Silent Night
STUDY GUIDE

Music by Kevin Puts
Libretto by Mark Campbell
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THE CHARACTERS

Courtesy of kevinputs.com

The German Side
Nikolaus Sprink, an opera singer
Anna Sørensen, his lover
Lieutenant Horstmayer
Kronprinz, son of Kaiser Wilhelm II

The Scottish Side
Jonathan Dale
William Dale, his brother
Father Palmer
Lieutenant Gordon
The British Major

The French Side
Lieutenant Audebert
Ponchel, his aide-de-camp
The General
Madeleine, Lt. Audebert’s wife

THE STORY

Prologue: Late summer, 1914
War is declared. At a Berlin opera house, the announcement disrupts the careers and personal lives of international opera singers Anna Sørensen and Nikolaus Sprink. In a small church in Scotland, it inspires dreams of heroism in William who demands that his younger brother Jonathan immediately enlist with him, as their priest, Father Palmer, looks helplessly on. In the apartment of the Audeberts in Paris, it angers Madeleine who excoriates her husband for leaving to fight while she is pregnant with their first child. Amid the fervor of nationalistic songs, the men prepare to leave for war.

Act I, Scene 1: In and around a battlefield in Belgium; December 23, late afternoon
A horrific battle is fought between the Germans, the French, and the Scottish. An attempt by the French and Scottish soldiers to infiltrate the German bunker fails miserably; corpses begin to pile up in the no-man’s land between the three bunkers. Nikolaus violently engages in combat, stabbing a man to death and growing in despair at the violence. William is shot, and Jonathan must leave his brother behind to die.

Act I, Scene 2: December 23, evening
In the Scottish bunker, Lieutenant Gordon assesses the casualties after the battle. Father Palmer attempts to offer solace to Jonathan in prayer. In the French bunker, Lieutenant Audebert discovers the French General, who reprimands him for surrendering and threatens him with a transfer. The General leaves and Audebert laments the loss of his wife’s photograph to his aide-de-camp, Ponchel. When he is alone, Audebert tallies the casualties in the last battle, while missing Madeleine and their child who he has not yet seen. He sings of needing sleep, a sentiment echoed by all of the soldiers. Alone in the German bunker, Nikolaus reveals to an imagined Anna his despair about war.

Act I, Scene 3: December 24, morning
In the German bunker, crates have arrived – and little Christmas trees from the Kronprinz. Lieutenant Horstmayer receives a directive from headquarters that Nikolaus has been ordered to sing at the nearby chalet of the Kronprinz, along with one Anna Sørensen, reuniting Nikolaus with Anna after many months apart. The French soldiers have received crates of wine, sausages, and chocolates and open them jubilantly. Ponchel, a barber by trade, brings coffee to Audebert and sits him down for a haircut. He is reminded of having coffee with his mother every morning; the alarm clock he carries next to his heart at all times rings at ten o’clock every morning to remind him of their daily meeting. In the Scottish bunker,
crates of whiskey have arrived from home. Jonathan writes a letter to his mother, not mentioning his brother’s death.

**Act I, Scene 4: December 24, early evening**
At the chalet of the Kronprinz, Anna and Nikolaus perform a duet. Following the performance, they steal a few moments on a terrace outside. Anna notices the cruel effect war has had on her lover’s spirit, and is angry when Nikolaus says he must return to his fellow soldiers. She vows to accompany him back to the battlefield.

**Act I, Scene five: December 24, night**
In the French bunker, Gueusselin volunteers to infiltrate the German bunker, and with several grenades, sidles onto no-man’s land. The Scottish soldiers drink whiskey and play a bagpipe as Father Palmer sings a sentimental ballad about home. The men in the other bunkers hear the song and react to it with sadness, caution, and annoyance. Nikolaus arrives; his fellow soldiers greet him with cheers and applause and gasp in amazement at seeing Anna with him. When the song in the Scottish bunker is finished, Nikolaus sings a rousing Christmas song in response and midway through, the bagpiper begins to accompany. Emboldened, Nikolaus stands atop the bunker raising a Christmas tree as a gesture of friendship. Against the protestations of their superiors, the soldiers from all bunkers stand. Nikolaus bravely moves to the center of no-man’s land. Gueusselin abandons his plan to grenade the German bunker. Eventually, the three lieutenants, waving a white flag of truce, agree to a cease-fire … but only on Christmas Eve. The soldiers share their provisions, their photos, and their names. Jonathan finds his brother’s body and vows revenge. Father Palmer celebrates mass and urges the men to “go in peace” as bombs explode menacingly in the distance.

**Act II, Scene 1: December 25, dawn**
The following morning, Jonathan tries to bury his brother. Because the truce is officially over, two German sentries are prepared to shoot him, although Father Palmer and Lieutenant Gordon intervene. The three lieutenants meet and decide over coffee that the truce will be extended until after the dead in no-man’s land are buried.

