

Gianni Schicchi

(or Where There's A Will)

OPERA
UPCLOSE
INTIMATE IN SCALE. MIGHTY IN IMPACT

Learning Guide



This learning guide supports students and their teachers in exploring **Gianni Schicchi** and the 2026 OperaUpClose production. Whilst the intended audience is students in years 9-11 (including GCSE Music and BTEC Performing Arts), we encourage you to use these materials as appropriate for your own individual setting.

Gianni Schicchi

(or Where There's A Will)

Music: Giacomo Puccini and Vahan Salorian

Libretto: Hannah Kumari

Director: PJ Harris

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This pack was written by Creative Learning Consultant Susie Ferguson, and was commissioned by OperaUpClose.

ABOUT OPERAUPCLOSE:

Information for Educators

We work with composers and writers to commission re-interpretations of known work that distil the essence of classic operas into new, contemporary chamber works with their own artistic integrity and excellence.

We produce at an intimate scale as an active artistic choice, giving all performers equal agency as storytellers and breaking down barriers between pit, stage and audience.

We build legacy and impact by enriching the repertoire with excellent new work that will last and be of future value for organisations and audiences across the UK.

We commission new cross-disciplinary companion pieces in partnership with exceptional arts organisations from across the UK.

We collaborate with partners, local and national, on a co-creative approach to newly commissioned work that reflects and explores the interests and environment of our audiences.

We create new operas made with and for 2-5 year olds, inspired by well-loved children's books, that engage a new generation in the power of musical storytelling.

We develop material through workshops and engagement activities in schools, taking our co-creative approach into the classroom.

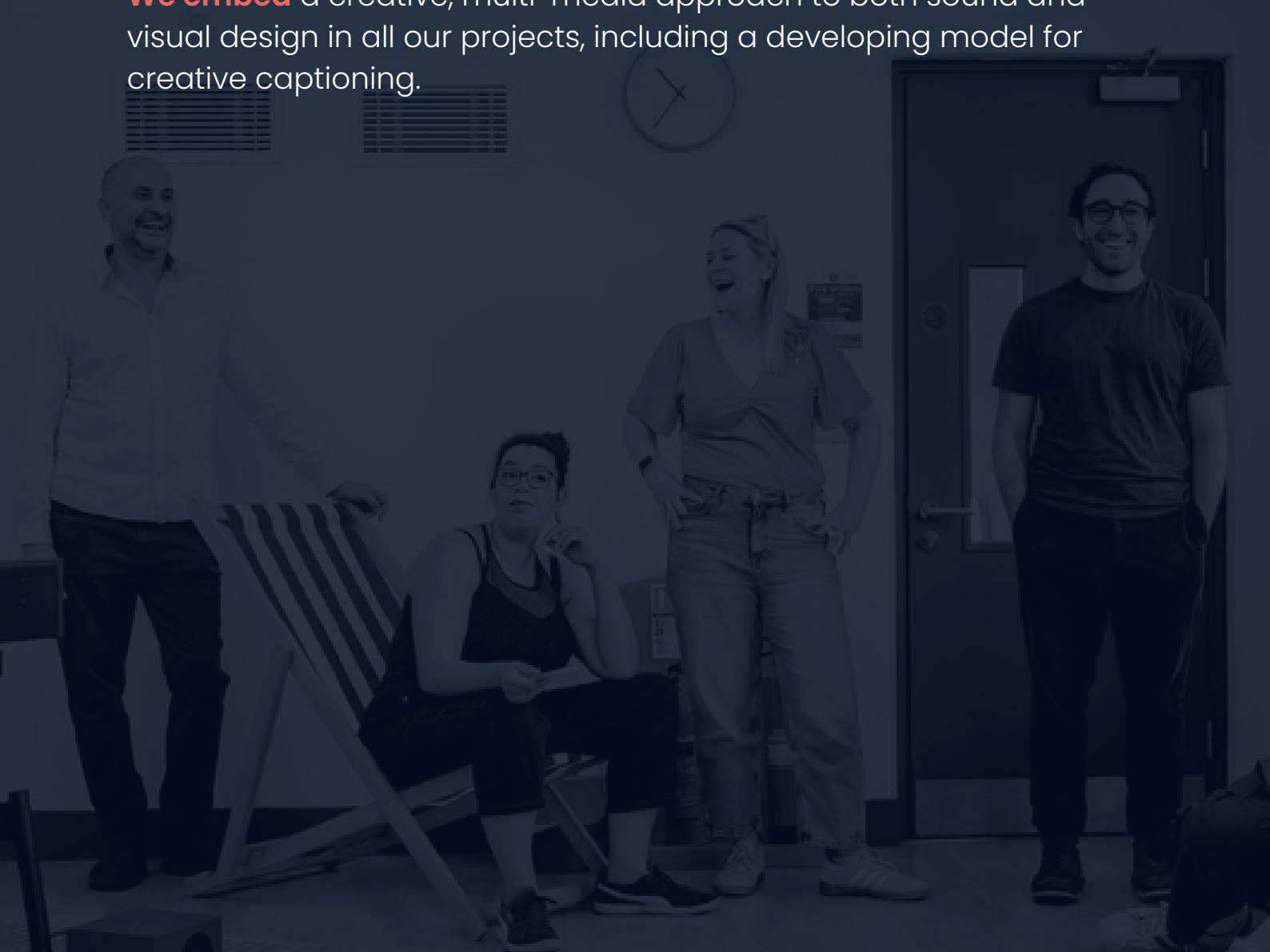
We contribute to an Early Years music strategy, led by local Music Hubs, that supports year round teacher led music delivery.

We support new voices within the art-form with paid training programmes for emerging producers, directors, conductors and performers through our Early Career Associate Artist Scheme.

We aim to diversify both those who make opera - performers, writers, designers and directors - and those who watch it by engaging people of all genders, ethnicities, backgrounds & economic means as audience, as performers & behind the scenes.

We share both process and performance across our digital platforms with high- quality filmed content, increasing access and widening our reach.

We embed a creative, multi-media approach to both sound and visual design in all our projects, including a developing model for creative captioning.



FACT FILE: GIACOMO PUCCINI

Giacomo Puccini was one of the greatest opera composers of all time. He is especially famous for writing emotional, dramatic operas with beautiful melodies. He came from a family of musicians and was the fifth generation of composers in his family. His operas are among the most frequently performed in the world today.



Full Name: Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini

Born: 22 December 1858, Lucca, Italy

Died: 29 November 1924, Brussels, Belgium

Nationality: Italian

Occupation: Composer

Musical Era: Late Romantic / Verismo opera

Musical Style

- Known for lyrical melodies and powerful orchestration
- His works place strong focus on human emotion and realism (love, jealousy, tragedy)
- Puccini was part of the Verismo movement (writing opera that shows real-life situations and feelings)
- The music closely follows the drama, enhancing the story and characters, in the same way that film music does today.

