

Giacomo Puccini

LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

January 8, 2011

Conductor **Nicola Luisotti**
Production **Giancarlo del Monaco**
Set and Costume designer
Michael Scott
Lighting Designer **Gil Wechsler**

Minnie **Deborah Voigt**
Dick Johnson **Marcello Giordani**
Jack Rance **Lucio Gallo**

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ACT I A miners' camp in California, 1849–50. At sunset the miners gather at the Polka Saloon. Two of them try to bribe the bartender Nick to help them win the heart of Minnie, the owner of the bar. All the men are in love with her, including Jack Rance, the cynical sheriff of the camp. There's news of the imminent capture of the Mexican bandit Ramerrez and his band. A quarrel breaks out between two of the miners and things almost get out of hand when Minnie herself appears. The men calm down and sit to listen to her bible teaching. Later, alone with her, Rance confesses his love to Minnie, but she rejects him.

A stranger appears in the bar, introducing himself as Dick Johnson. Minnie recognizes him as a man she has met before, which arouses Rance's jealousy. As Johnson and Minnie dance, the miners drag in one of Ramerrez's band. He pretends that he will lead them to their hideout, but then whispers to Johnson—who is in fact Ramerrez—that he let himself be captured to trick the miners. The men depart, and Minnie and Johnson are left alone. She tells him about her simple life and that she is still waiting for her first kiss. The two feel attracted to each other and Minnie shyly invites Johnson to visit her in her cabin later that evening.

INTERMISSION

ACT II At the cabin, Minnie prepares for her meeting with Johnson. Alone with him, she gives in to his declarations of love and they kiss. Since it has begun to snow, she asks him to stay for the night. When several shots are heard, Johnson hides in the closet. Rance appears with some of the men and tells Minnie that they have discovered Johnson's true identity. Minnie claims to know nothing and the men leave. She then angrily confronts Johnson, who makes excuses about his past and declares that when he met her he decided to give up his former life. Minnie sends him away. Another shot rings out. Johnson, wounded, staggers back into the cabin and Minnie hides him in the attic. Rance returns and demands to search the room. Minnie refuses and the sheriff is about to give up when a drop of blood falls on his hand from above. Johnson is forced to surrender, but Minnie has an idea—she challenges Rance to a game of poker. If he defeats her, she will give herself to him; if he loses, Johnson goes free. Minnie cheats and wins.

INTERMISSION

ACT III Johnson has been nursed back to health by Minnie. Again on the run from Rance and his men, he is eventually captured. As the miners prepare to hang him, Johnson asks for one last mercy—that Minnie believe him free and far away. The men hesitate and at that moment, Minnie rides in, wielding a pistol. When her pleas to spare Johnson prove fruitless, she reminds the men how much they owe her. The miners finally give in and release Johnson. He and Minnie leave to start a new life together.

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