**Act II, Scenes 2-4: December 25, late morning, early afternoon, and evening**
The soldiers pile up the corpses, Father Palmer delivers last rites, and the soldiers form a processional bearing the wagon of bodies away. In the meantime, news of the cease-fire has reached headquarters, and the British Major, the Kronprinz, and the French General all react in anger and disbelief. They declare that they will punish the soldiers for their betrayal.

Lieutenant Horstmayer prepares to return to war and Nikolaus berates him for his allegiance to the Fatherland. Horstmayer arrests Nikolaus for insubordination, but Anna takes his hand firmly and leads him across no-man’s land as Horstmayer orders his men to shoot, but no one moves. Reaching the French bunker unharmed, Nikolaus regains his voice and demands asylum for he and Anna.

**Act II, Scene 5: December 26, late morning**
The British Major admonishes the Scottish soldiers for participating in the Christmas truce. They are to be transferred to the front lines. When a German soldier is seen crossing the battlefield, the Major orders him killed. Jonathan complies and dispassionately shoots the man.

The French General tells Audebert that he will be transferred to Verdun as punishment for consorting with the enemy and that his unit will be disbanded. Audebert informs the French General – his father – that he has learned he has an infant son named Henri. They vow to survive the war for the child’s sake.

The Kronprinz angrily announces that the German soldiers are to be deployed in Pomerania as punishment. As the soldiers are taken off in a boxcar, they hum the Scottish ballad they heard in the bunker on Christmas Eve. The battlefield is now completely empty. Snow begins to fall again.
KEVIN PUTS: COMPOSER

Courtesy kevinputs.com

Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his debut opera Silent Night, Kevin Puts has been hailed as one of the most important composers of his generation. Critically acclaimed for a richly colored, harmonic, and freshly melodic musical voice that has also been described as “emotional, compelling, and relevant,” his works, which include two operas, four symphonies, and several concertos, have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists throughout the world.

Silent Night was premiered by Minnesota Opera in November 2011, and marked his Heralded as “breathtaking” and “a stunning emotional experience”, Silent Night has since been produced and performed at Opera Philadelphia, Fort Worth Opera, Cincinnati Opera, the Wexford Opera Festival, Calgary Opera, Opera de Montreal, and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, with upcoming productions at Atlanta Opera, Opera Santa Jose, and Michigan Opera Theatre.

Acclaimed as “thrilling” and “not to be missed,” Mr. Puts' second opera, an adaptation of Richard Condon's novel The Manchurian Candidate, also commissioned by Minnesota Opera with a libretto by Mark Campbell, had its world premiere in March 2015. March 2015 also saw the world premiere of Mr. Puts’ song cycle Of All The Moons, commissioned by Carnegie Hall and performed by mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, which The New York Times called “a showcase for his craftsmanship.”

His newest orchestral work, The City, was premiered in Baltimore and New York in April 2016. Co-commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in honor of its 100th anniversary and by Carnegie Hall in honor of its 125th anniversary, the New York Times called it “captivating from the start” and The Baltimore Sun writes that Mr. Puts “never disappoints in terms of orchestral coloring...distinctive lyrical style...and passages of intense melodic fire.”

November 2016 will see international opera star Rénee Fleming and the Eastman School of Music Philharmonia performing the world premiere in New York City of a new work based on the personal letters of Georgia O’Keeffe and commissioned by the Eastman School of Music. In September 2017, Mr. Puts will premiere his first chamber opera, an adaptation of Peter Ackroyd’s gothic novel The Trial of Elizabeth Cree, which has been commissioned by Opera Philadelphia with libretto by Mark Campbell.

His other critically acclaimed works include Arcana, which was commissioned and premiered in 2009 by the string sextet Concertante; Trio-Sinfonia, commissioned by Music Accord and premiered in 2007 by the Eroica Trio; Four Airs, commissioned by the Music from Angel Fire Festival in 2004; Three Nocturnes, commissioned and premiered by the Verdehr Trio in 2004; Chorus of Lights, Mr. Puts’ first work for winds, commissioned by the University of Texas Wind Ensemble in 2003; and Einstein on Mercer Street, commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and premiered in summer 2002.
As the Composer-in-Residence for the Fort Worth Symphony, Mr. Puts composed a violin concerto for its concertmaster, Michael Shih, which was premiered in April 2007 with Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducting and later recorded by the orchestra. In 2007, as the American Composer-in-Residence at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, his *Two Mountain Scenes* was premiered by the New York Philharmonic. Later that summer, his *Symphony No. 4: From Mission San Juan* was premiered at the Cabrillo Festival.

