

Giacomo Puccini

Tosca

CONDUCTOR

Riccardo Frizza

PRODUCTION

Luc Bondy

SET DESIGNER

Richard Peduzzi

COSTUME DESIGNER

Milena Canonero

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Max Keller

STAGE DIRECTOR

Paula Williams

GENERAL MANAGER

Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR

James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica,
based on Victorien Sardou's play *La Tosca*

Saturday, November 9, 2013, 1:00–4:15 pm

The production of *Tosca* was made possible by a
generous gift from **The Annenberg Foundation**.

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera,
Bayerische Staatsoper, and Teatro alla Scala

The Metropolitan Opera

2013–14 Season

The 929th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Giacomo Puccini's

Tosca

Conductor
Riccardo Frizza

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Angelotti
Richard Bernstein

Shepherd
Seth Ewing-Crystal

Sacristan
John Del Carlo

Jailer
Ryan Speedo Green**

Cavaradossi
Roberto Alagna

Tosca
Patricia Racette

Scarpia
George Gagnidze

Spoletta
Eduardo Valdes

Sciarrone
James Courtney

Saturday, November 9, 2013, 1:00–4:15 pm

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Two Boys

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NOV 6, 9, 14

Acclaimed composer Nico Muhly makes his Met debut with this hauntingly beautiful and dramatically chilling new work, set in the shadowy realm of internet chat rooms.

PUCCINI

Tosca

NOV 5, 9mat, 13, 16mat **DEC** 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 28mat

Puccini's operatic thriller is well served by two exceptional casts, with Patricia Racette and Sondra Radvanovsky sharing the title role and Roberto Alagna and Marcello Giordani as Cavaradossi.

R. STRAUSS

Die Frau ohne Schatten

NOV 7, 12, 16, 20, 23mat, 26

Strauss's fantastical opera returns for the first time in ten years in a legendary Met production, led by conductor Vladimir Jurowski and starring Anne Schwanewilms, Christine Goerke, Torsten Kerl, and Johan Reuter.

VERDI

Rigoletto

NOV 11, 15, 18, 21, 27, 30 **DEC** 4, 7mat

Michael Mayer's acclaimed new production of Verdi's tragic masterpiece—set in Las Vegas in 1960—returns with Dmitri Hvorostovsky singing the title role for the first time at the Met.

Visit metopera.org for full casting information and ticket availability.

Synopsis

Rome, June 1800

Act I

Morning, the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:55 PM)

Act II

That evening, Scarpia's rooms in the Palazzo Farnese

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:15 PM)

Act III

Dawn, the prison and ramparts of Castel Sant'Angelo

Act I

Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, rushes into the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle to hide in one of the chapels. Once he has disappeared, a sacristan enters and then the painter Mario Cavaradossi, who sets to work on his portrait of Mary Magdalene. The painting has been inspired by the Marchesa Attavanti, whom Cavaradossi has seen in the church but does not know. While he works, he compares the dark-haired beauty of his lover, the singer Floria Tosca, to that of the blonde Marchesa Attavanti. Angelotti, a member of the former Bonapartist government, ventures out and is recognized by his friend Cavaradossi. The painter gives him food and hurries him back into the chapel as Tosca is heard calling from outside. Suspicious, she jealously questions Cavaradossi, then reminds him of their rendezvous that evening at his villa. Suddenly recognizing the Marchesa Attavanti in the painting, she accuses him of being unfaithful, but he assures her of his love. When Tosca has left, Angelotti emerges from the chapel. A cannon signals that the police have discovered the escape, and he and Cavaradossi flee to the painter's villa. The sacristan enters with choirboys who are preparing to sing in a Te Deum that day celebrating a victory against Napoleon. Their excitement is silenced by the arrival of Baron Scarpia, chief of the secret police, who is searching for Angelotti. When Tosca comes back looking for Cavaradossi, Scarpia shows her a fan with the Attavanti crest that he has just found. Seemingly finding her suspicions about her lover's infidelity confirmed, Tosca bursts into tears. She vows vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshipers. Scarpia sends his men to follow her to Cavaradossi, with whom he thinks Angelotti is hiding. While the congregation sings the Te Deum, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will.



