

Tosca

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Italian libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Synopsis

Act I

The Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

Escaped political prisoner Cesare Angelotti, finds refuge in a chapel in the church. His friend, the painter Mario Cavaradossi, discovers him and offers to help. Cavaradossi's lover, the famous opera singer Floria Tosca, interrupts their planning. Prone to jealousy, Tosca suspects Cavaradossi of being unfaithful but he manages to calm her and they arrange to meet later that evening. Cavaradossi and Angelotti flee just before the arrival of the police chief Baron Scarpia. He discovers evidence that Angelotti was hiding in the church and suspects Cavaradossi was an accomplice in his escape. When Tosca returns, Scarpia uses the evidence to feed her jealousy and convinces her that Cavaradossi has fled with another woman. She leaves to find Cavaradossi and confront him. Scarpia exults that he now has Tosca in his power.

Act II

Scarpia's rooms in the Palazzo Farnese

Scarpia anticipates his next meeting with Tosca. Cavaradossi has been arrested and brought to Scarpia but refuses to divulge Angelotti's whereabouts. When Tosca enters the painter is taken to be interrogated while Scarpia tries to extract information from her. When Cavaradossi cries out in pain as he is tortured, she reveals where Angelotti is hidden. Cavaradossi remains defiant as he is taken to prison to be executed. Tosca pleads for her lover's life, but Scarpia answers that only by giving herself to him can she save Cavaradossi. She agrees and Scarpia arranges for the mock execution of Cavaradossi. Thinking that he will now have her, Scarpia approaches Tosca, only to be stabbed to death.

Act III

The parapet of the Castel Sant'Angelo

The voice of a shepherd is heard as church bells signal dawn. Cavaradossi awaits execution. He bribes the jailer to allow him to write a final note to Tosca. As he writes he is flooded with memories. Tosca hurriedly enters and explains that she has killed Scarpia. She tells Cavaradossi about the mock execution and the two sing of their future life together. Cavaradossi is shot by the firing squad. After they leave Tosca approaches his body, but realizes that he is dead. When the men arrive to arrest her for Scarpia's murder, Tosca leaps from the parapet crying out that she will meet Scarpia in God's presence.

World premiere at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome, January 14, 1900.

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