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Mr. Puts has received numerous honors and awards for composition. These include the 2015 Arts and Letters Award and the 2003 Benjamin H. Danks Award for Excellence in Orchestral Composition, both from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the Delaware Symphony Orchestra's 2015 Alfred I. duPont Composer's Award; the 2013 Eddie Medora King Award for Composition by the Butler School of Music of the University of Texas at Austin; a 2001 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship; a 2001-2002 Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome; and the 1999 Barlow International Prize for Orchestral Music. In 1996, Mr. Puts was also named Composer-in-Residence of both Young Concert Artists and the California Symphony. While an undergraduate at the Eastman School of Music, Mr. Puts was awarded a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the BMI 2001 Carlos Surinach Fund Commission; BMI's 1998 William Schuman Prize; and several grants from BMI and ASCAP.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Mr. Puts received both his Bachelor's Degree and his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the Eastman School of Music, and his Master's Degree from Yale University. From 1999 to 2005, he taught composition at The University of Texas at Austin. Since 2006, he has been a member of the Composition Faculty at the Peabody Institute, and currently is the Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer’s Institute.

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**MARK CAMPBELL: LIBRETTIST**

*Courtesy markcampbellwords.com*

Mark Campbell is one of the most in-demand and prolific librettists in the world, profiled in Opera News as "poised...to become a major force in opera in the coming decade." Mark has written more than fifteen librettos, but his most known opera is *Silent Night*, which garnered the 2012 Pulitzer in Music. Since its premiere at Minnesota Opera, the opera has been broadcast on PBS' Great Performances and quickly entered the repertory with productions at Opera Philadelphia, Ft. Worth Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Calgary Opera, Ireland's Wexford Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Opéra de Montréal and upcoming productions at San Jose Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Atlanta Opera. Other successful operas include: *Later the Same Evening, Volpone, As One, Bastianello/Lucrezia, A Letter to East 11th Street, The Inspector, Rappahannock County, Approaching Ali, The Manchurian Candidate*, and most recently, *The Shining*. Mark has collaborated with many notable contemporary composers, including Mark Adamo, Mason Bates, Lembit Beecher, William Bolcom, Conrad Cummings, Ricky Ian Gordon, Julian Grant, Jake Heggie, Martin Hennessy, Laura Kaminsky, Missy Mazzoli, Marisa Michelson, Paul Moravec, John Musto, Paola Prestini, Kevin Puts,
Richard Peaslee, D.J. Sparr, and Michael Torke. Mark has received many other prestigious prizes for his work, including a Grammy® nomination for best Classical Recording, the first Kleban Foundation Award for Lyricist, two Richard Rodgers Awards, three Drama Desk nominations, a Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, a New York Foundation for the Arts Playwriting Fellowship and the Dominic J. Pelliciotti Award. Mark has also been awarded residencies at The Hermitage, The MacDowell Colony, Ucross Foundation, and the Sundance Theatre Lab.

As a lyricist, Mark penned all of the lyrics for *Songs from an Unmade Bed*, a theatrical song cycle with music by 18 composers including Jake Heggie and Duncan Sheik that premiered at New York Theatre Workshop. The show has since been produced in many venues around the world. Other musicals for which he has written lyrics include: *And the Curtain Rises, The Audience, Chang & Eng*, and *Splendora*.

Mark is also an advocate for contemporary American opera and mentors future generations of opera writers through such organizations as American Opera Projects, Washington National Opera’s American Opera Initiative, American Lyric Theatre, the University of Colorado's New Opera Workshop and Opera Philadelphia's Composer-in-Residence Program. 2017 opera premieres include: *The Nefarious, Immorcal but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Burke and Hare* (Boston Lyric Opera and Music-Theatre Group/Julian Grant, composer); *Elizabeth Cree* (Opera Philadelphia/Kevin Puts, composer); *Dinner at Eight* (Minnesota Opera/William Bolcom, composer); *Some Light Emerges* (Houston Grand Opera/Laura Kaminsky, composer and Kimberly Reed, co-librettist); and *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Santa Fe Opera/Mason Bates, composer).
A WAR TO END ALL WARS

By Jon Rosemond

World War I, or as it was known originally, The Great War shook the very world to its core. It was the first time a war was waged between more than just a few militaries, bringing 28 nations to fight on several fronts. In the end, it led to the deaths of over 8.5 million people, with 21.1 million people wounded and 7.7 million prisoners and missing persons. It was a war people thought would end all wars, until the start of World War II.

This war that caused over 37 million casualties started with the death of one person: Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914 by a Serbian nationalist named Gavrilo Princip. A month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. This war divided Europe into two main camps: the Triple Alliance, later known as the Central Powers, and the Triple Entente, later known as the Allied Forces. The major players in the Central Powers were Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. The major players that made up the Allied Forces were France, Russia, and Great Britain.

