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Puccini's

TOSCA

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“While the basis of Verdi’s operas is a battle cry, the basis of Puccini’s operas is a mating call.”

-The critic Harold Schoenberg comparing Verdi with Puccini.

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a Prelude..... to OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY's *Tosca*

Since its premiere in 1900, Puccini's *Tosca* has remained one of the most popular of all operas. *OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY* explores all the reasons that *Tosca* is indisputably a great and powerful music drama, far from the "shabby little shocker" that some critics have labeled it.

The *Commentary and Analysis* offers pertinent biographical information about Puccini, the genesis of the opera and its original story source, the true history surrounding its story, its premiere and performance history, and insightful drama and character analysis.

The text also contains a *Brief Story Synopsis*, *Principal Characters in Tosca*, and a *Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples*, the latter containing original music transcriptions that are interspersed appropriately within the story's dramatic exposition. In addition, the text includes a *Discography*, *Videography*, and a *Dictionary of Opera and Musical Terms*.

The *Libretto* has been newly translated by the Opera Journeys staff with specific emphasis on retaining a literal translation, but also with the objective to provide a faithful translation in modern and contemporary English; in this way, the substance of the drama becomes more intelligible. To enhance educational and study objectives, the *Libretto* also contains musical highlight examples interspersed within the drama's exposition.

The opera art form is the sum of many artistic expressions: theatrical drama, music, scenery, poetry, dance, acting and gesture. In opera, it is the composer who is the dramatist, using the emotive power of his music to express intense, human conflicts. Words evoke thought, but music provokes feelings; opera's sublime fusion of words, music and all the theatrical arts provides powerful theater, an impact on one's sensibilities that can reach into the very depths of the human soul.

Puccini's *Tosca* is certainly a glorious operatic invention, a powerful music drama that is a tribute to the art form as well as to its ingenious composer.

Burton D. Fisher

Editor

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY

Tosca

Opera in Italian in three acts

Music

by

Giacomo Puccini

**Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica,
based on the play *La Tosca*,
by Victorien Sardou (1887)**

**Premiere: Costanzi Theatre, Rome,
January 1900**

Commentary and Analysis

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) was the last superstar of the great Italian opera tradition, a genre whose soul was a magnificent blend of intense lyricism, melodiousness, and excellence of the vocal arts. Modern opera is a definitive element of Italian culture. It began with the Florentine Camerata in the early seventeenth century, and matured, developed, and continually rejuvenated itself over the next 400 years, its cast of ingenious musical architects becoming the foundation of the artform: Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Metastasio, Paisiello, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, and Puccini.

No Italian opera composer since Puccini has been able to sustain Italian opera's glorious heritage, although twentieth century attempts by Italian composers such as Busoni and Menotti were valiant. Puccini composed 12 operas, most of them so beloved by contemporary audiences that they define opera's endurance and survival.

Puccini's operatic epiphany occurred in 1876 when the eighteen year-old attended a performance of Verdi's *Aida* in Pisa; he was immediately inspired to become an opera composer. nevertheless, he was fortunate to have inherited the genes of a musically talented family: five generations of prominent musicians, accomplished church organists, and composers from his native Lucca, Italy, a part of the Tuscany region.

The young Puccini, the first son in a family of seven, followed the family traditions: he was adept at the piano, excelled as an organist, and composed liturgical music. In 1880, at the age of twenty-two, he enrolled in the Milan Conservatory, at the time, Italy's foremost training ground for composers, singers, and instrumentalists: financial support was secured from Queen Margherita of Italy, and supplementary funds from Dr. Nicolao Cerù, first cousin of his mother Albina.

During Puccini's first 2 years at the Milan Conservatory, he studied under Antonio Bazzini, a virtuoso violinist, composer, and teacher, with avid predilections towards Richard Wagner's recent innovations in music and opera. Afterwards, Puccini studied with Amilcare Ponchielli, triumphant with the opera, *La Gioconda* (1876), and an eminent professor of composition. Ponchielli became Puccini's mentor, astutely recognizing his young student's extraordinarily rich orchestral and symphonic imagination, and his harmonic and melodic inventiveness, resources that would become the musical trademarks and prime characteristics of Puccini's mature compositional style.

In July 1883, the twenty-five year-old Puccini received his diploma in composition from the Milan Conservatory; he was awarded a bronze medal for his thesis composition, *Capriccio Sinfonico*, an instrumental work that was performed by a student orchestra led by Franco Faccio, a composer, but also the most prominent conductor in Italy. *Capriccio Sinfonico* was a genuine success, receiving praise from Filippo Filippi, the severe, respected, and authoritative music critic of *La Perseveranza*, who praised the young Puccini's unity of style, rare musical temperament, and symphonic capabilities. *La Gazette Musicale*, published by Casa Ricordi, Italy's powerful music publishing company, similarly praised the *Capriccio Sinfonico*, recommending it to the attention of discriminate musicologists. Portions of the *Capriccio*, like so much of Puccini's early music, was recycled into his early operas. With the success of *Capriccio Sinfonico*, Puccini's music composing career was launched.

Most of the nineteenth century was dominated by the Romantic movement in art, an emphasis on the imagination, emotions, and sensibilities. As the century neared its fin de siècle, a period associated with Romantic decadence, Italian audiences tired of Romanticism's sentiment, artificiality, and idealization: if art was to express profound truths, Romanticism portrayed an unreal world.

Italy was experiencing political upheavals, as well as social and economic turmoil. The Risorgimento (1860-61) liberated Italy from foreign rule, but by the end of the century, chaos and anarchy loomed on the horizon: democracy and political stability had become unattainable dreams.

There was a great economic disparity between north and south, the north thriving and developing industrially, the south lacking the resources for economic development. The south, from Naples to Sicily, was virtually a medieval society; an illiterate peasantry living in grinding poverty with primitive feudal institutions that lacked the infrastructure to execute law and order. There was internal discontent, such as peasant revolts, and disorders provoked by anarchists and the disenchanted. In 1900, King Umberto was assassinated by anarchists; regicide and nihilism had become virtually everyday topics. The seeds of fascism were about to flower.

It was against this chaotic political, social, and economic background that many European artists, poets, composers, and librettists sought new genres for artistic expression: an antidote to Romanticism. Writers such as Émile Zola, Prosper Mérimée, and Giovanni Verga, ignited the sparks of "naturalism," or realism, a genre that embraced a fidelity to nature and real-life situations: a world without idealization, in which credible, earthy people, expressed powerful emotions and vigorous passions in swift, dramatic action.

In naturalist literature and drama, no subject was too mundane; no subject was too harsh; and no subject was too ugly. Primal passions became its underlying subject: it portrayed man's latent and uncivilized barbarian propensities that confirmed Darwin's theory that man evolved from primal beast.

Naturalist plots dealt with intense passions involving sex, seduction, revenge, betrayal, jealousy, murder, and death; like its successors, modernity and film noire, naturalist man was portrayed as irrational, immoral, crazed, brutal, crude, cruel, and demonic: sinister and fatal passions that were irreconcilable.

Naturalism wed the sordid with the sensational: death became the consummation of desire; and good did not necessarily triumph over evil. Enlightenment's reason and Romanticism's freedom and sentimentality were overturned, and man was portrayed as a creature of pure instinct.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Italian opera was poised for rejuvenation and transformation. Groups of intellectuals and artists emerged in an aesthetic movement known as the "scapigliati," literally "the disheveled ones," who condemned the romantic melodramas and grand opera spectacles of Verdi and Meyerbeer as old-fashioned, stale, obsolete, and approaching sterility. They found inspiration in Richard Wagner.

In 1871, Wagner's *Lohengrin* was first performed in Bologna, Italy, a bel canto masterpiece composed by the arch-critic of the bel canto style: when sung in Italian, its roots were indistinguishable; Italians embraced the opera and virtually adopted it as their own.

Afterwards, the Wagnerian tide swept across the Italian peninsula, fascinating and influencing the next generation of Italian opera composers. Wagner's hypotheses of music drama seemed a welcome antidote to Italian opera's antiquated traditions and conventions of set-pieces and recitatives. Wagner had provided an alternative to Italian opera's degeneration in his seemingly radical theories: *Art and Revolution* (1849), *The Art-Work of the Future* (1849), and *Opera and Drama* (1851). And in *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), Wagner innovated the existing harmonic structure, opening new avenues for harmonic and lyrical expansion; and his use of leitmotifs provided the wherewithal for musico-dramatic continuity as well as symphonic expansion.

Avant-garde Italian opera composers, the "giovane scuola" or "young school," would apply many of Wagner's musico-dramatic innovations and transformations to a new opera genre based on naturalism: verismo, or realism.

The fountainheads of Italian verismo opera were Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), and Ruggero Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* (1892), opera's Siamese twins, affectionately called "Cav" and "Pag": it is said that Cav is the flesh and bones of verismo; Pag is its soul. Among the verists who followed were Alfredo Catalani, Francesco Cilèa, Alberto Franchetti, Umberto Giordano, Alberto Zandonai, and Giacomo Puccini. These composers were intent to portray naturalist subjects in through-composed, seamless music dramas.

Puccini found his inspiration in naturalism, a world of real people in real-life situations without idealization. He peopled his stage with very human characters, not stereotypical cardboard characters of history, myth, or legend. Even the characters of *Turandot*, based on fable, were humanized by adding warmth and personality to the characterization of the commedia dell'arte "masks," and the invention of the slave-girl Liù provided a character of emotional complexity.

Two of Puccini's operas are pure examples of the verismo style: *Tosca* (1900) and *Il Tabarro* (1918), the latter perhaps the last of the genre; both dramas contain verismo's ceaseless violence and explosions of unbridled human passions. *La Fanciulla del West*'s love triangle, and its crude and fiercely violent characters have verismo overtones, but the opera's redemption-through-love conclusion echoes the idealizations of German Romanticism, far removed from the verismo genre.

Puccini's operas provide an entire spectrum of diverse yet realistic humanity: the courtesans Manon Lescaut and Magda, the student des Grieux, the painter Cavaradossi, the poet Rodolfo, the flower-embroiderer Mimì, the singers Musetta and Tosca, the geisha Cio-Cio-San, the bar proprietress Minnie, the nun Suor Angelica, and, of course, those carefree bohemians of *La Bohème*, and the miners of *La Fanciulla del West*.

Venues in Puccini's operas are likewise realistic and identifiable: Paris of *La Bohème* and *Il Tabarro*, the Orient of *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*, Rome of *Tosca*, the American West of *La Fanciulla*, Paris and the French Riviera of *La Rondine*, and a convent in *Suor Angelica*.

Puccini maintained a fidelity to real life situations by presenting the problems and conflicts of identifiable humanity, a naturalism that he called "piccole cose," the little things of life. The *Turandot* story is both fable and legend, but Puccini transformed it by injecting many naturalist elements; plots involving romantic heroism in myth and history were the terrain of Verdi, Meyerbeer, and Wagner, not Puccini, the realist.

Wagner said: “Art brings the unconscious to consciousness.” Freud noted: “Where psychology leaves off, aesthetics and art begin.” The artist’s unconscious filters into his creation. Puccini’s music, so often kindled by agony and despair, is a faithful mirror of his unconscious self. In *Manon Lescaut*, des Grieux agonizes “Ansia eterna crudel” (“Eternal cruel anxiety.”); in *Tosca*, Cavaradossi laments “E muoio disperato” (“I die in desperation.”); both men despair because of the imminent death of love.

Biographer-musicologists- (and lecturers) turned-psychologists have speculated copiously about the underlying causes of Puccini’s personal despair, a melancholy that became the muse that inspired some of his most poignant musical inventions. With the success of *La Bohème*, the thirty-eight year-old composer had achieved worldwide acclaim. The acknowledged heir to Verdi was en route to riches that would eventually include numerous homes, yachts, and automobiles. Like most artists, he possessed insecurities and self-doubts about his works, fearing failure, or the public’s fickleness. As his years advanced, he experienced the typical psychological and physical changes associated with mid-life crisis. And as he aged, he witnessed the deaths of beloved relatives and friends, fearing his own mortality. But success, insecurity, and fears associated with mortality cannot explain the intense sense of hopelessness so prevalent and recurring in Puccini’s music.

One theory poses that Puccini unconsciously despaired because he failed to find true love in his lifetime. Biographies of Puccini tend to present a man with numerous conquests, seemingly a Don Giovanni-type character whose romantic and amorous adventures are a manifestation of his pursuit of true or ideal love.

Puccini was a handsome and virile man, but also a sensitive and at times emotionally fragile artist. He of course yearned for love, its fulfillment humanity’s greatest aspiration and desire. And some of his greatest musical inspirations involve love: the love duets of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Fanciulla del West*, and *La Rondine*. Despair and an acute sense of hopelessness would be the natural response to failed love.

In *Puccini: A Critical Biography* (1958), Dr. Mosco Carner aptly commented: “While the basis of Verdi’s operas is a battle cry; of Puccini it is a mating call”: that illusive grail of love is the primary subject of Puccini’s entire oeuvre: the sum of many faces of love.

Some Puccini operas deal with the tragic death of love, despair its consequence: Fidelia dies and Edgar despairs (*Edgar*); Manon Lescaut dies, and des Grieux despairs (*Manon Lescaut*); Mimi dies, and Rodolfo despairs (*La Bohème*). The Song-Peddler of *Il Tabarro* provides the sum and substance of Puccini’s first 6 operas: “Chi ha vissuto per amore, per amore si morì” (“He who lives for love, dies for love.”) In those first 6 operas, the heroines die — and love dies with them: Anna (*Le Villi*), Fidelia (*Edgar*), Manon Lescaut (*Manon Lescaut*), Mimi (*La Bohème*), Tosca (*Tosca*), and Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*). And the tragedy of failed love reappears in Puccini’s last opera: the sacrificing slave-girl Liù (*Turandot*). The death of love could very well have been the mirror of Puccini’s own failure to find everlasting love: his personal despair. In his art, Puccini may have been unconsciously lamenting that failure in terms of an overpowering sense of hopelessness and despair; in that sense, art and life merged, with no dividing line between them.

Dr. Mosco Carner advanced the hypothesis that Puccini suffered from an unresolved, raging mother complex that unconsciously confounded his understanding of love: subconsciously no woman could attain the exalted image of his mother; he searched for that ideal but failed, his consequent despair. Carner further theorized that Puccini’s

heroines were guilty of mundane love, not saintly or exalted love. As such, those heroines were sinners who the composer subconsciously punished in agonizing and cruel deaths: Manon, Mimi, Tosca, and Butterfly. In that sense, Puccini's supposed raging mother complex was a conflict of the sacred versus the profane. Nevertheless, it is a hypothesis that cannot be applied to Puccini's entire oeuvre.

Puccini indeed possessed a strong bond with Albina, his mother, a mother-son relationship that seems classic. Puccini was her first son, following five older sisters, and he was the family's scion designated to continue its musical traditions. Albina was Puccini's guiding light and mentor, and they were remarkably close and affectionate. In July 1884, she died of cancer at the age of 54, just after the triumph of Puccini's first opera, *Le Villi*. The twenty-six-year-old Puccini became deeply affected by her death: it was a love that failed, a death that was attributable to God's will, or uncontrollable, deterministic forces. After her death, Puccini grieved and despaired, a response that seems quite natural when one copes with the loss of a beloved mother.

Shortly after his mother's death, Puccini fell madly in love with his piano student, Elvira Gemignani, the wife of Narciso Gemignani, a grocer and traveling wine-salesman.

Elvira was an impressive and strikingly attractive young woman: tall, a fine figure, dark eyes, and swept back dark-blond hair. Puccini was tall and handsome, his eyes bearing that melancholy aura so often associated with Tuscans.

Puccini's relationship with the married Elvira became scandalous. Gossip quickly spread, and the provincial townspeople of Lucca erupted into a frenzy of outrage. Likewise, Puccini's family and relatives became duly offended, accusing him of bringing shame and disgrace to the honorable Puccini name.

Puccini had difficulty coping with his family's animosity and criticism. He was reproached and admonished harshly by his married sisters and their husbands, and his sister Iginia, a nun. His sensitivity to their attacks transformed into despondency, a depression that impeded his progress on his second opera, *Edgar*.

He also feared the cuckolded Gemignani: Would he confront him publicly? Would he challenge him to a physical confrontation, or even a duel? Would he be arrested or sued for alienating Gemignani's wife's affections?

In 1885, Elvira became pregnant with Puccini's child, Antonio. The next year Elvira left her husband and eloped to Milan with Puccini, bringing along one of her young daughters, Fosca, the other remaining with her husband. Puccini was 27 years-old; Elvira was 25. In the eyes of Puccini's friends in Lucca, his sisters, and Ricordi, his publisher, Elvira was an immoral woman, an adulteress who abandoned her husband and children.

Gemignani died in 1903. Almost simultaneously, Puccini was nearly killed in a car crash, immobilized for ten months. Elvira and Puccini married on January 4, 1904, just before the premiere of *Madama Butterfly*.

As the years passed, the fires of their youthful love began to subside, and eventually the passions died completely, the marriage becoming loveless. Elvira had changed: her physical beauty faded. She also began to experience severe mood swings, most of them bordering on depression. Puccini claimed that she failed to provide him love and inspiration. And Elvira complained of her isolated life in Torre del Lago, yearning to return to city life in Milan. Life with Elvira became grim and depressing, and Puccini began to suffocate, the catalyst that led to his numerous love affairs. He was always

actively involved with rehearsals and preparations for productions of his operas: a convenient excuse to escape from what he now considered his imprisoned life with Elvira. For Puccini, the fulfillment of their love had turned to personal despair.

When Puccini's eye was fixed on the sight of his hunting rifle, his other eye was seeking good librettos — and women. He desperately needed women in his life to fuel his passions of love, for intimacy, and for erotic needs. Many women found him irresistible: a handsome, gentle and charming world-famous man. As his wealth and success grew, he began to dress elegantly, his manner so dignified and aristocratic that his publisher Ricordi jokingly nicknamed him the “Doge.”

Biographers have done well in accumulating Puccini's voluminous catalogue of affairs: there was Corinna, a young law student in her twenties; an apparent affair with Lina Cavalieri, one of his early Toscas; an intimate relationship with Blanke Lendvai, the sister of Ervin Lendvai, a young Hungarian composer and conductor whose career Puccini helped foster; the Hungarian writer, Margit Vészi, who became both friend and confidant; an intensive intimacy with the soprano Rose Ader; and a long and impassioned affair with Baroness Josephine von Stängel, a beautiful and wealthy German aristocrat.

In England, there was Sybil Seligman, the wife of a successful banker. She was a woman of elegance, beauty, and intelligence, as well as a singer, theatrical enthusiast, and opera lover. Sybil remained Puccini's most trusted friend and confidant throughout his entire life; no doubt the Seligman's were instrumental in fostering the large number of productions of Puccini's operas in England.

Puccini's notorious philandering and escapades provoked Elvira to become consumed with jealousy, at times valid, and at times imagined, but nevertheless a monomania of explosive potentiality. She was volatile, and any visit of an attractive woman to their home aroused her suspicions. Puccini called her his “policeman,” the monitor of all of his incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Elvira's fierce jealousy climaxed in the catastrophic scandal of the Doria Manfredi affair. Doria was a twenty-one year-old servant with over five years of service to the Puccini's: a nurse, housemaid, and cook. Elvira swore that she caught Puccini and Doria in flagrante. She fired Doria immediately, but became vengeful, determined to slander, defame, and even physically harm her. Doria's relatives, convinced of Puccini's reputation as a serial womanizer, believed Elvira's accusations.

Doria became humiliated and was unable to cope with the scandal; she took an overdose of pills and died five days later. An autopsy revealed that she was a virgin. Her outraged family launched a criminal prosecution against Elvira, alleging that Elvira was directly responsible for Doria's suicide. Elvira was found guilty, fined, and sentenced to five months and five days in prison. While attorneys prepared to appeal, Puccini made a substantial financial settlement with Doria's family, and the suit was withdrawn.

The scandal became a sensation in the press. Puccini was racked with guilt and shame. He became emotionally drained, bitter, and unhappy; and he even considered divorce. Years later art and life united: Elvira shares the persona of the brutal Princess-Aunt in *Suor Angelica*, and Doria's victimization parallels the tortured slave-girl Liù in *Turandot*.

Nevertheless, the Manfredi affair took a heavy toll on Puccini's creative processes, severely delaying the completion of *La Fanciulla del West*. It was a scar that remained with him until his death. But at the time, it was the signal that the emotional curtain had

decisively fallen on his marriage, the death of love, and no doubt a sense of intense despair and hopelessness.

Puccini's hometown of Lucca was renowned for presenting an endless succession of important dramatic plays by distinguished playwrights. In his youth, Puccini was fortunate to have been exposed to works by the Italian dramatists Vittorio Alfieri and Carlo Goldoni, the French writers Alexandre Dumas, father and son, and plays of the extremely popular late nineteenth-century realist, Victorien Sardou.

Those early theatrical experiences instilled and nurtured what eventually became his acute sense of drama, a theatrical talent that he expressed with brilliance in his operatic works. He ultimately became a master stage-craftsman who combined a consummate knowledge of the demands of the stage with extraordinary dramatic instincts.

Often, Puccini's demands for dramatic perfection caused friction with his librettists, at times, driving them to despair: they claimed that he vacillated excessively; that he was vague about his requirements and unable to explain himself clearly; that he demanded countless unnecessary revisions; that at times he would write the music first, and then seek words to fit the music; that he composed too slowly; and that he wasted too much time indulging his hobbies of hunting, cycles, autos, boats — and women. He was often accused of laziness, but that could be excused by his diabetic condition, at the time, awaiting the discovery of scientific advances such as insulin.

With the exception of *Turandot* and *La Fanciulla*, Puccini did not compose ambitious works or grand opera stage spectacles in the manner of Meyerbeer or Verdi. He commented that he was inspired by “cosettine” or little things, an acknowledgement that his talent and temperament were not suited to works of large design, spectacle, or portrayals of romantic heroism. In effect, Puccini was a naturalist, his inspiration emerging from real-life, ordinary people and their conflicts and tensions.

Puccini expanded his harmonic horizons with each succeeding opera. In his early operas, his harmonic language was diatonic, but beginning with *Madama Butterfly*, whole-tone scale harmonies began to appear, no doubt influenced by Debussy's harmonic adventurism. Those harmonic advancements became more complex in *La Fanciulla*, and flowered in his final *Turandot*. Dissonance and suspensions are more often than not exceptions rather than the rule, most often applied for specific dramatic effects: the bi-tonal chord structure at the opening of *Turandot* that suggests the executioner's axe falling.

