. Then she fainted away.

Bess was very sick with a fever and Porgy was beside himself with worry. Serena decided that the only thing to do now was pray for Bess. "Oh, Doctor Jesus," she called, "who done trouble de water in de sea of Gallerie, lay a han' on dis poor sister's head an' chase ole Satan out of her down into de dea."

After Serena's earnest prayer, Bess began to get better. She became well enough to talk to Porgy; and she told Porgy how she had found Crown on the island, how they had come to the mainland, and how she had run away from
Crown when she had reached Catfish Row. Porgy comforted her, told her of his love for her, and declared that he would protect her against Crown.

Meanwhile Clara and Maria and the other fishermen's wives were once again worried about a storm that was coming up. Their men were away at sea, and their babies were crying with the cries of the rising wind. As the storm became worse, the women met in Serena's house to pray.

"O, Captain Jesus, knowing you is de great fixer, we asks yo to fix the devil; tie him up an t'row him back to de place of fire. Oh, Father in Heaven, have mercy on us wit de sympathy and grace and understandin' which we know is bountiful up dere."

Pete who had just got out of jail said he heard death knocking at the door; but it wasn't death, it was Crown who rushed in and taunted the remaining men for their cowardice; then Crown, doing something good for a change, rushed out to see if he could help the men who were struggling in the storm. Bess rushed to the window and let out a terrible cry. "Jake's boat is in de water upside down."

The women prayed; but the tragic news reached them. All the men on Jake's boat, "Seagull," had been drowned. In tragic sorrow mixed with hope they comforted each other and chanted, "Jesus walks upon de water, rise up an follow Him home. Oh, Jesus walks upon de water, rise up an follow
Him home."

While Clara wept and prayed, Bess was singing a lullaby about summertime to Clara's baby; and Crown was crawling toward the door from where the sound of Bess's voice came. What Crown didn't know was that Porgy was hiding behind a shutter near the door. The shutter opened slowly. A hand extended out of it. The hand grasped a large knife, and the knife was plunged into Crown's back. The incredible Crown still stood and staggered forward—knife in back. Porgy, wanting to finish the job, left the window and closed his hands around the dying man's throat.

Crown was dead and Porgy shouted to Bess that she was free and out of danger, and that she had him, Porgy, for a boy friend.

In the excitement of the second murder in Catfish Row, the bewildered detectives accused Serena of the killing because Crown had killed Serena's husband. Porgy was taken along with Serena as a witness during the inquest. The detectives told Porgy that all he had to do was check the body for identification. Porgy was terrified at the thought of looking his victim in the face, and was dragged away when he refused to carry out the police request.

While Porgy was taken off by the police, Bess was back in Catfish Row. She was weeping because she didn't think she would ever see Porgy again. Just as she was in
her bluest mood, the slick, underworld character, Sporting Life, appeared on the scene, and once again tried to persuade her to come to New York with him. Bess didn't like him, said she would not go with him, and called him a rattlesnake; but he was very persuasive and knew Bess was in a very blue mood. He kept asking her to come with him to New York where she would be rich and beautiful.

Sometime later, Porgy was out of jail. The police had never actually suspected him of the murder of Crown, and had only locked him up for contempt of court because he had refused to look at Crown's body. He was now in high spirits and greeted everyone in Catfish Row jubilantly. He naturally looked around for Bess. He was frightened at the silence that greeted him when he called Bess's name. "Bess, my Bess, where is you? Ain' care what she done or say, won't somebody tell me where's my Bess?"

Still silence greeted Porgy. He looked pleadingly at the people of Catfish Row who stood around awkwardly. Finally Maria said, "Dat woman ain' good nuff for you, Porgy. She done put Jesus out of her heart. Porgy, you is better off when you don' have dat woman aroun' makin' bad trouble. She give herself away to Satan."

Porgy became more and more terrified at these words, "Is my Bess dead?" he cried.

"No," said Maria, "she be better dead, she done give
herself away to de debil!"

"Bess alive," said Porgy happily, "Where she gone?"

"New York," answered Maria, "She gone there with Sporting Life."

"Bring my goat and cart," said Porgy.

"Where you goin?"

"Ain' you say my Bess gone to New York? Dat's where Porgy's goin! I goin' to fin' my Bess. God will help me. Oh, Lawd, I'm on the long, long road. I'm in search of a Heavenly Lan. Lawd, guide me. Porgy goes on his way in search of Bess."
CHAPTER X

ROMEO AND JULIET--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

Romeo and Juliet is usually considered the second best of Gounod's operas. Going to Shakespeare for inspiration, Gounod set the famous story of Romeo and Juliet to music. This story had been set to music many times before, but Gounod's setting was considered particularly good because he could compose such pretty and charming melodies.

Although Romeo and Juliet is a work of beauty, it is not considered among the very greatest operas, and it has been said that Gounod tried to accomplish too many of the same things that he had set out to do in his opera, Faust.