MOST FAMOUS OPERAS BY PUCCINI

***La bohème* (1896)**

- Set in Paris
- Story of young artists and their loves
- Famous arias: 'Che gelida manina', 'Mi chiamano Mimì'

***Tosca* (1900)**

- Set in Rome
- Themes of love, power, and betrayal
- Famous for its intense drama and suspense

***Madama Butterfly* (1904)**

- Set in Japan
- Tragic love story between Cio-Cio-San and an American naval officer
- Famous aria: Un bel dì, vedremo

***Turandot* (1926, unfinished and completed by Franco Alfano after Puccini's death)**

- Set in China
- Features the famous aria 'Nessun dorma'
- A tale of love and revenge
- Franco Alfano was a contemporary of Puccini, and lived between 1875-1954

Puccini's works were composed in Italy. At the time he was composing, huge developments were taking place all over the world. Take a look at the next page and see how many composers you recognise.

ITALY

- **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813–1901) A major influence on Italian opera, Verdi's operas include *Otello* and *Falstaff*
- **Pietro Mascagni** (1863–1945) A Verismo composer like Puccini, known for *Cavalleria Rusticana*
- **Ruggero Leoncavallo** (1857–1919) Known for *Pagliacci*, Leoncavallo was another Verismo composer
- **Umberto Giordano** (1867–1948) Verismo composer, known for *Andrea Chénier* and the aria La Mamma Morta

GERMANY & AUSTRIA

- **Richard Strauss** (1864–1949) Wrote dramatic operas and tone poems as well as operas including *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier*
- **Gustav Mahler** (1860–1911) Best known for symphonies, he also conducted operas and influenced orchestral writing

GREAT BRITAIN

- **Edward Elgar** (1857–1934): British composer of orchestral and choral music including the *Enigma Variations* and the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*

FRANCE

- **Claude Debussy** (1862–1918) Impressionist composer. His operas include *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Also famous for his piano music such as *Clair de Lune* and *Children's Corner*
- **Gabriel Fauré** (1845–1924) Wrote orchestral, choral, and chamber music including *Cantique de Jean Racine* and *Requiem*
- **Jules Massenet** (1842–1912) Opera composer known for *Manon* and *Werther*

RUSSIA & EASTERN EUROPE

- **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893) Famous for operas such as operas and ballets such as *Eugene Onegin*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*
- **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844–1908) Used rich orchestration. Well-known pieces include *The Flight of the Bumblebee* and *Scheherazade*
- **Leoš Janáček** (1854–1928) Wrote operas using strong emotional realism including *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *The Makropulos Case*.

You can find out more about Puccini from this Royal Opera and Ballet 'Creative Spotlight'. You may also like to create your own fact file to support your study of Puccini and other operatic works.

GIANNI SCHICCHI (OR WHERE THERE'S A WILL)

SYNOPSIS AND CONTEXT

Set in the fictional seaside town of Harmouth, Bruno Donaldson, a wealthy second-home owner is throwing one last seasonal soirée. As the evening quickly unravels, the local 'fixer' Gianni Schicchi enters the fray and things go from bad to worse for the entitled liberal elite. Who should be held to account in a world where everyone is out for themselves?

In the OperaUpClose production, the singers and musicians all perform as characters within the story. The musicians form a 'Greek chorus', the purpose of which is to comment on the action and move the narrative forward for the audience.

Opera singers:

Gianni Schicchi (30s) Baritone. A local man, working class. Charming.

Lauretta (30s) Soprano. Gianni's sister, a barista in a coffee shop. Pretty.

Roderick/Roddie (30s) Tenor. Bruno Donaldson's godson, Lauretta's boyfriend. An upper class beach bum with little disposable income. Childish.

Zara (30s) Mezzo soprano. Roddie's Sister, Bruno 's goddaughter. Lives in London. Head of PR at Amazon. Snobby.

Claudia (50s) Soprano. Bruno Donaldson' s ex-wife. Interior Designer. refined.

Simon (60s) Bass-Baritone. Bruno Donaldson's ex-business partner. Likes coke and booze. Historically upper class but now has little money because of his addictions. Edgy and suspicious.

Instrumentalists/Greek Chorus:

Bianca (Doctor) - Double Bass

Solicitor - Accordion

Witness 1 - Violin

Witness 2 - Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

The action takes place in the fictional town of Harmouth on the South Coast, on the evening of Saturday 1st September.

FULL SYNOPSIS

In the town of Harmouth, wealthy Bruno Donaldson has been throwing a lavish party at his home. He is pushed into his own swimming pool, and does not survive the 'accident'. As the assembled guests – Roddie, Zara, Lauretta, Claudia and Simon – decide what to do after this 'accident', Roddie reveals that he has heard a rumour in town that Bruno's will leaves all of his money to the local football club (Harmouth Town). They search for the will in the house, and discover that the rumours are true. Roddie asks Simon to call Gianni Schicchi (Lauretta's brother): he is the only man who might be able to find a way to reverse Bruno's decisions. Meanwhile, the family bemoan Bruno's bequest and the impact it will have on their own lives, revealing their prejudices against the local community as well as their self-centred and materialistic approach to life.

Zara, Roddie's sister, does not want to hear anything about Gianni as she sees him as lower class. She is against the relationship between her brother and Lauretta, who is Gianni's sister. Claudia also resists Gianni's involvement but Roddie urges them to accept him because he has the skills to reverse their fortune.

Lauretta implores Gianni to help her, but he suggests she find a different, local lad and to retain her self-respect. Zara declares that she will stand in the way of the match between Lauretta and Roddie, who implores Gianni once again to take a look at Bruno's will.

Bruno's body is moved to his bed. Shortly afterwards, Bianca the doctor arrives. Lauretta and Zara tell Bianca that Bruno has had a fall but is ok, and is resting. Gianni pretends to be Bruno by calling out to Bianca in a frail voice, claiming that he's fine and will come and find her later. Bianca returns to the party. After his successful impersonation of Bruno, Gianni concocts the plan to deceive Bruno's solicitor (who is also at the party) by having him create a new will, dictated by Gianni who will be disguised as Bruno. By creating this new will, Gianni assures the family, he will ensure they are the recipients of Bruno's fortune instead of the football club.

The assembled company agree that they will split the proceeds of Bruno's will equally between them, listing the different assets that they

would like such as property and a race horse. As they discuss it, they hear sirens and think that news of Bruno's death has spread, but it is a false alarm – Claudia assumes that the sirens are police cars going to areas that she thinks are more likely to have problems with crime – areas that she associates with people like Gianni Schicchi.

Bruno's family and friends say they will leave the finer details of the will to Gianni's discretion, but pledge that if he does this well, he will be rewarded. They reveal their shallow, superficial personalities as they realise that Gianni has the power over their fortunes. Gianni reminds them that forging a will is highly illegal and comes with serious consequences if they are found out: it's ironic that they are willing to commit this crime given they had previously criticised other people when they heard the police sirens.

