

# The Metropolitan Opera

2021-22 SEASON

The 987th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIACOMO PUCCINI'S

## TOSCA

CONDUCTOR  
Carlo Rizzi

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

CESARE ANGELOTTI  
Kyle Albertson

A SHEPHERD BOY  
Ariadne Chan-Miller

A SACRISTAN  
Patrick Carfizzi

A JAILER  
Matthew Anchel

MARIO CAVARADOSSI  
Joseph Calleja

FLORIA TOSCA  
Elena Stikhina

BARON SCARPIA  
George Gagnidze

SPOLETTA  
Brenton Ryan

SCIARRONE  
Bradley Garvin

Tonight's performances of the roles of Tosca and Cavaradossi are underwritten by the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Great Singers Fund.

Friday, January 21, 2022, 7:00-10:00PM



Joseph Calleja as  
Cavaradossi and  
Elena Stikhina in  
the title role of  
Puccini's *Tosca*

Chorus Master Donald Palumbo  
Fight Director Thomas Schall  
Musical Preparation Carol Isaac, Steven White,  
Bryan Wagorn\*, and Dimitri Dover\*  
Assistant Stage Director Marcus Shields  
Met Titles Sonya Friedman  
Stage Band Conductor Joseph Lawson  
Italian Coach Hemdi Kfir  
Prompter Carol Isaac

Children's Chorus Director Anthony Piccolo  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and  
painted in Metropolitan Opera Shops  
Costumes executed by Metropolitan Opera Costume  
Department  
Wigs and Makeup constructed and executed by Metropolitan  
Opera Wig and Makeup Department  
Rehearsal space for the Children's Chorus provided by  
The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York City

**This production uses gunshot effects.**

This performance is made possible in part by public  
funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off  
cell phones and other electronic devices.

\* Graduate of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

Yamaha is the  
Official Piano of the  
Metropolitan Opera.

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# Synopsis

## Act I

*Rome, June 1800.* The French revolutionary armies, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, are at war with the rest of Europe. Rome has briefly been a Republic under French protection but has now fallen to the Allied forces. Cesare Angelotti, former Republican Consul, has escaped from prison. He takes refuge in the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, where his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti, has hidden a key to her husband's family chapel, where he hides. The artist Mario Cavaradossi returns to the church, where he is working on a fresco that depicts Mary Magdalene. He tells the shocked sacristan that the face of the Magdalene is that of the mysterious woman who has been praying near the chapel—in fact, Angelotti's sister. Angelotti emerges once the sacristan has gone. He recognizes the painter and begs for his help. Cavaradossi's lover, the singer Floria Tosca, calls from outside, and Angelotti hides again. The jealous Tosca suspects that Cavaradossi has been with another woman in the church, but he calms her fears. Turning to go, she spots his painting and immediately recognizes the Marchesa Attavanti. She accuses him of being unfaithful, but he again assures her of his love. When Tosca has left, a cannon signals that the police have discovered Angelotti's escape, and he and Cavaradossi flee to the painter's villa. The sacristan excitedly enters to tell the church choir that the Allies have won a great victory against the French at Marengo in northern Italy. As they celebrate, Baron Scarpia, chief of Rome's secret police, arrives looking for Angelotti. His agents search the chapel, and he discovers the Marchesa Attavanti's fan. Scarpia recognizes her in Cavaradossi's portrait, and when Tosca returns, he uses the fan to trick her into believing that Cavaradossi is unfaithful after all. She vows to have vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshipers. Scarpia sends his men to follow her; he knows that she will lead them to Cavaradossi and Angelotti. While the congregation intones the *Te Deum*, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 7:50PM)

