Opera Trivia Week 2:
Opera takes a right at the Great White Way

1. This musical was based on Puccini’s La Bohéme and won the Tony for best musical. Name the musical and the composer.
   
   **A: Rent by Jonathan Larson**

   *La Bohéme*, meaning bohemian, premiered on February 1, 1896 at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Italy. Its libretto, based on Henri Murger’s vignettes, *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, depicts young bohemians in the Latin Quarter of Paris in the 1840s. The story mostly follows Rodolfo and Mimi. The opera premiere was conducted by a young Arturo Toscanini.

   “Musetta’s Waltz”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6b7VY52C82k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6b7VY52C82k)

   Take a look at how the productions handle the meeting of Mimi and Rodolfo/Roger.
   “Light My Candle” from Rent: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llSqY32vgiA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llSqY32vgiA)
   “Che gelida manina” and “si, mi chiamano Mimi”:
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkHGUaB1Bs8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkHGUaB1Bs8)

   You’ll find many references of the opera throughout the musical. The song “Light my Candle” takes melodic content from *Che gelida manina*, and Musetta’s Waltz. Additionally, Musetta’s Waltz is paralleled in the first verse of “Take Me or Leave Me,” and it is used for “Your Eyes” as well.

   *La Bohéme*’s Cincinnati debut was in 1924 and was last seen in 2017.
   *Rent* was last seen at the Aronoff in December 2018.

2. The musical *The Phantom of the Opera* was charged in a lawsuit in 1987 for similar musical passages as this Italian composer’s less known opera. Name the composer and the opera.
   
   **A: Giacomo Puccini’s La fanciulla del West.**
The heirs of Giacomo Puccini charged in a lawsuit that a recurring two-bar passage in "Music of the Night" closely resembled a similar phrase first heard in the aria "Quello che tacete" from Puccini's opera *La fanciulla del West*.

Met Opera: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW85AKxMzkw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW85AKxMzkw)
Minnesota Opera: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJDUN8AYVow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJDUN8AYVow)
Phantom of the Opera: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77umP7IRxD4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77umP7IRxD4)

*La Fanciulla del West* had its Cincinnati debut in 1933 and was last seen in 1986. *The Phantom of the Opera* was last seen at the Aronoff in 2016.

3. Gian Carlo Menotti won the Pulitzer Prize twice for both of these operas that were performed on Broadway, one that ran 269 performances and the other that ran for 92 performances. Name the two operas.
   
   **A : The Consul (1950) and The Saint of Bleecker Street (1955)**

*The Consul* was Menotti’s first full-length opera and it premiered in NYC at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in March, 1950. While not a musical as we know them today, in 1950 it won New York Drama Critics’ Circle Best Musical Award.

Seattle Opera gives a trailer of *The Consul*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kOqseElHqM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kOqseElHqM)
Here you catch a glimpse of Marcy Stonikas who was Senta in our 2018 production of *The Flying Dutchman*

Eileen Farrell sings “To this we’ve come” from *The Consul*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2XLTidqjR](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2XLTidqjR)

*The Saint of Bleecker Street* premiered at the Broadway Theatre in December, 1954. It is similar to *The Consul* in that it is also three acts, and coincidentally also won the Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best Musical in 1955.

Menotti “Oh, Sweet Jesus” from *The Saint of Bleecker Street*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y06j0p_s4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y06j0p_s4s)

David Poleri sings “I know that you all hate me” from *The Saint of Bleecker Street*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_JIGPrU490](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_JIGPrU490)
These operas have not been produced by Cincinnati Opera. Although, Cincinnati Opera has performed Menotti’s *The Medium* in 1967.

Monica’s Waltz from *The Medium* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqI6lnuoHZE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqI6lnuoHZE)

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### 4. We mostly associate Leonard Bernstein with his orchestral work and his operetta, *Candide*, but he also composed an opera that launched the career of mezzo-soprano Beverly Wolff. What was the opera?

**A: Trouble in Tahiti**

This one-act opera premiered in June 1952 at Tanglewood. However, it was also nationally televised for the NBC Opera Theatre. This work was written during Bernstein’s honeymoon with Felicia Montealegre and it is based on his parents’ relationship.

“Island Magic” of *Trouble in Tahiti* from Opera North’s production: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6qzWI-fUvU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6qzWI-fUvU)

“There’s a law” from *Trouble in Tahiti*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cso5KWPd3bE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cso5KWPd3bE)

This work has not had a Cincinnati Opera premiere.

