Giacomo Puccini (b. Lucca, 1858, d. Brussels, 1924) was one of the greatest composers of Italian opera. Several of his works, notably *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900)*,* and *Madama Butterfly* (1904)are frequently performed throughout the world, more than a century since their composition. Puccini was influenced not only by other Italian opera composers (Giuseppe Verdi and Pietro Mascagni, for example) but also by the French composer Jules Massenet and the German composer Richard Wagner, who each aimed to unify the expression of text and music together in their operas.

*Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi* are the second and third operas in Puccini’s set of three one-act operas collectively titled *Il trittico* (1918), or “The Triptych.” In the visual arts, there are many “triptychs” or three-paneled pieces, of which “The Garden of Earthly Delights” by Hieronymus Bosch is a famous example:

Puccini’s triptych has death as its main unifying theme, and after two tragedies (*Il tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*) the mood is lightened with the masterful comedy *Gianni Schicchi*. As in his earlier works, Puccini includes recurring musical motives and hints of motives to great effect in these operas, reminding the listener of particular characters, actions, or emotions as the drama unfolds. Puccini was also keenly aware of the effect of sound coming from a variety of locations, not just from the stage or the orchestra pit; he employs off-stage singing and playing in both *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*, enhancing the listener’s perception of space and distance.