

TOSCA

AN OPERA IN THREE ACTS

BY

V. SARDOU - L. ILLICA - G. GIACOSA

(English version by W. Beatty-Kingston.)

MUSIC BY

G. PUCCINI

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12 West 45th Street, New York

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

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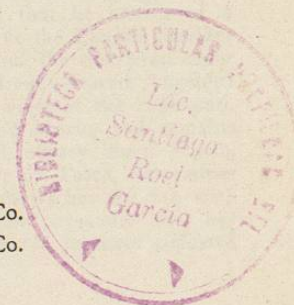
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SYNOPSIS

The opera is founded on the drama by Victorien Sardou.

ACT I

A man in the garb of a convict is seen stealthily entering the Church of San Andrea in Rome. The Sacristan comes into the Church carrying a basket of food and paint brushes for Mario Cavaradossi, who is painting a picture of Mary Magdalen. The Sacristan remarks that the features remind him of the face of a beautiful woman he has often seen in Church. Mario tells him the features of the lady inspired him for his picture and that he copied the face whilst the lady knelt in prayer. The Sacristan goes out and Mario takes from his pocket a picture of Tosca to compare it with that of his Mary Magdalen. At this moment the convict is seen approaching the Chapel door. The man calls Mario by his name and the latter recognizes his friend, Cesare Angelotti, who was imprisoned for political reasons. Angelotti implores him to help him escape. Whilst they earnestly talk together, Tosca's voice is heard calling to Mario. Mario gives Angelotti the food which was left for him and reassures Angelotti that he will help him. Meanwhile, Tosca, not seeing Mario, suspects him of an intrigue. After some delay Mario goes to her and she accuses him. He, however, manages to reassure her, but does not disclose the cause of his delay in answering her call to him. Tosca proposes that they meet that very evening at her Villa. She looks at the picture of Mary Magdalen and sees the resemblance with Donna Attavanti, Angelotti's sister. Mario tells her that he does not know the lady, but that he copied her features, because she looked so beautiful in prayer. Tosca's jealousy is kindled, but again Mario reassures her and they part, until the evening.

When Tosca has gone, Mario tells Angelotti that he knows of a hiding place near an old well. The two men leave the Church together and are hardly out of sight when choir boys and the Sacristan enter followed by Scarpia and the police, who have already traced Angelotti to the Church. Here they find the fan with the crest of the Attavanti. Scarpia sends his men in pursuit of Angelotti and Mario, and remains in the church. Meanwhile, Tosca, who has felt uneasy about Mario, returns. Scarpia, who has long been an admirer of Tosca, determines to win her and to turn her against Mario. He shows her the fan with the Attavanti crest. She recognizes it and is now persuaded that her lover loves Donna Attavanti. She leaves the Church in tears followed by Scarpia's spies.

ACT II

This act shows us Scarpia dining at the Palazzo Farnese, where he has his quarters. He knows that Tosca will sing there that evening and manages to send her a note telling her he has news of her lover. Mario is brought in a prisoner. Scarpia angrily orders Mario to divulge the hiding place of Angelotti, but he refuses. When Scarpia finds he cannot force his secret from Mario, he orders him tortured. Tosca enters as he is being led away and he entreats her to be silent lest

he be put to death. Scarpia now plies Tosca with questions, and Tosca, hearing the cries of agony as her lover is being tortured in an adjoining chamber, divulges that Angelotti is hiding in the well of the garden.

Sciarone now comes in with the news that they have been beaten by the army of Napoleon. Mario predicts the downfall of Scarpia, who in a fury orders the execution of Mario. Tosca wants to go to prison with him, but is detained. She asks Scarpia at what price she can save Mario. Scarpia tells her that he loves her and that only at the price of her honor she can save her lover. To save Mario, Tosca consents. Scarpia tells Tosca that Mario has only one hour more to live, and informs her that in order to gain his freedom Mario will have to go through a mock execution. She begs Scarpia for a safe conduct from the City for both of them that night. He writes the order and is about to give it to Tosca when she stabs him to the heart. As he falls, she takes the paper from him, washes her hands from his blood and places two candles at each side of him, laying a cross upon his bosom.

ACT III

That same night, at the Castle of San Angelo, Mario is listening to his death sentence. The guard tells him he has but ~~one~~ hour to live and he asks for paper and ink to write to Tosca. He hears someone approaching and sees Tosca, who tells him that his life is safe and that the execution will only be a sham, as she has an order for safe conduct for them both. He questions her as to how she was able to get this and she confesses her shameful bargain, telling him that she has murdered Scarpia. He takes her hands and kisses them, happy in her courage. She bids him to feign death and wait until she comes to him. He promises and they await the hour of death full of hope for the future.

Soldiers appear and lead Mario to the place of execution. They fire and he falls. When the soldiers have left, Tosca goes to him and bids him rise. He does not move and in terror she realizes that he has been killed. She throws herself on her lover's body weeping in agony. Spoletta and Sciarone appear and accuse her of the murder of Scarpia. As they are going to place her under arrest she runs to the bastions from which she throws herself.

CHARACTERS

FLORIA TOSCA, a celebrated songstress . . . *Soprano*
MARIO CAVARADOSSI, painter . . . *Tenor*
BARON SCARPIA, Chief of the Police . . . *Baritone*
CESARE ANGELOTTI . . . *Bass*
A SACRISTAN . . . *Baritone*
SPOLETTA, Police Agent . . . *Tenor*
SCIARRONE, Gendarme . . . *Bass*
A GAOLER . . . *Bass*
A SHEPHERD-BOY . . . *Contralto*

Roberti, Executioner.

A Cardinal.

A Judge.

A Scribe.

An Officer.

A Sergeant.

Soldiers, Police-Agents, Ladies, Nobles, Citizens, Artisans, etc

Rome, June, 1800.