This war was fought using a dangerous style of warfare called trench warfare. Soldiers would dig trenches on average 12 feet deep and could spread 100-300 yards (that’s up to three football fields long!). The area between two side’s trenches was called no-man’s land due to the fact that each side was defending their trench with, for the time, powerful machine guns. Each side would try to take the other’s trench whilst defending their own. The attempts to take the other trench would typically end in a massacre of troops on the charging side either from machine gun or artillery fire. There were also other dangers that did not even come from the opposing troops. Trench Fever, caused by lice, and Trench Foot, caused by a fungal infection, were common occurrences in the trenches that caused death, or in the case of Trench Foot, amputations which could still lead to death.

The reasons for the spike in the number of casualties during World War I was due to new weapons that were not available in previous wars, including machine guns, artillery, tanks, and air forces. These weapons could do damage to large amounts of enemies at one time. While these weapons were causing large amounts of damage, perhaps the most highly dangerous new weapon introduced during World War I was the U-Boat. The German U-Boat submarine was a game-changer.
due to the fact that not many had a way to counter them. However, the use of a German U-Boat to sink a civilian passenger liner, the Lusitania, was just one factor that pushed the United States closer to entering the war. Another terrifying type of fighting that both sides used in World War I was chemical warfare. Both sides used chlorine, phosgene, and mustard gas at the start of the war and by the end had developed their own compounds of chemicals making them more effective. This type of warfare, while not always deadly, caused heavy casualties and led to its prohibition in future wars under the Geneva Convention.

The Great War was fought on three major fronts: Western (France/Belgium), Eastern (Russia), and Southern (Serbia). While there were many battles, here are a few famous battles.

The Gallipoli campaign (Apr 1915 - Jan 1916) was an attempted assault on Germany’s Middle Eastern allies, the Ottoman Turks. The combined forces of Australian, New Zealand, British, French, and Indian troops mounted an ambitious landing to try to take the peninsula of Gallipoli which was 100 miles south of the Ottoman capital of Constantinople. The Allies were unable to break past the beach and eight months later retreated to Egypt. Almost a third of the New Zealand forces were killed and there were around 28,000 Australian casualties, while close to 200,000 Turkish soldiers were injured or killed.

The Battle of Verdun (Feb 1916) was a German offensive meant to force France to use up all its resources on the defense of forts surrounding the town of Verdun. This battle was an attempt to break up the stalemate of the Western Front which had turned into a war of attrition (strategy of wearing down the enemy to the point of collapse through continuous losses in personnel and materiel). This was the longest single battle of the war. By the end, Germany had failed to break through or exhaust French resources and both sides lost around 300,000 soldiers.

The Battle of Jutland (June 1916) was the only major naval surface battle between the German High Sea Fleet and the British Royal Navy’s Grand Fleet. Before the battle began, Britain had two advantages: they had more ships and they had broken the signal codes of the Germans. There were two phases to this battle, the first being artillery attacks between both fleet’s scouting parties. The German ships did the most damage but the British ships were able to lure Germany back to their main fleet. The second phase was between the main fleets. Britain was able to make use of the fading sunlight and cut off the Germans’ route to their home port. While Britain suffered more loses, they still emerged victorious due to having more
ships and the ability to sustain more loses (though both sides claimed victory). After the battle, Germany relied mainly on their U-Boats to attack British ships and supply lines.

The Battle of Somme, also known as the Somme Offensive, was one of the largest and bloodiest conflicts of World War I. On the very first day July, 1916, 20,000 British soldiers lost their lives and there were more than 57,000 casualties. To put that in perspective, that is more than the total combined British casualties in the Crimean, Boer, and Korean wars (History.com). Such heavy losses were due to artillery shifting away from the front German trenches too soon, leaving the infantry exposed in the no-man’s land. After that first day, the campaign became a battle of attrition until November.

The major turning point in the war was the United States’ decision to join the war. This was caused by the sinking of the Lusitania, the infamous ‘Zimmerman’ telegram, and attacks on United States ships. The Zimmerman telegram was sent in Jan. 1917 from Germany to Mexico in an attempt to get Mexico to attack the United States. After that, German U-Boats began attacking commercial ships from the United States to Britain in an attempt to halt potential supply lines between the two. In April, President Woodrow Wilson convinced Congress to declare war on Germany. The arrival of fresh U.S. troops dealt a major blow to the German army, who now has to face one of the world’s rising powers.

Another turning point was the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. The war was hugely unpopular with the Russian people and seen as highly unsuccessful. In November of 1917, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, seized power through a revolution under the slogan “Peace, bread, land” (bbc.co.uk). In December, Russia signed an armistice with Germany and in the peace treaty, Germany gained large amounts of land in Eastern Europe. This gave Germany the ability to mount a series of major offenses in France in the spring of 1918. Without the threat of Russia to the east, Germany could focus on trying to break France. They were able to break through a front south of Arras and push back the Allies forty miles. However, due to the front being fifty miles long, the German army was stretched too thin and could not sustain the attack.

