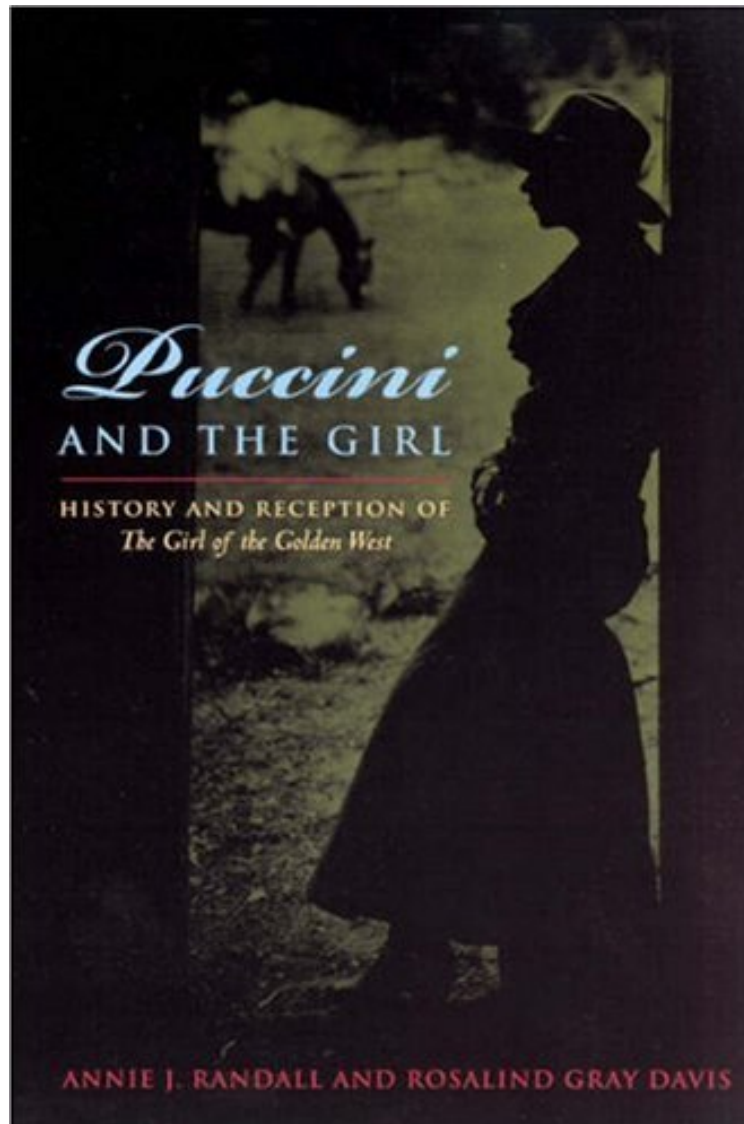


[Ebook pdf] Puccini and The Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West

Puccini and The Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West

Annie J. Randall, Rosalind Gray Davis
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Annie J. Randall, Rosalind Gray Davis : Puccini and The Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Puccini and The Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The opera "Girl" in the mythic Golden American West By HN In Puccini and The Girl Annie Janeiro Randall and Rosalind Gray Davis open up a new look into a fascinating account of