In America, Romeo and Juliet has received much praise where it has been performed by top artists.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

Charles Gounod (1818-1901)

"I felt as if I were in some temple," said young Charles when his mother took him home from his first opera; and from that time on the boy could think of nothing else but becoming a musician. It was hard for him to get the
proper training he needed because his mother had little money. Ever since Charles' father had died, his mother had run both household and her husband's printing business.

The principal of Charles' school in Paris thought he was spending too much time on music, and he called Charles to his office one day and asked him to set a poem to music right there on the spot. Charles did, and so successfully that the principal agreed that he should be a musician.

Charles Gounod studied very hard, and received many honors for his school work. He won an important prize in music, the Prix de Rome, for study in Italy. While in Italy, he came into contact with Italian church music, and being very religious anyway, he was made even more so by this music. He decided that he wanted to become a priest; but he could not keep away from his musical activities, so he gave up this idea.

After meeting a famous opera star, Charles Gounod turned to writing music for the opera. He was quite successful in this field, particularly with his opera, Faust, which is considered his greatest work.

Later in life, Gounod was highly respected and honored in many countries. He was also very devoted to his religion and became more and more a man of holy qualities. His very last work was a Requiem (mass for the dead); it turned out to be his own Requiem, for he died completing it.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

Many years ago in Verona, Italy, there lived two fine families. Both families were wealthy, lived in splendid mansions, and were waited on by many servants. Both families were proud because the parents, children, cousins and uncles of these families were brave and handsome people. There was only one thing wrong with these families—they hated each other and fought bitterly at every opportunity.

One family was named Capulet
The other Montague
And from their hatred and their love
A famous legend grew

One beautiful day, Mr. Capulet, father of the Capulet household, was in a happy frame of mind. He had talked to Count Paris, a handsome young nobleman, and the two of them had agreed on making wedding plans for Mr. Capulet's daughter, Juliet. Mr. Capulet was certain that Count Paris would make an excellent husband for his daughter. In a glow, and having a very pleasant attitude toward the world in general, Mr. Capulet decided to have a big party, a fine ball in his mansion. He would hire the best orchestra in Verona to play at the ball, and he would invite just about everyone in Verona to come to his party, everyone, that is, except the Montagues;--and, oh, how the Capulets
despised the Montagues.

The Capulet party was in full progress, and everyone was having a wonderful time when three masked young men entered, accompanied by a torch bearer.—No one paid much attention as some others were in masks and costumes also. What was different about these three men, was Romeo, a member of their group. Romeo's heritage that made him out of place in the Capulet home was that his full name was Romeo Montague. Naturally he didn't go around telling people who he was. If he had, he would have been beaten up, thrown out of the party, or possibly killed.

Romeo and his friends, being disguised, mingled happily in the crowd. Romeo was handsome and strong and good. Many girls wanted to dance with him, but he preferred looking around at the festivities of the party. Suddenly Romeo stopped and stared as if struck by some strange power. Before his gaze was a maid of such beauty that she seemed to make the torches burn more brightly. Never had Romeo seen such beauty before. He continued to stare at the lovely girl, and he finally found the courage to ask who she was.

The girl was Juliet Capulet, daughter of the house, but this fact did not for an instant stop Romeo's admiration. He managed to come near Juliet and talk to her for a few minutes. So gentle were his words, so manly and s.
fine his appearance, that Juliet too lost her heart as quickly as she had won his love. Their moments of tenderness were short-lived, however, for word was sent to Juliet that her mother wanted her.

When she was alone with her faithful nurse, Juliet asked her who the handsome young gentleman was. The nurse told her that he was one of the hated Montagues, and an enemy; but Juliet said that it was too late. Enemy or no enemy, she was already in love with him.

Meanwhile Tybalt, a Capulet, and Juliet's cousin, had discovered that a Montague had dared to come to a Capulet party, and he had in his heart a vow to get revenge for this bold deed.

Romeo could not rest when he left the party, so full was his mind and his heart with the vision of Juliet. Finally, after roaming the streets, he leaped over a high wall, and landed on the Capulet estate. He saw a dim light burning from a balcony window. Shadows and night sounds sent him warning. As a Montague, he would be killed if he were caught prowling on the Capulet estate; but he was more anxious to draw near the balcony light (it might be Juliet's) than he was afraid of being killed. As he crept closer, he saw that Juliet was standing in the balcony from where he had seen the little light; and as she stood there she seemed to be talking to the stars. She
was saying that Romeo's only offense was his name, and her
gentle words praised his blameless manhood.

Romeo, hearing Juliet speak of him, knew that she
loved him. His heart was so filled with happiness that he
could scarcely speak; and when she leaned her cheek upon
her hand, he wished that he were a glove that he might
touch her cheek.

He dared speak to the one whom he called in his heart
his bright angel; and he on the ground below, she in the
balcony above, declared their love for each other, and in
the light of the blessed moon, they became engaged.

Their happiness was interrupted by Juliet's nurse
who kept calling Juliet's name and coming closer as she
called. Juliet's heart was filled with fear, and she told
her lover to hasten before he was caught and killed.
Before he left, they made plans to meet at Friar Laurence's
cell, there to be married by the priest in secret.—The
next morning their secret plans came through, and they were
united in holy matrimony by the man of God.

