

### 6i3.Boston University Humanities Foundation (2) Application

“For the first time in the history of opera an Italian grand opera with an American theme for the subject of its libretto had its initial production last night, and in the Metropolitan Opera House. The opera was Mr. Giacomo Puccini’s *The Girl of the Golden West (La Fanciulla del West)*, its libretto, in three acts, based on Mr. David Belasco’s well known play of the same name.”

*New York Herald*, December 11, 1910

“On opening night, while I was helping Caruso up the ladder, his spurs caught in my nightdress and slashed long tears in it. The opera threatened to become more realistic than Mr. Belasco and Mr. Puccini had planned to have it!”

Emmy Destinn, the first Minnie, in *The New York Times*, December 12, 1910

#### A. Project Description

*Fanciulla 100* is the first phase of a new larger scale initiative entitled Opera Research Online, based at Boston University. This phase has two parts: first, the creation of an interactive interdisciplinary website focusing on Giacomo Puccini’s “American” opera *The Girl of the Golden West (La Fanciulla del West)*, based on the play 3. by American playwright David Belasco. Second, an exhibition of related materials from Boston University’s Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center and a symposium of invited participants will be held at Boston University. This event will be videotaped and made available on the website.

The development of this site is timed to coincide with the centennial of the opera’s premiere (the first world premiere of New York’s Metropolitan Opera, with Enrico Caruso singing and Arturo Toscanini conducting) in December 1910, but will continue indefinitely as a resource intended to increase and educate the audiences for opera. The website will inform and stimulate dialogue among Boston University scholars, educators, students, as well as the public at large, with previously unknown archival material, interactive features, a virtual museum, iconography, video interviews, video streaming, links to other sites, and various means of exploring the social and humanistic themes inherent in the opera. Later phases of Opera Research Online (not included in this proposal) will provide in-depth focus on other single operas by various composers (such as Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro*, which would lead to discussions of societal and class issues, and Verdi’s *Otello*, which would open up issues of race and racism). There will also be companion Facebook and Twitter sites, which are cost-free. In addition, the web content can ultimately be made portable to different media, such as DVDs, YouTube, or any new platforms that arise.

The current trial site, set up using private funds with only some of the links active, can be seen at <http://www.fanciulla100.org/demo/test.html>.

#### B. Content and creative approach

Opera is by nature interdisciplinary, involving several of the humanities: music, theatre, history, poetry, often dance, and visual arts. Puccini’s opera *The Girl of the Golden West (La Fanciulla del West)*, set in the multicultural society of the California Gold Rush in the 1840s, simultaneously challenges and propagates stereotypes that have become part of the American myth of the cowboy and the West. The popular image of the

strong, silent, white cowboy, quick on the trigger, riding off into the sunset with his obedient female companion, is overturned by operatic characters who refrain from killing (in the end), express emotion, and value and respect an independent white woman who knows how to shoot and comes to the rescue of her Latino man. They then ride off into the *sunrise*.

The creative team for this project is very fortunate to have strong connections with descendants of the creators of *The Girl of the Golden West*: Simonetta Puccini (granddaughter of the composer), Walfredo Toscanini (grandson of orchestral conductor Arturo Toscanini, who led orchestra for the opera's premiere), and Cheryl Green (a Belasco descendant). These advisors, as well as the archivists at the Metropolitan Opera and the Lehman family archive, have been very generous in supplying unique archival material for dissemination on the site. For example, in our Virtual Museum, we reproduce part of David Belasco's typescript for his stage play, which includes many directorial cues not published with the drama. This typescript, autographed by the author and given to Arturo Toscanini in 1910, is from the Toscanini family collection and has never before been made public. The Metropolitan Opera has also been extremely generous in allowing us access to their entire press book of clippings from the 1910 premiere: more than 60 pages of hard-to-find materials that will now be available to all.

There is no direct competitor for this site. Most opera companies now have individual sites that deal with their own productions and usually contain some interactive educational features. In the United States, the Aria Database gives information on operatic arias, which is useful to performers, but does not serve as a resource for in-depth scholarship. Opera Glass, based at Stanford University, provides information on libretti, source texts, plot synopses, performance histories, creators of roles, and discographies for most standard operas, but also does not allow for in-depth scholarship or discussion of one particular opera and the themes it raises. The most useful current site for scholars of *The Girl of the Golden West* is that of the Centro Studi Giacomo Puccini (CSGP), based in Lucca, Italy. It supplies scholarly information in Italian and English about the center's conferences, presentations and publications, a bibliography of Puccini studies (incomplete), PDF files of scores, set designs and material from the Ricordi Archive. Some of this material is quite useful for opera scholars, but the site covers all of Puccini's works and does not provide the quantity of detailed material that could be made available on *The Girl of the Golden West*, nor does it include any special interactive features or attempt to explore discussion topics raised by the work.