2013-14

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Mariusz Kwiecien as Onegin
and Anna Netrebko as Tatiana

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Act II

In his study at the Palazzo Farnese, Scarpia sadistically anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca in his power. The spy Spoletta arrives, explaining that he was unable to find Angelotti. Instead he brings in Cavaradossi. While Scarpia interrogates the painter, Tosca is heard singing at a royal gala in the same building. Scarpia sends for her and she enters just as Cavaradossi is being taken away to be tortured. Frightened by Scarpia's questions and Cavaradossi's screams, Tosca reveals Angelotti's hiding place. Cavaradossi is carried in, hurt and dazed. Realizing what has happened, he angrily confronts Tosca, when the officer Sciarrone rushes in to announce that, in a surprise, Napoleon has won the Battle of Marengo, a defeat for Scarpia's side. Cavaradossi shouts out his defiance of tyranny and is dragged off to be executed. Scarpia, calmly resuming his supper, suggests to Tosca that he would let Cavaradossi go free if she'd give herself to him. Fighting off his advances, she calls on God and declares that she has dedicated her life to art and love. Scarpia insists, when Spoletta interrupts: faced with capture, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, now forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. The baron seemingly orders a mock execution for Cavaradossi, after which he is to be freed. Spoletta leaves. As soon as Scarpia has written a safe-conduct for the lovers, Tosca kills him with a knife she found earlier on the table. She wrenches the document from his hand.

Act III

At dawn, Cavaradossi awaits execution at the Castel Sant'Angelo. He bribes the jailer to deliver a farewell letter to Tosca. Overcome with memories of love, he gives in to his despair. Tosca enters. She explains to him what has happened and the two imagine their future in freedom. As the firing squad appears, Tosca instructs Cavaradossi how to fake his death convincingly, then hides. The soldiers fire and depart. Tosca urges Cavaradossi to hurry, but when he doesn't move, she realizes that Scarpia has betrayed her and that the bullets were real. Spoletta rushes in to arrest Tosca for murder. She cries out to Scarpia and leaps from the battlement.

Giacomo Puccini

Tosca

Premiere: Teatro Costanzi (now the Teatro dell'Opera), Rome, 1900

Puccini's melodrama about a volatile diva, a sadistic police chief, and an idealistic artist has offended and thrilled audiences for more than a century. Critics, for their part, have often had problems with *Tosca's* rather grungy subject matter, the directness and intensity of its score, and the crowd-pleasing dramatic opportunities it provides for its lead roles. But these same aspects have made *Tosca* one of a handful of iconic works that seem to represent opera in the public imagination. *Tosca's* popularity is further secured by a superb and exhilarating dramatic sweep, a driving score of abundant melody and theatrical shrewdness, and a career-defining title role.

The Creators

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world's opera companies. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, sensitivity to everyday subjects, copious melody, and economy of expression. Puccini's librettists for *Tosca*, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his two other most enduringly successful operas, *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. Giacosa found the whole subject of *Tosca* highly distasteful, but his enthusiastic collaborators managed to sway him to work on the project. The opera is based on *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou (1831–1908), a popular dramatist of his time who wrote the play specifically for the talents of the actress Sarah Bernhardt.

The Setting

No opera is more tied to its setting than *Tosca*: Rome, the morning of June 17, 1800, through dawn the following day. The specified settings for each of the three acts—the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Palazzo Farnese, and Castel Sant'Angelo—are familiar monuments in the city and can still be visited today. While the libretto takes some liberties with the facts, historical issues form a basis for the opera: the people of Rome are awaiting news of the Battle of Marengo in Northern Italy, which will decide the fate of their symbolically powerful city.

