

1) Read the review below of the first public performance at the Royal Opera House, Muscat. As you read, make notes about the features of the Opera House that are mentioned.

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## ROYAL OPERA HOUSE PUTS OMAN ON WORLD STAGE

by our Arts Correspondent Ali Al Nabhani

The Royal Opera House, Muscat, opened last night with a performance of the opera *Turandot* by Giacomo Puccini. Puccini was the last in a line of great Italian composers which ran for 300 years from the 17th century to the 20th.

It was hard to know which was more stunning - the Opera House or the performance. The Opera House has a seating capacity of 850 for operas, and about 1,050 for concerts. It has an impressive entrance area, marble floors and staircases, and decorations hand carved by local craftsmen. The auditorium is of beautiful design. It was packed from floor to ceiling with elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, including many visitors from neighbouring countries.

*Turandot*, which takes place in Beijing in ancient China, has a huge cast of actors and singers. It is divided into three acts. As the curtain rose for the second act, the audience gasped in admiration at the set. The stage had been transformed into a Chinese emperor's palace. A wide staircase flanked by lanterns, pagodas and statues of lions rose up to where the emperor sat on a gold throne.

The Opera House uses modern technology to aid understanding. On the back of every seat is a digital screen. By touching the screen, you can view the libretto in three different languages - Arabic, English and the original language. In this way, you can easily follow the story.

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|---------------------------|----------|
| 1-Large seating capacity. | 2-_____. |
| 3-_____                   | 4-_____  |
| 5-_____                   | 6-_____  |

2) Scan the text as quickly as possible to find the following information.

a) the nationality of the composer of Turandot

b) the seating capacity of the Royal Opera House

c) the country where Turandot is set

d) features of the emperor's palace in the second act

e) the purpose of the small screen on the back of each seat

3) Read the sentences a - j below. They come from two different paragraphs in a review of Turandot at the Royal Opera House. Paragraph 1 is about the Opera House. Paragraph 2 is about the performance. In pairs, decide which phrases belong in Paragraph 1 and which in Paragraph 2.

a) The story is set in ancient Beijing.

b) It has a huge seating capacity.

c) There is a huge cast of actors.

d) It opened in October 2011.

e) The costumes are very colourful.

f) It has marble staircases.

g) It is divided into three acts.

h) It is lit up at night.

i) The composer was Italian.

j) The carvings are done by hand.

### The Opera House

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### The performance

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