While Germany no longer had the threat of Russia, they had a new threat: the United States. Starting on the 18th of July, the French received reinforcements in the form of 85,000 American troops who launched a counter-attack on the German forces, pushing them to retreat. This offensive became known as the Hundred Days Offensive. With the help of 10 divisions of soldiers, fifty tanks, and the Royal Air Force, the Allies launched a surprise attack at Amiens. After these series of battles, the Germans were pushed back and the German commanders privately decided the war was lost.

Germany signed the armistice before the Allies were able to invade Germany bringing the war on the Western Front to a close. On the 11th of Nov., 1918, the fighting ceased. The aftermath of the war was highlighted with a death toll that had never been seen before. The blame for the
The war was placed on Germany, along with harsh monetary reparation (around US$12.5 billion) which took them until 2010 to finally pay off. The monetary reparation was imposed due to all the civilian damage inflicted by Germany during the war. While the world leaders deemed this a fit punishment, it served to anger many Germans and led them to start the gears turning for the second global war.

**KEY PLAYERS IN WORLD WAR I**

*Courtesy biographyonline.net*

**UNITED STATES**

**Thomas Woodrow Wilson**
US president who negotiated the Versailles Treaty at the end of World War I based on his "Fourteen Points" and creating the League of Nations. He was, however, unable to get the US Senate to ratify membership. Wilson initially tried to keep the United States out of the war but changed his mind when a German U-boat campaign sank US ships crossing the Atlantic. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919.

**John J. Pershing**
The American general in command of all U.S. forces in Europe during the war. To the Allies’ consternation, Pershing strongly opposed the idea of sending American forces to fight on the front alongside regiments from Britain and France. Nevertheless, he did eventually reach a compromise, allowing limited numbers of U.S. soldiers to do exactly that.

**GREAT BRITAIN**

**Prime Minister Herbert Asquith**
Prime Minister of Britain who oversaw Britain’s entry into World War I when he underestimated the scale of the July crisis and relied on the judgement of colleagues who had supported the Boer war. He struggled to unite his government, and after the disasters of the Somme and a rising in Ireland was forced out by a mixture of press and political pressure.

**David Lloyd George**
A pacifist finance minister, George rallied behind the war effort first as minister of munitions in 1915, becoming War Minister then Prime Minister the following year. He is credited with creating the civil infrastructure to support the war, and for unifying the Allied military command in 1917. He was a key figure at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

**Winston Churchill**
The first lord of the British admiralty. Although Churchill is better known for his role as Britain’s Prime Minister during World War II, he played a significant role in World War I as well, serving as the head of Britain’s navy until he was demoted in 1915 following the British failure at the Dardanelles. Shortly thereafter, Churchill resigned his post and went to serve on the western front as a battalion commander.
**France**

**Raymond Poincare**
A conservative French prime minister and president noted for strong anti-German positions, he advocated moving further into Germany before signing the Armistice. Said to be cold and unimaginative, he came from the Lorraine region claimed by both France and Germany. His 1914 call for a "Sacred Union" of political figures struck a deep chord, and he was a highly respected figure after the war.

**Georges Clemenceau**
French Prime Minister from 1917-1920. Clemenceau known as the “Tiger” was a key figure in holding French resolve to fight for total victory, when others considered negotiating a treaty with Germany. He took a harsh position against Germany at the Treaty of Versailles.

**Germany**

**Kaiser Wilhelm II**
Last King of Prussia and German emperor who led his country to war in 1914. The grandson of Britain's Queen Victoria, Wilhelm ascended to the German throne in 1888 and forced the resignation of chancellor Otto von Bismarck. With support from conservative factions, Wilhelm put Germany on an expansionist, colonialist path. He broke traditional alliances with Russia and drew closer to Austria-Hungary and Italy. He was obliged to abdicate on November 9, 1918, and went into exile in the Netherlands.

**Austria-Hungary**

**Franz Joseph**
The emperor of Austria and king of Hungary, he launched hostilities in World War I by declaring war on Serbia on July 28, 1914, a month after the assassination of his nephew and heir Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. He ascended to the Austrian throne after the 1848 revolution and ruled as an absolute monarch before being forced to adopt a more liberal policy. He died during the war, in November 1916.

**Charles I**
The last of the Habsburg emperors, Charles I became heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian empire on June 28, 1914, following the assassination of his uncle Franz Ferdinand. He was made emperor in November 1916 and crowned apostolic king of Hungary a month later.

**Archduke Franz Ferdinand**
Heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Ferdinand’s assassination is considered the spark that ignited World War I. He was a Slavophile who favoured a federation to replace the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was murdered with his wife Sophie in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, by a Serbian nationalist.