Puccini integrated his music, words, and gestures into a single conceptual and organic unity, seamless music dramas that were remote from the old-fashioned “numbers-operas” with recitative that typified the operas of his predecessors; but all of Puccini's operas are distinctly Italian in character, emphasizing the supremacy of melody and voice.

Puccini often repeats melodic blocks or passages: like leitmotifs they are employed to provide reminiscence of an idea, person, object, situation, or identify a character's thoughts to the audience: the music identified with the well in *Tosca*, or the music associated with his heroines that is usually heard before they appear. Puccini was a master symphonist, and his scores are saturated with rich and sumptuous orchestral coloration, but he never developed and integrated his leitmotifs or melodic passages into the symphonic complexity, grandeur, or systematic manner of Wagner.

Puccini was a quintessential melodist who possessed a unique musical signature and personal style that the noted critic Harold Schonberg called “an inimitable style that

stands out among the Italian operas of his time like the song of a nightingale in a flock of starlings.” He possessed a supreme talent — if not magic — to invent lush and sumptuous melodies, a writing for both voice and orchestra that is rich, tender, and elegant, and at times possesses a suppleness and gentleness, as well as a profound poignancy. Puccini’s personal lyricism has had few rivals; it is a musical signature that is so individual that it is recognized immediately. And to some, his music is endlessly haunting: music that seems to resound in one’s mind even after leaving a Puccini opera performance.

It is a rare Puccini opera that does not have its special assortment of hit tunes: *La Bohème*’s “Che gelida manina”, “Sì! Mi chiamano Mimi,” and the showstopper, Musetta’s Waltz; *Tosca*’s “Vissi d’arte”; *Madama Butterfly*’s “Un bel di vedremo”; *La Fanciulla del West*’s “Ch’ella mi creda”; *La Rondine*’s “Il sogno di Doretta”; *Gianni Schicchi*’s “O mio babbino caro”; and *Turandot*’s “Nessun dorma.”

But Puccini’s muse was tragic: when his musical inventions exploited pain, suffering, and despair, they kindled his fundamentally tragic imagination, and he translated that heightened emotion and passion into quintessential moments of music drama: the Torture Scene of *Tosca*; or the suicides of *Madama Butterfly*, Liù, or Suor Angelica.

Puccini endowed his love duets with a sensual lyricism, an almost erotic mysticism that has been called pornophony: *Manon Lescaut*’s second act, “Tu, tu, Amore tu!; *La Bohème*’s “O soave fanciulla”; *Tosca*’s “Qual occhio mondo”; *Madama Butterfly*’s “Viene la sera”; and *La Fanciulla*’s love duet ending Act I.

Puccini’s ensembles reflect his ingenious craftsmanship, “concertatos” or ensembles that are knitted together with exceptional brilliance: the “Roll Call of the Prostitutes” in *Manon Lescaut*; the Café Momus scene of *La Bohème*; *Tosca*’s “Te Deum”; the miner’s ensembles in *La Fanciulla del West*; the second act at Bullier’s in *La Rondine*; and virtually all of the choral scenes of *Turandot*.

Puccini was a skilful musical impressionist, and he was meticulous in using his music to evoke ambience: in *La Bohème*, the music dutifully conveys the fire crackling as Rodolfo’s manuscript burns in the stove, or Colline falls down the stairs, or the snow falls in Act III; in *Tosca* the exact pitch of St. Peter’s bells awakens Rome in Act III; and in *Il Tabarro*, there are boat and automobile horns that realistically capture ambience.

In sum, Puccini was a quintessential musico-dramatist, his music and words unified coherently, the dramatic whole of each opera equal to the sum of its many meticulously constructed elements.

Puccini has many detractors, a host of critics who delight in condemning his operas and his compositional style. He has been denounced as the “Bohemian epicure,” a composer whose entire oeuvre recycles the music of his masterpiece, *La Bohème*; a plagiarist of other composers; a composer of banal café music; and a composer of inauthentic exoticism in operas such as *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*.

That said, it is necessary to invoke Mark Twain’s opinion of critics: “Damn the critics, it’s the public that counts.”

To many, Puccini’s name is synonymous with opera: the catalyst for their love of opera, and to some, the beginning of an adventure into a sublime world of music of unrivalled beauty and unbridled dramatic power.

Words performed through music can express what language alone has exhausted; opera is an art form in which words are realized through music.

Puccini's musical language has many facets. At times his music speaks powerfully of suffering, despair, grief, tragedy, and death, the inspiration for some of his finest music that is plaintive, heartrending, and extremely poignant. But Puccini's music also speaks of love, his music possessing an unabashed sensuality, or erotic mysticism that is incomprehensible to reason, but fully understood by the subconscious; it is music that speaks of love's glorious fulfillment, and warns of its dreadful failure, a tension between Eros and Thanatos.

Each of Puccini's 12 operas is a masterpiece of artistic invention, each unique, and each exploring a different facet of love: its success or failure. But Puccini's operas are the sum total of the expression of a musical genius who bared his soul in his art: music that more often than not has the power to reach into the very depths of the human soul.

Victorien Sardou (1831-1908) was a renowned and prolific French dramatist as well as librettist, a man with an uncanny genius for the invention of absorbing plots and the contriving of tense stage situations. In many of Sardou's plays, his style followed in the footsteps of Scribe and Beaumarchais: his works were mostly satirical comedies that scorned contemporary social and political issues of his day.

Sardou was also an astute and meticulous amateur historian, writing passionate and tragic melodramas that were usually set against a background of war or rebellion: *Patrie!* (1869), *La Haine* (1874), *Théodora* (1884) and of course, *La Tosca* (1887). His dramatic stage works inspired some 25 operas, among the many, Giordano's *Fedora* and *Madame Sans-Gêne*, Saint-Saëns's *Les Barbares*, Offenbach's *Le Roi Carotte*, and Bizet's unfinished *Grisélidis*.

Sardou became a champion of late nineteenth-century literary naturalism, or Realism, in the same mold as Prosper Mérimée, the original literary source for Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), and Giovanni Verga, the literary source for Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1892). Realism — “verisme” in French, “verismo” in Italian — was a profound dramatic contrast to Romanticism's sentimentalism and noble ideals that dealt with the underbelly of life, portraying man as barbaric and cruel. The music critic, George Bernard Shaw, writing at the time under the pseudonym “Corno di Bassetto,” was prompted to coin his synonym for Sardou's melodramatic realism: “sardoodledom.”

Sardou wrote the stage play *La Tosca* for the then reigning diva, or goddess of the theatrical stage, Sarah Bernhardt — then age 45. His play was a supreme theatrical and dramatic success, which had over 3000 performances in France alone. Sardou's *La Tosca* portrayed the genre of realism to the core; it was a brutal and savage melodrama saturated with sadism, cruelty, and murder.

Puccini prided himself in his three great passions: he was a great hunter of wild fowl, women, and opera librettos. He was above all an astute judge of dramatic possibilities, and was forever in search of suitable material, continually scrutinizing innumerable stories, plays, novels, and poems, until he found an appropriate and inspiring subject.

Puccini's guidelines in judging a potential opera libretto were profound and insightful: a perfect story must be sympathetic, vibrant, full of life, vital, as well as sentimental. In order to endure and have universal appeal, the story must be embedded with profound

emotionalism, and its dramatic elements must obey the rules of the stage: the necessity to sustain interest, to surprise, to move, and in the end, to represent truthfully its characters and their human conflict.

In 1895, Puccini saw a performance of Sardou's *La Tosca* with Sarah Bernhardt in the title role, and suddenly became captivated and overwhelmed by the dramatic intensity of the play: the non-French speaking Puccini was reacting to pantomime; to the play's actions and gestures rather than its text. By reacting to external exposition to translate the internal essence of the story, his response provided him with instinctive proof he had witnessed a powerful drama.

Similarly, in his hunt for a suitable libretto after *Tosca*, he saw David Belasco's *Madam Butterfly* and *Girl of the West*, both of which were performed in English, a language he neither spoke nor understood. Again, the stage action served to stimulate him: it was specifically the transition of night into day in *Madam Butterfly's* Vigil scene whose dramatic effects mesmerized the non-English speaking composer.

Puccini became obsessed with Sardou's *La Tosca*, and with characteristic zeal he begged his publisher, Ricordi, to obtain the rights to transform the play into an opera: "...since in this *Tosca* I see the opera that I need: one without excessive proportions or a decorative spectacle; nor is it the kind that calls for a superabundance of music." In effect, Puccini was admitting that he was gun-shy to produce a grand opera in the Meyerbeerian or Verdian style, but recognized the dramatic intensity inherent in Sardou's play.

Unfortunately, Sardou had already granted the rights for *La Tosca* to a Puccini rival, Alberto Franchetti, a wealthy Baron whose financial resources facilitated productions under the best possible auspices, but nevertheless, a composer possessing fine lyrical gifts and astute theatrical talent. Luigi Illica had already written a scenario for Franchetti's *La Tosca*, but the composer's dissatisfaction with the libretto made Ricordi's efforts to secure it for Puccini an easy victory. The play and Illica's libretto had also won Verdi's approval: although he was in his eighties, he was so impressed with *La Tosca* that he seriously considered coming out of retirement to write an opera based on the subject. Nevertheless, Ricordi secured the rights to *La Tosca* for his favorite composer, envisioning a third consecutive Puccini triumph after the phenomenal successes of *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème*.

Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa proceeded to ingeniously capture the dramatic power of Sardou's play, a play that was cumbersome in its original five-act configuration: their ultimate challenge was to transform the drama into operatic proportions, in the end, reducing it to three power-packed acts.

Giacosa (1847 – 1906) was a lawyer turned playwright, and by the turn of the century, was regarded as Italy's leading playwright. His earlier association with Puccini was his participation with the libretto team for *Manon Lescaut*, and as Illica's partner in the writing of *La Bohème*. For *La Bohème*, Giacosa is credited with astutely contrasting the characterization of the two female leads, Mimi and Musetta, an important dramatic aspect that seems to have eluded Leoncavallo in his treatment of the same subject.

Illica (1857 - 1919) had many successes as a playwright. His 35 librettos represented an eclectic potpourri of contemporary literary fashions: his scenarios included verismo, historical drama, art nouveau symbolism, evocations of the commedia dell'arte, and even an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. But Illica's particular skill was

in creating scenes that sustained the dynamism of the action: he is credited with creating the dramatic roll-call of the prostitutes in *Manon Lescaut*, the Café Momus scene in *La Bohème*, and in *Andrea Chénier*, which he wrote for Giordano, the parade of the People's Representatives in the second act. Illica also participated in the much tormented and tortured libretto for Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, a libretto that eventually evolved from the contributions of a succession of poets and dramatists, including Ricordi himself.

For *Tosca*, Illica drafted the scenario and Giacosa versified the dialogue by converting it into polished verse, the latter continually arguing and protesting that he was saturated with too much plot. Puccini, an obsessive perfectionist who was always integrally involved with plot and dramatic details, became a brutal taskmaster, but in spite of continuing tension and conflict, as well as Giacosa's melodramatic series of threats to withdraw from the collaboration, the team of Illica and Giacosa finally succeeded in completing their second full libretto for Puccini, delivering the text of *Tosca* to the composer in early 1898.

Many find difficulty absorbing details of some of the action of Puccini's music drama, a problem created by the fact that its massive original text was reduced to three concise acts, and many of its action details are revealed not in great lyrical moments but in the more conversational episodes where some of the words do not communicate clearly to the audience.

Typically, Puccini was extremely meticulous with the authenticity of details. The *Te Deum*, which concludes *Tosca*'s Act I, takes place in the Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, and the composer proceeded to investigate the melodies to which *Te Deums* were sung in Roman churches, the correct sequence of the cardinal's procession, the costumes of the Swiss Guard, and for even greater authenticity, adapting the exact pitch from the great bell of St. Peter's. For Act III, his music realistically portrays hints of early dawn in the Eternal City when morning bells chime from surrounding churches: Puccini went to Rome to capture the effect of matin bells, measuring their sound as they would be heard from the ramparts of the Castel Sant' Angelo.

Tosca premiered in Rome in 1900, its Roman setting leading Ricordi to arrange the première in the Italian capital: the production was placed under the control of Tito Ricordi, Giulio's son. The critical reception was guarded and mixed with several reviewers taking exception to the plot's brutality. Nevertheless, the opera ran for 20 performances to packed houses. Two months later, it was successfully mounted at La Scala in Milan, where it was conducted by Toscanini, and immediately following, there were performances in Buenos Aires and London's Covent Garden — with the famous baritone, Antonio Scotti. In 1901, it premiered in New York at the Metropolitan Opera.

Since its premiere, there have been outstanding Toscas, an almost quintessential role for a fine singing-actress which can become a passport to opera's "Hall of Fame": Geraldine Farrar, Maria Jeritz (who is reputed to have been the first soprano to sing "Vissi d'arte" lying prone), Maria Caniglia, and later, Maria Callas, whose performances with Tito Gobbi as Scarpia have become legendary.

Tosca, now past its centennial birthday, has become a phenomenal operatic success. Sardou himself commented that Puccini's opera, in terms of dramatic intensity, was even better than his play. Indeed, Puccini improved upon the original play, and created a musico-dramatic masterpiece that ultimately endowed Sardou's story with an immortality and longevity it would have never achieved.

Tosca's story deals with authentic politics and true historical events. In order to fully grasp the essence of the drama, knowledge of the history of the period is essential.

The story takes place in Rome in the year 1800. The city provides a fascinating glimpse of its paradoxes: there is pervasive religiosity; there is violence and bigotry erupting from political turmoil; sheep still graze in the Forum, and blood pours from the executioner's scaffold that stands in the Piazza del Popolo.

In 1800, Europe is embedded in political turmoil and social upheaval: the ideals of democracy, freedom, and reform border on revolution. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment gave birth to new ideals for humanity's progress and correcting social injustices: the literary works of Rousseau, Voltaire, Locke, and Jefferson. And the French and American Revolutions had awakened Europe to a new humanism that it was hoped would ultimately signal the end of human oppression and tyranny: the ancien régime and autocracies. The ruling European monarchies were deemed the oppressors and causes of all human oppression, and Napoleon, perceived as the savior for the masses of society, was resolved to destroy them. Nevertheless, there remained a great disparity between the dominators and the dominated.

Italy was a microcosm of Europe's early nineteenth-century political turmoil: a patchwork of city-states not yet unified, and its population longing for independence from the oppressive rule of the Austrian Hapsburg monarchy, remnants of the Bourbon French monarchy in Naples, and the Papacy. Rome was ruled as a tyrannical police state under the control of the Kingdom of Naples: the Bourbon King Ferdinand IV and his wife, Maria Carolina, the latter, the sister of Marie Antoinette who had been beheaded a few years earlier.

In Rome, there was a heated conflict between two political factions, Republicans and Royalists, which was approaching civil war. The Republicans advocated the liberation of Italy, in effect, reform and the institution of the Enlightenment ideals of human rights, freedom, and democracy. Republican hopes for liberation from tyranny resided with the French and Napoleon.

The Royalists advocated the preservation of the European monarchies. To Royalists, the ideals of democracy were considered anathema and treachery against the state: democratic ideals would eliminate their power. The Royalists initiated an oppressive cleansing action against all opposition: Republicans, liberals, anti Royalists, anti-monarchist, and supporters of Napoleon.

All the characters in Puccini's *Tosca* were true personages of history. The heroine, Floria Tosca, is a beautiful and famous singer. Tosca is in love with the painter, Mario Cavaradossi, a staunch Republican sympathizer.

A dramatic essence of the plot springs from Tosca's intense and uncontrollable passions: Tosca acts with emotion rather than with reason. And the two most important aspects of her paradoxical character are her obsessive religiosity and her propensity for extreme jealousy.

Tosca's intense religiosity stems from her youth. While she was an orphan who tended goats outside Verona, Benedictine monks took pity on her and took her into their convent: her upbringing in a convent explains her intense piety and profound religiosity.

Singing came naturally to Tosca, and at 16, her unusual talent earned her celebrity. The renowned composer, Cimarosa, heard her and tried to rescue her from the convent so

he could foster her singing career, but his wish resulted in a fierce battle with the nuns of the convent. Finally, the Pope agreed to arbitrate Tosca's future at a special Vatican audition: he was so moved by her singing that he declared her free to devote herself to an artistic career. Floria Tosca actually sang at La Scala, San Carlo in Naples, and La Fenice in Venice.

Mario Cavaradossi's father was Italian, and his mother was French. He was brought up in Paris where he was trained in painting in the studio of the famous painter, Jacques Louis David. He apparently inherited his liberal, anti-Royalist, and revolutionary notions from his father, who frequented the Parisian salons of Diderot and Voltaire.

Cavaradossi's love affair with the famous diva, Floria Tosca, brought him to Rome. However, the Roman authorities became aware of his liberal background and naturally presumed his sympathy for Napoleonic France; as such, he was obviously suspect by the Royalists. To counter their suspicion, Cavaradossi misled the authorities by offering his artistic services to the Jesuit church of Sant'Andrea della Valle where he painted the Madonna slaying a serpent: the symbolic representation of the triumph of good over evil. The model for his Madonna painting became the Marchesa Attavanti, Angelotti's sister, who he captured in the painting, unbeknownst to her, when she visited the Attavanti Chapel in the church: she had gone to the chapel to hide a key, food, and clothing for her soon to be fugitive brother, Cesare Angelotti.

Cesare Angelotti is a Republican sympathizer and former Consul, or elected representative, in the short-lived Roman Republic. Angelotti had been a long time friend of Cavaradossi, and both shared Republican political ideals. At the very moment the opera story begins, Angelotti, a freedom fighter for the cause of Italian liberation, is a fugitive, having just escaped from the Royalist prison at Castel St. Angelo, his escape facilitated by his sister's bribe of the jailer.

The Royalist Chief of Police, Baron Vitello Scarpia, was assigned to Rome by the Bourbon King of Naples, not only to retain the status quo for the monarchy, but to keep an iron hand on Napoleonic sympathizers: he was to eliminate all those who advocated democratic ideals and opposed their authority.

From the moment Scarpia appears, when he interrupts the Sacristan's celebration with the choirboys, he is fierce: "Un tal baccano in chiesa - bel rispetto" ("What kind of behavior is this in a church! Show respect!") Immediately, there is a sudden hush as the entire scene is seized and frozen by fear, as if possessed by a monstrous evil spirit. Scarpia finds the Attavanti chapel door unlocked, finds the "smoking gun," the fan bearing the Attavanti crest and portrait of the Marchesa Attavanti, and becomes ecstatic: his suspicions about the fugitive Angelotti hiding in the church are borne out and he senses victory.

Scarpia immediately conveys an aura of satanic ruthlessness: he is indeed playing tough, and appears like an incarnation of Torquemada-style evil, who just stepped out of the Inquisition. Scarpia is the demon of the story: the unquestionable incarnation of evil, and an agent of retribution and political repression. All evil applies to Scarpia as he relentlessly pursues his victims: he is a fanatic demon, an utterly ruthless zealot, who is ferocious, cruel, and a violent bigot. Nevertheless, his tyranny descends into lechery and sadism, driving him unconscionably in his obsession to possess the beautiful Tosca.

Scarpia is the forerunner of those twentieth century totalitarian police chiefs like the Soviet NKVD, or the Nazi Gestapo. He is as loathsome as Shakespeare's Iago, and his

persona places him in the company of those other notorious diabolical characters from Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Bronte, and Bram Stoker.

The entire drama revolves around Scarpia's political tyranny, his descent into lechery, and his obsession to possess Tosca. Puccini's musical description of Scarpia, the leitmotif of those three ominous chords associated with Scarpia, aptly describes the demon of the *Tosca* story.

Tosca is a high-voltage, powerful, and sensational thriller crammed with action, containing intense and sometimes ferocious, supercharged dramatic confrontations: it delivers an abundance of violent cruelty, and it contains an ingenious blend of sex, sadism, jealousy, and religion. It is true melodrama with raw emotion, and Puccini masterfully uses his music to savagely assault the emotions as the action generates into a feverish pitch as it moves from one climax to another.

The dynamic engine that ignites the drama is Scarpia's evil, tyranny, lechery, and lust. Scarpia's sadism and brutal use of power become the counter-force against the political and social idealism of the lovers, Tosca and Cavaradossi, as well as the fugitive, Angelotti. The underlying theme of *Tosca* is the tension between the sadistic power of Scarpia, and the idealistic young lovers, Tosca and Cavaradossi. But the story also portrays man's helplessness and impotence against evil, absolute, and abusive power: it is the evil embodied in Scarpia's tyrannical power that inflames the drama.

A tragedy of the story is that Floria Tosca is in reality a political innocent whose only guilt is her association with her idealistic lover, Mario Cavaradossi. Nevertheless, both will sacrifice their lives in vain for the noble cause of freedom.

Prior to Puccini, the great Giuseppe Verdi, an avowed idealist and humanist, became obsessed with the theme of the corruption inherent in the use and abuse of power. Verdi's operas, *Don Carlos* and *Aida*, pontificated the composer's moral outrage: in *Don Carlos*, the heroes are conflicted men who oppose the demonic sixteenth century King, Philip II, and the equally corrupt Inquisitors of the Church; in *Aida*, it is the awesome power of the Pharaoh, the incarnation of god on earth, and his Priest/Inquisitors that each character eventually confronts in vain.

Generally, nineteenth century forces for human progress encountered frustration and futility against authoritarian forces of evil; the heroes of the *Tosca* story are idealists struggling for a new moral conscience. However, *Tosca* has been criticized for Puccini's unidealistic handling of the political aspects of the story; in *Tosca*, human love takes precedence over political ideals. In the third act, Cavaradossi sings his farewell to life and love as he awaits execution: "E lucevan le stelle," his anguished lament and grief built around the words "Muio disperato" ("I die in despair.") Cavaradossi expresses remorse for his political defeat, but Puccini was the musical dramatist, and he was more concerned with the inner pathos of the soul as it faced the death of love, rather than with the death of noble idealism.

Also, Giulio Ricordi complained of the lack of a transcendental love duet forming the climax of the drama in the finale of Act III, no doubt, having in mind the highly successful concluding scene of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* (1896). Ricordi found the final dialogue between the lovers intolerably careless and indifferent; nevertheless, Puccini maintained that *Tosca* would be far too preoccupied with saving her lover than indulging in time-

wasting outpourings of noble expressions. In this sense, with deference to Ricordi's reservations, Puccini's theatrical instinct did not betray him.