how the art of the opera transforms with its musical mastery so many elements of drama, history, literature, and ideas that capture the human imagination. They bring to the fore previously unpublished material about the creation of Puccini's opera "La Fanciulla del West" and explains how this opera is much different in musical composition from Puccini's other more well know masterpieces. Most important for this review, however, is the story itself -in essence, a romance tale during the California Gold Rush where a young girl saves the reluctant outlaw to then join together, looking forward to prospects of their life in the Golden American West. The source of the story is David Belasco's New York stage play version of about 1907 of "The Girl of the Golden West". Puccini's 1910 opera "La Fanciulla del West", perhaps fortunately mistranslated carried the story to opera. Both artists a century ago recognized and built upon "the girl" as the essential element in the worldwide lure and tremendous excitement of the development of the American West. Puccini had seen Belasco's very successful New York City play in 1907 when he was visiting for his other popular operas. Without understanding English well, he quickly acquired the rights to use the story for a new fully American opera. The opera premier of "La Fanciulla del West" was at the Metropolitan Opera House on 10 Dec 1910, with Arturo Toscanini conducting and with Enrico Caruso singing. Puccini later said they received 55 curtain calls. The orchestral and choral parts involved new innovations for Puccini. It was indeed well received; but later the critics did not favor it, perhaps because of fewer of the famous Puccini arias and the contrast of Italian melodies with the names of the California Gold Rush characters - Jack, Dick Nick. To begin to appreciate the opera and story one must see a DVD version with Placido Domingo, who like the hero in the story is of Spanish - Mexican descent (several versions are easily available on .com). Yet, the worldwide fascination with the strong willed "girl" in the American Golden West did not end there with this Puccini opera and the Belasco story. Exactly at that same time period, Zane Grey had built his immensely popular career of writing historical romance novels of the American West, with almost identical stories that focused on the young, determined girl of the West saving the young man so that they could, together, go on to build a new life in the Golden West. Examples of Grey's novels from this same time period are The Heritage of the Desert (1910) and Riders of the Purple Sage (1912). In summary, one should begin an appreciation of this story line by seeing Placido Domingo in the Puccini opera and then delve into its history with Randall's book Puccini and The Girl . The fascination with the romance of the mythic Golden American West continues. Puccini - La Fanciulla del West / Zampieri, Domingo, Pons, Bertocchi, Maazel, La Scala Opera Starring Mara Zampieri, Placido Domingo and Juan Pons (Jul 20, 2004) 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. "Women Bamboo"? By Kevin Killian Randall and Gray Davis between them have given us a book which will permanently change the way we view Puccini and his most controversial opera, the "American" GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST, a work commissioned by NYC's Metropolitan Opera on the heels of the success of MADAME BUTTERFLY. Their research shows us that using David Belasco's Broadway hit as the basis for a libretto was by no means a foregone conclusion, and that many years passed before Puccini committed himself to the saga of Minnie. Indeed, part of the interest of the book is speculating what we missed out on when Puccini decided to do with Minnie instead of working up--the last days of Marie Antoinette! For a piece that he planned on calling, THE AUSTRIAN WOMAN. He also flirted with turning the HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME into an opera; as well as considering two plays by Oscar Wilde. Perhaps our greatest regret is that he did not pursue THE WOMAN AND THE PUPPET, the searing, sexual tale of obsessive love that Von Sternberh later filmed with Dietrich as THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN (and later remade by Luis Bunuel at the end of his career). As Randall and Gray Davis indicate, the scandalized reception of Strauss' recent SALOME made Puccini leery of a similarly decadent subject. However, in his private life Puccini was experiencing a coruscating scandal which tore him apart and exposed his marriage for a living hell to the whole world. His wife, Elvira, became madly jealous of her own maid, Doria Manfredi, driving her to her death. After Doria's death an autopsy revealed that she had never had sex with anyone, much less the blameless Puccini. Or was he blameless? It's easy to paint Elvira as a vicious, deluded shrew, but in my experience there's not much smoke without at least a little bit of fire. The authors hint that this trying and scandalous cloud affected the composition of LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST in numerous ways. Gray Davis brings a lot to the project, especially the cache of Puccini letters she inherited from her late dad. These letters are the archive of Puccini's correspondence with Carlo Zangarini, his librettist. Zangarini's reputation, of course, went to hell long ago when his Fascist leanings won him honor in Mussolini's Italy and disdain everywhere else. The two authors here do their best to rehabilitate him, but in all honesty, it's uphill sledding for them and you can hear the tone of their monograph wobble when it comes to discussing Zangarini's politics. And yet they have accomplished something new under the sun, a new reading of FANCIULLA as well as the definitive account of its writing and reception. One minor quibble, I do not exactly see why they say that the archive of Puccini letters must have left the Zangarini hands after his death (in other words, in the postwar period). According to the evidence, why not consider it possible for Carlo to have sold them to the American autograph dealer himself, perhaps before the war? Did I miss something, why blame it on his mistress or nephew or whoever. One further comment, publication of Puccini's notes to Zangarini reveals that Puccini ws quite a poet himself, his verses are the dark equivalent of those of Laura Riding or Edith Sitwell. They're spooky, they're so weird. "I'm passing dark days/ writing real torpedoes/ in kangaroo form/ for days not far in the future." What the hell? How about, "They are all English,/ German and French,/ Women with hips,/ Women bamboo." 2 of 4 people found the

following review helpful. Then and Now By Jack DonderTerrific tale of the maestro coming to New York with his new opera. Sure to provoke attention with 2010 in the near future when this work will be 100. The attention paid to the opening when New York burst with potency, bejewelled dames listening to world voices sort of put the Met on the map. Laughed out loud at the recreation of that scene of the opening. Now, we wonder what about that girl next door, Doria, who helped him recuperate from the auto accident, then with Elvira the Fricka-like wife screaming, having to deal with the tragedy of Doria's demise. This personal view of the master at home with his devils informs the interpretation of the opera and how it went over. The depiction of Belasco and early 20th century theater, the pre-Method method as it were, puts Puccini right in the middle of the mix that included but pre-dated the Stanislavski revolution, in fullest flower with Stanley's "Stella!" at the foot of the stairs. None of that here, actually, this a precise look at the work and its times, the publisher, the competition, the writers, the abandon with which people went to opera then, the end of the Whitman era and the the beginning of end of that world, only a few years after 1910 when all hell broke lose. It's historical, yes, but also hysterical how much is made of so little. There are in fact no arias in this opera, just rich orchestration and seemingly improvised conversation, very modern that way, a view to Strauss then, Adams now. It's like a couple hundred years of opera crystalized into one book, both too specific, (pages of music printed in a text), and not specific enough: do the authors think Elvira was right? The movie that must be made of this book will deal with this question. In the meantime, opera lovers should thank these writers for perservering dauntlessly to give us a look through 29 epistles at what the man went through to get there then, landing us here and now when we wonder who was that girl of the golden west: the soprano who survives, does not die in the end, but rides off with her beloved, wow, a happy ending; or the girl left behind who poisons herself, a miserable death? It's edgy that way.

Set in the American West during the California Gold Rush, *La fanciulla del West* marked a significant departure from Giacomo Puccini's previous and best-known works. Puccini and the Girl is the first book to explore this important but often misunderstood opera that became the earliest work by a major European composer to receive an American premiere when it opened at New York's Metropolitan Opera House in 1910. Adapted from American playwright David Belasco's Broadway production, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *Fanciulla* was Puccini's most consciously modern work, and its Met debut received mixed reviews. Annie J. Randall and Rosalind Gray Davis base their account of its creation on previously unknown letters from Puccini to his main librettist, Carlo Zangarini. They mine musical materials, newspaper accounts, and rare photographs and illustrations to tell the full story of this controversial opera. Puccini and the Girl considers the production and reception of Puccini's "cowboy" opera in the light of contemporary criticism, providing both fascinating insight into its history and a look to the future as its centenary approaches. Engrossing. . . . An eminently readable, ideally direct and information-packed book. William Fregosi, *Opera Today*

"Welcome for its spirited defence of this sadly neglected opera."