The solicitor arrives with two witnesses. Gianni, disguised as Bruno, tells the solicitor that his fall into the pool has frightened him and he thinks it is a good idea to ensure his will is up to date. 'Bruno' claims that his hands are shaking from the fall and that's why he cannot write the will in his own handwriting. Claudia, Zara, Lauretta and Roddie all observe Gianni dealing with the solicitor and are impressed with his performance but are shocked when they hear 'Bruno' bequeath the racehorse, worth six million pounds, to Gianni Schicchi, followed by the estate in Harmouth Town and the yacht. The goodwill that the family had previously shown to Gianni disappears quickly as they realise that he has swindled them out of what they wanted for themselves. However, they know that they are helpless to object because it would reveal their criminal intentions. 'Bruno' asks Zara to give the two witnesses some money to thank them for helping them at such short notice.

Gianni confronts the family about their hypocrisy as they attempt to take everything they can. Roddie and Lauretta are delighted that they are now able to marry each other.

Gianni Schicchi turns to the audience and asks them to consider whether what he does is justified and whether he should or should not be condemned to Hell.

THEMES

REVENGE: Gianni Schicchi is subjected to rude and judgmental comments by those keen to get his help. He gives them a taste of their own medicine when he manipulates the situation for his own benefit, rather than theirs. He exposes their hypocrisy.

MONEY: Bruno's death does not cause grief for his family and former business partner. Instead they are more excited about the financial and material gain that they hope they will receive in the will.

FAMILY: Gianni and Lauretta are loyal siblings. However, Bruno Donaldson's family show little loyalty to each other, even identifying key aspects of Bruno's estate that they hope to obtain at the expense of others.

CRIME: Forging a will is a serious criminal offence, but one that the family are willing to risk because of the potential benefits. They make critical comments about other members of the local community who they consider criminal because they are of lower social class. Once again, their hypocrisy is highlighted because it is the family themselves who are committing serious fraud.

SNOBBERY: Roddie wishes to marry Lauretta, but his sister and family are against the marriage because Lauretta is working class rather than being a member of the wealthy elite like them. Their snobbery exposes them as shallow and superficial.

DECEPTION: From the moment Bruno dies at the beginning of the opera, a series of deceptions take place. This includes deceiving the party guests, the solicitor, the witnesses, and finally the deception of Bruno's own family by Gianni Schicchi.

Preparing to see the production.

Before you see *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*), it's helpful to think about what you're expecting.

Complete the following prompts:

Opera sounds like...

.....

The acting style is.....

.....

The instruments involved will be...

.....

The story will be about...

.....

The ending will be...

.....

The roles played by the singers and instrumentalists will be...

.....

The costumes for this operatic story will be...

.....

The setting is a summer party at the home of a wealthy man.

Draw what you think the set will look like below...

Once you've seen the production, revisit these predictions. What has surprised you? What elements of the production contradicted your preconceptions of opera?



THE SPOKEN WORD OVERTURE – INTERVIEW WITH RI BAROCHE

This production of *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*) begins with a spoken word overture. We would normally associate an overture as an orchestral piece of music played at the beginning of an opera, ballet or musical, and which contain the main musical themes and motifs that will be heard during the performance.

We caught up with Ri Baroche, a multi-disciplinary artist, who has written a spoken word overture for *Gianni Schicchi*.

What does it mean to be a multi-disciplinary artist?

I work across various different art forms, including writing, performance, music and facilitation. I also run arts projects. The art that I create is my form of activism. There are a lot of issues I'm very passionate about, whether it be LGBT rights or climate change.

How did you start working with *OperaUpClose*?

I first became aware of them because they're one of the resident companies at Mayflower Studios in Southampton. I've done a couple of projects there, primarily with ArtfulScribe. We worked together on Riders to the Sea, which is where I first sat in a room with Flora McIntosh (Artistic Director) and Michael Betteridge (composer). That was such a great experience, being part of a group of writers generating new material that would inform a new prologue. I then applied to work on the Research and Development (R&D) for *Gianni Schicchi* and was one of five writers who created a new spoken word piece. We took part in what seems to be the world's first (and only) opera slam! This involved creating a five minute spoken word piece that had accompaniment from an opera singer and a violinist who were responding to what we were doing to give it a sort of operatic flare, mostly through improvisation.

I think that was the first time any of us, whether it be the spoken word artist or the opera performers, have been in that kind of situation. It was very interesting and experimental – really fun. It was really great fun to have an opportunity to explore what they were doing with the story, and come up with this new piece. I was then invited back to write the prologue to *Gianni Schicchi*.

What experience did you have in working in opera before *Gianni Schicchi*?

Before working with OperaUpClose, I'd only ever seen one opera, and that was just by chance, because I was doing my year abroad in living in Paris. A friend of mine was au pairing for a family in which both the parents were opera singers, and they were doing a performance at the Théâtre du Châtelet. We went along, got to go backstage and stuff, we saw this opera, which was in English. I was 21 years old, and that was my first experience of opera. I had previously just thought that opera was only something that people wrote in Italian or German.

When the opportunity came up to be part of the *Riders to the Sea* project, I decided to give it a go. I'm a very curious person. I love to learn about things that don't feel accessible. And like I said, it's part of my motivation as an artist to make anything accessible: especially the arts. You don't have to come from an area of expertise. You just need a curiosity and a willingness to give things a go, as well as a respect for the art form.

Opera is a very heightened art form, which is a really helpful way of framing it, particularly for people who look at opera and see it as very inaccessible. It's like any art form. It's like Shakespeare: it's only drab and boring if you approach it in a way that's been done a million times before. Shakespeare's still relevant. Opera is still relevant because people are giving it a fresh take that applies to the modern day.

What was the process of writing the spoken word overture to *Gianni Schicchi*?

This opera is a really well known, well loved, respected piece that is tied to Dante's *Inferno*, which is one of the most historic pieces of literature.

When I get into something, I often start with a title that might appear to me. Something that really solidifies what you're kind of thinking of. Then you can work backwards, identifying what's behind that title. In this case, though, because obviously we already had a title, it was more important to look for some kind of image that would unlock where this piece is. I thought that if we've got spoken word before opera, that's instantly going to feel unexpected and jarring for the audience. I didn't want to make them feel that this is totally irrelevant or something that's been tacked on at the beginning. I wanted it to feel like it is really in sync with the production, the art form and the story.

The key was to identify the person, or people, who would be speaking this piece, why they would be speaking, and where they would be.