Thus, Puccini did not possess the human idealism of his predecessor, Giuseppe Verdi. In Puccini, politics and the idealistic theme of man's impotency against autocratic power became secondary themes. In Puccini's hands, the *Tosca* story is an autobiographical self-portrait of the composer's inner psychological demons, those internal dilemmas that haunted the composer throughout his life: his admitted Neronic complexes and sadistic tendencies.

As a result, in *Tosca*, Puccini makes us witness a torture scene, a supposed mock execution, a double-crossing, and a betrayal, an attempted rape, a murder, and eventually, suicide. The death rate in Puccini operas is usually very high, but in the case of *Tosca*, the composer outdid himself. When the curtain falls at the end of Act III, Puccini leaves us with all four corpses of his principal characters: the escaped political fugitive Angelotti, Scarpia, Cavaradossi, and Tosca.

Tosca's charismatic soprano role has become a perennial favorite for audiences as well as for great operatic singing-actresses.

The character Tosca provides credible and perfect theater, because she possesses genuine dignity, even though Sardou's original literary model has been criticized as mildly ridiculous, a characterization conceived specifically as a vehicle for the virtuosity of Sarah Bernhardt in order to guarantee its success. However, in the heroine's role, Puccini created a moving personality, vastly improving on his literary source.

Tosca is frankly affecting in Act III when she imagines herself to be in command of Cavaradossi's mock execution, and that all she need do is teach Cavaradossi how to act. Her discovery that Cavaradossi is dead and that Scarpia betrayed her becomes a heart-rending moment.

But Tosca also represents a character imbedded in intense conflict: she is a deeply religious woman who becomes a murderess when she kills Scarpia in cold blood. The great opera director, Franco Zeffirelli, recently opined that in killing Scarpia, Tosca destroys an elemental passion that she subconsciously bears for Scarpia. But in contrast, Maria Callas was more basic, commenting that Tosca could only weigh her dilemma in terms of either love or hate, and there was nothing in between: to Callas, Tosca's murder of Scarpia reflects but one passion: her violent hatred for him.

Musically, Puccini uses leitmotifs in *Tosca* extensively; nevertheless, those musical references to objects, persons or ideas are not developed on a Wagnerian scale, and are certainly not woven into a symphonic web.

Puccini's musical motives serve as a narrator and provide information about a character's unexpressed thoughts, recollection, or recall. In Act I, Tosca and Cavaradossi plan their rendezvous that evening, but Cavaradossi's thoughts are revealed when Angelotti's fugitive motive is heard. Likewise, Scarpia's interrogation of Cavaradossi is punctuated by the motif connoting the well: Cavaradossi refuses to mention the well, but the music reveals that he is thinking about it.

Opera, because it speaks on the two levels of words and music, can provide powerful and potent dramatic emphasis. The irony of good and evil presented in the *Te Deum* scene is a quintessential example of the art form's great capacity to reveal truth: against the

solemn, sacred *Te Deum*, Scarpia speaks blasphemy: he vows that to possess Tosca, he would forsake God.

In *Tosca's* finale, the orchestra thunders the music from Cavaradossi's farewell: "e lucevan le stelle." But specifically, it is the music that underscores his final lamenting words in the aria: "e non ho amato mai tanto la vita" ("Never have I loved life so much as in this moment.")

In Puccini's musical hands, the tragedy of this story is the death of love and the death of lovers, a poignant statement from a supreme master of music drama.

Tosca

Principal Characters in *Tosca*

Brief Story Synopsis

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

Principal Characters in Tosca

Floria Tosca, a celebrated singer	Soprano
Mario Cavaradossi, Tosca's lover, a painter	Tenor
Scarpia, Police Chief of Rome	Baritone
Cesare Angelotti, a former Roman Consul and escaped political prisoner	Bass
The Sacristan	Bass
Spoletta, a police agent	Tenor
Sciarrone, a police agent	Baritone
Jailer	Bass
Shepherd Boy	Boy Soprano

Soldiers, police agents, noblemen and women, townspeople,
artisans, a Cardinal, altar boys and priests, a judge, the executioner,
a scribe, an officer, soldiers, police.

TIME: June, 1800

PLACE: Rome

Brief Story Synopsis

In 1800, the city of Rome was a virtual police state. The ruling Bourbon monarchy was threatened by agitators advocating political and social reform: the Republicans, inspired to freedom and democracy by the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and Napoleon, were opposed by the Royalists, who advocated the continuation of the existing monarchy.

Mario Cavaradossi, a painter and ardent Republican sympathizer, aids the escaped fugitive, Cesare Angelotti, imprisoned because his political sympathies were believed to threaten the State. Baron Scarpia, the Roman chief of police, suspects Cavaradossi's complicity in concealing the fugitive Angelotti. Scarpia arrests Cavaradossi.

Cavaradossi and the renowned singer, Floria Tosca, are in love: Scarpia is Cavaradossi's rival, consumed by an irrational passion to possess Tosca. Scarpia tortures Cavaradossi in the presence of Tosca, and she then discloses Angelotti's whereabouts. Afterwards, Scarpia condemns Cavaradossi to execution.

To save her lover, Tosca agrees to submit to the lustful Scarpia. Scarpia orders a mock execution for Cavaradossi, then Tosca murders Scarpia.

Cavaradossi is killed when real bullets are fired at his execution. Scarpia's police arrive to arrest Tosca, but she escapes by leaping over a parapet to her death.

Story Narrative with Music Highlights

Act I: The Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome.

Tosca begins without prelude or overture. The curtain rises to the orchestral announcement of three shattering, thundering, and crashing chords: the three chords represent the musical motive of the Baron Scarpia; a leitmotif, which is the indelible musical signature associated with the villainous, dreadful Royalist chief of police.

Scarpia's Motive:



The Scarpia chords convey menace, danger, harshness, cruelty, and sinister brutality: they are recalled throughout the opera in different variations, a reminder of Scarpia's satanic evil.

The second theme represents the fugitive, Cesare Angelotti; it is appropriately a hurried and descending syncopated motive. Angelotti appears, breathless, exhausted, trembling with terror, and seeking refuge in his family's Attavanti chapel inside the church.

Angelotti's Fugitive Motive:



Angelotti is a descendant of a noble Roman patrician family, however, his Republican sympathies led to his imprisonment by the Royalists. His escape was engineered by his sister, the Marquesa Attavanti, who succeeded by bribing the jailer.

The Marquesa has left food and clothing for her brother in the chapel. Angelotti searches frantically for the chapel key concealed at the feet of a statue of the Madonna. Relieved after he finds the key, Angelotti cautiously approaches the chapel, inserts the key, enters, and then disappears inside.

The Sacristan enters the church carrying a bundle of paintbrushes, grumbling that his awful burden is to wash brushes for the painter, Mario Cavaradossi.

Mario Cavaradossi arrives to work on his painting. He removes its curtain and reveals a portrait of Mary Magdalene slaying a serpent, her hair golden, and her eyes

blue. Cavaradossi's model for the Magdalene figure was the Marquesa Attavanti, who had come to the church to pray, hid provisions for her soon-to-be fugitive brother, but was unaware that Cavaradossi had captured her image.

Cavaradossi admires his painting and reflects on the differences between his painted Magdalene (the Marquesa) and his beloved Floria Tosca, noting the blonde, blue-eyed features of his painting and the more Mediterranean, dark beauty of Tosca. Cavaradossi praises the harmony of nature's beauty, but concludes with loving sentiment, that his beloved Tosca remains the sole possessor of his heart.

"Recondita armonia"

Andante lento
CAVARADOSSI



All the while, the Sacristan has been busy cleaning the painter's brushes, muttering his doubts about the impious artist who has combined the sacred with the profane. The Sacristan leaves, reminding Cavaradossi that he has left a basket of food for him.

Angelotti, believing that the church is empty, emerges from hiding. Cavaradossi catches sight of the anxious Angelotti, recognizes his old friend, and both reminisce about their shared political sympathies.

But they are interrupted by the voice of Tosca who is heard from outside calling "Mario!" Cavaradossi gives Angelotti the basket containing food and wine, and abruptly sends him back into the chapel, assuring him that he will quickly dismiss Tosca and he will return.

Tosca's Motive:



Tosca enters, a woman possessed with obsessive jealousy and profound religiosity: she becomes agitated, irritated, and suspicious because Cavaradossi delayed opening the door, and also believes that she heard him talking to a woman. Raging furiously, she immediately interrogates Cavaradossi: "Whom were you talking to? Who was in here? Was there another woman here?" Tosca, a woman of fierce passions, furiously accuses Cavaradossi of betraying their love.

Tosca's irrational jealousy and suspicion are further inflamed when she recognizes that the woman in Cavaradossi's painting is the Marquesa Attavanti: a beautiful woman

with blue eyes and blonde hair. She urges Cavaradossi to alter the image and change its hair and eyes to those of Tosca: dark hair and brown eyes.

Cavaradossi diverts her obsession with the painting with passionate reassurances of his profound love for her, and then the lovers plan to rendezvous at Cavaradossi's villa after Tosca's evening performance. With hesitation, Tosca apologizes for her jealous outburst and begs forgiveness. Cavaradossi urges her to leave, explaining that his work is pressing.

As Tosca is about to depart, she becomes haunted by Cavaradossi's painting, its blue eyes and blond hair arousing her jealous suspicions. Triumphant, she bursts out that she recognizes that it is a portrait of the Marquesa Attavanti, immediately concluding that she has discovered the reason for the whispering and rustling of clothes when she arrived.

Cavaradossi embraces Tosca, assuring her that there are no eyes on earth like hers, and that she has no cause to be jealous. Tosca professes to be convinced by Cavaradossi's ardor, nevertheless, she urges him to paint her eyes dark.

Tosca's jealousy and temper vanishes after Cavaradossi again assures her of his love for her.

Tosca and Cavaradossi: Love Duet



Their joyous celebration is suddenly interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Baron Scarpia and his police agents: three crashing chords announce the entrance of the autocratic police chief; afterwards, there is a sudden and fearful hush, and all remain spellbound.

Scarpia's first words rebuke the Sacristan and Choir boys for boisterously desecrating the sacred atmosphere of the church: "Un tal baccano in chiesa, bel rispetto" ("What kind of behavior is this in a church? Show some respect!") Scarpia who commands all of them to prepare for the "Te Deum," and abruptly cuts the Sacristan's apologies short. The frightened choirboys slip away, but Scarpia detains the Sacristan.

When Scarpia discovered Angelotti's empty cell at the Castel Sant'Angelo, he arrested the jailer, tortured him, and learned of the Marquesa Attavanti's complicity in helping her brother escape. Scarpia has pursued Angelotti to the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, his ruthless detective instincts assuring him that Angelotti would take refuge in his family's chapel.

Scarpia interrogates the trembling Sacristan, advising him that a prisoner of State has just escaped from Castel Sant'Angelo, and that he has taken refuge in the church. Scarpia asks which is the Attavanti chapel? The Sacristan points it out to him, approaches the grill, and finds that not only is it unlocked, but that there is a different key in the lock.

Scarpia and the Sacristan enter the chapel and return at once. Scarpia holds a fan he has discovered; a precious piece of evidence bearing the Attavanti crest and a portrait of the Marquesa that he will manipulate to his advantage. In Angelotti's haste to leave the chapel, he was careless and left the fan behind: the fan was part of his camouflage, since he was to escape in woman's disguise. Scarpia is now convinced that Angelotti took refuge in the chapel. But, the fugitive has disappeared. Scarpia regrets that firing the cannon was a grave mistake, a warning to the fugitive that he was being pursued. After scrutinizing the fan, Scarpia is convinced that the Marquesa Attavanti aided her brother's escape. Then Scarpia notices that the woman's features in the Magdalene painting are those of the Marquesa Attavanti.

Scarpia's agents emerge from the chapel bearing new evidence: a basket of provisions. The Sacristan informs Scarpia that he had brought the basket earlier in the day for the painter Cavaradossi, and that it was impossible for the painter to have put the basket in the chapel since he had no key.

Scarpia pieces together all the evidence. Cavaradossi's political and religious opinions have been suspect and he is Tosca's lover. Certainly, he concludes Angelotti ate the provisions and Cavaradossi is somehow involved in the prisoner's escape.

Tosca returns to the church. She seeks Cavaradossi to inform him that she must cancel their plans to rendezvous at his villa, because in celebration of Napoleon's defeat she must perform a Cantata that evening in the garden of the Palazzo Farnese.

Scarpia suspects the painter Cavaradossi's complicity in Angelotti's escape, and he intends to prey on Tosca, using her jealousy to incite her to betray both Cavaradossi and Angelotti. The fan will achieve a double purpose for Scarpia: he will use it to destroy Cavaradossi, and also to possess Tosca. Shakespeare's Iago used Desdemona's handkerchief to plant the seeds of jealousy in *Othello*; likewise, Scarpia will use the fan with the Marquesa Attavanti's portrait to inflame Tosca's jealousy.

Scarpia courteously flatters Tosca's noble qualities, a woman whose magical songs

redeem man's faith in the divine. But at the same time he plants seeds of jealousy, inflaming her with doubt and suspicion. Scarpia notes that pious women are rare: Tosca comes to the church to offer sincere prayers, whereas wanton others — he points to the portrait — look like Magdalenes but come to the church to carry on intrigues with lovers.

Scarpia show Tosca the fan, cynically inquiring if she believes it is a painter's tool? He tells her that he found it on the scaffold, implying to Tosca that the Marquesa is Cavaradossi's lover, and that they have escaped together to Cavaradossi's villa. Tosca recognizes the crest on the fan, confirms that her suspicions were correct, and pours out the agony of her betrayal.

She came to the church bearing deep sorrow because her participation in the celebration forced her cancel their rendezvous at the villa that evening. But now her love has betrayed her, and she vehemently swears that the Attavanti woman shall not possess Mario. Obsessed with revenge, she rushes off to Cavaradossi's villa to confront the lovers, unaware that Scarpia, in lieu of finding Angelotti, has assigned three of his agents to follow her.

The faithful have been gathering the church for the "Te Deum." The sacred processional music surges and swells as the church fills with humble and devoted worshippers, a Swiss guard, the Cardinal and his entourage, and choristers and priests.

The "Te Deum" tableau is a magnificent demonstration of the uniqueness of the operatic art form, which, unlike the singularity of drama, integrates text with music, and can effectively portray conflicting ideas and ironies simultaneously: against the austere pomp of the sacred and religious procession, Scarpia's evil, lust, and hypocrisy are brought into high relief; the sacred simultaneously portrayed with the profane.

While the spiritual passions of the "Te Deum" intensify, Scarpia reveals his true soul as he gloats menacingly over his achievements and his prospects: he is confident he will have Angelotti's head, the death of his rival Cavaradossi, and the sexual conquest of Tosca. Scarpia kneels in prayer, and above the solemn hymn of the choir, vows: "Tosca, mi fai, dimenticare Iddio" ("Tosca, to possess you, I would forsake God.")

Te Deum



The first act of *Tosca* concludes with a thundering orchestral explosion of Scarpia's motive: those three crashing chords.

Act II: Scarpia's apartment in the Palazzo Farnese.

The second act of *Tosca* is savage: there is a relentless buildup of Scarpia's malicious intent, his satanic evil and lust. Scarpia dines alone in his apartment, while below in the courtyard, Queen Caroline hosts festivities to celebrate the presumed Austrian victory by General Melas over Napoleon.

Scarpia provides a gloating revelation of his evil soul, admitting pride in his lechery and monstrous depravity. Specifically, he revels in his forthcoming victory: tonight will be his lucky evening; by dawn both Angelotti and Cavaradossi will be hanged; and tonight he will bait Tosca to come to his apartment for news of her lover Cavaradossi. He is confident that Tosca will surrender to his passion for her.

Scarpia sits at his dinner table, nervous, anxious, and disquieted. He is feverishly awaiting his meeting with Tosca and his triumph over his enemy; by tomorrow at dawn, Angelotti and Cavaradossi will both be hanging on the gallows.

“Ha più forte sapore”

Andante un poco agitato
SCARPIA



Ha più for - te sa - po-re la conquista vio-len-ta che il mellifluo consenso,
A willing surrender is more sweeter than a violent conquest.

Scarpia rings for his agent, Sciarrone, and learns that Tosca has not yet arrived for the celebration. He hurriedly writes a letter that he hands to Sciarrone to deliver to her. He orders him to await her at the entrance to the Palace, and that he must advise her that she is expected at his apartment after the cantata is finished. Scarpia concludes that because of her profound love for the painter, she will surrender to him.

Scarpia's henchman, Spoletta, informs him that their search was fruitless; they followed Tosca to the villa, but she emerged alone. Afterwards, they entered the villa, but found no signs of Angelotti. Scarpia erupts into a rage, which Spoletta placates by informing him that they did find the painter Cavaradossi, apprehended him, and have brought him to the Palazzo Farnese.

Scarpia summons Cavaradossi to his chamber for questioning. As Scarpia ferociously interrogates Cavaradossi, from the courtyard below, Tosca is heard singing the Cantata. Scarpia advises Cavaradossi that a prisoner escaped from Sant' Angelo, and that Cavaradossi is suspected of meeting him at the church of Sant' Andrea, providing him with food and clothes, and then guiding him to his suburban villa. Cavaradossi is defiant and angrily protests that he has no knowledge about the whereabouts of Angelotti.

Cavaradossi's obstinacy, together with the soaring music of the Cantata unnerves and irritates Scarpia. He violently closes the window and begins interrogating Cavaradossi again. And again, Cavaradossi obstinately denies any knowledge of Angelotti. Scarpia alters his tactics from violent anger to gentle persuasion, advising Cavaradossi that it would be in his own interests to make a full confession.

The Cantata has concluded and Tosca arrives at Scarpia's apartment, an invitation she accepted because Scarpia promised knowledge of Cavaradossi's whereabouts. But Tosca becomes immediately confused, troubled, and distressed when she sees Cavaradossi. She rushes to embrace him, and he whispers that she should say nothing of what she saw at the villa; if she does, they will kill him.

Solemnly, Scarpia announces that the judge is awaiting Cavaradossi's deposition in the next room. However, Tosca is to remain while he is tortured into a confession: Scarpia is convinced that Tosca will be unable to bear Cavaradossi's suffering and pain, which will cause her to reveal the whereabouts of Angelotti.

Torture Motive:

Andante moderato



Tosca and Scarpia remain behind. Scarpia, displaying elegant courtesy and gallantry, invites Tosca to converse with him as good friends. Tosca is unaware that Cavaradossi is to be tortured; she believes he has been taken into another room to be questioned.

Scarpia maliciously attempts to reawaken Tosca's jealousy by reminding her of the fan, but she displays indifference, discounting her outburst as foolish jealousy. She further assures Scarpia that Cavaradossi was alone at the villa, and even inquires if Scarpia wants her to lie.

Scarpia advises Tosca to avoid anguish, for in the adjoining room her lover is bound hand and foot with a steel hook pointed at his head that mercilessly brings forth blood at each of his denials. Confirming Scarpia's sinister announcement of torture, a groan is heard from Cavaradossi. Scarpia again advises Tosca to speak and save her lover. She implores Scarpia to release Cavaradossi for a moment. She is forbidden to enter the torture chamber, but calls to Mario from the door, who calls out to her to be courageous and keep silent.

Scarpia again rejects Tosca's appeal for mercy, and angered by her obstinacy, he orders the door opened so she can hear Mario's agony; as the music conveys the horror, Spoletta mutters an ancient prayer for the dead. Cavaradossi continues to urge Tosca to be unyielding, causing the infuriated Scarpia to order his agents to silence him.

The tension becomes intolerable. Tosca cannot endure her lover's pain, and to save him, she betrays Angelotti's hiding place to Scarpia, telling Scarpia that Angelotti hides in the well at Cavaradossi's villa.

Tosca has betrayed Cavaradossi, but it was an act of love, for she could no longer bear Cavaradossi's suffering. Scarpia halts the brutal and sadistic torture, and in response to Tosca's pleading, Cavaradossi is brought back into Scarpia's chambers, bruised, bleeding, and in agony. Tosca, ashamed and impotent, showers him with kisses and tears.

While Tosca consoles Cavaradossi, he faintly asks her if she told anything to Scarpia. Scarpia unveils his most fiendish ploy and shouts "In the well in the garden!", and then orders Spoletta into immediate pursuit. Cavaradossi thunders curses at Tosca for betraying him.

Scarpia's henchman, Sciarrone, rushes in with news that the Royalist victory at Marengo was a mistake: Napoleon had indeed been victorious over the Austrians, and General Melas is in flight.

Cavaradossi, weak and in excruciating pain, rises and explodes into a patriotic outburst of victory: "Vittoria! Vittoria!" Cavaradossi reveals for the first time that he is an ardent revolutionary and Republican sympathizer. He curses Scarpia and all tyrants, while Tosca, in fear for his life, pleads with him to be silent. Helping the fugitive Angelotti was a crime against the state, but Scarpia had no conclusive proof against Cavaradossi. Now, Cavaradossi has avowed treason, and Scarpia immediately arrests him and sends him off to jail and execution. As Tosca tries to join him, Scarpia's men brutally thrust her back.

"L'alba vindice appar"

Allegro concitato
CAVARADOSSI



Now alone with Tosca, Scarpia sarcastically laments his unfinished supper. Tosca faces the dilemma of her desperation to save her lover. Sarcastically, Scarpia hints that perhaps together they can devise a plan to save Mario. With gallantry and elegance, he offers the agitated Tosca some Spanish wine, suggesting that it will revive her.

But Tosca quickly ends Scarpia's charade. She seats herself before Scarpia, and with contempt and disdain, suggests that they negotiate for Cavaradossi's freedom. She asks Scarpia "quanto" ("How much?"....Your price?") Scarpia replies mockingly: "Money!", assuring her that although he has often been accused of being corrupt, "Scarpia wants no money. Scarpia will not sell himself for money!"

Scarpia reveals his passion: "Tosca, I want you!" If Cavaradossi is to be freed, Tosca will be his prize. Scarpia can no longer contain his desire for Tosca: he reveals that he is consumed by his savage passion and lust for her, telling her that he has long admired her beauty, that her devotion to her lover, her rage and hatred for him, have made him even more resolute, and have more profoundly stirred his uncontrollable obsession to possess her.

