

Postludio

Nachspiel

Postlude

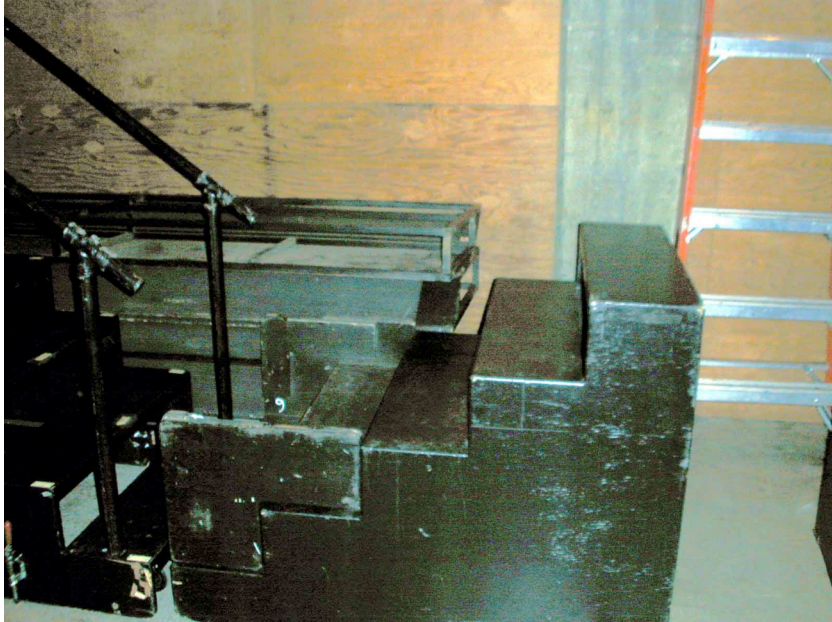
*More softly sleeps and dreams the Titan in the arms of the
earth.*

Even Cerberus, the envious one, drinks and then sleeps.

“Brod und Wein,” IX, end

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short stairs; sticks in can



410_low_stairs lo qual (reverse so stairs lead left?)



444_props_sticks lo qual

MOONLIGHTING IN *TURANDOT*

CLOSING NIGHT, 15 NOVEMBER 2003. Liù's death is also the point where Puccini famously laid down his pen, or rather stopped composing, and then soon died. Even though the chorus will return to the stage for the final and very short paeon to reconciliation and universal joy after the long "nessun dorma" scene, I treat our exit at the end of Líu's funeral as though it were also my own farewell from the stage. In my sadness for Liù, half artistic pretense and half genuine feeling, I let my cudgel droop, and with the other hand I help pull offstage the little flight of steps on which I had perched and kowtowed during the torture scene. I hold my low e-flat far into the wings. Feeling very much an operatic Prospero, I stand my wand-stick back up in the prop barrel. This my revel now is ended, and so on, though on the next day I will be in church, sinfully proud of myself as I regale my friends with my performance, sing in the choir, recite – and also believe – the Creed, take the bread and wine and begin my confident wait through the needy time till the Second Coming and, in the meantime, whatever will be my next operatic gig.

After the audition, the costume-fitting, the rehearsals, opening night, and now closing night, with the last "amor" and "gloria," the first curtain call, the applause, the bows, and the final curtain call, my performance – the performance on stage, though not the one in my mind – is truly over. The history of *Turandot*, of Italian opera, of opera, of music, of art, is

As an essentialist in philosophy, I am committed to the view that art is eternally the same – that there are conditions necessary and sufficient for something to be an artwork, regardless of time and place. I do not see how one can do the philosophy of art – or philosophy *period* – without to this extent being an essentialist. But as an historicist I am also committed to the view that what is a work of art at one time cannot be one at another....Many of the world's artworks (cave paintings, fetishes, altar pieces) were made in times and places when people had no concept of art to speak of,

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since they interpreted art in terms of their other beliefs. It is true that today our relationship to these objects is primarily contemplative, since the interests they embody are not our own, and the beliefs in the light of which they were regarded as effective can no longer be widely held, least of all among those who admire them.

Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (1997) 95

– *pace* Danto – not over.

I grin at my fellow choristers, leave the stage, and fetch my sandals and glasses. I go to the auxiliary chorus dressing room, change into street clothes, and turn in my costume. I feel both exalted and numb, almost robotic, but that is not why I let each moment take longer than it needs.

I close the stage door behind me and walk toward the parking structure. I've left my makeup on, deliberately. The street lamps are still bright, but I don't need them. The moon has risen well above the horizon in the East. The eclipse is over.

Feeling a little crazed by it all, and silly and happy too, I walk slowly past the departing audience and subtly tilt my face toward the light. I'm certain they see me and envy me. Then I go home for a couple glasses of wine. If it was not the prize 2002 Blue Moon Riesling from the vineyard in the valley where I grew up in Southern Oregon, it should have been so, and so it will become in my memories.

Much later there was, and will be again, blissful sleep.

fine

MOONLIGHTING IN *TURANDOT*

I know very well that I do not understand music. I freely admit that I am a layman. I do not conceal the fact that I do not belong to the chosen people who are connoisseurs of music, that I am at most a proselyte at the gate, whom a strangely irresistible impulse carried from far regions to this point, but no farther. And yet it is perhaps possible that the little I have to say might contain some particular remark, which, if it met with a kind and indulgent reception, might be found to contain something true, even if it concealed itself under a shabby coat.

Kierkegaard, *The Immediate Stages of the Erotic or the Musical Erotic*



Bill-POW lo qual