Dark and ugly events were going to happen. In an
inn of the city, Mercutio and Benvolio, Romeo's friends,
were passing the time of day when they were accosted by
Tybalt, Juliet's cousin who had sworn revenge on Romeo for
coming to the Capulet party. He talked roughly to Romeo's
friends and demanded to know the whereabouts of Romeo.
When Romeo finally appeared, everyone was amazed that he took insult after insult from Tybalt. Romeo, however, was so happy and didn't want to fight anyone, least of all blessed Juliet's cousin.

Mercutio, Romeo's friend, was disgusted that Romeo would not fight; so he decided to uphold Romeo's honor and fight for him. Out flashed the swords of Tybalt and Mercutio. Romeo tried to stop the fight by holding Mercutio back with his arm. This halted Mercutio's movements and Tybalt's sword plunged into Mercutio's body, killing him. Romeo, furious, said that sweet Juliet's beauty had made him a coward, but that his steel now could come forth. Tybalt and Romeo fought furiously, and the fight ended with the death of Tybalt.

All the fighting had aroused the citizens of the city who came running with the prince of Verona and the police. Romeo fled when he heard them coming.

When the prince of the city heard the story of what had happened, he stood looking at the dead bodies, and he condemned Romeo to exile. He was banished from Verona and was ordered never to step foot inside the city again.

While all the fighting was going on, Juliet was waiting and sighing for Romeo. She asked the black-browed night to make Romeo into little stars when he died, that he could make the face of heaven so fine. Her pretty
words were halted when she heard that Romeo had killed her cousin. She became angry at her lover, but her anger died on her lips as she thought the matter out. If Romeo hadn't killed Tybalt, why, Tybalt would have killed Romeo; and she preferred to have her beloved husband alive. When she heard of Romeo's banishment, her eyes filled with tears and she sent her nurse to Friar Laurence (in whose house Romeo was hiding), and sent word for Romeo to come quickly and bid her farewell before he went into exile.

Romeo and Juliet had their sweet, secret meeting with help from the friar and the nurse. Romeo wanted to face death rather than leave, but Juliet finally convinced him to go. Secret meetings and arrangements would be made, and the friar and his friends would soon ask the prince for a pardon. Sadly they said goodbye, and deep in Juliet's heart she had a strange fear.

As soon as Juliet lost sight of Romeo, her mother came to talk to her. She, not knowing of Juliet's secret marriage, told of the arrangements that were being made for Juliet's marriage to Count Paris. Juliet's tears flowed because her heart was too sad over the death of her cousin, and also because she was too young for marriage. The mother could not make Juliet behave, so the father came also. He became very angry about Juliet's being stubborn about a fine nobleman like Count Paris, and said that she
would marry the count if he had to drag her to the altar.

Pretending that she wanted to see Friar Laurence to confess her sin of disobedience, Juliet went hurriedly to the friar where she cried tears of despair. How, she wanted to know, could she marry this man, Paris, when she was already the wife of her beloved Romeo.

The friar hit upon a plan. It was a desperate plan, but the whole situation was desperate. He would give Juliet a strange potion which was very effective. Upon drinking this potion, she would take an appearance of one dead, though she would really be alive. Thinking her dead, her family would hold her funeral and then place her to lie in state in the ancient burial vault of the Capulets. To the burial vault Romeo would secretly come, and when the effects of the potion had worn off, he would take her with him into exile to his new home in the city of Mantua.

The plan seemed very ghostly, but Juliet gathered up all her courage and drank the potion. The plan worked as had been expected. In terrible sorrow, her 'funeral' was held, and the family placed the lovely Juliet in the burial vault. But at this point the friar's plan went wrong. The friar's word that Juliet was secretly alive did not reach Romeo. Instead he heard that she was dead. Wild with grief, he purchased some poison and hurried to the burial vault at Verona. Once on the burial grounds, he was told
to stop by Count Paris who had come to grieve at Juliet's tomb also. Desperately Romeo asked Paris to leave him alone; but Paris thought that Romeo had come to do some terrible thing to the graves of the Capulets, and the two men fought bitterly. Romeo left Paris dead in the gloom of the night, and then he hurried in to look at Juliet. Loving and tender were the words he spoke to the bride he thought dead; and he vowed that he too would rest everlastingly beside her. He made a toast to his love, and drank the poison.

His death came quickly, too soon to be stopped by Friar Laurence who had just then entered the burial vault; and while Friar Laurence stood there in his shock and sadness, Juliet awoke from her long sleep. She immediately asked for her Romeo, and to her horror discovered him truly to be there, but dead, though his lips were still warm. Her heart broken, she picked up Romeo's dagger, and looking around, she asked for the sheath in which to hold it. She said that she was the sheath as she stabbed herself.