The Music

The score of *Tosca* (if not the drama) itself is considered a prime example of the style of verismo, an elusive term usually translated as “realism.” The typical musical features of the verismo tradition are prominent in *Tosca*: short arias with an uninhibited flood of raw melody, including the tenor’s Act I soliloquy shortly after the curtain rises and his unforgettable “E lucevan le stelle” (“And the stars were shining”) in Act III; ambient sounds that blur the distinctions between life and art (the cantata heard through the window in Act II, the passing shepherd’s song, and the extraordinary tolling of morning church bells as dawn breaks to open Act III); and the use of parlato—words spoken instead of sung—at moments of tension (Tosca’s snarling “Quanto? Il prezzo!” in Act II as she asks the price she must pay for her lover’s life). The opera’s famous soprano aria, “Vissi d’arte” in Act II, in which Tosca sings of living her life for love and her art, also provides ample opportunity for intense dramatic interpretation. One of *Tosca*’s most memorable scenes is the Te Deum, in which the baritone’s debased inner thoughts are explored against a monumental religious procession scored for triple chorus and augmented orchestra including bells, organ, and two cannons.

Tosca at the Met

A year after its world premiere in Rome, *Tosca* premiered at the Met with an all-star cast that included the great baritone Antonio Scotti as the evil Baron Scarpia. Scotti would go on to sing Scarpia 217 times at the Met, a house record for an artist in a lead role. Among his principal Toscas were Emma Eames, Geraldine Farrar, Olive Fremstad, Emmy Destinn, Claudia Muzio, and Maria Jeritza. Farrar headlined a new production in 1917, which, incredibly, was in use for half a century. Renata Tebaldi, Richard Tucker, and Leonard Warren, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting, headlined a “revised” production in 1958, and in 1968 a new one directed by Otto Schenk starred Birgit Nilsson, Franco Corelli, and Gabriel Bacquier. Maria Callas brought her legendary portrayal of Tosca to the Met for six performances, two each in 1956, 1958, and 1965. A production by Franco Zeffirelli premiered in 1985 starring Hildegard Behrens, Plácido Domingo, and Cornell MacNeil with Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting. Luc Bondy’s current production opened the Met’s 2009–10 season with Karita Mattila in the title role, Marcelo Álvarez as Cavaradossi, and James Levine conducting the opera of his 1971 Met debut.

Rigoletto

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VERDI

Rigoletto

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Program Note

When looking for an operatic subject, Giacomo Puccini suffered agonies of doubt; when decided, his certainty about what he wanted could be the despair of his librettists. Puccini knew about Victorien Sardou's 1887 play *La Tosca* as early as 1889, when he wrote to his publisher, Giulio Ricordi: "In this *Tosca* I see the opera which exactly suits me, one without excessive proportions, or decorative spectacle, and one which gives opportunity for an abundance of music...."

We don't know what happened to this early initiative: Puccini turned instead to *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème* while *Tosca* was taken up by another Ricordi composer, Alberto Franchetti. In 1894 Franchetti and his librettist, Luigi Illica, were in Paris to confer with Sardou, and one evening Illica read his text aloud, with Verdi among the listeners. Puccini set great store by the enthusiasm of colleagues—he had insisted on composing *Manon* in the face of Massenet's already successful work, and successfully confronted Leoncavallo's simultaneous *Bohème*. The combination of Verdi's reported praise and Franchetti's possession of the subject probably revived Puccini's earlier interest in *Tosca*. Ricordi had no doubt which of his two composers would produce a more successful opera, and so a somewhat discreditable maneuver ensued: Ricordi and Illica persuaded poor Franchetti that the subject was, after all, not suitable for operatic treatment—too brutal, too risqué, too tied to forgotten historical events. The ruse worked, and by the end of the year Illica was at work for Puccini, aided by Giuseppe Giacosa, his collaborator on *La Bohème*.