Tosca runs to the door, planning to appeal to the Queen. Scarpia makes no attempt to restrain her, but with malicious irony, advises her that the Queen cannot pardon a dead man. Tosca pauses, and Scarpia approaches her, cynically declaring that he realizes that she hates him, but passions of love and hate are the same.

As Tosca pleads for mercy, Scarpia proceeds from persuasion to physical action. Suddenly, Tosca is struck with terror as she hears ominous drum rolls in the distance, indicating that the gallows are being erected for an execution: it will be Cavaradossi's execution. Scarpia warns her that time is passing quickly; her lover, by her own will, has but one hour to live.

Tosca's spirits are crushed. She asks: "Why has God forsaken me?" Tosca expresses her despair in the aria, "Vissi d'arte" ("I lived for art"), a touching prayer from a deeply religious woman, a Job-like prayer questioning God for punishing a woman who has lived unselfishly as a righteous woman of faith with unselfish compassion for humanity.

"Vissi d'arte"

Andante lento appassionato
TOSCA



As Tosca once more pleads with Scarpia for mercy, Spoletta enters to announce that when Angelotti was seized he swallowed poison; ferociously, Scarpia screams that his corpse should be hanged on the scaffold.

Spoletta inquires about the other prisoner: Cavaradossi. Tosca is disgusted with herself for having to negotiate with the insidious Scarpia, but in her desperation to save Cavaradossi, she finds no alternative but to agree to yield to Scarpia: Tosca nods her consent.

Scarpia proceeds to his ultimate duplicity. He does not have the power to pardon Cavaradossi, so he contrives an alternative scheme: he orders a mock execution; instead of the gallows for Cavaradossi, there will be a firing squad, but a simulated execution with blanks in the rifles. Scarpia looks fixedly at his cunning agent, who by his expressions and gestures indicates his full understanding of his real, sinister intentions. He directs that Tosca be admitted to the jail at four o'clock to advise Cavaradossi of the change in plans.

Scarpia turns passionately to Tosca, declares that he has fulfilled his promise, and that he is ready to claim his reward. But Tosca demands that Scarpia must also provide the lovers with a safe-conduct pass out of Rome.

The defining, macabre moment of the drama unfolds. While Scarpia writes the safe-conduct pass, Tosca approaches the table, and with a trembling hand takes up the glass of wine Scarpia had poured for her. As she raises it to her lips, she notices a knife at the corner of Scarpia's desk. She assures herself that Scarpia is not looking, cautiously seizes the knife, and hides it behind her.

In a moment of terror and confusion, Tosca has conceived the idea to murder Scarpia. The intensity of the orchestra music narrates her thoughts: Tosca is in profound inner conflict, caught between Scarpia's lust, her dreaded fear of being raped by Scarpia, and her profound love for Cavaradossi. In a moment of uncontrollable passion she decides to protect herself and redeem the world from Scarpia's evil.

Scarpia seals and folds the safe-conduct pass, rises from his desk and advances toward Tosca, shouting victoriously, "Tosca finalmente mia!" ("Tosca, you are finally mine!") As he attempts to embrace her, Tosca plunges the knife into Scarpia's heart: "This is Tosca's kiss that you have so passionately longed for." Scarpia shrieks in horror,

and curses her as he falls to the ground. In his agony, he tries to clutch her, but she recoils from him in horror. Overcome by her hatred for him, she condemns and insults him: “Suffocate in your own blood! And a woman has killed you! You have tortured me too much! Can you still hear me? Speak! Look at me! Scarpia, I am Tosca!”

Tosca, keeping her eyes fixed on the dead Scarpia, goes to the table, dips a napkin in water, and washes the blood from her hands. Then, she approaches a mirror and rearranges her disheveled hair.

She looks feverishly for the safe-conduct pass but cannot find it. Then she notices that the dead Scarpia clutches the pass in his hand. She raises his arm, extracts the pass from his hand, lets the arm fall, and stares at the corpse in horror. With religious solemnity she forgives the dead Scarpia for his sins, reciting an ironic epitaph to him: “E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma” (“And in front of him, all Rome trembled.”)

Before leaving, she reverentially places candlesticks on each side of the corpse. Then she sees a crucifix on the wall, removes it, and places it his breast. A sudden roll of distant drums breaks the quiet. With great caution, Tosca departs, her steps accompanied by the Scarpia motive chords, this time, funereal and somber.

Act III: Castel Sant'Angelo.

It is a serene and starry night, with hints of early dawn in the Eternal City as sheep bells sound, and morning bells chime from surrounding churches. In the distance, a shepherd sings.

A jailer awaits the condemned man and the firing squad. A group of soldiers arrive with Cavaradossi, who is delivered to the jailer. The jailer questions Cavaradossi, and then enters his name in the register.

The jailer advises Cavaradossi that he has but one hour to live, and that a priest is available if he so desires. Cavaradossi declines, but requests that he may write a few words to the love that he leaves behind. He offers the jailer his ring after he receives assurance that he will deliver the letter.

Cavaradossi's farewell letter to his beloved Tosca is a reminiscence of those ecstatic starlit nights of blissful love, and a recollection of past ecstasy before the final darkness: "E lucevan le stelle" ("The stars were shining"). Cavaradossi reflects on his despair and melancholy as he faces the end of his life: his dream of love is over; "e non ho amato mai tanto la vita" ("never have I loved life so much as at this moment."); "Muio disperato" ("I die in desperation.")

"E lucevan le stelle"

Andante lento appassionato molto
CAVARADOSSI

pp Oh! dol - ci ba - ci, o languide ca - rezze, mentr'io fre-
 As her beautiful form surrendered to me. I trembled
 men - te le bel - le for - me dis - cio gliea dai ve - li!
 amid sweet kisses and languid caresses!

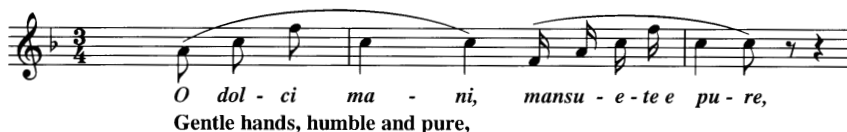
Tosca arrives, accompanied by Spoletta and a sergeant. Spoletta indicates where Tosca will find Cavaradossi, orders the sentry to watch the pair closely, and then descends the stairs with the jailer and the sergeant.

Tosca rushes exultantly to the weeping Cavaradossi. She produces their safe-conduct pass, and triumphant and unrepentant, explains to a suspicious Cavaradossi the details of how she obtained it. Cavaradossi reads the safe-conduct pass and becomes confused: he remarks that it was Scarpia's first concession ever, but she responds that it was his last.

Tosca reveals to Cavaradossi that she murdered Scarpia. Cavaradossi grasps her hands and tenderly praises the hands that have avenged them and changed their destiny.

“O dolci mani”

Andantino sostenuto
TOSCA and CAVARADOSSI



Tosca explains that she has collected her jewels and money, and a carriage awaits them. But first, he is to act out a mock execution; when they fire he is to fall down immediately and pretend he is dead. The soldiers will retire, and then they will escape to freedom.

The couple exults in the ecstasy of their forthcoming freedom. But reality intervenes and the firing squad and its officer arrive, accompanied by Spoletta and the jailer.

As the clock strikes four in the morning, Cavaradossi is ordered before the firing squad. Tosca, anxious yet jubilant, whispers to Cavaradossi that he should remember to fall down immediately. Cavaradossi is led to the wall. The sergeant offers him a bandage for his eyes, but he refuses it.

Anxious yet confident, Tosca comments on the action. As the officer is about to lower his sword as the signal to fire, she covers her ears. The soldiers fire the fatal shots. Tosca watches from the side, sees Cavaradossi fall, and rejoices with pride that her lover has acted so well; ironically, she exclaims, “Ecco un artiste” (“How well he acts.”)

The sergeant approaches the body and is about to give the usual coup de grâce, but Spoletta stops him and then leads the group down the stairs. After the firing squad departs, Tosca, fearful that Mario might spoil everything by some indiscretion, urges him to remain still and silent as she goes to the parapet to assure herself that the soldiers have left. Satisfied, she returns to Cavaradossi and urges him to rise. In shock, the awful reality overcomes her, as she realizes that she is addressing a lifeless body: “Dead! Dead!” Scarpia betrayed his promise; Cavaradossi has been murdered.

Tosca throws herself on Cavaradossi’s corpse and moans in agony and grief. Voices are heard from policemen racing up the stairs. Sciarrone is heard telling the others that Scarpia has been found stabbed to death. Spoletta assures them that it was Tosca.

Spoletta rushes to seize Tosca, who thrusts him back violently. She rushes to the edge of the parapet, but before she leaps to her death, addresses her final words to the dead Scarpia: “O Scarpia, davanti a Dio” (“Scarpia, God will be our final judge.”)

The final music explodes in passionate grandeur, a thunderous rendering of the climactic refrain from Cavaradossi’s farewell: “E lucevan le stelle: e non ho amato mai tanto la vita” (“Never have I loved life so much as in this moment.”)

Tosca

Libretto

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Act I

*Rome: the interior of the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle.
There is a scaffold erected before a large painting that is in progress.
Various painters' accessories and tools are strewn about.
Angelotti enters the church, a fugitive in prison clothes: disheveled,
exhausted, and trembling in fear.*

**Vivacissimo
con violenza**



Angelotti:

Ah! Finalmente! Nel terror mio stolto
vedea ceffi di birro in ogni volto.

Angelotti:

Finally! In my panic and fright I was
seeing those pursuers' faces everywhere.

*He sighs in relief when he recognizes a shrine with an image of the Virgin
and a receptacle for Holy Water.*

La pila, la colonna.
A piè della Madonna mi scrisse mia
sorella.

The front of the column.
My sister wrote that I would find the key
"At the foot of the Madonna."

*At first, he becomes discouraged when his search for the key is unsuccessful.
He anxiously searches again, and breathes easier when he finds the key.*

Ecco la chiave, ed ecco la Cappella!

Here is the key, and here's the Chapel!

*He glances about in fright, opens the Chapel gate, enters, and locks it behind himself.
Just as he disappears, the Sacristan appears, carrying a basket of paint brushes.*

Sagrestano:

E sempre lava! Ogni pennello è sozzo
peggio d'un collarin d'uno scagnozzo.

Signor pittore. Tò! Nessuno.
Avrei giurato che fosse ritornato il
cavalier Cavaradossi.

Sacristan:

Always washing them! Every brush is
filthy, worse than a poor priest's collar.
(*He approaches the scaffold, surprised*)
Good morning. What! No one here.
I could have sworn that Cavalier
Cavaradossi had returned.

*He puts down the paint brushes, climbs the scaffold, looks into the food basket,
and notices that nothing has been eaten.*

No, sbaglio. Il paniere è intatto.

I'm wrong. The basket is untouched.

Bells announce the Angelus. The Sacristan kneels in prayer.

*Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae
Et concepit de Spiritu Sancto.
Ecce ancilla Domini
Fiat mi hi secundum verbum tuum.
Et Verbum caro factum est
Et habitavit in nobis.*

*The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
and She conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Behold the handmaid of the Lord
Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.
And the Word was made flesh
And dwelt among us.*

*Cavaradossi enters, ascends the scaffold, and uncovers the painting which represents
Mary Magdalene; the figure has large blue eyes and golden hair.*

Cavaradossi:

Che fai?

Cavaradossi: *(to the kneeling Sacristan)*

What are you doing?

Sagrestano:

Recito l'Angelus.

Sacristan:

I'm reciting the Angelus.

The Sacristan notices the painting and marvels in great astonishment.

Sante ampolle! Il suo ritratto!

Holy cruets! I know that lady!

Cavaradossi:

Di chi?

Cavaradossi:

You do?

Sagrestano:

Di quell'ignota che i dì passati a pregar qui
venia. Tutta devota e pia.

Sacristan:

That unknown woman has come here daily
to pray. She is very devoted and pious.

Cavaradossi:

È vero. E tanto ell'era infervorata nella sua
preghiera ch'io ne pinsi, non visto, il bel
sembiante.

Cavaradossi:

That's right. She was praying so fervently
that she didn't notice that I was painting her
beautiful face.

Sagrestano:

(Fuori, Satana, fuori!)

Sacristan: *(as if scandalized)*

(Get rid of the Devil!)

Cavaradossi:

Dammi i colori!

Cavaradossi:

Give me the paints!

*Cavaradossi starts to paint, but hesitates as he scrutinizes his work. He removes
a medallion from his pocket, and he compares its image to the image in his painting.*

Andante lento
CAVARADOSSI



Recondita armonia di bellezze diverse!
È bruna Floria, l'ardente amante mia.

Sagrestano:

(Scherza coi fanti e lascia stare i santi!)

Cavaradossi:

E te, beltade ignota, cinta di chiome bionde!
Tu azzurro hai l'occhio,
Tosca ha l'occhio nero!

Sagrestano:

(Scherza coi fanti e lascia stare i santi!)

Cavaradossi:

L'arte nel suo mistero
le diverse bellezze insiem confonde.
Ma nel ritrar costei il mio solo pensiero,
Ah! Il mio sol pensier sei tu! Tosca, sei tu!

Sagrestano:

Queste diverse gonne che fanno
concorrenza alle Madonne mandan tanfo
d'Inferno.

(Scherza coi fanti e lascia stare i santi!)

Ma con quei cani di volterriani nemici del
santissimo governo non s'ha da metter voce!

Già sono impenitenti tutti quanti!
Facciam piuttosto il segno della croce.

Eccellenza, vado.

Cavaradossi:

Fa il tuo piacere!

Sagrestano:

Pieno è il paniere.
Fa penitenza?

Cavaradossi:

Fame non ho.

The mysterious similarities of different
beauties! My impassioned Floria is dark-haired.

Sacristan:

(Play with the mundane, but leave the
saints alone!)

Cavaradossi:

You, unknown beauty, are crowned with
golden hair! Your eyes are blue,
but Tosca has dark eyes!

Sacristan:

(Play with the mundane, but leave the
saints alone!)

Cavaradossi:

Art unites the mystery of these two
beautiful and different women.
But in this painting my only thought is of
Tosca! Tosca, my only thought is you!

Sacristan:

These different women competing with
the Madonna, emits the stench of Hell.

(Play with the mundane, but leave the
saints alone!)

Like those dogs, those Voltarian enemies,
the voice cannot be raised!

They are all unrepentant sinners!
Let's make the sign of the Cross right away.

Sir, I'm going.

Cavaradossi:

Do as you please!

Sacristan:

Your food basket is full.
Are you doing penance?

Cavaradossi:

I'm not hungry.

Sagrestano:

Ah! Mi rincresce!
Badi, quand'esce chiuda.

Sacristan:

Oh, I'm so sorry!
Don't forget to lock up.

Cavaradossi:

Va!

Cavaradossi:

Go!

Sagrestano:

Vo!

Sacristan:

I'm going!

After the Sacristan leaves, Cavaradossi begins to paint. He becomes uneasy when he hears the noise of someone at the gate of the chapel. It is Angelotti. Angelotti realizes that he has been discovered and becomes terrified.

Just as he is about to hide again in the chapel, Cavaradossi approaches him.

Cavaradossi:

Gente là dentro!

Cavaradossi:

Someone is in there!

Angelotti:

Voi! Cavaradossi!
Vi manda Iddio!
Non mi ravvisate?
Il carcere m'ha dunque assai mutato?

Angelotti: *(recognizing Cavaradossi)*

You! Cavaradossi!
God has sent you to me!
Don't you recognize me?
Has prison changed me that much?

Cavaradossi:

Angelotti! Il Console della spenta
repubblica romana!

Cavaradossi: *(recognizing Angelotti)*

Angelotti! The Consul of the extinct
Roman Republic!

Angelotti:

Fuggii pur ora da Castel Sant'Angelo.

Angelotti:

I've just escaped from the Castel Sant'Angelo.

Cavaradossi:

Disponete di me!

Cavaradossi:

I am at your disposal!

Voce di Tosca:

Mario!

Voice of Tosca: *(from outside)*

Mario!

Cavaradossi:

Celatevi!
È una donna gelosa.
Un breve istante e la rimando.

Cavaradossi: *(to Angelotti)*

Hide yourself!
She is a jealous woman.
I'll get rid of her quickly.

Voce di Tosca:

Mario!

Voice of Tosca:

Mario!

Cavaradossi:

Eccomi!

Cavaradossi:

I'm coming!

Angelotti:

Sono stremo di forze, più non reggo.

Angelotti:

I'm exhausted, I can't bear it any longer.

*Cavaradossi gives Angelotti the food basket.***Cavaradossi:**

In questo panier v'è cibo e vino.

Cavaradossi:

There's food and wine in this basket.

Angelotti:

Grazie!

Angelotti:

Thank you!

Cavaradossi:

Presto!

Cavaradossi: (*urging Angelotti to hide*)

Hurry!

Angelotti:

Grazie!

Angelotti:

Thank you!

Cavaradossi:

Hurry!

Cavaradossi:

Hurry!

Voce di Tosca:

Mario! Mario! Mario!

Voice of Tosca:

Mario! Mario! Mario!

Cavaradossi

Son qui!

Cavaradossi:

I'm here!

Andantino sostenuto*Tosca bursts in, anxiously and suspiciously looking about the church.***Tosca:**

Perchè chiuso?

Tosca:

Why was the door locked?

Cavaradossi:

Lo vuole il Sagrestano.

Cavaradossi:

It was the Sacristan's wish.

Tosca:

A chi parlavi?

Tosca:

Who were you speaking to?

Cavaradossi:

A te!

Tosca:

Altre parole bisbigliavi. Ov'è?

Cavaradossi:

Chi?

Tosca:

Colei! Quella donna!

Ho udito i lesti passi ed un fruscio di vesti.

Cavaradossi:

Sogni!

Tosca:

Lo neghi?

Cavaradossi:

Lo nego e t'amo!

Tosca:

Oh! Innanzi alla Madonna?

No, Mario mio, lascia pria che la preghi,
che l'infiori.Ora stammi a sentir, stasera canto,
ma è spettacolo breve. Tu m'aspetti
sull'uscio della scena e alla tua villa andiam
soli, soletti.**Cavaradossi:**

Stasera?

Tosca:È luna piena e il notturno effluvio floreal
inebria il cor!

Non sei contento?

Cavaradossi:

Tanto!

Tosca:

Tornalo a dir!

Cavaradossi:

To you!

Tosca:

You were whispering. Where is she?

Cavaradossi:

Who?

Tosca: (*implying another woman's presence*)

She! That woman!

I heard hasty footsteps and the rustling of
a woman's dress.**Cavaradossi:**

You're dreaming!

Tosca:

Do you deny it?

Cavaradossi:

I deny it, and I love you!

Tosca: (*he tries to embrace her*)

In front of the Madonna?

No, dear Mario, let me first pray to her
and adorn her with flowers.Now listen to me. I'm singing tonight, but
it is a short performance. Wait for me at
the stage exit, and then we'll go to your
villa and be alone together.**Cavaradossi:**

This evening?

Tosca:It's a full moon, and the fragrance of the
evening flowers intoxicate my heart.

Aren't you pleased?

Cavaradossi:

Very much so!

Tosca:

Say it again!

Cavaradossi:

Tanto!

Tosca:

Lo dici male!

Non la sospiri la nostra casetta
che tutta ascosa nel verde ci aspetta?
Nido a noi sacro, ignoto al mondo inter,
pien d'amore e di mister?
Al tuo fianco sentire
per le silenziose stellate ombre,
salir le voci delle cose!
Dai boschi e dai roveti,
dall'arse erbe,
dall'imo dei franti sepolcreti,
odorosi di timo,
la notte escon bisbigli
di minuscoli amori
e perfidi consigli
che ammolliscono i cuori.

Fiorite, o campi immensi, palpitate
aure marine, aurite nel lunare albor.
Ah piovete voluttà, volte stellate!

Cavaradossi:

Ah! M'avvinci ne' tuoi lacci mia sirena.

Tosca:

Arde a Tosca nel sangue il folle amor!

Cavaradossi:

Mia serena, verrò!

Tosca:

O mio amore!

Cavaradossi:

Or lasciami al lavoro.

Tosca:

Mi discacci?

Cavaradossi:

Urge l'opra, lo sai!

Cavaradossi:

Very much so!

Tosca:

You don't really mean it!

Don't you long for our little house hidden
amidst the forest greenery?
Isn't it our sacred nest, hidden from the
entire world, and full of love and mystery?
I'll be at your side
in the silence of the starry darkness,
hearing all of those mysterious sounds:
from the forest and the briar patches,
from the parched herbs and the
broken tombs
and their aroma of thyme.
The night whispers
little words of love
and amorous confessions
that soften the heart.

Immense fields of flowers, the sea air
throbbing, and the moon shining.
Lust rains down from the starry heavens!

Cavaradossi:

My temptress has defeated me!

Tosca:

A passionate love burns in Tosca!

Cavaradossi:

I long for the moment to arrive!

Tosca:

Oh my love!

Cavaradossi:

But now let me finish my work.

Tosca:

Are you chasing me away?

Cavaradossi:

You know that my work is urgent!

Tosca:

Vado!

Tosca:

I'm going!

*As Tosca begins to leave, she notices Cavaradossi's painting.
She rushes back to Cavaradossi in great agitation.*

Chi è quella donna bionda lassù?

Who is that blond woman in the painting up there?

Cavaradossi:

La Maddalena. Ti piace?

Cavaradossi:

The Magdalen. Do you like it?

Tosca:

È troppo bella!

Tosca:

She's too beautiful!

Cavaradossi:

Prezioso elogio!

Cavaradossi: *(laughingly)*

That's a flattering compliment!

Tosca:

Ridi?

Quegli occhi cilestrini già li vidi.

Tosca: *(suspicious)*

Why are you laughing?

I've seen those pale blue eyes before.

Cavaradossi:

Ce n'è tanti pel mondo!

Cavaradossi:

There are so many like them in the world!

Tosca:

Aspetta. Aspetta.

E l'Attavanti!

Tosca:

Wait a moment. Wait.

That's the Attavanti woman!

Cavaradossi:

Brava!

Cavaradossi: *(laughing)*

Very good!

Tosca:

La vedi? T'ama?

Tu l'ami?

Tosca: *(raging with jealousy)*

Have you seen her? Does she love you?

Do you love her?

Cavaradossi:

Fu puro caso.

Cavaradossi: *(trying to calm her)*

It was by accident.