### **C. Format**

In 2000, Boston University Assistant Professor Deborah Burton co-organized an interdisciplinary, international conference on Puccini's opera *Tosca* in Rome, which later became the book *Tosca's Prism* (Northeastern University Press, 2004). After this experience, she realized the limited nature of organizing a traditional conference, the influence of which often wanes precipitously after the event is over, and whose participants are restricted to whoever can be physically present at a certain time and location. In an effort to increase the staying power and influence of important musicological and socially contextual research, she began using the Internet as a launching pad for podcasts of the "Opera and Society" conference she organized at Boston University in 2005 ([www.operaandsociety.org](http://www.operaandsociety.org)) and for the New England Conference of Music Theorists ([www.necmt.org](http://www.necmt.org)), for which she served as president from 2007 to 2009. The scholarly materials presented at those conferences have had a much broader and longer-lasting effect thanks to the electronic medium in which they have been presented. She has been determined to utilize this new medium to its full advantage in future projects, and expand the range of users even further.

The Internet is the ideal platform for studying opera, since it can display text, images, video and sound – all elements of the artform. A website can serve as a repository for archival material, be an interactive tool for learning, provide recordings interviews and events, and more, while gathering it all in one easy-to-access location. Further, it can link easily to other sites that can give the interested user almost unlimited access to information, and opportunities to experience this opera or other cultural events; however, the main advantage of the Internet is that it is available to all, via private and public access points, no matter one's location or social standing.

This website can accomplish much more than a traditional conference, both in breadth of audience reach and in content: rare documents from various parts of the world can be examined and re-examined, videos can be watched and music heard at the time and place the viewer prefers, the information is available indefinitely, and participation is not limited by physical presence.

The exhibition held at Boston University would allow the university and local communities to have a close look at original documents from the Gotlieb Center's collection and other archives. The symposium would bring together specialists from the Boston area, as well as descendants of the opera's creators. A provisional list of invitees would include descendants Simonetta Puccini, Walfredo Toscanini, and Cheryl Green, and scholars Deborah Burton (BU, Music), Nina Silber (BU, History), Harvey Sachs (Curtis Institute, Opera studies). Boston University has a flourishing Opera Institute and a renowned vocal department in its College of Fine Arts, and this exhibition and symposium would be of interest to those singers and to other students and faculty, as well as its usefulness as an adjunct to courses on opera and music. An exhibition and symposium at Boston University would also be physically accessible to the nearby institutions of Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the New England Conservatory of Music, Northeastern University, Tufts University, Boston College, Wellesley College, and the University of Massachusetts – all major centers of learning that have strong music and humanities departments. Once the event has been videotaped and uploaded onto the website, it will be accessible to all.

#### **D. Rights and Permissions**

Permissions to reprint two scholarly articles, two autograph manuscript pages of music (from the Lehman Collection's copy of Puccini's draft of the opera), articles and images from *The New York Times*, the complete Metropolitan press book of clippings from the 1910 premiere, and facsimiles of the covers of Native American songbooks owned by Puccini have already been received. Remaining is permission from Simonetta Puccini to reproduce a manuscript page from the collection of the Museo Puccini at Torre del Lago, Italy, but since Dr. Puccini has been involved in this project from the beginning, no problems in that regard are anticipated. Permissions will also be needed from the Gotlieb Archive at Boston University, Cornell University Library, various public-access websites, and private archives for research material and images, and from the Metropolitan Opera for permission to stream video of their production of the opera.

The usual costs for reproducing images average \$35 an image, according to the research recently completed. Approximately twenty images and documents from various repositories are expected to be used, so the likely cost is \$700.