Hannah Kumari (the production's writer) and the creative team were looking to do a reworking of the story, which could be an episode or a film, like from the *Knives Out* series or *The White Lotus*. It lends itself to speculation and the idea of gossiping about the comings and goings of rich, privileged people, and who's ultimately going to get the upper hand. Are people going to be held accountable? In a modern sense, it feels familiar and feels permissible to do all of those things like commenting on the action and what's about to take place. So I decided it would be a podcast.

As soon as I had that image in my head, it was clear there'd be two people, and a dialogue, because that would be more interesting for the audience and more interesting for me to write as well. We're talking about a story where you've got people basically fighting over what the truth is and a character who's impersonating another to get their own way. My idea was about two people who give their own take on things, and it plays with the idea of whether you can trust what they're saying before the piece has even started. The idea plays into the modern world's use of platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, and the way people spout something as if it's fact.

Then it was a question of figuring out what the form would be, because opera uses heightened language, as well as heightened music. The way that Hannah had written the script was kind of very relatable, though. A lot of the speech is very contemporary and conversational.

That gave me permission to do the opposite in the overture: to make the prologue more operatic even than the production itself. I was reading Dante's *Inferno*, which also uses a very heightened and dense writing style.

Dante's *Inferno* is written in rhyming scheme called terza rima*. It lends itself to the operatic nature of the piece and gives me a really interesting rhyming scheme to play with, or to break at certain points when it feels appropriate to the characters and what they're saying.

*Terza rima is a rhyme scheme in which tercets (groups of three lines) conform to a rhyme scheme of ABA, BCB, CDC, and so on. The end of the middle line informs the rhyme for the next tercet. When written in the English language, terza rima utilises iambic pentameter. The scheme is said to have been invented by Dante Alighieri, the author of *Inferno*.

Because of the closed captions the audience will be able to follow along, but there will be a sense of whether on the one hand we celebrate language, but also question whether we can really trust what's being said because of that complexity. The characters might finish each other's sentences, they might finish each other's rhymes, or they might not rhyme with each other.

If I'm writing a scene, especially with two characters, I will basically make them argue with each other and figure out what their personalities are. In the case of *Gianni Schicchi*, we've got one character who's an elitist socialite, and on the other hand, we have got someone who has a connection to the town where the piece is set. He's from more of a working class origin. Being able to put them up against each other and get them to argue over the course of the drafting gave a really clear sense of who those characters are.



REORCHESTRATING GIANNI SCHICCI - INTERVIEW WITH VAHAN SALORIAN

The original orchestration of *Gianni Schicchi* involved up to 60 instruments. However, this production uses a reduced score. Vahan Salorian explains his role as an orchestrator, and explains the challenges and opportunities of this project:

Can you tell us about your route into music?

I don't come from a musical family, but my mum listened to a lot of music in the house, so my music tastes have basically come from my mum. I grew up in the north of England, where there's a brass band culture. I was in my local brass band so I learned a lot through playing in ensembles. When I went to secondary school in Yorkshire I started learning the flute, which became my main instrument, and then I was involved a lot in all the county youth orchestras. I was a member of various different ensembles and took part in a lot of different types of music making.

I really, really loved playing, and composition wasn't a thing that really occurred to me as a career, until I did GCSE music. For our coursework portfolio we had to write a country and western theme. That summer, the North Yorkshire County Music Service did their super elite orchestra course, which was run by my violin teacher. She encouraged me to enter a piece into their new composition competition, so I submitted that GCSE piece. The orchestra played through all of the entries and then chose the one they would play in their big concert.

I remember sitting there, and suddenly 60 people started playing this thing that I'd only ever heard coming out of a computer speaker before. I thought, "I am going to do this for the rest of my life". It was like a proper 'wow' moment. Luckily, my piece was the one that got picked for performance in the concert.

During sixth form, I auditioned for music colleges, and I studied at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. It was an amazing experience, especially as a composer, because you're just surrounded by amazing players: you can write stuff and actually get it played just by your mates, and often for free! Nowadays, I can pay that back whenever someone tells me they need a musician who plays a particular instrument, I think "I'm going to recommend that guy who played in all my operas for free when I was younger...".

How did you start working on opera, specifically?

In my final year of uni, I wrote an immersive opera, set in a nightclub: I wrote it and put it on with my friends, as an outside project. Until that point, opera was not a thing that had ever really interested me – I was always much more into instrumental music.

I didn't know a lot about opera but I just thought that a nightclub would be the perfect setting for an opera. It was a good challenge to write an opera that I would like to go and see. Hamish Mackay from The Opera Story came to see that opera and invited me to work with them on a new opera and I've worked with them several times now.

On both of those projects I was working with my best mate who I grew up with back home. To this day he's still my main librettist with whom I work. I've done about five different operas now, and I work with the English Touring Opera, with whom I'm writing their next opera for SEN and Early Years audiences.

I like working with different mediums, such as theatre or film, as that crossover enhances the storytelling that's in the music.

Can you tell us about other aspects of your work?

I'm writing an orchestral piece at the moment, and it's very daunting, because the possibilities are endless: there's no definite starting points, whereas I find it that when you read a libretto it feels very obvious what the music needs to do to show that that person is angry or that something is happening in the action, for example.

What advice can you give to young people who would like to make a career in music?

Although there is a constantly changing landscape of jobs and technology, humans will always need to consume art: now more than ever! Music is art and we're always going to yearn for human expression. As a musician, the opportunities to promote yourself and be heard are so much greater now than they were 20 years ago, when I was growing up. There are also more ways to have your music realised. You could write a piece of classical music, and obviously the best thing is always to have it played live, but you can get your music out there on so many different avenues, such as sound libraries. You can actually get access to a much bigger audience now.

It can be challenging working in the industry, and there can be a huge element of chance: I get jobs and work coming in from contacts that I made five to ten years ago that I never thought would actually come to fruition, and then suddenly someone gets in touch! For example, I've just finished a choral piece for a choir that I worked with when I was a teenager. You never know where the work is going to come from. You've always got to be very open to opportunities. With artists, we're always comparing ourselves to the success of other people. You might be working on a job, but then looking at someone who's also your age doing something that you think is bigger or better than what you're doing. I think the absolute key to staying sane as an artist, and actually putting out work of any worth, is to treat every project you work on as the most important thing in the world, and then you'll always be satisfied.

Do you think that AI is a threat to musical composition?

I think AI is a threat to things like library music and pastiche types of music. When you have a career as a composer, though, you're always making something that is new. If you look at some of the film and TV music that is emerging now, such as the score for *The White Lotus*, it's incredibly original and exciting. AI is never going to be able to achieve that because it's only generated from music that's gone before: it can never make something completely new. The whole point of classical music is that it's a kind of puzzle – a fun game that you play to make something new and original.

The other reason I chose composition more over being an instrumentalist, was that I could write the worst piece, the worst piece that you've ever heard, but only I could have written it! Whereas, as a flautist for example, I was practising four hours a day and taking it really seriously, but there'll always be a YouTube video of someone playing the same piece as I'm playing, but better. That's why I liked composing. It's your own path that you're making. You can't really compare with other people.