**Russia**

**Tsar Nicholas II of Russia**
The last Russian tsar, he approved Russia's entry into World War I in August 1914. The Imperial Army's severe casualties -- some 3.3 million -- are often cited as a
leading cause of the fall of the Romanov dynasty. As the first Russian revolution erupted, the tsar was forced to abdicate in March 1917 and he and his family were executed by Bolsheviks on July 17, 1918.

**Leon Trotsky**  
A founder of the Russian revolution, he declared his opposition to global conflict in 1914. After the October Revolution, he became the de facto foreign minister and sought to stop the war without signing a peace treaty. Trotsky hoped the revolution would spread to Germany, but advances by German troops forced him to adopt Lenin's position and sign the Brest-Litovsk treaty in March 1918. Trotsky then reorganized the Red Army.

**Vladimir Lenin**  
Born Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, he was a Russian revolutionary who lived mostly abroad during the war, before returning home in February 1917. He convinced fellow Bolsheviks to revolt in October 1917, and became head of the Council of People's Commissars, mercilessly crushing any opposition. He was the driving force in Russia for the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

**Serbia**

**Gavrilo Princip**  
A young and naïve Bosnian Serb from a peasant family, Princip was the man who succeeded – at the second attempt – to kill Franz Ferdinand, the trigger event for World War One. Princip died in 1918 during a twenty-year prison sentence.

**World War I Timeline**

*Courtesy historylearningsite.co.uk*

1914

- **June 28th**: Francis Ferdinand assassinated at Sarajevo
- **July 5th**: Kaiser William II promised German support for Austria
- **July 28th**: Austria declared war on Serbia
- **Aug. 1st**: Germany declared war on Russia
- **Aug. 3rd**: Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium. Germany had to implement the Schlieffen Plan.
- **Aug. 4th**: Britain declared war on Germany
- **Sept. 6th**: Battle of the Marne started
- **Oct. 18th**: First Battle of Ypres
- **Oct. 29th**: Turkey entered the war on Germany’s side. Trench warfare started to dominate the Western Front.
1915
Jan. 19th  The first Zeppelin raid on Britain took place
Feb. 19th  Britain bombarded Turkish forts in the Dardanelles
April 25th Allied troops landed in Gallipoli
May 7th    The “Lusitania” was sunk by a German U-boat
May 23rd  Italy declared war on Germany and Austria
Aug. 5th   The Germans captured Warsaw from the Russians
Dec. 19th  The Allies started the evacuation of Gallipoli

1916
Jan. 27th Conscription introduced in Britain
Feb. 21st Start of the Battle of Verdun
April 29th British forces surrendered to Turkish forces at Kut in Mesopotamia
May 31st  Battle of Jutland
July 1st  Start of the Battle of the Somme
Sept. 15th First use en masse of tanks at the Somme
Dec. 7th   Lloyd George becomes British Prime Minister

1917
Feb. 1st   Germany’s unrestricted submarine warfare campaign started
April 6th  USA declared war on Germany
April 16th France launched an unsuccessful offensive on the Western Front
Oct. 24th  Battle of Caporetto – the Italian Army was heavily defeated
Oct. 26th  After Brazilian merchant ships were sunk by German submarines, President Venceslau Bras formally declared war on Germany and the Central Forces — the only South American country to do so, and the only Latin American nation to play a military role in the conflict.
Nov. 6th   Britain launched a major offensive on the Western Front
Nov. 20th  British tanks won a victory at Cambrai
Dec. 5th   Armistice between Germany and Russia signed
Dec. 9th   Britain captured Jerusalem from the Turks
1918

March 3rd  The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Russia and Germany.

March 21st  Germany broke through on the Somme

July 15th  Second Battle of the Marne started. The start of the collapse of the
          German army

Aug. 8th  The advance of the Allies was successful

Sept. 19th  Turkish forces collapsed at Megiddo

Oct. 4th  Germany asked the Allies for an armistice

Oct. 29th  Germany’s navy mutinied

Oct. 30th  Turkey made peace

Nov. 3rd  Austria made peace

Nov. 9th  Kaiser William II abdicated

Nov. 11th  Germany signed an armistice with the Allies – the official date of the
          end of World War One.

1919 (Post-war)

Jan. 4th  Peace conference met at Paris

June 21st  The surrendered German naval fleet at Scapa Flow was scuttled.

June 28th  The Treaty of Versailles was signed by the Germans.
Part 1: Art in Our Lives

• What is art? What is music? How do these fit into our lives?
• What was your first exposure to opera? What do you remember about it?
• Do you consider yourself an artist? What is the criteria for being an artist?
• Define what opera is, and what it is not. How does it differ from other musical and/or theatrical forms, including musicals and symphonies?