Tosca:

Quei passi e quel bisbiglio.

Ah! Qui stava pur ora!

Tosca:

Those footsteps and the whispering.

She was just here!

Cavaradossi:

Vien via!

Cavaradossi:

Come, leave!

Tosca:

Ah, la civetta!

A me, a me!

Cavaradossi:

La vidi ieri, ma fu puro caso.

A pregar qui venne non visto la ritrassi.

Tosca:

Giura!

Cavaradossi:

Giuro!

Tosca:

Come mi guarda fiso!

Cavaradossi:

Vien via!

Tosca:

Di me beffarda, ride.

Cavaradossi:

Follia!

Tosca:

Ah, quegli occhi!

Cavaradossi:

Quale occhio al mondo

può star di paro

all'ardente occhio tuo nero?

È qui che l'esser mio s'affisa intero.

Occhio all'amor soave, all'ira fiero!

Qual altro al mondo può star di paro

all'occhio tuo nero!

Tosca:

Oh, come la sai bene

l'arte di farti amare!

Ma falle gli occhi neri!

Tosca:

Ah, that coquette!

Leave her to me!

Cavaradossi:

I saw her yesterday, but by pure chance.

She prayed here, but didn't see me paint her.

Tosca:

Swear it!

Cavaradossi:

I swear it!

Tosca: (*looking at the painting*)

How she stares at me!

Cavaradossi:

Come away!

Tosca:

She's mocking me and laughing at me.

Cavaradossi:

Nonsense!

Tosca:

Those eyes!

Cavaradossi:

What eyes in the world

can rival

your impassioned dark eyes?

Your intense eyes have conquered me:

eyes of gentle love and fiery passion!

No other eyes in the world can rival your

impassioned dark eyes!

Tosca:

How well you have perfected the art of

making yourself loved!

But paint her eyes dark!

**Cavaradossi:**

Mia gelosa!

Cavaradossi:

My jealous love!

Tosca:Sì, lo sento, ti tormento
senza posa.**Tosca:**Yes, I feel it, and I'll torture you
relentlessly.**Cavaradossi:**

Mia gelosa!

Cavaradossi:

My jealous love!

Tosca:Certa sono del perdono, se tu guardi al mio
dolor!**Tosca:**I'm sure that you would forgive me if you
understood my suffering!**Cavaradossi:**Mia Tosca idolatrata,
ogni cosa in te mi piace;
l'ira audace
e lo spasimo d'amor!**Cavaradossi:**My adored Tosca,
I love everything about you:
your bold anger
and your yearning for love!**Tosca:**Dilla ancora la parola che consola.
Dilla ancora!**Tosca:**Say those consoling words again.
Say them again!**Cavaradossi:**Mia vita, amante inquieta,
dirò sempre: "Floria, t'amo!"
Ah! L'alma acquieta,
sempre "t'amo!" ti dirò!**Cavaradossi:**My darling, my restless lover,
I will always say: "Floria, I love you!"
Calm your soul, for I will always tell you
that "I love you!"**Tosca:**Dio! Quante peccata!
M'hai tutta spettinata!**Tosca:** (*drawing from his embrace*)God! Nothing is sacred!
You have completely messed my hair!**Cavaradossi:**

Or va, lasciami!

Cavaradossi:

Now go, and leave me to my work!

Tosca:

Tu fino a stassera stai fermo al lavoro. E mi prometti: sia caso o fortuna, sia treccia bionda o bruna, a pregar non verrà donna nessuna?

Cavaradossi:

Lo giuro, amore! Va!

Tosca:

Quanto m'affretti!

Cavaradossi:

Ancora?

Tosca:

No, perdona!

Cavaradossi:

Davanti alla Madonna?

Tosca:

È tanto buona!

Ma falle gli occhi neri!

Tosca:

You'll be working here until evening. Promise me that you will not look at another woman, whether blond or brunette, even if she comes to pray?

Cavaradossi:

I swear it, my love! But please go!

Tosca:

How you rush me!

Cavaradossi: (reproachfully)

Again?

Tosca: (embracing him)

No, forgive me!

Cavaradossi: (jokingly)

In front of the Madonna?

Tosca: (as she departs)

She is so good!

(gazing at the painting)

But do make her eyes dark!

*As soon as Tosca has departed, Cavaradossi rushes to the chapel.
Angelotti appears, and they greet each other affectionately.*

Cavaradossi:

È buona la mia Tosca, ma credente al confessor nulla tiene celato, ond'io mi tacqui.
È cosa più prudente.

Angelotti:

Siam soli?

Cavaradossi:

Sì. Qual è il vostro disegno?

Angelotti:

A norma degli eventi, uscir di Stato o star celato in Roma. Mia sorella...

Cavaradossi:

Tosca is a good woman, but because of her profound faith, she would never keep a secret from her confessor, and that's why I didn't tell her about you. I think it was a wise decision.

Angelotti:

Are we alone?

Cavaradossi:

Yes. What is your plan?

Angelotti:

Depending on events, I'll either leave the State or remain hidden in Rome. My sister...

Cavaradossi:

L'Attavanti?

Angelotti:

Sì, ascose un muliebre abbigliamento là sotto l'altare, vesti, velo, ventaglio.

Appena imbruni indosserò quei panni.

Cavaradossi:

Or comprendo!

Quel fare circospetto e il pregante fervore in giovin donna e bella m'avean messo in sospetto di qualche occulto amor!

Or comprendo!

Era amor di sorella!

Angelotti:

Tutto ella ha osato onde sottrarmi a Scarpia, scellerato!

Cavaradossi:

Scarpia?! Bigotto satiro che affina colle devote pratiche la foia libertina e strumento al lascivo talento fa il confessore e il boia!

La vita mi costasse, vi salverò!

Ma indugiar fino a notte è mal sicuro.

Angelotti:

Temo del sole!

Cavaradossi:

La cappella mette a un orto mal chiuso, poi c'è un canneto che va lungi pei campi a una mia villa.

Angelotti:

M'è nota.

Cavaradossi:

Ecco la chiave, innanzi sera io vi raggiungo, portate con voi le vesti femminili.

Angelotti:

Ch'io le indossi?

Cavaradossi:

The Attavanti woman?

Angelotti:

Yes, she's hidden a lady's wardrobe under the altar: a dress, a veil, and a fan.

After dark, I'll put on the clothes as a disguise.

Cavaradossi:

Now I understand!

That young, beautiful woman's fervent prayers were a camouflage to avoid arousing suspicion about her secret purpose!

Now I understand!

It was a sister's love!

Angelotti:

She has risked everything to rescue me from the clutches of that villainous Scarpia!

Cavaradossi:

Scarpia?! That lecher and bigot uses the power of the state to destroy freedom and serve his lust; he is both confessor and executioner!

I will save you even if it costs me my life!

But it is imprudent to delay leaving until night.

Angelotti:

I'm afraid of being seen in daylight!

Cavaradossi: (*pointing to the chapel*)

From the chapel garden, take the path through the suburbs and cane-fields; it leads to my villa.

Angelotti:

I'm familiar with it.

Cavaradossi:

Here's the key. I'll join you before nightfall. Take the woman's clothes with you.

Angelotti:

Should I put them on?

Cavaradossi:

Per or non monta, il sentier è deserto.

Cavaradossi:

It's not necessary, the path is deserted.

Angelotti:

Addio!

Angelotti:

Farewell!

Cavaradossi:

Se urgesse il periglio, correte
al pozzo del giardin.
L'acqua è nel fondo, ma a mezzo della
canna, un picciol varco guida ad un anatro
oscuro, rifugio impenetrabile e sicuro!

Cavaradossi:

If there's any danger, take shelter in the
well in the garden.
Water is at the bottom, but half way
down, there's a small passage that leads
to a dark cave; it's impenetrable and safe!

A cannon shot booms in the distance.

Angelotti:

Il cannon del castello!

Angelotti:

The cannon from the castle!

Cavaradossi:

Fu scoperta la fuga!
Or Scarpia i suoi sbirri sguinzaglia!

Cavaradossi:

Your escape was discovered!
Scarpia's henchmen will be in pursuit!

Angelotti:

Addio!

Angelotti:

Farewell!

Cavaradossi:

Con voi verrò! Staremo all'erta!

Cavaradossi: (resolutely)

I'll be with you soon! We must be careful!

Angelotti:

Odo qualcun!

Angelotti:

I hear someone!

Cavaradossi:

Se ci assalgon, battaglia!

Cavaradossi:

If we're attacked, we'll fight!

*As Cavaradossi and Angelotti leave the chapel,
the Sacristan arrives, excited by the news he brings.*

Sagrestano:

Sommo giubilo, Eccellenza!
Non c'è più! Ne son dolente!
Chi contrista un miscredente
si guadagna un'indulgenza!

Sacristan:

Excellency, what a triumph!
He's not here anymore! What a pity!
Anyone who makes a non-believer feel
guilty deserve a small indulgence!

Choir boys rush into the chapel.

Tutta qui la cantoria!
Presto!

All you choir boys, over here!
Quickly!

Ragazzi:

Dove?

Sagrestano:

In sagrestia.

Ragazzi:

Ma che avvenne?

Sagrestano:

Nol sapete?

Bonaparte, scellerato, Bonaparte...

Ragazzi:

Ebben? Che fu?

Sagrestano:

Fu spennato, sfracellato, è piombato a Belzebù!

Ragazzi:

Chi lo dice?

È sogno! È fola!

Sagrestano:

È veridica parola or ne giunse la notizia!

Ragazzi:

Si festeggia la vittoria!

Sagrestano:

E questa sera gran fiaccolata
veglia di gala a Palazzo Farnese,
ed un'apposita nuova cantata
con Floria Tosca!

E nelle chiese inni al Signore!
Or via a vestirvi, non più clamor!
Via, via in sagrestia!

Tutti:

Ah! Doppio soldo. Te Deum. Gloria!
Viva il Re! Si festeggia la vittoria!

Boys:

Where?

Sacristan:

To the sacristy.

Boys:

But what happened?

Sacristan:

You don't know yet?

That scoundrel Bonaparte...

Boys:

Well? What was it?

Sacristan:

He was plucked, crushed, and sent to the Devil!

Boys:

Who said so?

It's a dream! It's a fable!

Sacristan:

It's the truth. The news will soon arrive!

Boys:

Then there'll be a victory celebration!

Sacristan:

This evening there will be a torchlight
celebration at the Farnese Palace,
and a specially composed new cantata
will be sung by Floria Tosca!
And in the church, there will be hymns to
the Lord! Now go and dress, no more
commotion! Go, go off to the sacristy!

All:

Oh, double wages. Te Deum. Gloria!
Long live the King! Let's celebrate the victory!

*The door opens unexpectedly. Scarpia and his agents appear.
With great emphasis, Scarpia reproaches the choir boys and the Sacristan
for making such a disrespectful commotion in the church.*

Scarpia:

Un tal baccano in chiesa!
Bel rispetto!

Scarpia:

Such commotion in church!
Have respect!

Sagrestano:

Eccellenza, il gran giubilo.

Sacristan:

Your Excellency, the great celebration.

Scarpia:

Apprestate per il Te Deum.

Scarpia:

Get ready for the Te Deum.

The choir boys quietly leave. Scarpia orders the Sacristan to remain.

Tu resta!

You, stay here!

Sagrestano:

Non mi muovo!

Sacristan: (*fearful and stuttering*)

I'm not moving!

Scarpia:

E tu va, fruga ogni angolo,
raccogli ogni traccia!

Scarpia: (*to his agent Spoletta*)

And you, go search every corner and
gather every clue!

Spoletta:

Sta bene!

Spoletta:

Very well!

Scarpia:

Occhio alle porte, senza dar sospetti!

Scarpia:

Watch the doorways without arousing
suspicion!

(*to the Sacristan*)

Ora a te! Pesa le tue risposte.

As for you, weigh your answers carefully!

Un prigionier di Stato fuggì pur ora da
Castel Sant'Angelo, s'è rifugiato qui.

A prisoner of the State just escaped from
Castel Sant'Angelo and took refuge here.

Sagrestano:

Misericordia!

Sacristan:

Mercy!

Scarpia:

Forse c'è ancora.

Dov'è la Cappella degli Attavanti?

Scarpia:

Perhaps he is still here.

Where is the Attavanti Chapel?

Sagrestano:

Eccola! Aperta! Arcangeli!
E un'altra chiave!

Sacristan: (*going to the chapel door*)

Here it is! It's open! Archangels!
There must have been another key!

Scarpia:

Buon indizio. Entriamo.

Scarpia:

That's suspicious. Let's go inside.

They enter the Chapel, and return immediately. Scarpia holds a fan in his hands.

Fu grave sbaglio quel colpo di cannone! Il
mariolo spiccato ha il volo, ma lasciò una
preda preziosa, un ventaglio.

That cannon shot was a grave mistake!
The rogue has taken flight, but he left me
a precious clue: a fan.

Qual complice il misfatto preparò?

Who was the accomplice who helped him?

Scarpia closely scrutinizes the fan and recognizes its coat-of-arms.

La marchesa Attavanti!

Il suo stemma!

The Marquise Attavanti!

Her coat-of-arms!

Scarpia surveys the church. His eyes move to the painter's scaffold. He notices the well-known face of the Marquise Attavanti in Cavaradossi's painting.

Il suo ritratto!

Chi fe' quelle pitture?

It's a portrait of her!

Who did that painting?

Sagrestano:

Il cavalier Cavaradossi.

Sacristan:

Cavalier Cavaradossi.

Scarpia

Lui!

Scarpia:

Him!

*An agent emerges from the Attavanti Chapel with an empty basket.***Sagrestano:**

Numi! Il paniere!

Sacristan:

Gods! The bread basket!

Scarpia:

Lui! L'amante di Tosca!

Un uom sospetto! Un volterrian!

Scarpia:

Him! Tosca's lover!

He's a suspect! He's a Voltairian!

Sagrestano:

Vuoto? Vuoto!

Sacristan:

Is it empty? Empty!

Scarpia:

Che hai detto? Che fu?

Scarpia:

What did you say? What was that?

Sagrestano:

Si ritrovò nella Cappella questo panier.

Sacristan:

This basket was found in the Chapel.

Scarpia:

Tu lo conosci?

Sagrestano:

Certo!

È il cesto del pittor, ma nondimeno...

Scarpia:

Sputa quello che sai!

Sagrestano:

Io lo lasciai ripieno di cibo prelibato.

Il pranzo del pittor!

Scarpia:

Avrà pranzato!

Sagrestano:

Nella Cappella?

Non ne avea la chiave

nè contava pranzar, disse egli stesso.

Onde l'avea già messo al riparo.

(Libera me Domine!)

Scarpia:

(Or tutto è chiaro. La provvista del sacrista d'Angelotti fu la preda!)

Scarpia:

Do you recognize it?

Sacristan:

Certainly!

It's the painter's basket, but nonetheless...

Scarpia:

Spit out what you know!

Sacristan:

I left it filled with choice food.

It was the painter's dinner!

Scarpia:

Then he must have eaten it!

Sacristan:

There, in the Chapel?

He didn't have a key to it. Besides, he told me he wasn't hungry.

I left it over there, in a safe place.

(God help me!)

Scarpia:

(Now it's all clear to me. The Sacristan's provisions became Angelotti's prize!)

Tosca returns, extremely agitated. She approaches the scaffold but does not find Cavaradossi. As she searches the church, Scarpia hides behind the column near the Holy Water basin.

Tosca? Che non mi veda.

(Per ridurre un geloso allo sbaraglio

Jago ebbe un fazzoletto, ed io un ventaglio!)

Tosca? She must not see me.

(Iago had a handkerchief to exploit the evils of jealousy; I have a fan!)

Tosca:

Mario? Mario?

Tosca:

Mario? Mario?

Sagrestano:

Il pittor Cavaradossi?

Chi sa dove sia?

Svani, sgattaiolò per sua stregoneria.

Sacristan: *(to Tosca)*

The painter Cavaradossi?

No one knows where he is?

He vanished, slipped away as if by witchcraft.

Tosca:

Ingannata? No, no!
Tradirmi egli non può!

Tosca:

Did he deceive me? No, no!
He couldn't have betrayed me!

*Scarpia emerges from behind the column and surprises Tosca by his presence.
He offers her Holy Water. Bells resound, calling the faithful to church.*

Scarpia:

Tosca divina la mano mia la vostra aspetta,
piccola manina, non per galanteria ma per
offrirvi l'acqua benedetta.

Scarpia:

Divine Tosca, let me take your delicate
hand, not to be chivalrous, but to offer you
some holy water.

Tosca:

Grazie, signor!

Tosca:

Thank you, Sir!

Scarpia:

Un nobile esempio è il vostro. Al cielo
piena di santo zelo attingete dell'arte il
magistero che la fede ravviva!

Scarpia:

You are a noble example: Heaven is full of
zealous saints, but it is the dignity of your
art that revives faith!

Tosca:

Bontà vostra.

Tosca:

You are very kind.

Scarpia:

Le pie donne son rare.
Voi calcate la scena.
E in chiesa ci venite per pregar.

Scarpia:

Pious women like you are rare:
you glow on the stage,
and you also come to church to pray.

Tosca:

Che intendete?

Tosca:

What do you mean?

Scarpia:

E non fate come certe sfrontate che han di
Maddalena viso e costumi, e vi trescan
d'amore!

Scarpia: (*pointing to the painting*)

You are not like certain shameless women
who pretend to be Magdalen, but come to
church to indulge in love intrigues!

Tosca:

Che? D'amore? Le prove!

Tosca:

What? Love? Prove it!

Scarpia:

È arnese da pittore questo?

Scarpia: (*showing her the fan*)

Is this a painter's implement?

Tosca:

Un ventaglio? Dove stava?

Tosca:

A fan? Where was it?

Scarpia:

Là su quel palco. Qualcun venne
certo a sturbar gli amanti
ed essa nel fuggir perdé le penne!

Tosca:

La corona! Lo stemma! È l'Attavanti!
Presago sospetto!

Scarpia:

(Ho sortito l'effetto!)

Tosca:

Ed io venivo a lui tutta dogliosa
per dirgli: invan stassera,
il ciel s'infosca, l'innamorata Tosca
è prigioniera dei regali tripudi.

Scarpia:

(Già il veleno l'ha rosa!)

O che v'offende, dolce signora?
Una ribelle lagrima scende
sovra le belle guancie e le irrorà;
dolce signora, che mai v'accora?

Tosca:

Nulla!

Scarpia:

Darei la vita per asciugar quel pianto.

Tosca:

Io qui mi struggo e intanto
d'altra in braccio le mie smanie deride!

Scarpia:

(Morde il veleno!)

Tosca:

Dove son? Potessi coglierli, i traditori!
Oh qual sospetto!
Ai doppi amori è la villa ricetto!
Traditor!
Oh mio bel nido insozzato di fango!
Vi piomberò inattesa!

Scarpia:

There, on the scaffold. Someone surely must
have surprised the lovers, because she lost her
feathers as she fled!

Tosca: (examining the fan)

The coronet! The coat-of-arms!
It's Attavanti's! Just as I suspected!

Scarpia:

(I've achieved the effect!)

Tosca:

And I came here downcast because I cannot
be with him tonight;
the unkind heavens have made Tosca
a prisoner of royal celebrations.

Scarpia:

(My poison is already working!)

Why are you so upset, lovely lady?
Are those antagonistic tears
flooding your beautiful cheeks?
Tell me what distresses you?

Tosca:

Nothing!

Scarpia: (insinuating)

I would give my life to dry those tears.

Tosca:

I suffer here while he is in the arms of
another, mocking me!

Scarpia:

(The poison is taking hold!)

Tosca: (bitterly)

Where are they? If I could only catch the
traitors! Oh, this suspicion!
The villa has become a refuge for both
lovers! Traitor!
Our beautiful nest is now soiled with slime! I'll
surprise you and bury you!

Tosca turns toward the painting.

Tu non l'avrai stasera. Giuro!

I swear, you won't have his love tonight!

Scarpia:

In chiesa!

Scarpia:

In church!

Tosca

Dio mi perdona.

Egli vede ch'io piango!

Tosca:

God forgives me.

He sees that I am crying!

Scarpia pretends to comfort Tosca: he offers her his arm, and accompanies her to the door.

After Tosca's departure, people stream into the church.

Scarpia gives Spoletta orders.

Scarpia:

Tre sbirri. Una carrozza.

Presto, seguila dovunque vada, non visto,
provvedi!

Scarpia:

Take three agents and a carriage.

Quickly, follow her wherever she goes, but
be careful and don't arouse suspicion!

Spoletta:

Sta bene! Il convegno?

Spoletta:

Very well. Where will I find you?

Scarpia:

Palazzo Farnese!

Scarpia:

At the Farnese Palace!

Va, Tosca!

Nel tuo cuor s'annida Scarpia!

È Scarpia che scioglie a volo

il falco della tua gelosia.

Go, Tosca!

Scarpia's name is etched in your heart!

Scarpia has released the falcon and

inflamed your jealousy.

Quanta promessa nel tuo pronto sospetto!

Your suspicions promise me success!

The crowd in the church amasses for the Te Deum.

Scarpia kneels as the Cardinal enters.

Largo Religioso



Capitolo:

Adjutorum nostrum in nomine Domini

The Chapter:

May help be in the name of the Lord

Folla:

Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Folla:

who made Heaven and earth.

Capitolo:

Sit nomen Domini benedictum

Folla:

Et hoc nunc et usquem in saeculum.

Scarpia:

A doppia mira tendo il voler,
né il capo del ribelle è la più preziosa.
Ah di quegli occhi vittoriosi veder la
fiamma illanguidir con spasimo d'amor,
fra le mie braccia.

L'uno al capestro,
l'altra fra le mie braccia.

Folla:

*Te Deum laudamus,
Te Dominum confitemur!*

Scarpia:

Tosca, mi fai dimenticare Iddio!

Tutti:

*Te aeternum Patrem
omnis terra veneratur!*

The Chapter:

May the name of the Lord be blessed

Folla:

from here and unto all eternity.

Scarpia:

I'm consumed by two desires, and the traitor's
head is by no means my most precious one; my
triumph will be to hold her languid body in my
arms as she throbs with love, and behold the
fiery passion of those eyes.

One goes to the gallows,
the other into my arms.

Crowd:

*Lord, we laud You,
and profess that You are our Lord!*

Scarpia:

Tosca, you make me forget God!