By that time, in Florence in October 1895, Puccini had seen Sarah Bernhardt perform the play, a skillful tapestry combining historical drama, revolutionary politics, love and religion, architectural spectacle, melodrama, and Grand Guignol into a closely plotted mechanism of ever-tightening tension. Inevitably, in the compression of Sardou's five acts to the opera's three, a good deal of meticulously laid detail and motivation went by the boards. The political circumstances—the occupation of Rome by the Bourbons of Naples, Cavaradossi's liberalism, the approach of Napoleon's army—are reduced to a few obscure phrases. Gone altogether is the original significance of the Angelotti affair. Visiting London years before, Sardou's Angelotti had spent a week with a beautiful girl who plied the oldest profession in Vauxhall Gardens. When he met the same girl later in Naples, she was Lady Hamilton—and so unhappy at being recognized that she had Angelotti framed as a revolutionary and imprisoned. Scarpia, sent by the court of Naples to control dissidence in Rome, knows Lady Hamilton's influence over the queen, and knows that Angelotti's escape can cost him his position.

Yet Puccini was quite certain of the effect he could make with the scenes that suited his talents. His invention yielded some memorable musical images, notably the three-chord progression that opens the opera and embodies the menace of Scarpia, and the headlong syncopations that follow it: Angelotti in flight. The suave bell-like theme that opens the Scarpia–*Tosca* conversation in Act I, the rising bass line that tautens the torture scene, and the suspenseful

orchestral motives that wind through the murder at the end of Act II and through the “mock” execution in Act III are all masterfully extended and developed. And in lyric mastery no Puccini score can surpass the first-act duet, the tenor arias, or Tosca’s second-act prayer. (There is, in fact, a unifying “Tosca melos,” a pattern of rising and falling thirds, that underlies many of the themes.)

The time-consuming process of compressing Sardou and revising the libretto was complicated by the resistance of Giacosa, who sincerely believed the play unsuitable for operatic treatment: “The first act consists of nothing but duets. Nothing but duets in the second act (except for the short ‘torture’ scene in which only two characters are seen on stage). The third act is one interminable duet.” He was right in terms of operatic tradition, but of course Puccini was in the process of redefining that. (So were others: a few years later Strauss would produce *Elektra*, almost entirely a succession of one-on-one confrontations.)

Though most of the libretto was in hand to Puccini’s satisfaction by the end of 1896, he didn’t begin composition until January 1898. Twice he visited Sardou in Paris, finding the old man, now more than 70, “prodigious.” In 1899 the playwright was preparing a revival of his play with Bernhardt. Wrote Puccini: “In sketching the panorama, he wanted the course of the Tiber to be seen passing between St. Peter’s and the Castello!! I told him that the flumen flows past on the other side, under the Castello. But he, as calm as a fish, said: ‘Oh, that’s nothing!’ A fine fellow, all life and fire and full of historical-topo-panoramical inexactitudes.”

Puccini, for his part, cared a good deal about accuracy, directing precise inquiries to friends in Rome about the appropriate liturgical music and processional order in Act I, about the tuning of the matin bells that would be heard from the Castel Sant’Angelo at the beginning of Act III (in the end, he made a field trip to Rome himself to check this out), about a suitable dialect text for the shepherd boy heard in the same scene. The first act was completed in 1898, the second act the following July. Aspects of the libretto were still under discussion, especially the aria Cavaradossi was to sing in the final act. Puccini objected to the reflective, philosophical “farewell to life and art” that the librettists furnished (and which Verdi had much admired, a fact that no doubt stiffened their resistance). The composer wanted a passionate personal statement and finally insisted, playing the music of what would become “E lucevan le stelle,” complete with dummy words, for Illica and Giacosa. The opera was finished on September 29, 1898, and although Ricordi offered serious objections about the “conception and craftsmanship” of the third act, Puccini held his ground and changed nothing.

The premiere took place, appropriately enough, in Rome, at the Teatro Costanzi on January 14, 1900. Ericea Darcée sang the title role, with Emilio De Marchi as Cavaradossi and Eugenio Giraldoni as Scarpia; Leopoldo Mugnone conducted. Despite mixed reviews, the new work was an immediate box-office success and was quickly taken up around the world.