Part 2: Silent Night and Me

• What did you expect to experience with this opera? Were your predictions correct? In what ways were your expectations met or not met?
• Which character in the opera did you identify with most fully? Why do you think that is? Did the relationship and/or power dynamics between characters in the opera echo any of your experiences? How so?
• Did you, or family members that you know, live through World War I? What experiences during this time period are part of your family’s background or history?

Part 3: About the Production

• How did you see the technical elements support the story? Did anything in particular stand out?
• How did the music reinforce the action on stage? What musical changes did you note throughout in terms changes in setting and atmosphere?
• Aside from the many languages the opera is sung in, how were the different nationalities of the characters established? What elements distinguished each group?
• How does the opera relate to current events? Could a cease-fire happen today? Why or why not?
• If the Christmas Truce had lasted longer, would it have changed the outcome of the war? Why or why not?
Pre- and Post-Performance Activity: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

Assign four corners of the room (or four spaces within the room) to be the location for Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never.

When a statement is given, have students move to the location that matches their answer and discuss with their group members why those chose their answer. After several minutes of discussion, choose one group member from each area to share with the whole class why the group as a whole answered Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never.

**Statements about live performance:**

I *always, sometimes, rarely, or never* think that attending a live performance (an opera, play, concert, or sporting event) is more enjoyable than watching the same event on television.

I *always, sometimes, rarely, or never* think that attending live performances is an important thing to do.

Live performances hold my interest *always, sometimes, rarely, or never*.

When I attend live performances, I *always, sometimes, rarely, or never* feel like the story is relevant to my life.

I *always, sometimes, rarely, or never* wish I could attend live performances more often than I do.

**Notes on this activity:**

Remember to encourage your students to talk about WHY they chose their answers. Follow questions with more questions- for example, if students RARELY believe that operas and live performances are relevant to their lives, make sure to ask why. And how can we change that? Who is telling the stories right now? How do we position ourselves to make sure our stories, and stories that are important to us, get told? What stories would we like to see represented on stage? Also, if this activity is conducted both pre- and post-performance, make sure to encourage students to note if their answer has changed, and why it changed. Encourage them to talk about elements of the performance that may have contributed to their answer changing.
SILENT NIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM:
GRADES 6-8

Geography
1. Have students present oral reports or write research papers on a specific region or state within Germany, France, or Scotland, the countries represented in the opera. Students can focus specifically on present-day or WWI-era, or compare and contrast the two. Additionally, students can create drawings or paintings to accompany the project, and hang them in the classroom to create “cultural collages” of the three countries.

   WHG 6 – G2.2.1 Describe the human characteristics of the region under study (including languages, religion, economic system, governmental system, cultural traditions).

English Language Arts
1. In groups, have students brainstorm “Who, what, where, when, why, how” questions they may have relating to Silent Night. These could be about the production itself (“how long does it to put up an opera?”), about the setting (“Where did this story take place?”), or about the real-life event it’s based on (“What are the differences between the opera and factual accounts of this story?”). Share these questions with the full class, and then let students choose a question to answer through their research project.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7
   Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

2. Write a review of Silent Night and send a copy to the Michigan Opera Theatre. Write about what happened in the opera, and what you thought about it (music, design, performances). What stuck out to you about the production? Would you recommend the opera to a friend? Send your reviews to the Opera House.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1
   Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Visual Arts
1. In small groups, allow students to create their own mural which re-casts Silent Night (or some aspect of the story) in a modern expression. This could coincide with a field trip to the Detroit Institute of Arts to study the Detroit Industry murals and learn more about muralism as an art form.

   ART.VA.II.8.3
   Collaborate, communicate, and work with others to create new ideas at an emerging level.
English Language Arts

1. Write a review of *Silent Night* and send a copy to the Michigan Opera Theatre. Make sure to include a brief outline of plot and themes, a sense of what the staging looks like, and an evaluation of the design choices, music, and performances.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.D
   Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

2. Compose an essay on life of civilians during World War I in France, Germany, and/or Scotland, particularly noting changing roles for women and strengthening of labor unions during this time.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2
   Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

World History and Geography

1. Create an event timeline of World War I that emphasizes the incidents which led America from neutrality to participation in the war. From here, choose a specific item about which to write and present a persuasive speech to the class, using this event as justification for maintaining neutrality or joining the war.

   USHG 6.2.2
   WWI – Explain the causes of World War I, the reasons for American neutrality and eventual entry into the war, and America’s role in shaping the course of the war.

2. Have students create a digital slideshow which compares and contrasts World War I-era fighting styles and weaponry with those of previous time periods. Make sure to relate information about the invention, use, and technological changes of the weapons used in World War I, and the lasting effects of this changing technology.