#### **E. Media staff**

- **Malcolm Johnstone** - Mr. Johnstone is the founder of Learning Objects, LLC, an award-winning developer of interactive media for online learning. His company provides students with learning experiences that target different learning styles, while focusing on specific learning objectives. Through simulations and interactive

exercises, their sites promote active learning by providing students with media that is both educationally effective and engaging. As the Executive Producer, Mr. Johnstone is responsible for working with clients to develop interactive media that is fun and engaging, while meeting learning objectives. He is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire, Bachelor of Science Business Administration. He will be the head of the media staff, and will direct Jin Chyung in her web design.

- Jin Chyung - Ms. Chyung is the Art Director and is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and obtained her Masters degree at Harvard University's Technology in Education program. During the past five years Jin has worked on hundreds of interactive projects at Learning Objects and developed the media that was used in two award-winning courses. She will continue to do most of the web designing.

## **F. Progress**

In May 2009, Deborah Burton began to develop ideas for this project and discussed them with a variety of humanities scholars, performers and other musical contacts: a videographer recommended by Placido Domingo was approached (Jose Luis R. Cortes, A.D.O. Entertainment, Inc., 155 W. 70th. Street #5F, New York, NY 10023). The next month, Prof. Burton visited Simonetta Puccini in Italy, received some photocopies of archival material and recorded a video interview of her for the website. In September 2009, Prof. Burton discussed the project at length with Malcolm Johnstone of LearnObject and signed an agreement to set up a trial website, for which \$1000 was paid from her own funds. Since that time, communication between Prof. Burton and Mr. Johnstone has been almost daily by email; she has been supplying him with raw data and archival material as it becomes available.

During the autumn of 2009, contact with performers who have participated in important stagings of *The Girl of the Golden West* was made. Baritone Sherrill Milnes made a taped interview on February 5, 2010, while tenor Placido Domingo's and Walfredo Toscanini's interviews are tentatively scheduled for March 2010. A response from conductor James Levine, who has been ill, is pending.

In December, permission from the Lehman family collection to reproduce two pages of their autograph score of the opera on our website was received, and the archivist for the Metropolitan Opera, Robert Tuggle, sent three DVDs containing the entire press book for the 1910 premiere of the opera.

## **G. Fundraising plan and budget**

- Current funds: \$4,000 in donations from private donors (Deborah Burton, Walfredo Toscanini, anonymous), with an additional \$1,000 expected from private donors.
- A grant application has been submitted for a more extensive version of this project to the NEH "America's Media Makers." If accepted, the project would also include outreach development to secondary schools and other educational institutions, as well as cover the costs specified below. If that grant proposal is accepted, all funds received from the Humanities Foundation would be returned.

**Budget:**

item	object codes	description	cost	Other funds	HF	TOTAL
<u>travel for symposium</u>		trip to Boston for symposium:				
	0934	Simonetta Puccini: Milan-Boston-Milan	Alitalia \$1786	\$0	\$1786	<b>\$1786</b>
	0918	Walfredo Toscanini: NY-Boston-NY	Amtrak Acela \$124	\$0	\$202	<b>\$202</b>
	0934	Cheryl Green: London-Boston-London	British Airways: £1135 (US\$1833)	\$0	\$1833	<b>\$1833</b>
	0918	Harvey Sachs: NY-Boston-NY	Amtrak Acela \$124	\$0	\$202	<b>\$202</b>
<u>hotel for symposium</u>	0918	four guests, 1 night	Hotel Commonwealth, 500 Commonwealth Ave., Boston 02215: \$199 x 4 = \$796	\$0	\$796	<b>\$796</b>
<u>per diem for symposium</u>	0918	2-day per diems for four guests	\$70 x 2 x 4 = \$560	\$0	\$560	<b>\$560</b>
<u>exhibition costs</u>	0929	white foam board, paint, pins, mounting adhesive, paper for labels clear polyester stripping decorative marbled paper	\$500	\$0	\$500	<b>\$500</b>
<u>videotaping honoraria</u>	0929	\$1000 honoraria to five interviewees (Simonetta Puccini, Sherrill Milnes, Placido Domingo, James Levine, Walfredo Toscanini)	\$1000 x 5 = \$5000	\$5000	\$0	<b>\$5000</b>
videotaping service	0915	camera crew recommended by Placido Domingo: Jose Luis R. Cortes, A.D.O. ENTERTAINMENT, INC., 155 W. 70th. Street #5F, New York, NY 10023; <a href="http://www.jlcortesphoto.com">www.jlcortesphoto.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one camera up to 4 hours - \$450</li> <li>• second camera \$150</li> <li>• editing 2 hours @ \$50/hour</li> <li>• lights, tapes and microphones included</li> </ul> = \$700/video x 5 videos = \$3500	\$0	\$3500	<b>\$3500</b>
<u>website</u>	0915	Learning Objects, LLC,	\$25,000	\$0	\$10,000	<b>\$10,000</b>

