

TURANDOT 2011 BACKSTAGE TOUR INFO

Staff/Running crew: (40) stagehands (carpenters, electricians, av tech, prop men, fly men)
(34) wardrobe crew (wardrobe supervisor, dressers, stitchers, launderers)
(14) wig and make-up crew
(3) artistic team (conductor, director, designer)
(14) music and production staff (incl. asst. designers, stage mgrs, digitext staff, etc.)

Cast: (12) principals
(114) chorus (44 m, 36 f, 34 children -20 onstage)
(49) supers
(6) acrobats

Orchestra: (76) (33 strings, 12 winds, 11 brass, 1 timpani, 6 percussion, 2 harps, 7 backstage banda, plus 2 librarians & 2 personnel managers backstage)

Total Budget: \$2,401,899 (for artists, crews, sets, costumes, everything else . . .) (2004 budget was \$1,845,037)

Music/Pit This show utilizes approximately 15 regular and Chinese gongs. The differences between these 2 types are many, including type of sound and method of creating the actual gong itself. Backstage there is a gong which is played by one of the percussionists who comes up from the pit. Onstage you will see a prop gong, but it is struck by Calaf. Along the back wall of the pit, there are several Chinese gongs played by the percussionists. Chinese gongs have an indescribable sound and are individually pitched.

Scenery This production is owned by San Francisco Opera. The scenery was designed by David Hockney, a very well known visual artist. The scenery is stylized with brilliant primary colors and seems enormous on stage. There are 5 settings. Act I is a town center with a main structure which has an opaque scrim near the top. It is here that Turandot is revealed in her first appearance (stage management sometimes refers to this part of the set as "the Condo"). You'll notice examples of forced perspective which adds extra depth. Act II begins in an inner chamber of the palace. Scene 2 begins with a huge procession which proceeds down a steep zigzagging rake. The palace is represented with giant red flats and a sweeping green roof which paradoxically gives the feel of traditional China. Act III is a series of deep blue cut drops (soft drops that have a silhouette to them w/netting in between so they hold the shape) representing a forest. In the dark, the blue drops are replaced by bright red cut drops representing the interior of the palace. Because of the size and the odd angles of the various individual units, the crew basically reconstructs each set every night.

Props There few props in this show, but they are very stylized. Notice the different heads on the halberds. At the prop rack there is a halberd "guide" to make it easier for the supers to pick up the correct prop. At this table one will also find the heads of the beheaded suitors. The spark effect of the executioner "sharpening" his sword on the grinding wheel is accomplished by a hidden prop man touching a flint rod to sandpaper which surrounds the wheel while the executioner mimes sharpening the sword. We are required to get permission and a flame permit from the fire marshal to do this effect and to use the votive candle bowls carried by the priests.

Lighting Michael Whitfield, who has designed many SDO shows, is in residence for the focusing of the lights and cueing during the technical rehearsals. There are 600 instruments that use approximately 450,000 watts, which would power 7500 60 watt reading lamps or 375 1200 watt hair dryers. There is never a time when all of the lights are on at one time however. The color is very intense in the sets and the costumes. Therefore, the lighting uses a lot of red and blue gels, actually around 30 different colors used ranging from pale lavenders and ambers to plain unfiltered "white" light. We are using new LED fixtures which use far less energy (90% less) than the traditional strip lights they replace. In addition, the lumen output is one and a half times that of the older strips and gives much more saturated blues and reds. These units use a 7 color LED mixing system. This particular fixture - the Vivid-R is meant for more saturated colors in the reds, blues, and ambers, but is capable of mixing thousands of variations of color. Most LED technology uses only 3 LED colors - the primary colors of light : Red, Green, and Blue. Adding more LED colors as part of the fixture gives the designer the ability to create a much wider range of color. The 7 color system in these particular units is: Red, Red-orange, Amber, Green, Cyan, Blue, and Indigo. Once the color is mixed we also have the ability to control the overall intensity of the LEDs that are being used to mix the color so that as the fixture is faded up or down the color stays consistent. Also, once a desired color is mixed we can save that color as a library in the light board and recall it at will. As the sets are changed for each act, several lighting instruments must be reset and focused during intermissions as well.

Costumes Costumes belong to SFO as well and were designed by Ian Falconer who among other things is the creator of the "Olivia" children's books. The costumes incorporate many of the colors of the set and are also rather stylized. The chorus (or popolo) is in basic black with the principals and supers in the colorful costumes. Many of the costumes

are bulky and hot. The guards wear leather masks which restrict their vision, so they have to be extra careful negotiating the sharp rakes of the set. There are 277 costumes in the show.

Wigs/Make-up Principal makeup and wigs are applied in a room at the end of the dressing room hallway or in individual dressing rooms by 4 M/U artists including the designer Steven Bryant. The chorus and supers have their wigs and makeup applied by 10 more artists in the rehearsal hall downstairs. There are only 30 wigs used in the production, but there are a lot of hairpieces to transform performers from one character to another. The 20 onstage chorus children wear a kind of a cloth bald pate or skin tight cap that covers the top and back of the head and neck to evoke a bald head. The 10 priests wear bald pates. There are 30 masks used to aid in changing characters. Timur, who is blind in the opera, has two strips of wig lace glued over his eyes making a mini scrim to give them a blank look but which still allows the artist to see the stage.

CIVIC THEATRE BASIC TECH INFO: # of seats = 2885; # of line sets = 69; # of traps = 6 (4'x6' to 4'x18')

Proscenium opening: width = 56', height = 29'6" Depth of stage = 56' (86' to back wall) Height of grid = 80'