   WHG 7.1.4
   Global Technology – Describe significant technological innovations and scientific breakthroughs in transportation, communication, medicine, and warfare and analyze how they both benefited and imperiled humanity.
SILENT NIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM: GRADES 11-12

English Language Arts

1. Compare and contrast the opera Silent Night with the film Joyeux Noël and historical documents relating to the Christmas Eve Truce. Note in particular any differences between the opera and the film, and how they stay true to or deviate from actual accounts of the cease-fire.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7
   Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

2. Individually or in small groups, have students brainstorm “Who, what, where, when, why, how” questions relating to Silent Night. These could be about the production itself, the themes represented in the opera, or the historical context of the piece. Let students choose one question to guide their research project, and then share final projects with the class.

   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7
   Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

World History and Geography

1. The events and effects of World War I paved the way for the Russian Revolution. In groups, have students examine the causes of the Revolution and create newspapers which advocate for and against the Revolution, from the point of view of various factions within the country.

   WHG 7.3.1
   Russian Revolution – Determine the causes and results of the Russian Revolution from the rise of Bolsheviks through the conclusion of World War II, including the five-year plans, collectivization of agriculture, and military purges.

2. Read some or all of the Treaty of Versailles as a class, and then host a classroom debate which analyzes multiple sections of the treaty. Was it fair that Germany was not represented at the settlement talks? Why does the "war guilt clause," Article 231, single out Germany and not the other Central Powers? Was the German response to the Treaty of Versailles justified? Have students take a stand on whether the treaty was fair or unfair, with specific evidence to justify their ideas.

   WHG 7.2.1
   World War I – Analyze the causes, characteristics, and long-term consequences of World War I by explaining the major decisions made in the Versailles Treaty and analyzing its spatial and political consequences, including the mandate system, reparations, and national self-determination around the globe.
AN INTRODUCTION

Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), the state of Michigan’s premier opera company, which, through its commitment to producing and presenting the very best professional productions of opera, dance, musical theater, and arts education programming, serves as a statewide cultural resource.

The vision of Founder and Artistic Director Dr. David DiChiera, and led by President and Chief Executive Officer Wayne S. Brown, MOT offers an essential, vibrant contribution to the quality of life for Detroit-area residents and to communities throughout the region. This dynamic cultural resource exemplifies artistic excellence. Since its founding in 1971, MOT has offered southeast Michigan the finest arts and cultural performances, concerts, education, and entertainment. By presenting culturally significant productions relative to the diverse populace of the region, such as Porgy and Bess, Anoush, King Roger, Dead Man Walking, and the world premiere production of Margaret Garner, MOT has brought the magic of live theatre to thousands of people.

In April of 1996, on the Company’s twenty-fifth anniversary, the ribbon was cut for the grand opening of the Detroit Opera House. Michigan Opera Theatre joined the ranks of major opera companies worldwide with the multi-million renovation of a 1922 movie palace. Michigan Opera Theatre is one of only a few opera companies in the United States to own its own opera house. The product of Dr. DiChiera’s dream, the Detroit Opera House is comparable to the world’s greatest houses in visual and acoustical beauty.

OUR MISSION

Michigan Opera Theatre is the premier multi-disciplined producer and presenter for opera, musical theatre, and dance in the Great Lakes Region. Based in the city of Detroit, the organization engages artists of national and international stature for stellar main stage and outreach performances, and provides compelling cultural enrichment programs for the diverse audiences and communities that it serves, making it one of Detroit’s pillars of arts and culture.

SELECT AWARDS & HONORS INCLUDE

Best Opera: The Passenger, Wilde Awards 2016 | Best Opera, Elektra, Wilde Awards, 2015 | Founder and Artistic Director Dr. David DiChiera named the 2013 Kresge Eminent Artist | Opera Honors Award to Dr. David DiChiera, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010 | Outstanding Service in the Field of Opera for Youth, National Opera Society, 2006 | Success in Education Award, Opera America, 2002
The Department of Education and Community Programs has brought its varied musical programs to every age group in Michigan for nearly 40 years. Artists visit schools, community centers, and stages throughout Michigan, performing shows that range from lively children’s operas to musical revues. Founded by Karen V. DiChiera, the Department of Education and Community Programs serves the entire state with quality entertainment and education.

Since its inception, the Department of Education and Community Programs has been honored with awards and recognitions including the Governor’s Arts Award, a Spirit of Detroit Award, and multiple Philo T. Farnsworth Awards for Excellence in Community Programming, among others. Touring productions, concerts, workshops, and residencies have reached many thousands of people throughout the state of Michigan, and programs have extended as far as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Canada. With an ever-growing repertoire of productions, an exciting roster of up-and-coming singers, and a circle of experienced and passionate teaching artists, the Department of Education and Community Programs continues to provide people of all ages with opportunities for access, growth, and learning through the arts.
Contact

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