

AMILCARE PONCHIELLI (1834 - 1886)

“Dance of the Hours” from *La Gioconda*

BIOGRAPHY: Amilcare Ponchielli was an Italian Opera composer. He was musical from a very young age, writing his first symphony at the age of ten while attending the Milan Conservatory. During his career he wrote many operas, most famously *La Gioconda*, and was fairly successful. In the process of getting to this point of success, Ponchielli spent time as a bandleader and composed many works for wind band as a result. Most of his operas were lyric dramas or melodrammas, with the exception of one comedic opera. *La Gioconda* was an opera based on a play by Victor Hugo. It tells the story of female lead Gioconda who befriends her rival in the face of terror from the villain Barnaba. It was well received and is now referenced for its famous piece “Dance of the Hours”.

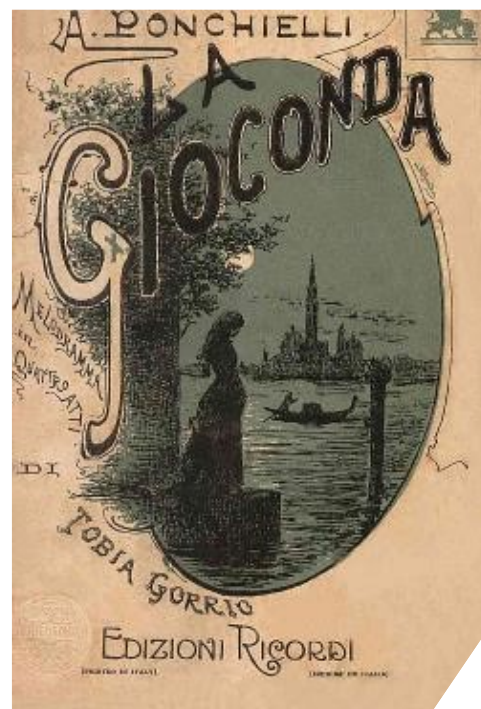


▶ **[LISTEN](#) to “Dance of the Hours” from *La Gioconda***

REPERTOIRE NOTES: Dance of the Hours is a ballet dance number within the opera *La Gioconda* and it depicts the passage of a day in several parts, beginning with a slow dawn and ending in a lively nighttime dance scene. The glockenspiel is used to indicate the change of “scene” or time of day through the piece. Although the opera in its entirety is only performed occasionally nowadays, this piece from *La Gioconda* has taken on a life of its own: used famously in Disney’s *Fantasia*, A Letter from Camp Granada, recordings by Frank Sinatra and Perrey and Kingsley, and plenty of tv commercials.

Follow along with the score [HERE](#)

Did you know? The first violin performance heard by Fiona the hippo from the Cincinnati Zoo was “Dance of the Hours”. Watch on the next page!



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“Dance of the Hours” from *La Gioconda*

After its use in the opera, “Dance of the Hours” from *La Gioconda* has been used in popular culture for many decades, including in TV, movies, commercials and more! It was used in the comedic song parody “Camp Granada”. [READ more](#) about Camp Granada.

WATCH [ballet from *La Gioconda*](#)

WATCH [clip from *Fantasia*](#)

WATCH one of many [commercial adaptations](#) of “Camp Granada”

Fiona & “Dance of the Hours” - [WATCH](#)

WATCH CSO Acting Associate Concertmaster and Tom & Dee Stegman Chair, Charles Morey, play “Dance of the Hours” for Fiona. Then **LISTEN** and **CHOOSE** three pieces from our [Young People's Concert](#) playlist that could be these animals' “theme music”.