All:

*You, eternal Father
all earth venerates!*

END OF ACT I

Act II

*Scarpia's apartment in the Farnese Palace. It is evening.
Scarpia is seated at a table having dinner.*

Scarpia:

Tosca è un buon falco!
Certo a quest'ora i miei segugi le due
prede azzannano!
Doman sul palco vedrà l'aurora
Angelotti e il bel Mario al laccio
pendere.

Tosca è a palazzo?

Sciarrone:

Un ciambellan ne uscì pur ora in traccia.

Scarpia:

Apri!

Scarpia:

Tosca is a good falcon!
Surely, by this time she has led my hunters
to seize my double prize!
At dawn tomorrow, Angelotti and the fair
Mario will be hanging side by side on my
gallows.

(Sciarrone enters)

Is Tosca in the palace?

Sciarrone:

An officer has just gone to fetch her.

Scarpia: *(pointing to the window)*

Open it!

*An orchestra is heard from outside; the Queen
is hosting a party celebrating Melas's victory over Bonaparte.*

Tarda è la notte. Alla cantata ancor manca
la Diva, e strimpellan gavotte.

Tu attenderai la Tosca in sull'entrata;
le dirai ch'io l'aspetto finita la cantata.

O meglio, le darai questo biglietto.
Ella verrà, per amor del suo Mario!
Per amor del suo Mario, al piacer mio
s'arrenderà.
Tal dei profondi amori, è la profonda
miseria.

It is late. They're playing the gavotte because
the cantata cannot begin without the Diva.

Wait for Tosca at the entrance. Tell her I want
to see her as soon as she finishes the cantata.

Or better, give her this note.
She'll come because of her love for Mario!
And because of that intense love,
she will surrender favors to me.
Such profound love produces profound
misery.

Andante un poco agitato
SCARPIA



Ha più forte sapore la conquista violenta
che il mellifluo consenso.
Io di sospiri e di lattiginose albe lunari
poco mi appago.
Non so trarre accordi di chitarra, nè oroscopo
di fior nè far l'occhio di pesce,
o tubar come tortora!

Bramo. La cosa bramata perseguo, me ne
sazio e via la getto, volto a nuova esca.
Dio creò diverse beltà e vini diversi.
Io vo' gustar quanto più posso dell'opra
divina!

Sciarrone:
Spoletta è giunto.

Scarpia:
Entri. In buon punto!

O galantuomo, come andò la caccia?

Spoletta:
(Sant'Ignazio m'aiuta!)
Della signora seguimmo la traccia.
Giunti a un'erma villetta tra le fratte perduta,
ella v'entrò.
N'esci sola ben presto.
Allor scavalco lesto il muro del giardin coi
miei cagnotti e piombo in casa.

Scarpia:
Quel bravo Spoletta!

Spoletta:
Fiuto! Razzolo! Frugo!

Scarpia:
Ah! L'Angelotti?

Spoletta:
Non s'è trovato.

A violent conquest is sweeter
than a willing.
Timid sighs under the moonlight do not
gratify me.
I do not how how to strum a guitar,
pluck petals from flowers,
or pretend romance!

I yearn for the elusive prey, and after the
conquest, I discard it for new challenges.
God created both diverse beauty as well as
different wines. I want to enjoy His divine
work as much as I can!

Sciarrone:
Spoletta has arrived.

Scarpia:
Let him in. He's right on time!

(Scarpia anxiously interrogates Spoletta)
Well my good man, how did the hunt go?

Spoletta:
(Help me St. Ignacius!)
We followed the lady's trail.
She came to a villa hidden in a pine-grove,
and then went inside.
She came out right away, alone.
Then me and my agents quickly jumped over
the garden wall and entered the villa.

Scarpia:
Well done, Spoletta!

Spoletta:
I searched! I sniffed around! I rummaged!

Scarpia:
And Angelotti?

Spoletta:
He wasn't found.

Scarpia:

Ah cane! Ah traditore!
Ceffo di basilisco, alle forche!

Spoletta:

Gesù!
C'era il pittor.

Scarpia:

Cavaradossi?

Spoletta:

Ei sa dove l'altro s'asconde.
Ogni suo gesto, ogni accento tradia
tal beffarda ironia, ch'io lo trassi in arresto.

Scarpia:

Meno male!

Spoletta:

Egli è là.

Scarpia:

That dog! That traitor!
Hang that son of the devil!

Spoletta:

Jesus!
But the painter was there.

Scarpia:

Cavaradossi?

Spoletta:

He knows where the fugitive is hiding.
Every gesture and every word of his was
defiant, so I arrested him.

Scarpia:

Terrific!

Spoletta: (*pointing to an anteroom*)

He's there.

*Scarpia paces the room while in deep thought.
He hears the Cantata being performed by Tosca through the open window*

Tosca e Coro interno:

Sale, ascende l'uman cantico,
varca spazi, varca cieli,
per ignoti soli empirei,
Profetati dai Vangeli,
a te giunge o re dei re!
Questo canto voli a te.
A te quest'inno voli.
Sommo Iddio della vittoria.
Dio che fosti innanzi ai secoli.
Alle cantiche degli angeli
quest'inno di gloria or voli a te!
Sale, ascende l'uman cantico,
Varca spazi, varca cieli,
A te giunge o re dei re!

Scarpia:

Introducete il Cavaliere.

A me Roberti e il Giudice del Fisco.

Tosca and Chorus:

Humanity's hymn rises and ascends,
through the vast firmament to the heavens,
to the unknown eternity.
As the Gospel prophecies foretold,
it reaches Him, the King of Kings!
May this hymn rise to Thee.
May our hymn of glory rise to Him.
Great God of victory.
God who was here before the world began.
May this hymn of glory rise to Thee,
like the songs of angels!
May humanity's hymn rise and ascend,
through the vast firmament to the heavens,
reaching Him, oh King of Kings!

Scarpia: (*to Spoletta*)

Bring the gentleman in here.

(*to Sciarra*)

Get Roberti and the Fiscal Judge.

Spoletta and three agents bring in Cavaradossi, followed by Roberti, the torturer, a judge, a clerk, and Sciarrone.

Cavaradossi:

Tal violenza!

Cavaradossi:

What brutality!

Scarpia:

Cavalier, vi piaccia accomodarvi.

Scarpia:

Cavalier, please sit down.

Cavaradossi:

Vo' saper...

Cavaradossi:

I want to know...

Scarpia:

Sedete.

Scarpia:

Sit down.

Cavaradossi:

Aspetto.

Cavaradossi:

I'm waiting.

Scarpia:

E sia!

V'è noto che un prigioniero...

Scarpia:

So be it!

You must have heard that a prisoner...

Upon hearing Tosca singing the Cantata, Cavaradossi interrupts Scarpia.

Cavaradossi:

La sua voce!

Cavaradossi:

Her voice!

Scarpia:

...v'è noto che un prigioniero oggi è fuggito da Castel Sant'Angelo?

Scarpia: *(continuing the interrogation)*

...you must have heard that today a prisoner escaped from Castel Sant'Angelo?

Cavaradossi:

Ignoro.

Cavaradossi:

I know nothing about it.

Scarpia:

Eppur, si pretende che voi l'abbiate accolto in Sant'Andrea, provvisto di cibo e di vesti.

Scarpia:

Yet I am told that you saw him at Sant'Andrea and provided him with food and clothing.

Cavaradossi:

Menzogna!

Cavaradossi:

That's a lie!

Scarpia:

...e guidato ad un vostro podere suburbano.

Scarpia:

...and you directed him to your suburban villa.

Cavaradossi:

Nego. Le prove?

Scarpia:

Un suddito fedele.

Cavaradossi:Al fatto. Chi mi accusa?
I vostri sbirri invan frugar la villa.**Scarpia:**

Segno che è ben celato.

Cavaradossi:

Sospetti di spia!

Spoletta:

Alle nostre ricerche egli rideva.

Cavaradossi:

E rido ancor!

Scarpia:Questo è luogo di lacrime!
Badate!
Or basta! Rispondete!**Cavaradossi:**

I deny it. Can you prove it?

Scarpia:

A faithful accomplice.

Cavaradossi:You have no proof. Your agents searched
my villa and found nothing.**Scarpia:**

That means he's well hidden.

Cavaradossi:

Your suspicions are unfounded. I'm not a spy!

Spoletta:

He scorned us as we searched the villa.

Cavaradossi:

And I still laugh!

Scarpia:This is a place for tears!
Be careful!
Enough! Answer!

Scarpia, irritated by the singing of the Cantata, brusquely closes the window.

Ov'è Angelotti?

Where is Angelotti?

Cavaradossi:

Non lo so.

Cavaradossi:

I don't know.

Scarpia:

Negate avergli dato cibo?

Scarpia:

Do you deny that you gave him food?

Cavaradossi:

Nego!

Cavaradossi:

I deny it!

Scarpia:

E vesti?

Scarpia:

And clothing?

Cavaradossi:

Nego!

Cavaradossi:

I deny it!

Scarpia:

E asilo nella villa?
E che là sia nascosto?

Cavaradossi:

Nego! Nego!

Scarpia:

Via, Cavaliere, riflettete: saggia
non è cotesta ostinatezza vostra.
Angoscia grande, pronta confessione
eviterà! Io vi consiglio, dite:
dov'è dunque Angelotti?

Cavaradossi:

Non lo so.

Scarpia:

Ancor, l'ultima volta: dov'è?

Cavaradossi:

Nol so!

Spoletta

(O bei tratti di corda!)

Scarpia:

(Eccola!)

Scarpia:

And provided refuge for him in your villa?
And isn't he hiding there now?

Cavaradossi:

I deny it!

Scarpia:

Come now, Cavalier, think about it;
it's not so wise to be so obstinate.
A quick confession will avoid extensive
anguish! I advise you to tell me:
where Angelotti is?

Cavaradossi:

I don't know.

Scarpia:

Again, for the last time, where is he?

Cavaradossi:

I don't know!

Spoletta:

(He's inviting the whip!)

Scarpia: (*seeing Tosca enter*)

(Here she is!)

*Tosca is surprised to find Cavaradossi in Scarpia's apartment.
She rushes to embrace Cavaradossi.*

Tosca:

Mario? Tu qui?

Cavaradossi:

(Di quanto là vedesti, taci, o m'uccidi!)

Scarpia:

Mario Cavaradossi,
qual testimone il Giudice vi aspetta.

Pria le forme ordinarie. Indi ai miei cenni.

Tosca:

Mario? What are you doing here?

Cavaradossi: (*whispering to Tosca*)

(If you tell them what you have seen at my
villa, I'll be killed!)

Scarpia:

Mario Cavaradossi, the judge is waiting for
your testimony.
(*to Roberti*)

First, the usual procedures. Watch for my
signals.

Tosca and Scarpia remain while Cavaradossi is taken into an adjoining room to be tortured into a confession.

Scarpia:

Ed or fra noi parliam da buoni amici.
Via quell'aria sgomentata.

Tosca:

Sgomento alcun non ho.

Scarpia:

La storia del ventaglio?

Tosca:

Fu sciocca gelosia.

Scarpia:

L'Attavanti non era dunque alla villa?

Tosca:

No: egli era solo.

Scarpia:

Solo?
Ne siete ben sicura?

Tosca:

Nulla sfugge ai gelosi. Solo! solo!

Scarpia:

Davver?

Tosca:

Solo! Sì!

Scarpia:

Quanto fuoco!
Par che abbiate paura di tradirvi.
Sciarrone, che dice il Cavalier?

Sciarrone:

Nega.

Scarpia:

Insistiamo.

Scarpia:

Now let's talk like good friends.
You have nothing to fear.

Tosca:

I'm not frightened.

Scarpia:

What about your reaction to the fan?

Tosca:

That was just foolish jealousy.

Scarpia:

So Attavanti was not at the villa?

Tosca:

No, he was alone.

Scarpia:

Alone?
How can you be so sure?

Tosca:

Nothing escapes my jealous instincts.
He was alone!

Scarpia:

Really?

Tosca:

Alone! Yes!

Scarpia:

What passion!
You must be afraid to betray him.
Sciarrone, what has the Cavalier said?

Sciarrone: *(appearing at the door)*

He denies everything.

Scarpia:

Let's insist.

Tosca:
Oh, è inutil!

Scarpia:
Lo vedremo, signora.

Tosca:
Dunque, per compiacervi, si dovrebbe mentir?

Scarpia:
No, ma il vero potrebbe abbreviargli un'ora assai penosa.

Tosca:
Un'ora penosa? Che vuol dir?
Che avviene in quella stanza?

Scarpia:
È forza che si adempia la legge.

Tosca:
Oh! Dio! Che avvien?

Tosca:
It's useless!

Scarpia:
We'll see, Madam.

Tosca:
Would you prefer that I lie to please you?

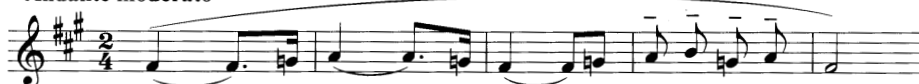
Scarpia:
No, but if you tell the truth he may be spared a very painful hour.

Tosca:
A painful hour? What does that mean?
What's happening in that room?

Scarpia:
I am using force to carry out the law.

Tosca:
Oh God, what is happening?

Andante moderato



Scarpia:
Legato mani e piè il vostro amante ha un cerchio uncinato alle tempia, che ad ogni niego ne sprizza sangue senza mercè!

Tosca:
Non è ver, non è ver!
Sogghigno di demone.

La voce di Cavaradossi:
Ahimè!

Tosca:
Un gemito? Pietà, pietà!

Scarpia:
Your lover is bound hand and foot, and a steel ring is clamped to his head. For every one of his denials, we make some of his blood spurt unmercifully!

Tosca:
It can't be true!
You're a fiendish demon.

Cavaradossi's voice:
Ay!

Tosca:
A moan? Have mercy!

Scarpia:

Sta in voi di salvarlo.

Tosca:

Ebben, ma cessate!

Scarpia:

Sciarrone, sciogliete!

Sciarrone:

Tutto?

Scarpia:

Tutto.

Ed or la verità.

Tosca:

Ch'io lo veda!

Scarpia:

No!

Tosca:

Mario!

Cavaradossi:

Tosca!

Tosca:

Ti straziano ancora?

Cavaradossi:

No, coraggio! Taci!

Sprezzo il dolor!

Scarpia:

Orsù, Tosca, parlate.

Tosca:

Non so nulla!

Scarpia:

Non vale quella prova?

Roberti, ripigliamo.

Scarpia:

It's up to you to save him.

Tosca:

All right, but stop the torture!

Scarpia:

Sciarrone, untie him!

Sciarrone:

Completely?

Scarpia:

Completely.

Now tell me the truth.

Tosca:

Let me see him!

Scarpia:

No!

Tosca: (*hearing Cavaradossi groan*)

Mario!

Cavaradossi:

Tosca!

Tosca:

Are they still torturing you?

Cavaradossi:

No, be courageous! Keep silent!

I scorn pain!

Scarpia:

Now then, Tosca, talk.

Tosca:

I don't know anything!

Scarpia:

The torture was not enough?

Roberti, let's start over.

Tosca:

No! Fermate!

Scarpia:

Voi parlerete?

Tosca:

No! No! Ah! Mostro!

Lo strazi, l'uccidi!

Scarpia:

Lo strazia quel vostro silenzio assai più.

Tosca:

Tu ridi all'orrida pena?

Scarpia:

Mai Tosca alla scena più tragica fu!

Aprite le porte che n'oda i lamenti!

Cavaradossi:

Vi sfido!

Scarpia:

Più forte! Più forte!

Cavaradossi:

Vi sfido!

Scarpia:

Parlate!

Tosca:

Che dire?

Scarpia:

Su, via!

Tosca:

Ah! Non so nulla!

Ah! Dovrei mentir?

Scarpia:

Dite dov'è Angelotti?

Parlate su, via, dove celato sta?

Tosca:

No! Stop it!

Scarpia:

Will you talk now?

Tosca:

No, you monster!

You'll kill him with your torture!

Scarpia:

Your silence tortures him even more.

Tosca:

Does his anguished suffering make you happy?

Scarpia:

Tosca was never more convincing on the stage!

(to Spoletta)

Open the door so we can hear his moans!

Cavaradossi:

I defy you!

Scarpia:

Harder! Harder!

Cavaradossi:

I defy you!

Scarpia: *(to Tosca)*

Talk!

Tosca:

What can I say?

Scarpia:

Then leave!

Tosca:

I know nothing!

Should I lie?

Scarpia:

Tell me where Angelotti is?

Come on, tell me where he is hiding?

Tosca:

No! Ah! Più non posso! Che orror!
Cessate il martir! È troppo il soffrir!

Cavaradossi:

Ahimè!

Tosca:

No! I can't bear his suffering anymore! It's horrible! Stop it! He's suffering too much!

Cavaradossi:

Ah!

Tosca begs Scarpia to let her approach the door and speak with Cavaradossi.

Tosca:

Mario, consenti ch'io parli?

Tosca: *(calling to Cavaradossi)*

Mario, will you let me tell them?

Cavaradossi:

No! No!

Cavaradossi:

No! No!

Tosca:

Ascolta, non posso più.

Tosca:

Listen, I can't bear it anymore.

Cavaradossi:

Stolta, che sai?
Che puoi dir?

Cavaradossi:

Foolish woman, you know nothing?
What can you tell them?

Scarpia becomes irritated, fearing that Cavaradossi might encourage Tosca to keep silent. In an outburst, he yells to Spoletta.

Scarpia

Ma fatelo tacere!

Scarpia:

Make him shut up!

Tosca:

Che v'ho fatto in vita mia?
Son io che così torturate!
Torturate l'anima.
Sì, l'anima mi torturate!

Tosca:

What have I done to you in my lifetime?
You are also torturing me!
You torture my soul.
Yes, my soul is being tortured!

Scarpia, taking advantage of Tosca's despair, goes to the door and signals for the torture to be continued. Spoletta recites a prayer.

Spoletta:

*Judex ergo, cum sedebit,
Quid quid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.*

Spoletta:

*Therefore, when the judge will sit,
whatever is hidden will be apparent
and will remain forever.*

Tosca hears Cavaradossi's painful outcries, and then whispers to Scarpia.

Tosca:
Nel pozzo nel giardino.

Scarpia:
Là è Angelotti?

Tosca:
Sì.

Scarpia:
Basta, Roberti.

Sciarrone:
E svenuto!

Tosca:
Assassino! Voglio vederlo.

Scarpia:
Portatelo qui!

Tosca:
In the well in the garden.

Scarpia:
Is Angelotti there?

Tosca:
Yes.

Scarpia: (*toward the torture room*)
Roberti, that's enough.

Sciarrone: (*opening the door*)
He has fainted!

Tosca:
Murderer! I want to see him!

Scarpia:
Bring him here!

Cavaradossi, bleeding profusely, is brought in by the agents.

Cavaradossi:
Floria!

Tosca:
Amore.

Cavaradossi:
Sei tu?

Tosca:
Quanto hai penato anima mia!
Ma il giusto Iddio lo punirà!

Cavaradossi:
Tosca, hai parlato?

Tosca:
No, amor, no.

Cavaradossi:
Davvero?

Cavaradossi:
Floria!

Tosca:
My love.

Cavaradossi:
Is it you?

Tosca:
My beloved, how much you have suffered!
But the just God will punish them!

Cavaradossi:
Tosca, did you tell them?

Tosca:
No, beloved, no.

Cavaradossi:
Is that the truth?

Scarpia:
Nel pozzo del giardino. Va, Spoletta!

Scarpia: (*shouting in triumph*)
In the well in the garden. Spoletta, go there!

Cavaradossi rises menacingly and threatens Tosca.

Cavaradossi:
M'hai tradito!

Cavaradossi:
You've betrayed me!

Tosca:
Mario!

Tosca:
Mario!

Cavaradossi:
Maledetta!

Cavaradossi:
Damned you!

Sciarrone enters in alarm.

Sciarrone:
Eccellenza, quali nuove!

Sciarrone:
Excellency, there's bad news!

Scarpia:
Che vuol dir quell'aria afflitta?

Scarpia:
Why do you look so worried?

Sciarrone:
Un messaggio di sconfitta.

Sciarrone:
There is news of defeat.

Scarpia:
Che sconfitta? Come? Dove?

Scarpia:
What defeat? How? Where?

Sciarrone:
A Marengo.

Sciarrone:
At Marengo.

Scarpia:
A Marengo?

Scarpia:
At Marengo?

Sciarrone:
Bonaparte è vincitore!

Sciarrone:
Bonaparte has won!

Scarpia:
Melas.

Scarpia:
And Melas.

Sciarrone:
No! Melas è in fuga!

Sciarrone:
Melas has escaped!

*Cavaradossi's anxiety increases when he hears the news.
He finds the strength to rise, and then threatens Scarpia menacingly.*

Cavaradossi:
Vittoria! Vittoria!

Cavaradossi:
Victory! Victory!

Allegro concitato
CAVARADOSSI



L'alba vindice appar
che fa gli empi tremar!
Libertà sorge, crollan tirannidi!
Del sofferto martir
me vedrai qui gioir.
Il tuo cor trema, o Scarpia, carnefice!

The morning brings vindication
and all the wicked tremble.
Liberty rises and tyrannies collapse!
My excruciating suffering
has turned to joy.
Scarpia, you hangman, your heart trembles!

Tosca:
Mario, taci, pietà di me!

Tosca:
Mario, quiet, have mercy on me!

Scarpia:
Braveggia, urla! T'affretta a palesarmi il fondo
dell'alma ria!
Va! Moribondo, il capestro t'aspetta!
Portatemelo via!

Scarpia:
Courageous ranting! You couldn't wait to
expose the guilt within your soul!
Go! Death awaits you at the scaffold!
Take him away!

*Sciarrone and agents take the resisting Cavaradossi away.
Tosca tries to go to him but Scarpia's agents brutally thrust her back.*

Tosca:
Mario, con te!

Tosca:
Mario, I want to go with you!

Scarpia:
Voi no!

Scarpia:
You remain here!

Tosca:
Salvatelo!

Tosca:
Save him!

Scarpia:
Io? Voi!

Scarpia:
Me? Only you can save him!

Scarpia looks at his interrupted dinner on the table and smiles sarcastically.

La povera mia cena fu interrotta.
Così accasciata?
Via, mia bella signora, sedete qui.
Volete che cerchiamo insieme il modo di
salvarlo?

My meager supper was interrupted.
Why do you seem so crushed?
Come, my lovely lady, sit down here.
Maybe we can work together to find a
way to save him?