It was not long before both the Capulets and the Montagues stood in the dim gloom of the burial vault. There they saw what their foolish hatred had accomplished, and over the dead bodies of their children, they made friends while the souls of their children flew upward to the stars of the sky.
CHAPTER XI

WILLIAM TELL--BACKGROUND, COMPOSER, AND STORY OF THE OPERA

I. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERA

The opera, William Tell, is taken from legend and history. It breathes life into a long ago hero of Switzerland who, in 1407, refused to pay homage to the Austrian governor of Switzerland, and roused his people to rally against the tyrant and demand their independence. A great German poet, Schiller, made a dramatic play of this tale, and the Italian composer, Rossini, created his musical masterpiece from the tale.

This opera, with its cry of revolution and freedom, is said to be a reflection of the signs of its times, and some people shrank from Rossini, as they would from a sort of operatic communist.

Rossini did other things in William Tell and other of his operas besides proclaiming freedom for the masses. He also proclaimed freedom of the opera from the singers who added all kinds of twists and trills of their own to the composer's work. Rossini, in his own way, put the point across that drama, as well as music, and acting as well as singing, were all parts of opera.

Heard regularly over radio and television is music
from the overture in *William Tell*. It has become so con-
nected with the adventures of The Lone Ranger that when the
last part of the overture is played, The Lone Ranger
immediately comes to mind.

There are many beautiful melodies in *William Tell*,
and the orchestral writing for this opera is the best
symphonic writing done by Rossini. A masterpiece, the
opera lasts six hours when presented without cuts.

II. THE MAN WHO WROTE THE OPERA

**Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)**

Gioacchino Rossini was born with many gifts. At
the age of ten he was the star of a boys' church choir,
and was so very handsome that he was called a boy angel.
When he grew up he was still very handsome and was adored
by the young women of his time. He had a beautiful voice
and sometimes put on concerts with his lovely wife, a
famous opera singer.

Certainly fate smiled on him in spite of his having
the reputation of being one of the laziest men in music
circles. This indolent genius produced no less than
thirty eight operas by his thirty seventh year, but
completely puzzled his adoring public by writing no more
operas in the remaining thirty nine years of life.

One often hears of composers and artists as those
poor geniuses who starved, froze, and wrote immortal music or painted great masterpieces in some dim, lone, forgotten attic, but such was not the case with Rossini. This composer was wealthy. He traveled, put on fabulous parties, displayed his handsome face, charming ease, and very clever wit in all the great cities of Europe. He was adored in Vienna, yet all this admiration in a foreign city didn't go to his head; he was sincerely and suitably humble when he praised that giant of musical giants, Beethoven; Bach he described as "a miracle of God."

When a very young boy, Rossini had not always given evidence of becoming a great person, and was, in fact, given up as impossible after he was twice apprenticed to a blacksmith, and to a butcher. He had little talent for these things, and ran wild until his liking for music was somewhat satisfied by a music teacher who taught him to play on the harpsichord. Finally he was able to take lessons in a conservatory, but had to quit in order to help support his parents.

After a long, interesting life, Rossini passed away. When the pope found out that he was dying, he sent a special representative to administer the last rites of the Catholic church.

Always kind-hearted, Rossini left his large fortune for the care of poor composers.
III. THE STORY OF THE OPERA

It was in the year 1407, and on the shores of lovely Lake Lucerne in north central Switzerland, William Tell's large log cabin was surrounded by pine trees and a little water-fall coming from the cool strength of the mountain-tops. Near the cabin, Tell's little boy Jemmy was practicing with a little bow and arrow while Hedwiga, his wife, was making baskets in front of the cabin.

There were other cabins around Lake Lucerne. Three of them were being decorated with rich, thick garlands of greens while villagers dressed in colorful costumes were making preparations for a wedding. In the midst of all the fun, some of the mountain men were talking seriously. Among the serious talkers were William Tell and Ruodi, a ruddy young fisherman. Ruodi was a little bitter about the fun he was seeing. He was talking about the Austrian dictator, Gesler, and how he governed Switzerland and wouldn't let the Swiss people have any freedom or rights of their own. He looked at the people getting ready for the wedding and said, "While they sing, country-men, Switzerland weeps for its liberty."

At length a figure with a snow-white beard appeared among the peasants. He was a wise old man, the mayor of the village, and loved by all the people. As he walked
through the village, the villagers asked for his blessing, and William Tell invited the mayor to his cabin. There they talked about the young men of the village who wanted to fight against the Austrians and drive them away.

One of the young men who wanted to fight the Austrians was Arnold, the mayor's son who was also talking with the mayor and William Tell.

"Before my son joins an army to fight the Austrians, I wish he would marry one of the village girls. I would like a grandson in my old age."

Arnold answered that he wanted to get married, but couldn't, because the girl he loved was Matilda, and she was the daughter of Gesler, the hated Austrian conqueror of Switzerland. Arnold was very sad about this state of affairs, and, of course, everyone agreed that if he were a patriotic Swiss ready to die for his country, he couldn't very well marry the daughter of the Austrian dictator he was to fight.