—David Hamilton

The Cast



Riccardo Frizza

CONDUCTOR (BRESCIA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Norma* and *Tosca* at the Met, *Rigoletto* with the Seattle Opera, and *L'Italiana in Algeri* with Paris's Bastille Opera.

MET APPEARANCES *Rigoletto* (debut, 2009), *Il Trovatore*, and *Armida*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent engagements include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, *Otello* in Frankfurt, Verdi's *Oberto* at La Scala, *Attila* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and *Rigoletto* at the Arena di Verona. He has also led *Don Pasquale* in Florence, *Manon Lescaut* in Verona, *Lucrezia Borgia* and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with the San Francisco Opera, *Il Trovatore* in Venice, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Theater an der Wien, *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Dresden, and *Falstaff* at the Seattle Opera. He has conducted Rome's Santa Cecilia Orchestra, the Philharmonic Orchestra of St. Petersburg, London's Philharmonia Orchestra, Tokyo New City Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, among many others.



Patricia Racette

SOPRANO (MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Tosca* and Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* at the Met, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the title role in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne*, Margherita in Boito's *Mefistofele*, Julie in *Show Boat*, and Cio-Cio-San at the San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Sixteen roles including Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Cio-Cio-San, Musetta (debut, 1995) and Mimi in *La Bohème*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Roberta in the world premiere of Picker's *An American Tragedy*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and the three leading soprano roles in *Il Trittico*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS World premieres include Leslie Crosbie in Paul Moravec's *The Letter* and the title role in Picker's *Emmeline* at the Santa Fe Opera and Love Simpson in Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* with Houston Grand Opera. She has also sung Madga in *La Rondine* with Los Angeles Opera, Liù in *Turandot* and Madame Lidoine with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the title roles of *Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Jenůfa* with Washington National Opera.



Scene from *The Enchanted Island*

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Roberto Alagna

TENOR (CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at the Met and at Covent Garden; Don José in *Carmen* at the Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Covent Garden; the title role of *Werther* at the Paris Opera; Aeneas in *Les Troyens* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; and the title role of Otello in concert at Paris's Salle Pleyel.

MET APPEARANCES The title roles of *Werther*, *Don Carlo*, and *Faust*, Don José, Ruggero in *La Rondine*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (debut, 1996), the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has sung at all the world's leading opera houses and festivals, most recently as Nemorino at Covent Garden, Pinkerton in Barcelona, and Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Werther*, and Cavaradossi in Vienna. Other notable engagements include Marius in the world premiere of Vladimir Cosma's *Marius et Fanny* in Marseille, Rodolfo at La Scala and Covent Garden, Roméo at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Salzburg Festival, Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Salzburg Easter Festival, and Don Carlo in Paris and London.



John Del Carlo

BASS-BARITONE (SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON Sacristan in *Tosca* at the Met and Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with the San Diego Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Gonzalo in Adès's *The Tempest*, the title role of *Don Pasquale*, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, the Prince in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (debut, 1993), Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier*, Swallow in *Peter Grimes*, Alfieri in Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge*, Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Baron Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, Dansker in *Billy Budd*, and Balducci in *Benvenuto Cellini*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Among his many roles with the San Francisco Opera are Dulcamara, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, General Boom in Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, and Falstaff. He has also appeared with the Paris Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Covent Garden, Houston Grand Opera, San Diego Opera, and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.



George Gagnidze

BARITONE (TIFLIS, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA)

THIS SEASON Scarpia in *Tosca* at the Met, Iago in *Otello* in Hamburg, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Vienna State Opera, the title role of *Rigoletto* in Brussels and with La Scala on Tour in Japan, and the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*, Macbeth, and Rigoletto (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Scarpia at La Scala, Rigoletto at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and Los Angeles Opera, Miller in *Luisa Miller* in Valencia, Simon Boccanegra in Madrid, and Gianciotto in *Francesca da Rimini* at the Paris Opera. He made his operatic debut in 1996 at the Tbilisi Opera House as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*.