E allor, sedete, e favelliamo.
E intanto un sorso.
È vin di Spagna.
Un sorso per rincorarvi.

Sit down here and we'll talk about it.
In the meantime have a taste
of this Spanish wine.
A drink can raise your spirits.

Tosca stares contemptuously at Scarpia, and then inquires.

Tosca:
Quanto?

Tosca:
How much?

Scarpia:
Quanto?

Scarpia:
How much?

Tosca:
Il prezzo!

Tosca:
What's your price!

Scarpia:
Già. Mi dicon venal, ma a donna bella
non mi vendo a prezzo di moneta.
Se la giurata fede devo tradir ne voglio altra
mercede.

Scarpia: *(laughing)*
That's right. They say I am corrupt, but I
don't sell myself to a woman for money.
If I must betray my sworn oath, then I want a
greater reward.

Quest'ora io l'attendeva!
Già mi struggea l'amor della diva!
Ma poc' anzi ti mirai qual non ti vidi mai!

I have longed for this moment! Indeed, I have
become consumed by my love for the Diva!
But a little while ago, I saw you as I never
saw you before!

Quel tuo pianto era lava ai sensi miei e il tuo
sguardo che odio in me dardeggiava,
mie brame inferociva!
Agil qual leopardo ti avvinghiasti all'amante;
Ah! In quell'istante t'ho giurata mia! Mia!

Your tears have cleansed my senses, and your
hatred toward me has kindled my yearning for
you!
At that moment when you clung to your lover
like a nimble leopard, I vowed you would be
mine! Mine!

Scarpia attempts to embrace Tosca. She runs from him, shrieking in hysteria,

Tosca:
Ah!

Tosca:
Ah!

Scarpia:
Sì, t'avrò!

Scarpia:
Yes, I will have you!

Tosca:
Ah! Piuttosto giù mi avvento!

Tosca: *(pointing to the window)*
I'd rather jump from the window!

Scarpia:
In pegno il Mario tuo mi resta!

Scarpia:
Mario's fate rests in my hands!

Tosca:

Ah! Miserabile l'orribile mercato!

Tosca:

You wretch. You've made a horrible bargain!

*Tosca rushes to the door, intending to leave and appeal to the Queen.***Scarpia:**Violenza non ti farò. Sei liberai.
Va pure.**Scarpia:**I will not force you. If you want to leave,
you're free to go.Ma è fallace speranza la Regina
farebbe grazia ad un cadavere!But you have false hopes. The Queen cannot
pardon a dead man!*Tosca draws back in horror,
gesturing toward Scarpia contemptuously.*

Come tu m'odii!

How you hate me!

Tosca:

Ah! Dio!

Tosca:

Oh God, I do!

Scarpia:

Così ti voglio!

Scarpia: (*approaching Tosca*)

That's the way I want you!

Tosca:Non toccarmi, demonio!
T'odio, t'odio, abietto, vile!**Tosca:** (*exasperated*)Don't touch me, you demon!
I hate you. You are vile and despicable!**Scarpia:**Che importa?!
Spasimi d'ira, spasimi d'amore!**Scarpia:**What's the difference?!
Passions of hate, or passions of love!**Tosca:**

Vile!

Tosca:

Coward!

Scarpia:

Mia!

Scarpia: (*pursuing Tosca*)

You're mine!

Tosca:

Vile!

Tosca:

Coward!

Scarpia:

Mia!

Scarpia:

You're mine!

Tosca:

Aiuto!

Tosca:

Help!

At the sound of drums in the distance, both stand motionless.

Scarpia:

Odi?

È il tamburo. S'avvia. Guida la scorta
ultima ai condannati.

Il tempo passa!

Sai quale oscura opra laggiù si
compia?

Là si drizza un patibolo!

Al tuo Mario, per tuo voler, non resta che
un'ora di vita.

Scarpia:

Do you hear that?

It's the drums approaching, escorting the
condemned to their doom.

Time is running out!

Do you realize what drastic events are about
to happen here?

They're erecting the gallows over there!

There is only one hour left for Mario; his fate
is in your hands.

Tosca is overcome with grief and despair.

Andante lento appassionato

TOSCA



Tosca:

Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore,
non feci mai male ad anima viva!

Con man furtiva
quante miserie conobbi, aiutai.

Sempre con fe' sincera,
la mia preghiera ai santi tabernacoli sali.

Sempre con fe' sincera
diedi fiori agli altar.

Nell'ora del dolore perchè, perchè Signore,
perchè me ne rimunerì così?

Diedi gioielli della Madonna al manto,
e diedi il canto agli astri,
al ciel, che ne ridean più belli.

Nell'ora del dolore, perchè, perchè Signore,
perchè me ne rimunerì così?

Tosca:

I lived for art, I lived for love,
I never harmed a living soul!

I was unselfish in consoling and helping
the poor and depraved.

My prayers to the saints above were always
with sincere faith.

I always placed flowers at the altar with
sincere faith.

Why, why God, in this hour of grief,
do You reward me this way?

In tribute to Your beautiful creation, I gave
jewels for the Madonna's mantle,
and offered my song to the stars and Heaven.

Why, why God, in this hour of grief,
do You repay me this way?

Scarpia:

Risolvi?

Scarpia:

Have you made up your mind?

Tosca:

Mi vuoi supplice ai tuoi piedi?
Vedi, le man giunte io stendo a te!
Ecco, vedi, e mercè d'un tuo detto,
vinta, aspetto.

Scarpia:

Sei troppo bella, Tosca, e troppo amante.
Cedo. A misero prezzo tu, a me una vita, io, a
te chieggo un istante!

Tosca:

Va! Va! Mi fai ribrezzo!

Tosca: *(kneels before Scarpia)*

Must I kneel at your feet and beg for mercy?
Look, I extend my hand to you!
I implore you to grant a merciful word to one
who has been vanquished.

Scarpia:

Tosca, you are too beautiful, and too loving.
I give in. I can't resist you. You win Mario's
freedom for a moment of your embraces!

Tosca: *(contemptuously)*

Go! Go! You disgust me!

Spoletta knocks at the door.

Scarpia:

Chi è là?

Scarpia:

Who is there?

Spoletta:

Eccellenza, l'Angelotti al nostro
giungere si uccise.

Spoletta: *(upon entering)*

Excellency, Angelotti killed himself before we
reached him.

Scarpia:

Ebbene, lo si appenda
morto alle forche! E l'altro prigionier?

Scarpia:

All right, but hang his corpse on the gallows!
And what about the other prisoner?

Spoletta:

Il Cavalier Cavaradossi?
È tutto pronto, Eccellenza!

Spoletta:

Cavalier Cavaradossi?
Everything is ready, Excellency!

Tosca:

(Dio m'assisti!)

Tosca:

(God help me!)

Scarpia:

Aspetta.
Ebbene?

Scarpia: *(to Spoletta)*

Wait.
(to Tosca) Well?

Tosca nods her assent to Scarpia.

Odi.

(to Spoletta) Listen.

Tosca:

Ma libero all'istante lo voglio!

Tosca: *(to Scarpia)*

But I want him freed immediately!

Scarpia:

Occorre simular. Non posso far grazia aperta. Bisogna che tutti abbian per morto il cavalier.

Quest'uomo fido provvederà.

Tosca:

Chi mi assicura?

Scarpia

L'ordin ch'io gli darò voi qui presente.

Spoletta, chiudi.

Ho mutato d'avviso.

Il prigionier sia fucilato.

Attendi.

Come facemmo col Conte Palmieri.

Spoletta:

Un'uccisione.

Scarpia:

Simulata! Come avvenne del Palmieri!

Hai ben compreso?

Spoletta:

Ho ben compreso.

Scarpia:

Va.

Tosca:

Voglio avvertirlo io stessa.

Scarpia:

E sia.

Le darai passo.

Bada: all'ora quarta.

Spoletta:

Sì. Come Palmieri.

Scarpia:

We need to camouflage it. I can't openly release him. We must make everyone believe that the Cavalier is dead.

(indicating Spoletta)

This trustworthy man will see to it.

Tosca:

Where's my guarantee?

Scarpia:

I'll give him the order in your presence.

(to Spoletta)

Spoletta, close the door.

I have changed my mind.

The prisoner will be shot.

Wait.

Just as we did with Count Palmieri.

Spoletta:

An execution.

Scarpia:

Simulated! As we did with Pamieri!

Do you understand?

Spoletta:

I understand well.

Scarpia:

Go.

Tosca:

I want to let him know myself.

Scarpia:

So be it.

(to Spoletta, pointing to Tosca)

You'll let her through.

Remember, at four this morning.

Spoletta:

Yes. Just like Palmieri.

Scarpia:

Io tenni la promessa.

Tosca:

Non ancora.

Voglio un salva condotto onde fuggir
dallo Stato con lui.**Scarpia:**

Partir dunque volete?

Tosca:

Sì, per sempre!

Scarpia:Si adempia il voler vostro.
E qual via scegliete?**Tosca:**

La più breve!

Scarpia:

Civitavecchia?

Tosca:

Sì.

Scarpia:

I've kept my promise.

Tosca:

Not yet.

I want a safe conduct pass so I can leave the
State with him.**Scarpia:**

You want to leave?

Tosca:

Yes, forever!

Scarpia:Your wish will be granted.
What route will you take?**Tosca:**

The shortest one!

Scarpia:

Civitavecchia?

Tosca:

Yes.

While Scarpia writes the safe-conduct pass, Tosca approaches the table; her hands tremble as she takes a sip of the Spanish wine. She sees a knife, seizes it, and hides it behind her back. After Scarpia finishes writing the pass, he approaches Tosca to embrace her.

Scarpia:

Tosca, finalmente mia!

Scarpia:

Tosca, at last you are mine!

Tosca stabs Scarpia with the knife.

Maledetta!

Damned woman!

Tosca:

Questo è il bacio di Tosca!

Tosca:

This is Tosca's kiss!

Scarpia:Aiuto! Muoio!
Soccorso! Muoio!**Scarpia:**Help! I'm dying!
Help me! I'm dying!

Tosca:

Ti soffoca il sangue?
E ucciso da una donna!
M'hai assai torturata!
Odi tu ancora? Parla! Guardami!
Son Tosca! O Scarpia!

Scarpia:

Soccorso, aiuto! Muoio!

Tosca:

Muori dannato! Muori, muori!

Tosca:

Is your own blood choking you?
You were killed by a woman,
because you tortured her too much!
Can you still hear me? Speak! Look at me!
Scarpia, it is Tosca!

Scarpia:

Help, help! I'm dying!

Tosca:

Die, damn you! Die, die!

Scarpia is motionless.

È morto! Or gli perdono!

He's dead! Now I forgive him!

Tosca takes water from the pitcher and cleans the blood from her hands. Then she stands before a mirror and arranges her hair. She panics as she remembers the safe-conduct pass.

She searches the desk for it and then notices it clutched in the dead Scarpia's hand.

She takes the pass from his clenched hand, hides it in her bodice, and stares at the dead Scarpia with scorn and loathing.

E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!

And before him all Rome trembled!

Just before leaving, Tosca removes two candlesticks from the table, extinguishes them, and places them on each side of the dead Scarpia. She removes a crucifix from the wall and places it on Scarpia's chest. Drums are heard in the distance.

Tosca leaves the room, cautiously closing the door behind herself.

END OF ACT II

Act III

*Castel Sant'Angelo on a starry night. It is just before dawn.
In the distance, sheepbells are heard and the song of a shepherd.*

Pastore:

Io de' sospiri
te ne rimanno tanti.
Pe' quante foje
ne smoveno li venti.

Tu me disprezzi,
io me ci accoro,
Lampene d'oro
me fai morir!

Shepherd:

I send you
so many sighs.
As many as the leaves
that are blown by the winds.

But I suffer
because you scorn me.
Golden light of my life
you are making me die!

*A jailer, carrying a lantern, climbs the stairs to a prison cell and lights a lamp.
He looks into the courtyard for the arrival of the firing squad and the condemned man.*

A sentry exchanges words with him, and then he sits down and waits.

*Soldiers escort Cavaradossi. He is led to the prison cell. The jailer rises, salutes the
sergeant, and enters Cavaradossi's name in the prison register.*

Carceriere:

Mario Cavaradossi? A voi.
Vi resta un'ora.
Un sacerdote i vostri cenni attende.

Jailer:

Mario Cavaradossi? Sign here.
You have one hour left.
If you like, there is a priest available.

Cavaradossi:

No! Ma un'ultima grazia io vi richiedo.

Cavaradossi:

No, but I have one last favor to ask of you.

Carceriere:

Se posso.

Jailer:

What is it?

Cavaradossi:

Io lascio al mondo una persona cara.
Consentite ch'io le scriva un sol motto.

Cavaradossi;

I leave behind someone I love and cherish.
Allow me to write her a farewell letter.

(He gives the jailer a ring)

Unico resto di mia ricchezza è questo
anel.

This ring is all I have left of my
possessions.

Se promettete di consegnarle il mio
ultimo addio, esso è vostro.

If you promise me that you will deliver
my farewell letter, it is yours.

Carceriere:

Scrivete.

Jailer: (nodding agreement)

Write your letter.

Cavaradossi:

E lucevan le stelle,
ed olezzava la terra,
stridea l'uscio dell'orto,
e un passo sfiorava la rena,
Entrava ella, fragrante,
mi cadea fra le braccia.

Cavaradossi:

The stars were shining,
and a fragrance permeated the air.
She strode through the garden gate,
her steps grazing the sand;
the radiant woman arrived,
and I fell into her rapturous arms.

Andante lento appassionato molto
CAVARADOSSI



Oh! Dolci baci, o languide carezze,
mentr'io fremente
le belle forme disciogliea dai veli!
Svani per sempre il sogno mio d'amore.
L'ora è fuggita, e muoio disperato!
E non ho amato mai tanto la vita!

Sweet kisses! Languid caresses!
I trembled as I removed the veils
from her gorgeous body!
My dream of love has vanished forever.
Time has fled, and I die in despair!
And I have never loved life so much!

Spoletta arrives with the sergeant and Tosca. Spoletta indicates where Tosca can find Cavaradossi, and then calls the jailer. Tosca tearfully observes Cavaradossi. She rushes to him excitedly, and immediately shows him the safe-conduct pass.

Cavaradossi:

Franchigia a Floria Tosca...

Cavaradossi: (reading the pass)

"Safe-conduct" for Floria Tosca...

Tosca e Cavaradossi:

...e al cavaliere che l'accompagna.

Tosca and Cavaradossi:

... and the gentleman accompanying her.

Tosca:

Sei libero!

Tosca:

You are free!

Cavaradossi:

Scarpia!
Scarpia che cede?
La prima sua grazia è questa.

Cavaradossi: (noting the signature)

Scarpia!
A pardon from Scarpia?
This is surely his first reprieve ever.

Tosca:
E l'ultima!

Cavaradossi:
Che dici?

Tosca:
Il tuo sangue o il mio amore volea.
Fur vani sconiuri e pianti.
Invan, pazza d'orror,
alla Madonna mi volsi e ai Santi.
L'empio mostro dicea:
già nei cieli il patibol le braccia leva!
Rullavano i tamburi.
Rideva, l'empio mostro rideva.
già la sua preda pronto a ghermir!
"Sei mia!"
Sì. Alla sua brama mi promisi.
Lì presso luccicava una lama.
Ei scrisse il foglio liberator,
venne all'orrendo amplesso,
io quella lama gli piantai nel cor.

Cavaradossi:
Tu!? Di tua man l'uccidesti?
Tu pia, tu benigna, e per me!

Tosca:
N'ebbi le man tutte lorde di sangue!

Tosca:
And the last!

Cavaradossi:
What do you mean?

Tosca:
He wanted your blood or my love.
My pleas and tears were in vain.
I became insane with fear,
and prayed to the Madonna and the Saints.
The wicked monster said:
The gallows are ready to take him!
The drums were rolling.
The wicked monster was laughing,
ready to seize his prey!
"You are mine!"
Yes. I promised to yield to him.
Then I seized a knife nearby.
He wrote the safe-conduct pass,
and when he came for the frightful embrace,
I plunged that blade into his heart.

Cavaradossi:
You!? You killed him with your own hand?
You, so kind and pious, did that for me!

Tosca:
That is why my hands were bloodstained!

Andantino sostenuto
TOSCA and CAVARADOSSI



Cavaradossi:
O dolci mani mansuete e pure,
o mani elette a bell'opre e pietose,
a carezzar fanciulli, a coglier rose,
aregar, giunte per le sventure.

Dunque in voi, fatte dall'amor secure,
giustizia le sue sacre armi depose?
Voi deste morte, o man vittoriose,
o dolci mani mansuete e pure!

Cavaradossi: (*taking Tosca's hands*)
These sweet hands, so kind and pure, are hands
created for merciful and beautiful deeds:
to caress children, to gather roses, and to
be clasped in prayer for the unfortunate of
the world.
Did justice make your hands sacred
weapons to save your love?
You awakened death, victorious hands,
sweet, kind, and pure hands!

Tosca:

Senti, l'ora è vicina; io già raccolsi
oro e gioielli, una vettura è pronta.
Ma prima, ridi amor, prima sarai
fucilato, per finta, ad armi scariche.
Simulato supplizio. Al colpo, cadi.
I soldati sen vanno. e noi siam salvi!
Poscia a Civitavecchia, una tartana,
e via pel mar!

Cavaradossi:

Liberi!

Tosca:

Chi si duole in terra più?
Senti effluvi di rose?
Non ti par che le cose aspettan tutte
innamorate il sole?

Cavaradossi

Amaro sol per te m'era morire,
da te la vita prende ogni splendore,
all'esser mio la gioia ed il desire,
nascon di te, come di fiamma ardore.
Io folgorare i cieli e scolorire
vedrò nell'occhio tuo rivelatore,
e la beltà delle cose più mire
avrà sol da te voce e colore.

Tosca:

Amor che seppe a te vita serbare, ci sarà
guida in terra, e in mar nocchier,
e vago farà il mondo riguardare.

Finchè congiunti alle celesti sfere
dileguerem, siccome alte sul mare
a sol cadente, nuvole leggere!

Tosca looks around nervously.

E non giungono.
Bada! Al colpo egli è mestiere
che tu subito cada.

Cavaradossi:

Non temere che cadrò sul momento, e al
naturale.

Tosca:

Listen, time is short. I gathered gold and
jewelry, and a carriage awaits us.
Don't laugh my beloved, but first you will be
shot: by fake bullets and empty guns.
A simulated execution. Fall when they
shoot. After the soldiers leave, we'll be free!
There's a boat waiting in Civitavecchia to
take us out to sea!

Cavaradossi:

Free!

Tosca:

Who would want to live in anguish here?
Can you smell the fragrance of roses?
Doesn't it seem that a new life is waiting
for the lovers?

Cavaradossi:

Because of you, I was bitter about dying;
you brought the splendor of joy and
desire into my life,
and inflamed my fiery passion.
In your candid eyes I see the glittering
stars and the fading heavens,
and their beauty is consecrated by your
voice and countenance.

Tosca:

The love that saved your life
will serve to guide us on land and sea,
and bring us to new horizons.

As long as we are together,
we will seclude ourselves from the world,
like the clouds above the seas at sunset!

They haven't arrived yet.
Remember, when they shoot,
you must fall immediately.

Cavaradossi:

Don't worry. I'll fall right down, and it
will look natural.

Tosca:

Ma stammi attento di non farti male!
Con scenica scienza io saprei la movenza.

Cavaradossi:

Parlami ancora come dianzi parlavi,
è così dolce il suon della tua voce!

Tosca:

Uniti ed esulanti diffonderem pel mondo i
nostri amori, armonie di colori.

Cavaradossi:

Armonie di canti diffonderem!

Tosca e Cavaradossi:

Trionfal, di nova speme l'anima freme in
celestial crescente ardor.
Ed in armonico vol già l'anima va
all'estasi d'amor.

Tosca:

Gli occhi ti chiuderò con mille baci
e mille ti dirò nomi d'amor.

Tosca:

But be careful not to hurt yourself!
It's like good acting. I wish I could show you.

Cavaradossi:

Speak to me again about love. It sounds
so sweet from your voice!

Tosca:

United and exiled, our love will radiate
throughout the world.

Cavaradossi:

Our songs will radiate through the world!

Tosca and Cavaradossi:

The soul throbs triumphantly with new
hope, the passion intensifying.
The soul is redeemed by the ecstasies of
love.

Tosca:

I will close your eyes with a thousand
kisses, and I will call you a thousand
loving names.

The clock strikes four.

Carceriere:

L'ora!

Jailer:

It is time!

Cavaradossi:

Son pronto.

Cavaradossi:

I'm ready.

Tosca:

(Tieni a mente, al primo colpo, giù.)

Tosca:

(Don't forget, go down on the first shot.)

Cavaradossi:

(Giù.)

Cavaradossi:

(Down.)

Tosca:

(Nè rialzarti innanzi ch'io ti chiami.)

Tosca:

(Don't get up until I call you.)

Cavaradossi:

(No, amore!)

Cavaradossi:

(No, my love!)

Tosca:
(E cadì bene.)

Cavaradossi:
(Come la Tosca in teatro.)

Tosca:
(Non ridere.)

Cavaradossi:
(Così?)

Tosca:
Così.

Tosca:
(And make a convincing fall.)

Cavaradossi:
(Like Tosca in the theater.)

Tosca: *(seeing him smile)*
(Don't laugh.)

Cavaradossi: *(gravely)*
(Like this?)

Tosca:
(Like this.)

Cavaradossi bids farewell to Tosca, and is led away by an officer. Tosca remains aside where she is able to see what is happening. Cavaradossi is led to a wall. He refuses a blindfold. Tosca comments impatiently.

Tosca:
Com'è lunga l'attesa!
Perchè indugiano ancor?
Già sorge il sole.
Perchè indugiano ancora?
È una commedia, lo so, ma questa
angoscia eterna pare!

Tosca:
The wait is so long!
Why this terrible delay?
The sun is already rising.
Why do they still delay?
I know it's playacting, I know, but this
waiting seems like eternal anguish!

The firing squad is ordered into position.

Ecco! Apprestano l'armi.
Com'è bello il mio Mario!

There! They're readying their weapons.
My Mario is so handsome!

*The officer's sabre is ready to fall. Tosca covers her ears.
The shots ring out.*

Là! Muori!
Ecco un artista!