How is classical music relevant today?

On every film that you watch and every TV show that you see, 90% of what you're listening to is a piece of classical music. Classical music is often associated with a period of about 150 years around the 1700s but it's a constantly changing and evolving form. We need a new term for it! You can't easily compare the work of Philip Glass to Bach, but they are both composers of classical music. They're both amazing. We've been inspired by the music of contemporary composers such as Cristobal Tapia de Veer, who composed the music for *The White Lotus* and Nathan Johnson's music for *Knives Out*, for example. Their works are technically classical, but so different from what we might expect from that term.

What was the process of orchestrating the score of Gianni Schicchi?

The first part of the process is listening to it, watching it and understanding the story. I don't speak Italian, so watching it helps see the sentiment. (This production is in English). The great thing about Puccini's music is that it's exactly like film music: the music relates directly to the action that is happening on stage. It's a very fulfilling kind of opera to watch, much more than classical era opera. Potentially, if someone's singing about something terrible, the music is going to move you. If they're singing about being loved, it sounds like a big, majestic kind of filmic love theme, for example. The parts become a lot more virtuosic, because you're taking a 40 strong orchestra down to four people. What the clarinet has to do, and the violin as well, becomes much more showy and fun for the musicians as well. It does start to sound like a kind of travelling band that's just struck up and starts playing.

That's quite nice, because it already gives a different angle on what people are used to hearing. Once we'd made those decisions, I worked through the score from beginning to end.

We had a *sitzprobe**. We heard it all first and I got helpful feedback from the singers and instrumentalists. I then went away and made some tweaks. I worked closely with the Erica, the conductor, as well: she had important thoughts on speeds that she wanted to change, or different markings to put in. I then sent back a final draft of the score.

*A *sitzprobe* is a session where the orchestra and singers rehearse the score together for the first time.

What were some of the challenges of this particular orchestration?

Our production of *Gianni Schicchi* is in English but it's not a literal English translation. Often when an opera is translated, the person who's done the translation tries to match the words syllable for syllable, so that you end up really just being able to slot in this new translation. Because aspects of the story have slightly changed in our version, we wanted it to feel really naturalistic and like the English language that is spoken, rather than a clunky translation. There were quite a few bits where some melodies did have to change, or some rhythms because when you sing everything, it becomes twice as long straight away. There were some moments which I had written more in a spoken pace, which when the singers started singing it, we realised it was just impossible to get the words out fast enough.

The most important thing to me is that people understand the words that they are hearing. It's a piece of storytelling, and I want people to be in the story, so I want them to understand what people are saying. Other considerations include checking that the range that the singer is in is not so high that everything becomes muddled or so low that you can't hear them over the orchestra, and that you give the space and time for the words to be really clear.

Orchestration is a puzzle. You have to think very creatively to solve problems, especially such a massive reduction in the ensemble size. You don't want the audience to get tired of hearing the same thing over with only four instruments: you don't want any fatigue on the ear.

You can't just have everyone playing all the time so sometimes you take things out, or you shift things around in the octaves that they're playing and you have to be a bit bold. That's probably the biggest challenge of it, because it's big and lush when you hear it performed with the full orchestra.

***Gianni Schicchi* is quite short. How does it achieve its drama?**

The opera is under an hour, so it's pacy: you feel like you're watching an episode of a murder mystery.

With the exception of 'O mio babbino caro', the singing is very pattery – it's almost musical theatre in its delivery. It's very quick, very conversational. The problem with opera sometimes, when you have lots of melisma*, is that it can take you a while to really understand what's going on. But the great thing about this opera is it's so action led you're essentially watching it in real time. Apart from that one aria ('O mio babbino caro') there's no moment where you have these kind of Shakespearean soliloquy moments where people step out of the action. You're constantly in the action, and it's moving forward.

*Melisma is the vocal technique of singing one syllable over multiple notes.

'O mio babbino caro' is one of the most famous operatic arias of all time. Did you feel a lot of pressure orchestrating this piece?

It's the only one where I really changed what Puccini had written, and tried to do something a little bit more original with it, because it's the most famous part of *Gianni Schicchi*. It's a moment of stillness where I actually could be a bit more experimental with the sounds of these four instruments. I've made it sound a little bit more folky than you might expect. In the original there are lots of runs of harp and strings kind of low down, playing semiquavers in the background. I took all of that out and just made it like a drone on an accordion at the beginning. It focuses the audience's attention: it's the bit that most of the audience who know the show have been waiting to hear so I think the changes make a bigger occasion of it.

The repetition of musical themes throughout an opera is where film got it from: all the leitmotifs and the big love theme that the lovers have, for example. It comes all the way through the show, and the character of Gianni Schicchi – his name, those four syllables – has a little arpeggio tune that you can hear every time someone shouts it or says it. You can hear it around the whole piece. At the end, there are parts for off-stage singing as well. I don't want to give away what happens at the end but you'll hear the singers still singing, even though they're not on stage anymore.



DESIGNING GIANNI SCHICCHI – INTERVIEW WITH RACHEL SAMPLEY

Rachel Sampley is a lighting designer who also works with creative captioning which you'll see throughout *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*). In this interview, Rachel explains the process of designing lighting and projection for the opera.

Can you introduce yourself and your work?

I'm a lighting and video designer. I'm from Tennessee in the USA, and have been working in London for 11 years. I work in a lot of different forms of theatre, including dance and opera. I love them all. For *Gianni Schicchi* I'm designing lighting and creative captioning, which is also a key part of my work. I'll be blending a lot of projection and lighting together.

Tell us more about creative captioning...

Creative captioning was originally predominantly for people who are hearing impaired or deaf, but it's also helpful for people for whom the sung language is their second language, and I think it can be helpful for people with neurodiversity, for example supporting auditory processing.

The captioning is incorporated into the scenography so that you don't have to play 'eyeball tennis' if you're relying on the captions for all of your understanding: you can be more focused on the piece and what's happening on stage. It also helps with carrying some of the tonality and delivery that you would miss if you were relying solely on text captions for it. When I am making these captions, I'm thinking for example, "okay, this is a really long note that's being delivered. Maybe it's going to carry on and maybe someone sounds frightened", so the text is going to appear wiggly, or someone whispers their line so the text appears tiny and then disappears into smoke.

We'll use one projector for this production, but other productions might use two or three projectors, depending on the scale and length of the production. It also depends on how many different surfaces we are using to project onto and where they are on stage.

When I'm designing creative captions, I will be in rehearsals more than if I was working solely on lighting design. I need to think about the blocking and spacing of the performance.

How have you worked with Anna Yates (set designer) to create the design concept for this production of *Gianni Schicchi*?