<u>development and design</u>		233 Prairie Street, Concord, MA 01742				
<u>website hosting</u>	0915	GoDaddy.com for one year 9/1/10-8/31/11	12mos@ \$12/mo = \$144	\$0	\$144	<b>\$144</b>
<u>permissions</u>	929	various sources including Chicago University Press, Met Archives, Museo Puccini Torre del Lago (IT), Yale University Beinecke Library, websites		\$0	\$700	<b>\$700</b>
<u>TOTAL</u>				\$5,000	\$20,223	<b>\$25,223</b>

## H. List of collections of materials to be used by the project

### *Resources for the website*

Users will be free to navigate among various webpages, beginning from <http://www.fanciulla100.org/demo/test.html>: information about the opera's premiere, the virtual museum, video interviews, a timeline, the text of the Belasco play, a "read more" section, a blog, streaming video, links and others. The contents of each webpage are described below.

- The 1910 premiere: articles and iconography from the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and dozens of other, often rare periodicals of the time, including many images from the press book of the Metropolitan Opera's Archive.
- Virtual museum: contains images of autograph musical sketches, Belasco's typescript for his stage play, autographed by the author and given to Arturo Toscanini in 1910, the first edition of the libretto, historic photos of Puccini, Caruso, Toscanini, Belasco and others, historical posters for the opera, photos of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (which Puccini saw in Italy), images of Puccini's copies of two Native American songbooks (on which he based some of his musical material), and more.
- Video interviews: original interviews with Simonetta Puccini (the composer's granddaughter, already posted), Walfredo Toscanini, Sherrill Milnes, Metropolitan Opera archivist Robert Tuggle, and possibly tenor Placido Domingo and Metropolitan Opera conductor James Levine.
- Timeline: will show key events such as Puccini's birth, the premiere dates for his other operas, writing of the Belasco play, the Metropolitan Opera premiere, the 100th anniversary.
- Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West*: both Belasco's original play and the novelization he created from it will be made available.
- Did you know...: this section would contain an interactive drag and drop quiz and interesting sidebars of related information.
- Read more: this sections contains excerpts of new and previously published material, with links to the complete source. The contributions include:

- new English translations of descriptions of the United States and New York by two of Puccini's librettists. Ferdinando Fontana, who wrote the libretti for Puccini's first two operas *Le villi* and *Edgar*, wrote *New York* in 1884 with Dario Papa, and one of the two librettists for *La bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*, Giuseppe Giacosa, penned *Impressions of America (Impressioni d'America)* in 1899.
- a new essay by Carolyn Guzski, a scholar specializing in opera in the musical scene in the New York City of the early 20th Century, and professor at Buffalo State University.
- two published essays by Allan Atlas, professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center and author of many articles on Puccini and *La Fanciulla del West*: "Belasco and Puccini: 'Old Dog Tray' and the Zuni Indians," *Musical Quarterly* 75/3 (Fall 1991): 362-397 (reprinted with permission) and "Lontanotornare-redenzione": Verbal leitmotives and Their Musical Resonance in Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*," *Studi musicali* 21/2 (1992): 359-98 (reprinted with permission.)
- an essay by Linda Fairtile, "Real Americans Mean Much More: Race, Ethnicity, and Authenticity in *The Girl of the Golden West* and *La fanciulla del West*," to be published in *Studi Pucciniani*, IV, forthcoming.
- a new essay on *La fanciulla del West* by Cori Ellison, Dramaturge of the New York City Opera and instructor at the Juilliard School.
- excerpts from Annie J. Randall and Rosalind Gray Davis, *Puccini and the Girl: History and Reception of "The Girl of the Golden West"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- a new essay by Annie J. Randall, co-author of the above and professor of musicology at Bucknell University
- an excerpt on Toscanini by Harvey Sachs, currently on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and author of standard biographies of Arturo Toscanini (Lippincott, 1978) and *Reflections on Toscanini*; Grove Weidenfeld, 1991).
- a new essay on the music of *La fanciulla del West* by Deborah Burton, assistant professor of music at Boston University, current Junior Fellow of the Boston University Humanities Foundation, and author of the forthcoming *Recondite Harmony: The Music of Puccini*, co-editor of *Tosca's Prism* (Northeastern University Press, 2004) and "The Real Scarpia: historical sources for *Tosca*" (*Opera Quarterly*, 1994), and many other articles and program notes on Puccini.
- a new essay by Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, author of *Puccini: a biography* (Northeastern University Press, 2002), *Leonard Warren, American baritone* (Amadeus Press, 2000), *Rosa Ponselle: American diva* (Northeastern University Press, 1997), *Verdi: a biography* (Oxford University Press, 1993), *Opera: grand and not so* (W. Morrow, 1966), and *The many lives of Otto Kahn* (Macmillan Co., 1963).
- an essay by Cheryl Green, descendent of playwright David Belasco and author of scholarly works on him.

