

Opera music is quite often used in film and television to enhance the dramatic or comedic action taking place on the screen. Opera's beautifully rich compositions and soaring melodies make the perfect accompaniment to what is taking place in front of us. Below are some of the most famous opera excerpts from the screen. Take some time to research and see what other opera works you can discover.

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

Nessun Dorma from Turandot by Puccini

This is used in great effect as the main character (Jess) is running between her sisters wedding where she is bridesmaid to the grand final of her soccer tournament. As Jess goes to take a penalty shot the music is used to create humorous dramatic tension as Jess envisions her family in place of her team members.

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

Sull' Aria from The Marriage of Figaro by Mozart

Quiet, hardworking and wrongly accused inmate (Andy) shows a complete act of defiance when he locks himself in one of the office's and plays this aria over the loudspeakers and into the prison courtyard causing all the inmates to stop and listen to this beautiful duet. Andy's sole friend and longterm inmate (Red) says "I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don't want to know. I like to think they were singing about something so beautiful it can't be expressed in words, and makes your heart ache because of it."

PRETTY WOMAN

Various scenes from La Traviata by Verdi

This scene within the film demonstrates incredible parallels between the two main characters (Vivienne, a prostitute and Edward, a successful entrepreneur) and the two main characters of this opera (Violetta, a courtesan and Alfredo, a respected young man). Both main characters fall in love against the backdrop of societies who say that they should not be together.

IKEA AD

Lakme Duet (Flower Duet) by Dlibes

Probably one of opera's most recognisable and beautiful duets. It features perfect harmonisation of the mezzo soprano and soprano voice types. It has appeared in numerous films and television ads. It is commonly known as the "British airways ad" It is used to great comic effect in this short Ikea commercial. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRQ9lmsfnJY>



OPERA AT THE MOVIES