I've worked really closely with Anna, and I think because of the captions I've worked with her even more closely than I would have if I was just doing lighting. We have a constant back and forth. We discuss items of the set that need to be built, and how we can integrate lighting for example, putting a bulb in a closet, or using an LED tape somewhere else on set. We have to negotiate budget demands, too. We have to ask, "what does this item need to do, and how can it do everything that both departments need from it?"

We have approached this production by acknowledging that it is surreal. It is strange. The characters are singing rather than speaking. We've definitely leaned into that, by including surrealness within the design. It'll be within the projections, and I think that it'll be in the dark comedy aspect of it.

What was your route into being a lighting designer?

When I was 14, and got into an art school for drawing and painting: it was a magnet school – a school in the USA that offers a particular focus (such as performing arts) as well as the general curriculum. I started taking technical theatre classes and just really fell in love with lighting. I'd come from a painting and drawing background but discovered the camaraderie of theatre and performing arts, and that was all very exciting. I came to video and captioning design at a later stage than lighting. I wanted to be doing a little bit more like textures on the stage, for example things that are organic, like clouds, constellations, and water. You can do some of it with lighting but it's often done with projection, just because it is more effective. That blending of lighting is how I got into projections.

I met the Deaf and Hearing ensemble – a deaf-led theatre company who needed captions: their shows are in British Sign Language (BSL) and English. I started working with them, and I now work with a lot of deaf-led companies. I also take a BSL class once a week!

What was your process for designing the lighting and captions for *Gianni Schicchi*?

The sitzprobe was very helpful: this is a new adaptation of the original opera and unusually we were able to hear the score and singing very early on in the creative process.

In other operas I've done, I've had to look at translations and then be going back and forth, whereas this is a little bit more accessible for me just because I speak English. As rehearsals start, I attend rehearsals a lot, and throughout the rehearsal process. I'm working really closely with PJ Harris (Director) and Anna. We've got references that we started with – I created a deck of research and design ideas which we've also used. The ideas have evolved from there.

I'm excited about this production because audiences can just watch it and understand it: this might be their first experience of opera. Hopefully you'll come away having enjoyed it and laughed. *Gianni Schicchi* is about a murder, but it is funny. It's a light, dark comedy. We've very keen to make more people welcome in the opera space.

What advice can you give to young people who want to work in the performing arts industry?

The performing arts offer so many different opportunities as well as challenges. Performance will always happen: it's been happening for thousands of years. It will continue to evolve and change and getting involved is important. That changed my life. I've done lots of different jobs in theatre – there's a range of jobs that require different skills and abilities. It takes so many people to make something happen. It's like an iceberg, audiences only see the tip of that iceberg in the performance, but there's a huge number of people making it happen.



PERFORMING IN *GIANNI SCHICCHI* – INTERVIEW WITH SOPRANO CEFERINA PENNY

Ceferina plays the role of Lauretta in the OperaUpClose production of *Gianni Schicchi (or Where There's A Will)*. She joined us to talk about her musical training, her preparation for the role of Lauretta, and how to pursue a career as an opera singer.

What was your introduction to opera?

It's hard to pinpoint where it started but my dad used to put on a particular opera CD by a tenor from Argentina who was singing in a restaurant there (I'm half Argentinian and we spent a lot of time there) and my dad bought a CD from him. Dad used to tell me it was Pavarotti: it wasn't Pavarotti, but I didn't know any different! I was about three, but I was already obsessed with the sounds that the singer was making, and I would try and imitate it.

My parents weren't knowledgeable about opera before I got into this career, but they would buy me CDs that I would then listen to avidly, such as a Katherine Jenkins CD or The Phantom of the Opera recording.

By the time I got to about nine years old I was singing all the time at home. My parents decided to get me some singing lessons. My teacher asked me what kind of music I liked, and I said classical music and opera. My teacher was amazing. She had been in the Glyndebourne Opera chorus and she knew the industry well. She got me into singing in Italian and French, and even German which I found more difficult.

My teacher encouraged me to audition for the Royal Northern College of Music junior programme which took place on a Saturday: I got a scholarship to attend that between the ages of 15 and 18. That was the best thing I could have ever done as it set me up for going to music college. I didn't know how people became opera singers, but I just knew that I wanted to do it. I went to the Royal College of Music in London, where I did an undergraduate and a Master's degree, and then did a year at the National Opera Studio.

Can you tell us more about your music training?

Studying at a music college is a lot more hands-on than a traditional university: there's a lot more contact time – about 30 hours per week, which is often a lot more than academic-based university degrees have. We would have lessons from about 10am to 4pm every day, and then some late classes which would go on into the evening. It was a four year undergraduate course.

Classes would consist of music theory, oral training, and the history of music, for example, and then the actual singing classes. It was quite nice, because for the theory, oral training and the history of music, we would be grouped together with all of the different instrumental players. In the first year, we had Italian and German lessons, two of each of those a week. In my course, we also had one-to-one singing lessons and coaching each week.

We also had movement classes. I didn't know about those beforehand but I'm really thankful for them: I learned how to do Viennese Waltz, some Cha Cha, the Charleston, and other styles. It was less about the moves and more about learning choreography and having confidence on stage. In some productions, we have to be dancers as well. That was really valuable for me as I didn't do dance lessons as a child.

As we progressed through the course, other elements were added, such as French language, and then working on repertoire. We'd work with people who'd been conductors and répétiteurs who would coach us.

After my Masters I went to the National Opera Studio (NOS) in London. That was very intense: they receive about 500 applications a year, but only accept about twelve singers and four pianists. What makes it so special is that NOS works in partnership with the six major opera companies in the UK: the Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne, Opera North and English National Opera. We did residencies with them and the course provided a tailored one-on-one training programme. That's where I feel I really became an opera singer. It was amazing.

What is the difference between a singing teacher and a coach?

A singing teacher will focus on the foundations of your singing technique which is the way you use your internal muscles to produce a sound. It's how you use your voice as your instrument. I read something recently that said that when you sing, you engage 100 different muscles in your body! Your singing teacher helps you develop the best way to use them to produce sound in an effective and healthy way.

A singing coach will bring a more stylistic approach to the way you learn your music. You'll take a piece of music to them, such as an aria, and they will tell you more about the musicality, the phrasing and so on. Singing teachers will do this too, but the coach has a depth of knowledge about the breadth of the repertoire and how composers will originally have intended pieces to be sung.

Have you had acting lessons as well?

I did LAMDA grade exams when I was younger – I started in the group classes and then took some one-to-one lessons which have really helped when doing operas based on Shakespeare, for example.

How have you prepared for the role of Lauretta in this production of *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*)?