- streaming video: permission from the Metropolitan Opera to stream Act II of *La fanciulla del West* from their video production of 1992 is anticipated. If that is not forthcoming, short clips will be used instead. Video from Cecil B. DeMille's silent movie adaptation of the play from 1915 would enhance this project.

- links: clickable links to sites dedicated to Puccini, Belasco, Toscanini, American History, the Gold Rush, Caruso, as well as sites belonging to libraries, collections, catalogues, publishers, Google Books, etc.

***Resources for the Exhibition from the Boston University Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center***

- From the Sarah Caldwell Collection: Her production files (annotated scores, set designs, translation notes, etc.) for a production she mounted with the Opera Company of Boston.

- From the Tito Gobbi Collection: His contract to perform in a production at Teatro della Scala in 1956, and two photos of Gobbi as Jack Rance.

- From the Frederick Jagel Collection: Photos of Jagel as Dick Johnson, and Jagel's signed score, dated ca. 1911.

- From the Dorothy Kirsten Collection: Almost 200 photographs of Kirsten in various productions, mostly from the 1960s; a bullet shell casing used as a prop in one production; a reproduction poster of the premiere

- From the Rise Stevens Collection: A photo from her appearance in the 1962 MGM film adaptation of the opera.



## I. Documentation

### *Letter of Commitment from Web Team:*

#### • Malcolm Johnstone

 <b>learning objects</b>		<b>Learning Objects LLC</b> <b>233 Prairie Street</b> <b>Concord, MA 01742</b> <b>978-287-4816</b> <b><a href="http://www.learnobject.com">www.learnobject.com</a></b>
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03 January 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that Learning Objects, LLC, will be developing the media for the project *Fanciulla 100*. I will act as head of the media team, and Learning Objects, LLC, will be remunerated \$10,000, as specified in the grant proposal. Jin Chyung will act as web designer for the media team.

Learning Objects, LLC has the proven expertise to develop the interactive media and web site for the Fanciulla project. We have been developing rich-media applications for colleges and universities for the past 5 years. We have won awards from the United States Distance Learning Association for the media we developed for courses at Boston University. Plus, last year we won the WCET award for the [www.accesstolearningproject.org](http://www.accesstolearningproject.org) web site and companion CD-ROM.

We are enthusiastic about the prospect of working on the *Fanciulla 100* project.

Sincerely yours,



Malcolm Johnstone  
 President/Executive Producer  
 Learning Objects, LLC

*Email from Ryan Hendrickson, Gotlieb Archival Center, 12/24/09 detailing the costs of exhibition:*

Dear Deborah,

Perry Barton, our Exhibitions Coordinator, came up with an estimate of \$500.00 total for supplies for a two-case exhibition.

That includes:

White foam board from Charrette, for two backing panels

Carpenter's glue, 16 oz

Colored foam board for backing panels, from Biefang

Paint, 2 gallons worth

Paint supplies (rollers, painter's tape, trays, etc.)

Pins, one box of 100

Papermat board for mounting labels, from Bainbridge

Mounting adhesive, in sheets

Paper for labels

Clear polyester stripping

Decorative marbled paper

Let me know if you need more specific information about any or each of these items.

I hope this is helpful! Please let me know you have any questions or concerns, or if they're anything else I can do.

And have a wonderful holiday!

Ryan Hendrickson

## J. Bibliography of scholarship that informs the project

The following bibliography is organized by topic.

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