Arnold left his friends and his father and wandered into the thick forest where he wanted to think. Suddenly in the distance he heard the royal hunters' horns sounding. He knew that the Austrian dictator and his friends were out hunting, and perhaps Gesler's daughter, Matilda, was with them. Arnold hurried through the forest in the direction of the hunters, but was stopped by William Tell.
Tell told Arnold not to meet the Austrian hunting party, or he would be harming his country. He might be tempted to give up his fight for Switzerland for the love of a girl.

"Choose," said Tell, "Choose between the country you love and the girl you love."

Sadly and with great yearning for Matilda, Arnold chose the country instead of the girl, pledging his loyalty and life for the freedom of Switzerland.

Back in the village Arnold and William Tell met with other villagers who were all talking about how they wanted to drive the Austrians from Swiss soil. In the midst of their discussion a terrible cry was heard. The great figure of Leuthold, the mountain shepherd, came crashing through the timbers. He seemed to be very frightened and was carrying a great, bloody axe. The villagers became very quiet while Leuthold told his story. One of the Austrian soldiers had grabbed his only daughter and carried her off screaming. Leuthold, the father, had chased after him with an axe and, in an effort to free his daughter, had split the soldier's skull. Leuthold said that other Austrian soldiers were after him, and at that moment were chasing through the forest and would soon be in the village. He begged Ruodi, the fisherman, to row him across the lake.
Closer and closer through the forest the enraged voices of the Austrian soldiers were heard crying for the head of Leuthold; and the shepherd, sweaty, exhausted, wildly clutching his bloody axe, begged Ruodi to ferry him across the lake. Ruodi was not a brave fisherman and was afraid to risk his neck; therefore William Tell clasped the hand of Leuthold and vowed that he would ferry the frightened shepherd across the lake, vengeance of the Austrian soldiers or not.

The pair had almost reached the opposite shore in safety when the grim young Austrian captain entered and asked the people the name of the escaped man. Talking for his people the mayor faced the Austrian officers. He would not tell anything to the soldiers, so they grabbed the old man roughly and dragged him off as his people were driven back by the soldiers' spears.

Meanwhile far back in the forest, the Austrian soldiers had been distracted by the head-splitting episode, and Matilda had had a chance to slip off with Arnold.

The moon was shining through the pine trees and the lovely Matilda was brushing away her tears as she told Arnold how she would willingly give up all the splendors of Austrian court life to be a Swiss woodsman's wife. Arnold was beside himself with joy and told Matilda how very much he loved her; and would she but command it, he
would abandon his country and even his father for her.

Suddenly through the underbrush, heavy footsteps were heard approaching, and Matilda hastened back to join the Austrians while Arnold faced two angry Swiss patriots, William Tell and Walter Furst.

Bitterly the patriots reproached Arnold for wishing to betray his country for love of a foreign princess. But the next words they told the young man were infinitely terrible. He was informed that the kindly mayor of the village, Arnold's own father, had been tortured and executed by the foreign tyrant, Gesler.

With anguish that tore his soul, Arnold cried out, "Oh, my father, when death was closing in, why wasn't your son with you?"

All gentle thoughts of Matilda had melted before the one terrible glow of vengeance; and he was surrounded by Tell, Furst and a large group of Swiss patriots who had met to swear to fight as one against the tyrant, to ask the wrath of heaven on any traitor, and to fight for the dignity of Switzerland and the freedom of her people.

While other patriots departed to prepare for their rebellion, Arnold braved death to meet Matilda inside a ruined chapel near Gesler's palace at Altdorf. The meeting was sad as Matilda told Arnold that she had said goodbye to all hope, but that she would always have the
picture of her lover in her memories. Desperately Matilda pleaded with Arnold to flee the wrath of Gesler who would kill him; but Arnold was unable to go with Matilda because he had to remain faithful to the memory of his father, and the two lovers declared in words of deep emotion that in giving up their love they gave to the departed father more than life itself.

Several days passed in which the Swiss secretly planned their rebellion; but in the city square at Altdorf, the tyrant, Gesler, was pointing to a large pole with his hat on it. He then demanded that the Swiss file in front of his hat and bow to it as a gesture of their humility and allegiance to the Austrian governor. There was, however, one man in Switzerland who would not obey the degrading order. William Tell refused to do homage to a hat.

The tyrant further threatened Tell, and the soldier, Rudolph, recognized the woodsman as the man who helped Leuthold escape. When the soldiers dragged away William Tell, he begged his little son, Jemmy, to leave him. Little Jemmy tried to be brave, however, and told the soldiers that he would stay with his father, and that he would die if necessary.

Meanwhile the angry Gesler saw a chance for pleasurable revenge much suited to his cruel nature. He demanded that an apple be placed upon Jemmy's (Tell's son's) head.
Then Tell was placed at a tremendous distance and commanded to shoot, with his bow and arrow, the apple off of his son's head. If the arrow pierced the apple, both Tell and his child would go free; if Tell killed his child with the arrow, he too would die. The tyrant was almost certain that at this great distance the marksman would kill his child.

The proud woodsman weakened and pleaded for mercy for his little son. For himself he laughed in the face of death and torture, but for his son he crawled at Gesler's feet in humility. The son, Jemmy, however, was very brave for a little boy, and he placed his father's hand upon his breast and begged his father to feel how calm was his heart.

