



TOSCA

Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

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Opera in three acts

Sung in Italian

From Opernhaus Zürich

Recorded 2008

Running Time: 2 h 05 min

Running Time by Act: Part 1/Acts 1&2: 1:31:01 h | Part 2/Act 3: 0:33:37 h, credits at 0:32:43

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Paolo Carignani
Director	Robert Carsen
Sets and costume design	Anthony Ward
Lighting	Davy Cunningham
Assistant Director	John La Bouchardière
Assistant Set & Costume Design	Alexander Lowde
Chorus master	Ernst Raffelsberger
Orchestra	Orchestra of Zürich Opera
Choir	Choir of Zürich Opera

ARTISTIC TEAM

Floria Tosca	Emily Magee
Mario Cavaradossi	Jonas Kaufmann
Baron Scarpia	Thomas Hampson
Cesare Angelotti	Valeriy Murga
Sacristan	Giuseppe Scorsin
Spoletta, <i>a police agent</i>	Peter Straka
Sciarrone, <i>a police agent</i>	Morgan Moody
Jailer	Daniel Golossov
Shepherd boy	Claudia Auf der Maur

PRESENTATION

Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* is melodrama at its purest, a festival of lush melodies and dramatic outbursts that remains one of this composer's most popular works to this day. It is also a genuine "action opera," a realistic crime story, complete with torture, betrayal, murder, sex and suicide. And in the production from the Zurich Opera presented here, it is a gripping, heart-stopping psychosexual study of three tragically and fatally interwoven figures.

As rendered by Emily Magee, *Tosca* is the veritable incarnation of a prima donna, a striking beauty, strong yet vulnerable. Magee fully inhabits the role, casting her tender moments with her lover Cavaradossi in warm, full-bodied phrases, and her tense confrontation with the chief of police Scarpia in outbursts of raw passion. With his imposing stage presence and eloquent delivery, U.S. baritone Thomas Hampson raises the often one-dimensionally evil Scarpia to the level of a gentleman criminal and elegant seducer, who fascinates until his parting breath.

Confirming his exceptional position as one of the most versatile, sensitive, warmly lyrical tenors of our day is Jonas Kaufmann as Cavaradossi. Whether indulging in playful banter, bristling with passionate indignation or glowing with romantic ardor, Kaufmann is always comfortable in his masculinity and unfailingly assured in his shaping of his part's every nuance. The press was unanimous in praising his "darkly hued, dazzling and robust tenor ... Puccini lyricism with a wealth of shadings practically unknown since di Stefano and Callas" (*Badische Zeitung*). Never before has the warhorse "E lucevan le stelle" been interpreted with such intimate, heart-rending poignancy as when Kaufmann bares his soul to a hushed audience in an account that makes time stand still.

The lyrical outpourings and dramatic surges of this stellar trio are given flexible, sensitive support by Italian conductor Paolo Carignani, who applies all the colors of the Zurich Opera orchestra's palette with a masterful hand. The staging by acclaimed Canadian director Robert Carsen engages the viewer in a subtle "play in a play" drama, in which theater and reality fuse together into an intelligent and revealing take on this exciting operatic thriller.

SYNOPSIS

Act I – in the Attavanti chapel, in the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle

Escaped political prisoner Angelotti rushes into the church to hide. Soon, painter and fellow dissident Mario Cavaradossi arrives to work on a new portrait of Mary Magdalene, inspired by the visage of Angelotti's sister, whom Mario has seen but has not met. He holds a miniature of the singer Floria Tosca, and compares the painting's light features with Tosca's dark ones. Angelotti emerges, but Mario urges him to hide again as they hear Tosca approaching. Tosca, always jealous, questions her lover Mario, prays, and reminds him of their planned meeting at his villa that night. Tosca then recognizes the face in the picture – Angelotti's sister! She bursts with newfound jealousy, but Mario quells her suspicions. After she leaves, Angelotti emerges again – but cannon fire is heard, indicating that Angelotti's escape has been discovered. The two men rush to Mario's villa. The Sacristan enters with choir boys excited about their performance in a *Te Deum* that day. They are hushed when the chief of the secret police, Baron Scarpia, enters in search of Angelotti. Tosca re-enters, hoping to see Mario again, but is met by Scarpia, who produces a fan bearing the Attavanti crest – deepening her suspicions that her lover has been unfaithful. Tosca storms off, and Scarpia sends his men to follow her. He vows that he will have the singer in his power.

Act II – The Farnese Palace

Scarpia anticipates the joy he will have when Tosca is his. The spy Spoletta returns. He was unable to find Angelotti, so he brought in Mario for interrogation. Tosca is heard singing at a gala downstairs. She enters the room just as Mario is hauled off to the torture chamber, where the secret police hope to break his silence. Mario's screams and Scarpia's questioning break down Tosca's resolve, and she reveals where Angelotti is hiding. Mario is carried in, and, realizing that Tosca has betrayed Angelotti, turns on her. Another one of Scarpia's men enter and reports (erroneously) that Napoleon has won the Battle of Marengo – a defeat for Scarpia's side. Mario exclaims in celebration and is taken to prison. Scarpia resumes his supper, and suggests to Tosca that she should give herself to Scarpia in exchange for her lover's life. Tosca pushes him away as she protests her fate to God. Scarpia makes another move, but they are interrupted by Spoletta – Angelotti, facing capture, has killed himself. Tosca agrees to Scarpia's proposition. He then seemingly orders a mock execution for Mario – “a la Palmieri,” he tells Spoletta, who responds knowingly and exits. As soon as Scarpia draws up a safe-conduct for the lovers, Tosca stabs him with a knife, killing him. She prays for him, wrenches the document from his hands, and leaves.

Act III – At the Castel Sant' Angelo

Mario awaits execution. He tries to bribe a guard to give Tosca a farewell note, but soon Tosca appears, and gives him the good news. They revel in their newfound freedom. Tosca then gives Mario an acting lesson on how to die convincingly before the firing squad. The firing squad arrives, shoots Mario, and departs. Tosca urges Mario to get up, and to hurry. When he doesn't move, she realizes that she has been deceived by Scarpia – the bullets were real. Spoletta rushes in to arrest Tosca for the murder of Scarpia, but Tosca cries out that she will meet Scarpia before God, and leaps to her death.