If I don't know an opera that I have been cast in, I would begin my preparation by watching it. However, *Gianni Schicchi* is a very famous opera which I've seen many times, both in person and online. I know the plot, but this is an adaptation of the original, so this process is a little different. This version is in English rather than Italian, so I haven't had to go through the translation process: the first thing I did was read through the score, because the words are different to Puccini's version. The personalities of the characters are slightly changed, and it's good to take note of that. I know what the original Lauretta is like and what this Lauretta is like, and they're very, very different. For example, in this version, Lauretta and Gianni are siblings: he's my older brother (rather than my father in the original) so that changes their relationship. Because there's no recording of this version, I have to rely on initiative before rehearsals to develop the interpretation.

The thing about this piece, both for the Italian and this version, is that it's an ensemble piece. Normally Lauretta is not on stage at the start of the opera, but in this version, she is, and it's the hardest bit! The first things I have been learning are the ensemble moments, and then there's a section later on which is more dense and difficult vocally – it leaps around quite a lot – so I've prioritised that part as well.

A lot of my preparation has literally just been sitting down with the music and counting and then trying to put on a backing track and counting and then failing and trying again! In anything that is an ensemble piece that's dense or bitty, it's good to start in those bits because they're the most difficult. I do get the big aria in the middle of this opera, but that's the easiest thing to learn, and I already have sung it many times in Italian, so I know the tune.

You will sing the most famous aria in this opera 'O mio babbino caro'. Does that create a sense of pressure?!

Yes! Everyone is waiting for it! Normally in the original it's quite a tender, almost heartbreak, moment but in this version, Lauretta is quite a

manipulative character, and the words that she's saying in this version are inherently funny. I hope I can convey this new version character to the audience, effectively but beautifully!

What advice would you give to aspiring opera singers?

Throw yourself at it! You need a lot of commitment to the art form, a lot of self-belief, and a lot of confidence. One thing I always tell myself is art is subjective, and everyone is going to have a different opinion of you, but you've got to have blinkers on to only take the advice that is useful for you. This could be your singing teacher and if you go to a music college, you'll also have your coach. Those are the people you can really confide in.

It really does take a village to support you in your training and so it's good to have a support network around you.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

MODERNISING AND ADAPTING LYRICS: 'O MIO BABBINO CARO'

This aria is one of the most famous for soprano singers in the entire opera repertoire. You can find a vast number of recordings of this aria on platforms such as YouTube and Spotify.

Classic FM translate the aria as follows:

*Oh my dear papa
I like him, he is so handsome.
I want to go to Porta Rossa
To buy the ring!
Yes, yes, I want to go there!
And if my love were in vain,
I would go to the Ponte Vecchio
And throw myself in the Arno!
I am pining, I am tormented!
Oh God, I would want to die!
Father, have pity, have pity!
Father, have pity, have pity!*

Now compare this with Hannah Kumari's lyrics on the next page...

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

MODERNISING AND ADAPTING LYRICS: HANNAH KUMARI

Hannah Kumari's lyrics are included below:

Oh, my darling brother.
He really is my man.
I'm desp'rate to get married
on the beach on Koh Phan gan.
Brother I'm deadly serious.
You simply can't say no.
Or I'll go down to the harbour
and drown myself below.
Oh, dreadful pain and suffering,
I simply can't go on!
I simply can't go on.
I simply can't go on.

Consider how Hannah has adapted the words and leveraged the key concepts in a new way.

Here, the song is sung by Lauretta, who is appealing to her brother (rather than her father) to help ensure she can marry Roddie. The setting has also changed from Florence (where the Ponte Vecchio bridge is situated) to the fictional town of Harmouth.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CREATING A SPOKEN WORD OVERTURE

Ri Baroche identified that a key aspect of *Gianni Schicchi* is whether or not we can fully trust what people say. People's accounts of what happened aren't always true or accurate. From that premise, Ri created a podcast scenario in which two people from two different social classes discuss what has happened. During that ten minute overture, the personalities of the two characters, and their viewpoints, become clear before the opera begins.

Having chosen one key theme from *Gianni Schicchi* (Revenge: Money: Family: Crime: Deception), students should write a spoken language overture for *Gianni Schicchi* (*or Where There's A Will*) using what they have seen in the OperaUpClose production and/or from reading Ri's interview in this learning guide.

Offer students the following prompts:

- **Create the scenario** in which two or three people are talking about their chosen theme. This could be characters from the opera itself, or other characters that they have created themselves (another guest at the party, a journalist who finds out about the plot, a wedding guest from Roddie and Lauretta's wedding...)
- **Improvise a conversation with a partner.** Explore what these two characters might say to each other about the student's chosen topic. You may wish to allow students to record this improvisation to help them later.
- **Explore rhythm and meter.** The *Gianni Schicchi* overture is written in terza rima. Students might use iambic pentameter, the sonnet form, rhyming couplets or blank verse, all of which they are likely to have covered in their English lessons.
- **Write the words for the spoken word overture.** Emphasise the need for drafting, and if possible spread the writing process over several lessons or homework assignments.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Ri Baroche gives the following advice for writing a spoken language overture:

- **Write about something you know**, and that you're passionate about.
- **Look at pieces of writing that you like** and sort of use the same techniques that you admire in that writing. If you're really struggling for ideas, there's no shame in taking inspiration from people you like and their work.
- **Don't be afraid of the drafting process**. In order for me to get to that point where we've got the finished version of the overture, I had to fail multiple times. I had to throw ideas away, or I had to look at lines that I'd written and discard them.

You can use the space below to make notes:

CREATIVE CAPTIONING

OperaUpClose's *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*) utilises creative captioning to enhance the experience of the audience by representing sound in a visual way. The text that is being sung is also projected on to various parts of the set, including the floor, the back wall, and pieces of furniture. The way in which the text is presented reflects the way in which the text is sung, for example, a whisper might be represented by very small text which then seems to disappear in smoke or fade away.

Task: Choose one of the set works from the exam syllabus which contains lyrics. This might be a pop song, or a musical theatre song for example. Imagine that the song is being performed live on stage. Task the students with designing the creative captions for the song. You can offer the following prompts:

1. Decide what surfaces might be available on your stage that you can project onto
2. Consider the colours that you might associate with the song. For example, red has connotations of love but also anger. Green is associated with jealousy, and yellow is an uplifting colour.
3. Work through the song line-by-line and design (using PowerPoint, for example) how you would present those creative captions. As well as considering how the singer will use their voice and how you will represent that, ensure that you also reflect the tempo, style, mood and tone of the piece. If your chosen song is sung by a particular character, consider how you will reflect their personality in your design.

Before you start: Rachel Sampley, Lighting and Captions designer, gives this advice:

Ask yourself "If I was only accessing this production visually, what would I need?"