"I am still William Tell," declared the woodsman, finding his courage from his little son. He took the great sharp arrow and his powerful bow. Jemmy was placed at a great distance, an apple upon his head. Jemmy stood perfectly still; his father taking careful aim. He was calmer and steadier than he had ever been in his life. The arrow cut the air with brilliant speed and with a ripping slash bore into the apple balanced on the boy's head.

A tremendous cry of joy resounded from the crowd of enslaved Swiss. Tears were streaming from William Tell's
eyes after his triumphant display of marksmanship. Jemmy, embracing his father and unfastening his cloak, caused a second arrow, hidden in his father's cloak, to fall to the ground. The tyrant demanded to know the meaning of the second arrow, and Tell admitted that had the first arrow pierced Jemmy instead of the apple, the second arrow would have been reserved for Gesler himself.

The dictator became wild with rage, and immediately demanded that William Tell and his son both be thrown into the dungeon; however, Gesler's daughter, Matilda, threw her arms around Jemmy and begged her father to spare the child. Hardly able to go against his daughter's opinion, and general public opinion this far, Gesler spared the child but had Tell taken to the fortress of Kussnach, on the lake. Here he was thrown into the dungeon containing serpents. As he was taken away, the great chains weighing him down and clanking away the echo of freedom, Tell shouted out his hatred for tyranny and Gesler, as the living example of tyranny.

The curtain of night drew itself over Switzerland. Into the house of his late father Arnold entered. In visiting his old home, Arnold thought of his slain father and sought courage to help avenge the death of his father and the enslavement of his countrymen.

Suddenly cries of "vengeance! vengeance!!" were
heard, and Arnold saw groups of strong, angry mountain men and villagers. They had heard of the imprisonment of William Tell and had resolved to rebel. Arnold seemed to have the role of one of their leaders and he spoke eloquently to the people, calling upon them to follow him to Altdorf to rescue William Tell.

Meanwhile a storm raged over Lake Lucerne. In a sturdy cottage on its shores, a woman sobbed. Hedwiga was lamenting the loss of both son and husband when she heard the cry of "mother." Jemmy, escorted by Matilda, broke into the cottage and rushed into his mother's arms.

Matilda returned the son to the mother. "He is a son worthy of you," she whispered haltingly.

Mrs. Tell, happy for her son, but worried about her husband, asked about her husband's fate. She wondered if the patriots would be able to rescue Tell from the Altdorf dungeon, and fell on her knees in thanksgiving when she learned that her husband had been rescued from the dungeon and was fleeing from the Austrians across the lake.

His people had rescued Tell, but the flight to freedom was dangerous. A tremendous storm tossed and howled on the lake and Tell was having a rough time on the water. Disaster would have fallen on his yet spared life had not Tell been as fine a boatman as he was a marksman. He handled the helm with rare skill.
All the villagers assembled to help Tell, and the escapee, after sailing across the lake, was finally joined by his rejoicing wife and son. The festivity was short-lived, however, because Gesler and his soldiers appeared on the rocks above the shore. Quickly the Swiss took cover and the skirmishing began. Once again a champion marksman took perfect aim and an arrow sprang from William Tell's bow hitting its target, the tyrant, Gesler.

The Austrian soldiers, seeing their leader dead, fled, and the Swiss, after their first joyful shock gave thanks to the Lord for their deliverance.

Arnold finally returned with the other Swiss patriots who had taken the castle at Altdorf. The Austrian flag, which had flown above the castle was presented to William Tell.

The storm had passed, and the most beautiful mountains in the world gleamed and glistened in glory. Lake Lucerne reflected the loveliness surrounding her like a jewel; and the land beat with the new found heart of freedom.
CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

This thesis has been written in an attempt to present a view into the world of opera to the junior high school student. Such a presentation would most likely take place in the general music classes of the public schools where music appreciation is usually a required subject.

The problems of "getting it across" are mainly two-fold: (1) Make it interesting. (2) Make it singable for the junior-high voices. A sincere attempt was made in this thesis to uphold these two criteria of presentation by carefully taking into consideration the laryngeal and the aesthetic factors.

In making the opera interesting, one of the most appealing elements would be the story. By no means would it be prudent to present the recorded operas, mostly in foreign languages, first. The actual stories of the operas give a toehold into the embryonic aesthetic consciousness. Opera stories are interesting, dramatic, and colorful. They are full of action and suspense. Presented simply, just as a story, with no references to this or that aria or act, the plain story of the opera has high dramatic appeal without having to fence with preconceived prejudices.
After presentation of the story, songs can be taught from a given opera. Arranged simply with relatively easy accompaniments, and within prescribed singing ranges, as in this thesis, these songs are of no greater difficulty than many of the songs found in junior high school singing textbooks; and they give a first-hand view or feeling for some of the arias and choruses of great operas.