## Act II

Dining that evening in his chambers at the Palazzo Farnese, Scarpia anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca in his power; the diva will be singing that night in the Palazzo at a royal gala to celebrate the Allied victory. The agent Spoletta has broken into Cavaradossi's villa and found no trace of Angelotti, but he has arrested Cavaradossi and brought him to the Palazzo. Scarpia interrogates the defiant painter and sends for Tosca. When she arrives, Cavaradossi whispers an urgent plea for her to keep his secret before Scarpia's agents lead him into another room. Scarpia begins to question Tosca. At first, she keeps her nerve, but when Scarpia tells her that Cavaradossi is being tortured in the next room, her



courage fails her. Unable to bear Cavaradossi's screams, Tosca reveals Angelotti's hiding place. The agents bring in Cavaradossi, who is badly hurt and hardly conscious. Scarpia cruelly reveals her betrayal, and Cavaradossi angrily curses her. Suddenly, word arrives that the news from Marengo was false; Bonaparte has won the battle. Cavaradossi shouts out his defiance of tyranny, and Scarpia orders him to be executed. Once alone with Tosca, Scarpia calmly suggests that he would let Cavaradossi go free if she'd give herself to him. She refuses, but Scarpia becomes more insistent, trapping her with his power over Cavaradossi's life. Despairing, she prays to God for help. Spoletta bursts in; rather than be captured, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, now forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. Scarpia orders Spoletta to prepare for a mock execution of Cavaradossi, after which he is to be freed. Tosca demands that Scarpia write her a passage of safe conduct. Once done, he embraces Tosca, but she seizes a knife from the dining table and stabs him. Before fleeing with the safe-conduct pass, she performs funeral rites over Scarpia's body.

### Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00PM)

### Act III

At dawn, Cavaradossi awaits execution on the platform of Castel Sant'Angelo. He bribes the jailer to deliver a farewell letter to Tosca and then, overcome with emotion, gives in to his despair. Tosca appears and explains what has happened. The two imagine their future in freedom. As the execution squad arrives, Tosca implores Cavaradossi to fake his death convincingly, then watches from a distance. The soldiers fire and depart. When Cavaradossi doesn't move, Tosca realizes that the execution was real and Scarpia has betrayed her. As Scarpia's men rush in to arrest her, she cries out that she will meet Scarpia before God and leaps from the battlements.



### Tosca on Demand

Looking for more *Tosca*? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons: from a classic 1978 telecast starring Shirley Verrett and Luciano Pavarotti to a thrilling 2010 radio broadcast featuring Patricia Racette, Jonas Kaufmann, and Bryn Terfel to a 2018 *Live in HD* transmission headlined by Sonya Yoncheva. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 750 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](http://metoperaondemand.org).

Giacomo Puccini

## Tosca

### Premiere: Teatro Costanzi, Rome, 1900

Puccini's melodrama about a volatile diva, an idealistic artist, and a sadistic police chief has thrilled and offended audiences for more than a century. Critics, for their part, have often had problems with *Tosca*'s rather lurid 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 its 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 the composer 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) 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 "Recondita armonia" shortly after the curtain rises on Act I and his unforgettable "E lucevan le stelle" in Act III; ambient sounds that blur the distinctions between life and art (the cantata heard through the window in Act II and 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 art and love, also provides ample opportunity for intense dramatic interpretation. One of *Tosca*'s most memorable scenes comes during the finale of Act I, 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.

### *Met History*

A year after its world premiere in Rome, *Tosca* appeared at the Met with an all-star cast that included Milka Ternina in the title role and the great baritone Antonio Scotti as Scarpia. Scotti would go on to sing the part 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 1955, and in 1968, a new staging 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. In 1978, Tito Gobbi, himself a celebrated Scarpia, restaged Schenk's production with a cast that included Shirley Verrett, Luciano Pavarotti, and Cornell MacNeil. Pavarotti would go on to sing the role of Cavaradossi a record 60 times with the company, including his farewell performance on March 13, 2004. A new staging by Franco Zeffirelli premiered in 1985, starring Hildegard Behrens, Plácido Domingo, and MacNeil, with Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting. In 2009, a production by Luc Bondy opened the Met's season, with Karita Mattila in the title role. On New Year's Eve 2017, Emmanuel Villaume led a cast including Sonya Yoncheva, Vittorio Grigolo, and Željko Lučić in the premiere of the current production, by David McVicar.