In my work I'm translating the auditory world into a visual one. If there's a doorbell, how do I convey that? If a phone rings, I need to convey that somehow. I also ask what the performer is doing on stage. For example, are they whispering, or yelling? This can inform what the caption looks like. You do have to be careful sometimes with conflicting needs or effects: for example, using flickering or flashing lights can be difficult for people who are photosensitive, even though it might be helpful for a hearing impaired audience, so strike a delicate balance.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Once students have completed their designs, they should present it, preferably alongside the track for which they have designed. (With programmes like PowerPoint, students can use settings to time their presentation transitions according to the track)

Reorchestration and *The White Lotus*:

A significant influence for this production of *Gianni Schicchi* is the filmic scores of *The White Lotus* and *Knives Out*. This activity asks students to consider how to reorchestrate some or all of a piece of music. You may wish to prepare for this task by reading this [article](#) from Classic FM.

1. Watch this video of the opening credits of HBO's *The White Lotus*.

Discuss the ways in which the composer, Cristobal Tapia De Veer, uses percussion, vocalisation and discordant sounds to create a chilling suggestion of something that's going to go wrong. This darkness is matched in the opening credits of the series in which the seemingly exotic and beautiful imagery harbours darker suggestion behind it. Ask students to identify the different instruments used, and challenge them to connect it with other music (period, style, form) that they have heard. This may also be an opportunity to draw comparison with set works on your chosen exam specification.

2. Watch the video of Series Two's opening credits for *The White Lotus*.

Discuss the difference in orchestration from Series One. Note the use of Electronic Dance Music (EDM) beats, and a more Italian style of music and instrumentation. Draw their attention to the way in which the soundtrack and the visual opening credits complement each other. (You can listen to the extended version [here](#)). Highlight the instrumentation, linking the sounds to the theme's subtitle, 'Renaissance'. Note too that the setting of series two is Italy.

3. Now watch this video from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) and soprano Ella Taylor performing the theme from *The White Lotus*.

Ask students to critique this version, which demonstrates Vahan Salorian's statement that 'classical music' is perhaps an outdated term to describe the use of an orchestra. You may wish to discuss the audience's response when the soprano begins to create the unusual vocalisations, and when the chorus begins to sing.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

You can then ask students to do one or more of the following:

- **Create your own version of this**, or any other filmic score, changing the instruments according to a brief of your, or their, choice.
- **Write a short analysis** of one of the versions of the White Lotus themes, discussing the instruments used, the connection to the setting and context of the series, and the link to the visuals of the opening credits.
- **Experiment with vocalisation and/or percussion** to create a one minute composition for soloist or ensemble, in response to one of the themes of *Gianni Schicchi*.
- **Refer to two contrasting pieces** from your specification's set works, and ask students to reorchestrate a short extract from those two pieces. Challenge students to justify why they have chosen their new orchestration: they can refer back to Vahan's interview earlier in this guide for examples of how he identifies the impact of the changes he has made to the score

Creating the OperaUpClose production

This new production of *Gianni Schicchi* (or *Where There's A Will*) began its life in 2024. On the next page, you'll see the different stages of bringing this production to life.

PRODUCTION TIMELINE

4th-6th November 2024	Research & Development (R&D)
11th September 2025	White card design presentation
12th September 2025	Read through & sitzprobe
13th November 2025	Final design presentation/approval
9-28th February 2026	Rehearsals – London & Southampton
2-4th March 2026	Technical rehearsals – Mayflower Studios Get-in, lighting & cast, technical and dress rehearsals with notes
5-21st March 2026 Tour	Southampton, Chichester, Cambridge, Blackpool, London, Plymouth

Mounting this production takes a large team of people, with different skills and talents. This includes some of the following:

Accountant: Administrator: **Book keepers:** Box Office: **Cleaners:** Costume Designer: **Costume Maker:** Director: **Drivers:** Education Consultant: **Electrician:** Front of House Assistants: **Instrumentalists:** Librettist: **Lighting Designer/Creative Captions:** Lighting Technician: **Maintenance:** Marketing: **Musical Director:** Orchestrator: **Press and Public Relations:** Painter: **Producer:** Rehearsal pianist: **Set Builder:** Set Designer: **Singers:** Sound Technician: **Stage Door Keeper:** Stage Management: **Wardrobe Supervisor:** Writers

CAREERS IN MUSIC

You can find out about the members of the cast and creative team [here](#). There are many different training routes, including studying at university or at a specific music college or conservatoire. We've listed a few of them below: it is worth exploring their different websites as each institution has its own identity and specialisms.

- [Guildhall School of Music and Drama \(London\)](#)
- [Leeds Conservatoire \(Leeds\)](#)
- [London College of Music \(London\)](#)
- [National Opera Studio \(London\)](#)
- [The Royal Academy of Music \(London\)](#)
- [The Royal College of Music \(London\)](#)
- [Royal Conservatoire of Scotland \(Glasgow\)](#)
- [Royal Northern College of Music \(Manchester\)](#)
- [Trinity Laban \(London\)](#)
- [Welsh College of Music and Drama \(Cardiff\)](#)

Check out <https://www.careersinmusic.com> for further information and inspiration. You'll find industry insights, signposting for funding and financial support, and suggestions for sources of information about careers and training.

Gaining performance experience

Your music teacher will be able to help you find local opportunities to play in ensembles, orchestras and bands. This may be through local music hubs and services. If you have instrumental lessons, your teacher may also be able to suggest places to go to play and hear music.

All of the creative team interviewed for this guide have emphasised the importance of giving new opportunities a go. If you can't find an ensemble to play with, perhaps create one yourself!

Find other instrumentalists in your school or college, or team up with friends who play instruments, even if the mix of instruments might initially seem unusual.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- This video of Anna Netrebko singing 'O mio babbino caro' includes the Italian and English subtitles.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdekJG5HG9c>

- Classic FM also has a brief page of information on 'O mio babbino caro' and its meaning.

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/puccini/o-mio-babbino-caro-lyrics-translation/>

- You can find out more about the work of Ri Baroche here

<https://www.ribaroche.co.uk/>

- Explore the work of Vahan Salorian by looking at his website

<https://www.vahansalorian.com/>

- You can see clips of Ceferina Penny performing here

<https://ceferinapenny.com/listen>

If you have any questions or need further support with this schools pack, please get in touch with us via info@operaupclose.com or visit our website to learn more at operaupclose.com.

Gianni Schicchi

(or Where There's A Will)

Puccini's classic in a new English version
by Hannah Kumari, re-orchestrated by Vahan Salorian

OPERA
UPCLOSE
INTIMATE IN SCALE. MIGHTY IN IMPACT

A co-production with
Mayflower Southampton



UK TOUR 2026

A co-production with Mayflower Southampton

SOUTHAMPTON	5-7 MAR	Mayflower Studios
CHICHESTER	11-12 MAR	Minerva Theatre
CAMBRIDGE	15 MAR	The Arts Theatre Cambridge
BLACKPOOL	17 MAR	Grand Theatre
LONDON	19 MAR	artsdepot
PLYMOUTH	21 MAR	The Drum