In doing research for this thesis, background of the operas, lives of the composers of the operas, and the scores and librettos of the operas were all studied with a view to handling the ultimate aesthetic and laryngeal problems involved. After the background of study, the stories as well as the background of the opera, and facts about the composer, were written in palatable form for the junior high school student. The scores of the operas were studied in an attempt to find relatively simple and appealing music that could be digestible for the young adolescent. The accompaniments were simplified, and each selection transposed to fit the proper range.

That the material of this thesis will be of some use in bringing about improvement of young taste, and instilling new concepts, as well as joy in the participation of making music, is the hope of the writer.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Books


2. Opera Scores


APPENDIX

OPERATIC SONGS
FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL VOICES

Arranged by

Margaret L\'Eveque
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## OPERATIC SONGS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opera</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDA</td>
<td>Giuseppe Verdi</td>
<td>Guard the Nile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heavenly Aida</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARMEN</td>
<td>Georges Bizet</td>
<td>Habanera</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toreador Song</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANSEL AND GRETEL</td>
<td>Engelbert Humperdinck</td>
<td>Dance Song</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOHENGRIN</td>
<td>Richard Wagner</td>
<td>Here Is a Knight</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wedding March</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADAME BUTTERFLY</td>
<td>Giacomo Puccini</td>
<td>One Fine Day</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suzuki's Prayer</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE</td>
<td>Christoph W. Gluck</td>
<td>She Is Gone and Gone Forever</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The God of Love Has Prevailed</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAGLIACCI</td>
<td>Ruggiero Leoncavallo</td>
<td>Bird Song</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On with Your Costume</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORGY AND BESS</td>
<td>George Gershwin</td>
<td>I Got Plenty O' Nuttin</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summertime</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMEO AND JULIET</td>
<td>Charles Gounod</td>
<td>Arietta</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Capulet's Ball</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WILLIAM TELL--Gioacchino Rossini

Children of Hardy Nature ................................ 42
William Tell Overture ..................................... 44
Guard The Nile
(from Aida)
Giuseppe Verdi

Majestically

Guard The Nile's remotest places from the bold invading horde; drive the foe-man from her beaches give them destruction for their reward.
Heavenly Aida
(from Aida)

Giuseppe Verdi

Andantino

Heavenly Aida
fair as the dawn

as the starlight
touching a flower

Queen of my heart, oh, reign there
forever, filling with beauty my darkest hour.

Could we return to the land that bore you where gentle
breezes come drifting down I would en-
Thou o'er me might the sunset light to be your crown ah:

Heavenly:

I da, fair as the dawning, soft as the starlight

Touching a flower, queen of my heart, on

Reign there forever filling with beauty—my darkest hour.
For Girls

Habanera
(from Carmen)

Allegretto

Georges Bizet

Gypsy

Love is a wild wild bird That none can ever hope To tame Not a bird That a fool can capture, he plays a very clever game Some put-
Sue him with threats and sorrow and some pret--a smoother plan, some may like to hear rhymes and verses, Give me a strong and silent man. Oh, love is just a gypsy boy, who always was and ever will be
free so if you

Turn from me, I'll

love - you, but

if I do be - ware of

me - 

so if you

go from me if

you don't want my love I'll

love you

but if I

love you, if I

love you, be - ware - of me!
Toreador Song

(In a bragging manner)

From Carmen

Georges Bizet

**For Boys**

"Toreador, be on your guard, Toreador"

"Dark eyes that flash as brightly as the sun"

"Tell that you are the one, and when you win the fight"

"Toreador, you'll find your heart's delight."

---

7
To—re-a—dor, be on your guard, To—re-a—dor—

dark eyes that flash as brightly as the sun

Tell that you are the one— and when you win the fight

To—re-a—dor— you'll—find your heart's del—ight!
Allegretto con moto

Dance Song
(From Hansel and Gretel)

Engelbert Humperdinck

Brother come and dance with me, both my hands I offer thee
Right foot first, left foot Then around and back again
I would dance but don't know how when to jump or when to bow,
Show me what I ought to do, so that I may dance like you.

9
Gretel

with your foot you
Tap Tap Tap,
with your hand you
clap clap clap,

right foot first,
left foot then,
round about and back again!

Hansel

with your foot you
Tap Tap Tap,
with your hand you
clap clap clap,

right foot first,
left foot then,
round and back a-
again!
Lullaby
(from Hansel and Gretel)
Engelbert Humperdinck

Gently

Hansel
when at night I go to sleep

Gretel
when at night I go to sleep

Fourteen angels watch do-keep,
Two my head are guarding,

Two my feet are guid-ing,
Two are on my right hand

11
Here Is a Knight
(From Lohengrin)

Adagio

March on! March on! To glory's dawn!