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### 5. While Gerschwin’s opera originally premiered on Broadway in 1935, it was shelved until this opera company revived it to much acclaim in 1976.

**A: Porgy and Bess and Houston Grand Opera**

The Met’s *Porgy and Bess* “Summertime” by Golda Schultz: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NghjBMn6ZJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NghjBMn6ZJM)

Eric Owens and Angel Blue sing “Bess, you is my woman now”

Met Opera: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e27TnaIT0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e27TnaIT0A)

San Francisco Opera: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=escz3nZ-frA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=escz3nZ-frA)
The inception of *Porgy and Bess* came from Dorothy Heyward and DuBose Heyward’s play *Porgy*. It’s Broadway premiere was in October 1935 at the Alvin Theatre. It later went on a national tour, leading to the National Theatre’s first integrated audience of any show in 1936. It had its European premiere at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen in 1943, which was occupied by Nazis at the time. Hence, the cast was an all-white cast performing in blackface, however it only went on for 22 performances before being forced to shut down.

It wasn’t until the Houston Grand Opera staged the opera in 1976 that an American opera company produced the opera, rather than a Broadway production company. This production led the Houston Grand Opera to its first ever – the only opera ever to receive one – Tony Award in 1977 for Most Innovative Production of a Revival and a Grammy Award, too.

*Porgy and Bess* had its Cincinnati debut in 2012 and was last seen in 2019.

6. Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* inspired two Broadway productions. What were they?

   **A: M. Butterfly and Miss Saigon**

*Miss Saigon* was premiered in London in September, 1989 and it made it’s US Broadway premiere in April 1991 at the Broadway Theatre. It is currently Broadway’s thirteenth longest-running show. The plot of the musical takes the doomed romance of the opera and sets it during the Vietnam War and it is between an US Marine and a South Vietnamese bargirl.

“I’d Give My Life for You” from *Miss Saigon*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb3Zxh2gSE

*M. Butterfly* was written by playwright David Henry Hwang and premiered on Broadway in 1988 when it won the 1988 Tony Award for Best Play. Most notably to opera, it has recently been commissioned by Santa Fe Opera and is hoping to have its world premiere this summer season. The music was written by Huang Ruo, a Chinese-born composer who has degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and from Juilliard. This will be Ruo’s third opera composition.

The Royal Opera House’s *Madama Butterfly* – “Vogliatemi bene”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmaQfmg0Rk0

Santa Fe Opera’s *M. Butterfly*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLDmj1C0NF1&feature=youtu.be
Besides being an opera and a play, *M. Butterfly* was made into a movie in 1993 with Jeremy Irons as the lead male fallen in love with an opera singer.
Trailer of the play: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh5nSdqeVY4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh5nSdqeVY4)
Clip from movie: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlidybdzDdE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlidybdzDdE)

*Madame Butterfly*’s Cincinnati debut was in 1924 and was last seen in 2014.
*Miss Saigon* was last seen at the Aronoff in April 2019.

7. What Richard Rodgers’ musical has Cincinnati Opera not done?
   A. *Carousel*
   B. *The Sound of Music*
   C. *South Pacific*
   D. *The King and I*

*Carousel* was premiered and last seen in Cincinnati on 1983
Stephanie Blythe and Kelli O’Hara sing “You’ll Never Walk Alone”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFZWzeLfT58](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFZWzeLfT58)

*The Sound of Music* was premiered and last seen in Cincinnati on 1982
Julie Andrews’ sings “Do-Re-Mi”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drnBMAEA3AM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drnBMAEA3AM)

*South Pacific* was premiered and last seen in Cincinnati on 1981
“Some Enchanted Evening” from the movie: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5dPtKvCTrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5dPtKvCTrs)
While Emile was played by Italian actor Rossano Brazzi in the film, the singing for the role was done by renowned operatic bass Georgio Tozzi. In addition to being a Metropolitan Opera star, Tozzi also trained generations of singers now gracing international stages during his time as a vocal professor at Indiana University.
Extra credit: What was the last Arthur Sullivan production we performed and what year was it. (Hint: If you have a program book with you, this should be a Venetian walk by the rivers)

A: The Gondoliers in 1985

The National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaJaeFAFFV4

The Gondoliers at the Proms in 1997: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Q-4FILszYk