There! Die!
What an artist!

The sergeant approaches Cavaradossi and scrutinizes his body. Spoletta stops the sergeant from giving Cavaradossi the coup de grace. The officer orders the soldiers to fall in line. Spoletta and the soldiers exit to the stairs.

Tosca, in great agitation, fears that Cavaradossi might become impatient and move.

O Mario, non ti muovere, s'avviano, taci!
Vanno, scendono.
Ancora non ti muovere.

Mario, don't move yet. They're leaving.
Be still! They're going down.
Just don't move yet.

*Tosca rushes to the parapet and assures herself that the soldiers have left.
She then rushes to Cavaradossi.*

Presto, su! Mario! Mario! Su presto!
Andiam! Su, su! Mario! Mario!

Up, quickly! Mario! Get up! Quickly!
Let's go! Up, up! Mario! Mario!

*Disturbed that Cavaradossi does not respond,
Tosca discovers that he is dead.*

Ah! Morto! Morto! Morto!
O Mario, morto?
Tu? Così?
Finire così? Finire così!
Tu, morto, morto?
Mario, povera Floria tua!

Ah! Dead! Dead! Dead!
Mario, dead?
You? Like this?
To die like this? To die like this!
You, dead?
Mario, your poor Tosca!

Sciarrone, Spoletta, and soldiers are heard ascending the stairs.

Sciarrone:
Vi dico pugnalo!

Sciarrone:
He was stabbed to death!

Voci:
Scarpia?

Voices:
Scarpia?

Sciarrone:
Scarpia.

Sciarrone:
Scarpia.

Spoletta:
La donna è Tosca!

Spoletta:
Tosca killed him!

Voci:
Che non sfugga!

Voices:
Don't let her escape!

Spoletta e Sciarrone:
Attenti agli sbocchi delle scale!

Spoletta and Sciarrone:
Guard the foot of the stairs!

Spoletta and Sciarrone appear at the top of the stairs and point to Tosca.

Sciarrone:
È lei!

Sciarrone:
There she is!

Spoletta:

Ah! Tosca, pagherai ben cara la sua vita!

Spoletta;

Tosca, you'll pay dearly for his life!

Tosca:

Colla mia!

Tosca:

With my own!

When Spoletta tries to seize Tosca, she runs to the parapet.

O Scarpia, avanti a Dio!

Scarpia, God will be our judge!

Tosca jumps from the parapet to her death.

END OF OPERA

Discography

- 1920 Bartolomasi (Tosca); Salvaneschi (Cavaradossi); Pacini (Scarpia);
 La Scala Chorus and Orchestra;
 Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1929 Melis (Tosca); Pauli (Cavaradossi); Granforte (Scarpia);
 La Scala Chorus and Orchestra;
 Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1930 Scacciati (Tosca); Granda (Cavaradossi); Molinari (Scarpia);
 La Scala Chorus and Orchestra;
 Molajoli (Conductor)
- 1938 Caniglia (Tosca); Gigli (Cavaradossi); Borgioli (Scarpia);
 Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
 De Fabritiis (Conductor)
- 1951 Guerrini (Tosca); Poggi (Cavaradossi); Silveri (Scarpia);
 Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra;
 Molinari-Pradelli (Conductor)
- 1951 Dall'Argine (Tosca); Scattolini (Cavaradossi); Colombo (Scarpia);
 Vienna Academy Chorus/ Vienna State Opera Orchestra;
 Quadri (Conductor)
- 1951 Petrova (Tosca); Ruhl (Cavaradossi); Campolonghi (Scarpia);
 Florence Festival Chorus and Orchestra;
 Tierl (Conductor)
- 1951 Tebaldi (Tosca); Campora (Cavaradossi); Mascherini (Scarpia);
 Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra;
 Erede (Conductor)
- 1952 (Live from Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City)
 Callas (Tosca); Di Stefano (Cavaradossi); Campolonghi (Scarpia);
 Palacio de Bellas Artes Chorus and Orchestra;
 Picco (Conductor)
- 1953 Callas (Tosca); Di Stefano (Cavaradossi); Gobbi (Scarpia);
 La Scala Chorus and Orchestra;
 de Sabata (Conductor)
- 1956 Milanov (Tosca); Björling (Cavaradossi); Warren (Scarpia);
 Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
 Leinsdorf (Conductor)

- 1956 Frazzoni (Tosca); Tagliavini (Cavaradossi); Guelfi (Scarpia);
Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra;
Basile (Conductor)
- 1956 Kirsten (Tosca); Barioni (Cavaradossi); Guarrera (Scarpia);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Mitropoulos (Conductor)
- 1956 Tebaldi (Tosca); Tucker (Cavaradossi); Warren (Scarpia);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Mitropoulos (Conductor)
- 1957 Stella (Tosca); Poggi (Cavaradossi); Taddei (Scarpia);
San Carlo Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Serafin (Conductor)
- 1959 Tebaldi (Tosca); Del Monaco (Cavaradossi); London (Scarpia);
Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra;
Molinari-Pradelli (Conductor)
- 1960 (In French) Rhodes (Tosca); Lance (Cavaradossi); Bacquier (Scarpia);
Paris Opéra Chorus and Orchestra;
Rosenthal (Conductor)
- 1960 (In German) Woytowicz (Tosca); Kónya (Cavaradossi); Borg (Scarpia);
Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Stein (Conductor)
- 1963 Price (Tosca); Di Stefano (Cavaradossi); Taddei (Scarpia);
Vienna State Opera Chorus/Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra;
Von Karajan (Conductor)
- 1964 Callas (Tosca); Bergonzi (Cavaradossi); Gobbi (Scarpia);
Paris Opéra Chorus/Paris Conservatoire Orchestra;
Prêtre (Conductor)
- 1964 (In Russian) Milashkina (Tosca); Andzhaparidze (Cavaradossi);
Klenov (Scarpia);
Moscow Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra;
Svetlanov (Conductor)
- 1966 Nilsson (Tosca); Corelli (Cavaradossi); Fischer-Dieskau (Scarpia);
Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra;
Maazel (Conductor)

- 1973 Price (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); Milnes (Scarpia);
Alldis Choir/New Philharmonia Orchestra;
Mehta (Conductor)
- 1973 Milashkina (Tosca); Atlantov (Cavaradossi); Mazurok (Scarpia);
Bolshoi Theater Chorus and Orchestra;
Ermler (Conductor)
- 1976 Vishnevskaya (Tosca); Bonisolli (Cavaradossi); Manuguerra (Scarpia);
French National Chorus and Orchestra;
Rostropovich (Conductor)
- 1976 Caballé (Tosca); Carreras (Cavaradossi); Wixell (Scarpia);
Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Davis (Conductor)
- 1977 Zeani (Tosca); Fânateanu (Cavaradossi); Herlea (Scarpia);
Romanian Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Trailescu (Conductor)
- 1978 Freni (Tosca); Pavarotti (Cavaradossi); Milnes (Scarpia);
London Opera Chorus/National Philharmonic Orchestra;
Rescigno (Conductor)
- 1979 Ricciarelli (Tosca); Carreras (Cavaradossi); Raimondi (Scarpia);
Deutsche Oper Chorus/Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra;
Von Karajan (Conductor)
- 1980 Scotto (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); Bruson (Scarpia);
Ambrosian Opera Chorus/Philharmonia Orchestra;
Levine (Conductor)
- 1983 Kabaivanska (Tosca); Antinori (Cavaradossi); Portella (Scarpia);
Bulgarian National Choir/Sophia Philharmonic Orchestra;
Bellini (Conductor)
- 1984 Te Kanawa (Tosca); Aragall (Cavaradossi); Nucci (Scarpia);
Welsh National Opera Chorus/National Philharmonic Orchestra;
Solti (Conductor)
- 1988 Marton (Tosca); Carreras (Cavaradossi); Pons (Scarpia);
Hungarian State Radio and Television Chorus/Hungarian State Orchestra;
Tilson Thomas (Conductor)

- 1992 Freni (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); Ramey (Scarpia);
 Philharmonia Orchestra;
 Sinopoli (Conductor)
- 1995 Gauci (Tosca); Aragall (Cavaradossi); Sardinero (Scarpia);
 Barcelona Symphony;
 Rahbari (Conductor)
- 2000 Gheorghiu (Tosca); Alagna (Cavaradossi); Raimondi (Scarpia);
 Covent Garden;
 Pappano (Conductor)
- 2001 Cedolins (Tosca); Bocelli (Cavaradossi); Guelfi (Scarpia);
 Maggio Musicale Fiorentino;
 Mehta (Conductor)

Videography

HARDY DVD (1960)

Olivero (Tosca); Misciano (Cavaradossi); Fioravanti (Scarpia);
RAI Torino
Vernizzi (Conductor)

VAI VHS/DVD (1961)

Tebaldi (Tosca); Tobin (Cavaradossi); London (Scarpia);
Stuttgart Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Patanè (Conductor)

DECCA VHS/ DG DVD (1976)

Kabaivanska (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); Milnes (Scarpia);
Ambrosian Chorus/New Philharmonic Orchestra;
Bartoletti (Conductor)
A film directed by Gianfranco de Bosio

TELDEC VHS

Malfitano (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); Raimondi (Scarpia);
Rome Radio Chorus and Orchestra;
Mehta (Conductor);
Storaro (Director);
Large (Video Director)

RCA VHS

Kabaivanska (Tosca); Pavarotti (Cavaradossi); Wixell (Scarpia);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Oren (Conductor);
Bolognini (Director);
Romagnoli (Video Director)

DG VHS

Behrens (Tosca); Domingo (Cavaradossi); MacNeil (Scarpia);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Sinopoli (Conductor);
Zeffirelli (Director);
Browning (Video Director)

TDK/DVD (2000)

Guleghina (Tosca); Licitra (Cavaradossi); Nucci (Scarpia);
La Scala Orchestra and Chorus
Muti (Conductor)

EMI DVD (2000)

Gheorghiu (Tosca); Alagna (Cavaradossi); Raimondi (Scarpia);
Covent Garden
Pappano (Conductor)

Opus Arte DVD (2004)

Dessi (Tosca); Armiliato (Cavaradossi); Raimondi (Scarpia);
Teatro Real de Madrid;
Benini (Conductor)

Videoland DVD

Patané (Tosca); Cura (Cavaradossi); Bruson (Scarpia)
Provincia di Bari
Morandi (Conductor)

DICTIONARY OF OPERA AND MUSICAL TERMS

Accelerando - Play the music faster, but gradually.

Adagio - At a slow or gliding tempo, not as slow as largo, but not as fast as andante.

Agitato - Restless or agitated.

Allegro - At a brisk or lively tempo, faster than andante but not as fast as presto.

Andante - A moderately slow, easy-going tempo.

Appoggiatura - An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.

Arabesque - Flourishes or fancy patterns usually applying to vocal virtuosity.

Aria - A solo song usually structured in a formal pattern. Arias generally convey reflective and introspective thoughts rather than descriptive action.

Arietta - A shortened form of aria.

Arioso - A musical passage or composition having a mixture of free recitative and metrical song.

Arpeggio - Producing the tones of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.

Atonal - Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.

Ballad opera - Eighteenth-century English opera consisting of spoken dialogue and music derived from popular ballad and folksong sources. The most famous is *The Beggar's Opera*, which is a satire of the Italian opera seria.

Bar - A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into measures.

Baritone - A male singing voice ranging between bass and tenor.

Baroque - A style of artistic expression prevalent in the 17th century that is marked by the use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and florid decoration. The Baroque period extends from approximately 1600 to 1750 and includes the works of the original creators of modern opera, the Camerata, as well as the later works by Bach and Handel.

Bass - The lowest male voice, usually divided into categories such as:

Basso buffo - A bass voice that specializes in comic roles: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Basso cantante - A bass voice that demonstrates melodic singing quality: King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Basso profondo - the deepest, most profound, or most dramatic of bass voices: Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Bel canto - Literally, "beautiful singing." It originated in Italian opera of the 17th and 18th centuries and stressed beautiful tones produced with ease, clarity, purity, and evenness, together with an agile vocal technique and virtuosity. Bel canto flourished in the first half of the 19th century in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Cabaletta - A lively, concluding portion of an aria or duet. The term is derived from the Italian word "cavallo," or horse: it metaphorically describes a horse galloping to the finish line.

Cadenza - A flourish or brilliant part of an aria (or concerto) commonly inserted just before a finale. It is usually performed without accompaniment.

Camerata - A gathering of Florentine writers and musicians between 1590 and 1600 who attempted to recreate what they believed was the ancient Greek theatrical synthesis of drama, music, and stage spectacle; their experimentation led to the creation of the early structural forms of modern opera.

Cantabile - An indication that the singer should sing sweetly.

Cantata - A choral piece generally containing Scriptural narrative texts: the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach.

Cantilena - Literally, "little song." A lyrical melody meant to be played or sung "cantabile," or with sweetness and expression.

Canzone - A short, lyrical operatic song usually containing no narrative association with the drama but rather simply reflecting the character's state of mind: Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Castrato - A young male singer who was surgically castrated to retain his treble voice.

Cavatina - A short aria popular in 18th and 19th century opera that usually heralded the entrance of a principal singer.

Classical Period - A period roughly between the Baroque and Romantic periods, the late 18th through the early 19th centuries. Stylistically, the music of the period stresses clarity, precision, and rigid structural forms.

Coda - A trailer added on by the composer after the music's natural conclusion. The coda serves as a formal closing to the piece.

Coloratura - Literally, "colored": it refers to a soprano singing in the bel canto tradition. It is a singing technique that requires great agility, virtuosity, embellishments and ornamentation: The Queen of the Night's aria, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren," from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Commedia dell'arte - A popular form of dramatic presentation originating in Renaissance Italy in which highly stylized characters were involved in comic plots involving mistaken identities and misunderstandings. Two of the standard characters were Harlequin and Colombine: The "play within a play" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Comprimario - A singer who performs secondary character roles such as confidantes, servants, and messengers.

Continuo, Basso continuo - A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of an independent succession of bass notes that indicate the required chords and their appropriate harmonies. Also called *figured bass*, *thoroughbass*.

Contralto - The lowest female voice, derived from "contra" against, and "alto" voice; a voice between the tenor and mezzo-soprano.

Countertenor - A high male voice generally singing within the female high soprano ranges.

Counterpoint - The combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character. The most sophisticated form of counterpoint is the fugue form, in which from two to six melodies can be used; the voices are combined, each providing a variation on the basic theme but each retaining its relation to the whole.

Crescendo - A gradual increase in the volume of a musical passage.

Da capo - Literally, "from the top"; repeat. Early 17th-century da capo arias were in the form of A B A, with the second A section repeating the first, but with ornamentation.

Deus ex machina - Literally "god out of a machine." A dramatic technique in which a person or thing appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly; it provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic difficulty.

Diatonic - A major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.

Diminuendo - Gradually becoming softer; the opposite of crescendo.

Dissonance - A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.

Diva - Literally, “goddess”; generally the term refers to a leading female opera star who either possesses, or pretends to possess, great rank.

Dominant - The fifth tone of the diatonic scale; in the key of C, the dominant is G.

Dramatic soprano or tenor - A voice that is powerful, possesses endurance, and is generally projected in a declamatory style.

Dramma giocoso - Literally, “amusing (or humorous) drama.” An opera whose story combines both serious and comic elements: Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Falsetto - A lighter or “false” voice; an artificially-produced high singing voice that extends above the range of the full voice.

Fioritura - It., “flowering”; a flowering ornamentation or embellishment of the vocal line within an aria.

Forte, fortissimo - Forte (*f*) means loud; mezzo forte (*mf*) is fairly loud; fortissimo (*ff*) is even louder; additional *fff*’s indicate greater degrees of loudness.

Glissando - Literally, “gliding.” A rapid sliding up or down the scale.

Grand opera - An opera in which there is no spoken dialogue and the entire text is set to music, frequently treating serious and tragic subjects. Grand opera flourished in France in the 19th century (Meyerbeer); the genre is epic in scale and combines spectacle, large choruses, scenery, and huge orchestras.

Heldentenor - A tenor with a powerful dramatic voice who possesses brilliant top notes and vocal stamina. Heldentenors are well suited to heroic (Wagnerian) roles: Lauritz Melchior in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

Imbroglia - Literally, “intrigue”; an operatic scene portraying chaos and confusion, with appropriate diverse melodies and rhythms.

Largo or larghetto - Largo indicates a very slow tempo, broad and with dignity. Larghetto is at a slightly faster tempo than largo.

Legato - Literally, “tied” or “bound”; successive tones that are connected smoothly. The opposite of legato is staccato (short and plucked tones.)

Leitmotif - Literally, “leading motive.” A musical fragment characterizing a person, thing, feeling, or idea that provides associations when it recurs.

Libretto - Literally, “little book”; the text of an opera.

Lied - A German song; the plural is “lieder.” Originally, a German art song of the late 18th century.

Lyric - A voice that is light and delicate.

Maestro - From the Italian “master”; a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.

Melodrama - Words spoken over music. Melodrama appears in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and flourished during the late 19th century in the operas of Massenet (*Manon* and *Werther*).

Mezza voce - Literally, “medium voice”; singing with medium or half volume. It is sometimes intended as a vocal means to intensify emotion.

Mezzo-soprano - A woman’s voice with a range between soprano and contralto.

Obbligato - An accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by an important, single instrument.

Octave - A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees; from C to C is an octave.

Opera - Literally, “work”; a dramatic or comic play in which music is the primary vehicle that conveys its story.

Opera buffa - Italian comic opera that flourished during the bel canto era. Highlighting the opera buffa genre were buffo characters who were usually basses singing patter songs: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*; Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*.

Opéra comique - A French opera characterized by spoken dialogue interspersed between the musical numbers, as opposed to grand opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. Opéra comique subjects can be either comic or tragic.

Operetta, or light opera - Operas that contain comic elements and generally a light romantic plot: Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *La Périchole*, and Lehar’s *The Merry Widow*. In operettas, there is usually much spoken dialogue, dancing, practical jokes, and mistaken identities.

Oratorio - A lengthy choral work, usually of a religious nature and consisting chiefly of recitatives, arias, and choruses, but performed without action or scenery: Handel's *Messiah*.

Ornamentation - Extra embellishing notes—appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas—that enhance a melodic line.

Overture - The orchestral introduction to a musical dramatic work that sometimes incorporates musical themes within the work. Overtures are instrumental pieces that are generally performed independently of their respective operas in concert.

Parlando - Literally, “speaking”; the imitation of speech while singing, or singing that is almost speaking over the music. Parlando sections are usually short and have minimal orchestral accompaniment.

Patter song - A song with words that are rapidly and quickly delivered. Figaro's “Largo al factotum” in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a patter song.

Pentatonic - A five-note scale. Pentatonic music is most prevalent in Far Eastern countries.

Piano - A performance indication for soft volume.

Pitch - The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.

Pizzicato - An indication that notes are to be played by plucking the strings instead of stroking the string with the bow.

Polyphony - Literally, “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed; counterpoint.

Polytonal - Several tonal schemes used simultaneously.

Portamento - A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another through all the intervening pitches.

Prelude - An orchestral introduction to an act or a whole opera that precedes the opening scene.

Presto, prestissimo - Vigorous, and with the utmost speed.

Prima donna - Literally, “first lady.” The female star or principal singer in an opera cast or opera company.

Prologue - A piece sung before the curtain goes up on the opera proper: Tonio's Prologue in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Quaver - An eighth note.

Range - The span of tonal pitch of a particular voice: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Recitative - A formal device used to advance the plot. It is usually sung in a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech; it conveys the dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios. *Secco*, or dry, recitative is accompanied by harpsichord and sometimes with other continuo instruments; *accompagnato* indicates that the recitative is accompanied by the orchestra.

Ritornello - A refrain, or short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.

Romanza - A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage, or anger.

Romantic Period - The Romantic period is usually considered to be between the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Romanticists found inspiration in nature and man. Von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) are considered the first German Romantic operas; many of Verdi's operas as well as the early operas of Wagner are also considered Romantic operas.

Roulade - A florid, embellished melody sung to one syllable.

Rubato - An expressive technique, literally meaning "robbed"; it is a fluctuation of tempo within a musical phrase, often against a rhythmically steady accompaniment.

Secco - "Dry"; the type of accompaniment for recitative played by the harpsichord and sometimes continuo instruments.

Semitone - A half step, the smallest distance between two notes. In the key of C, the half steps are from E to F and from B to C.

Serial music - Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.

Sforzando - Sudden loudness and force; it must stand out from the texture and be emphasized by an accent.

Singspiel - Literally, "song drama." Early German style of opera employing spoken dialogue between songs: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano - The highest range of the female voice ranging from lyric (light and graceful quality) to dramatic (fuller and heavier in tone).

Sotto voce - Literally, “below the voice”; sung softly between a whisper and a quiet conversational tone.

Soubrette - A soprano who sings supporting roles in comic opera: Adele in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*; Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Spinto - From the Italian “spingere” (to push); a singer with lyric vocal qualities who “pushes” the voice to achieve heavier dramatic qualities.

Sprechstimme - Literally, “speaking voice.” The singer half sings a note and half speaks; the declamation sounds like speaking but the duration of pitch makes it seem almost like singing.

Staccato - Short, clipped, detached, rapid articulation; the opposite of legato.

Stretto - Literally, “narrow.” A concluding passage performed in a quick tempo to create a musical climax.

Strophe - Strophe is a rhythmic system of repeating lines. A musical setting of a strophic text is characterized by the repetition of the same music for all strophes.

Syncopation - A shifting of the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.

Supernumerary - A “super”; a performer with a non-singing and non-speaking role: “Spear-carrier.”

Symphonic poem - A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually narrative or descriptive in character: Franz Liszt’s *Les Preludes*; Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and *Ein Heldenleben*.

Tempo - The speed at which music is performed.

Tenor - The highest natural male voice.

Tessitura - The usual range of a voice part.

Tonality - The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).

Tone poem - An orchestral piece with a program.

Tonic - The principal tone of the key in which a piece is written. C is the tonic of C major.

Trill - Two adjacent notes rapidly and repeatedly alternated.

Tutti - All together.

Twelve-tone - The twelve chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting, with some permitted permutations and derivations, the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note is repeated.

Verismo - Literally “truth”; the artistic use of contemporary everyday material in preference to the heroic or legendary in opera. A movement particularly in Italian opera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Vibrato - A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone to enrich and intensify sound, and add warmth and expressiveness through slight and rapid variations in pitch.