Here is a Knight of strength and splendor—may—vel! no man may with—
Stand. Here is a knight, a true defender, showing his valor in our land! Here is a knight of beauty and splendor who sheds a glory in our land!
Con Moto Moderato

Wedding March
- from Lohengrin -

Richard Wagner

Long may you live

Love

The blessings of

Heaven abound

Come valiant knight

Come lovely maid

Here may the music - of
love every sound! Boldest of heroes

lead in your bride! fairest of maidens-

stay by his side! Now that the sounds of

mirth have abated This is the hour so
fondly awaited — Here in this home of

love's true delight may they see love's

beautiful — light — long may you live!

long may you live! long may the blessings of
heaven abound. come valiant Knight

come lovely maid, here may the music of love — ever sound,

The music of love!
For Girls

One Fine Day
(from Madame Butterfly)  Giacomo Puccini

Andante

One — fine day we'll
notice a
thread — of smoke arising on
the
sea — in the far horizon and
then — the ship appearing

Then the trim white vessel

19
Glides into the harbour

Cannon, see you? Now he is coming!

I do not go to meet him; not I! I stay up on the brow of the hill and hide. There a bit to
Tease him— and a bit so as not to die—at our first meeting and then a little Troubled, he will call; he will call—"Dear baby wife of mine dear little orange blossom!"

The names he used to call me—when he came here—
Suzuki's Prayer
(from Madame Butterfly)

Giacomo Puccini

Andante Calmo

My head is Throbbing
She Is Gone and Gone Forever
(From Orpheus and Eurydice)  Christoph W. Gluck

Andante con Moto

She is gone and gone forever — All my joy has flown away — Without her would be bitter — She is gone forever and my heart is sad today. She is gone forever and my heart is sad today.
day she is gone and gone for-ever — all my
r

love has flown a-way life — with-

out her would be — bitter — She is gone for-ever and my heart is sad To-

day She is gone for-ever and my heart is sad To-

The God of Love Has Prevailed
(From Orpheus and Eurydice)

Allegro leggiero

Christoph W. Gluck

love has prevailed, and is triumphant; let us—

all his altar adorn; the God of

love has prevailed, and is triumphant; let us—
all his altar adorn; for mercy and freedom won and imparted gladly we

offet a life newborn gladly we

offet a life newborn
**Bird Song**  
(From Pagliacci)  
Ruggiero Leoncavallo

Hear Them...

call and cry...

sail...ing and glid...

ing... off... on The... wing...
Tine up

swift as an arrow in

flight

They sail

up to the clouds

where the sun is riding
Adagio (very sadly)

On With Your Costume
(from Pagliacci)

Ruggiero Leoncavallo

On with your costume and the grease paint and

powder —
The crowd will pay you To make them laugh once

more
when Harlequin and Columbine be-

—Try you Laugh then, Pagliacco and Then The crowd will
you must amuse them with sobbing and sighing,

and show them all how the artist plays his part. ah!

laugh then, pagliaccio, for the love that is dying,

laugh through the pain that is destroying your heart.
I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'

Moderato cor. ploita From Porgy and Bess George Gershwin

oh I got plenty o' nut-Tin' An nut-Tin's plenty - fo me. I got no car got no mule. I
got no mis-er-y De folks wid plenty o' plenty — got a lock on de door. —

33
To rob 'em while dey's out a-makin' move, — what
I got no lock on de door, dat's no way to
be.
Dey kin steal de rug from de floor, — dat's o-koh wid
me, cause de things dat I prize like de stars in de
skies, all for free. — oh
I got plenty o' nut-tin', — an' nut-tin's plenty to me.

I got my gal, got my song, got hab-ben de whole day long.

No use complainin', got my gal, — got my gal.

I saw — got my song.
Moderato (lullaby)  
(From Porgy and Bess)  
George Gershwin

Summer Time
an the livin is

Easy
Fish are jumpin-
an the cotton is high-

Oh yo' daddy's rich
an yo ma is good look-in-
so

Hush little baby
don' yo cry.

one of these
mornin's you goin' to rise up sing-in' Then you'll
spread yo' wings an' you'll take the sky --- but till that
mornin' There's a nothin' can harm you --- with
Daddy-- an' Mammy stand-in' by.
For Girls

Tempo di Valse

(from Romeo and Juliet) Charles Gounod

Arietta

In sweet joy of my dream I will dance and feel like a Queen while the stars high up in the sky show the love light moon bright young girl's delight of
a maiden's young heart I will sing

while music of spring plays the song

The sweet song we all know: the sweet song

of tender love
For Boys

The Capulet's Ball
(lively)
(from Romeo and Juliet) Charles Gounod

[Music notation]

ball pretty ladies! what pretty girl will be so

happy To be seen with me will be so

happy——To be seen——with——me

40
Happy to be seen with me will be so

Pretty girl, pretty girl I will

So hall pretty men
as our native mountains, Freedom and Toil, The fountains where
strength shall never fail and our strong arrows shall prevail.

children of hardy Nature, whenever the foe advances;

The without swords or lances our arrows shall prevail.
Allegretto

(Adopted as a School Pep Song) Giacchino Rossini

For the school that is best we will pass this test for the school that is right we will fight fight fight for our school of such fame we will win this game come along while we sing this song it is time for the chime of our hearts to beat we will win this game and
NOT re-treat we will show all who See that our vic-to-ry was fought with care and

on the square for the school that is best we will pass this test for the

school that is right we will fight fight fight for our school of such fame we will

win this game come along while we sing this song