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TOSCA

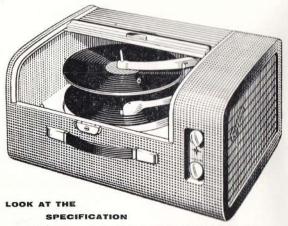
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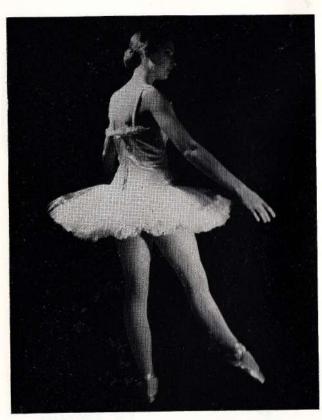
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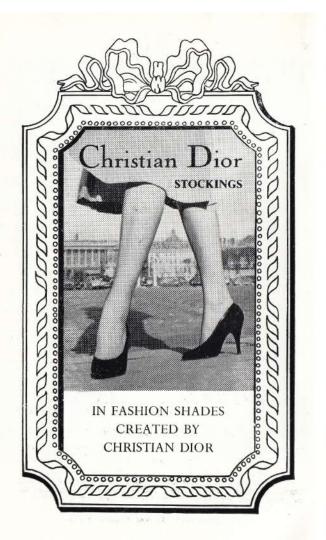
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Tuesday, 14th January, 1958

The 165th performance at the Royal Opera House

TOSCA

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

Words by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica based on the play by Victorien Sardou

> Music by Giacomo Puccini (Property of G. Ricordi & Co.)

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GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924

GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924

This opera was first produced at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome, on 14th January, 1900, with Ericlea Darclée as Tosca, Emilio de Marchi as Cavaradossi, and Eugenio Giraldoni as Scarpia; the conductor was Leopold Mugnone. It was first performed in London, in Italian, at Covent Garden on 12th July, 1900, with Milka Ternina, Fernando de Lucia and Antonio Scotti, conductor Luigi Mancinelli. Famous Toscas at Covent Garden have included Emmy Destinn, Louise Edvina, Maria Jeritza, Iva Pacetti, Gina Cigna, Maria Caniglia, Margherita Grandi, Ljuba Welitsch, Renata Tebaldi and Zinka Milanov. Among the best known singers who have appeared here as Cavaradossi are Enrico Caruso, Giovanni Martinelli, Joseph Hilsop, Aureliano Perfile, Beniamino Gigli, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Giuseppe Lugo, Mario del Monaco and Ferruccio Tagliavini. Famous Scarpias have included Mario Sammarco, Benvenuto Franci, Mariano Stabile, Lawrence Tibbett, Marko Rothmüller, Otakar Kraus, Tito Gobbi and Giangiacomo Guelfi.

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

CESARE ANGELOTTI AI	n escaped	politica	d prisoner	MICHAEL LANGDON		
A SACRISTAN				FORBES ROBINSON		
MARIO CAVARADOSSI	a famous	painter	& republi	ican RICHARD TUCKER		
FLORIA TOSCA, a fan		MARGHERITA ROBERTI				
BARON SCARPIA, Ch						
SPOLETTA, a Police A		6.72	DAVID TREE			
SCIARRONE, a Genda			174	RONALD LEWIS		
A SHEPHERD BOY				JOSEPHINE VEASEY		
A GAOLER .				RHYDDERCH DAVIES		
	re memb	ers of t	he Oueen	shridge Secondary School.		

and have been trained by Miss K. Robson.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

HISTORICAL NOTE

It was on 14th January, 1900, that Puccini's Tosca received its first performance at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome, but it is not generally known that but for a real operatic intrigue, the opera might never have materialised. Sardou's play had its première in Paris in 1887; when it was seen by Puccini two years later it immediately appealed to him as a possible subject for an opera. He discussed it with his publisher Ricordi and his librettist Illica, but being at that time busy with Manon Lescaut and then La Bohème, he lost interest in the project.

A contemporary of Puccini, the composer Franchetti, was also attracted by the Sardou play, and asked his librettist, the same Illica, to prepare him a libretto. This news reached Puccini, as did the information that Verdi himself thought the work good operatic material, so he decided to set to work on Tosca. How was he to get the libretto from Illica when it was being prepared for another composer? Ricordi and Illica decided to put Franchetti off by telling him that the subject was quite unsuited to the operatic medium, that the libretto was an execrable one and that he should set to work on quite another subject. Franchetti agreed with these proposals and cancelled his contract with Ricordi to compose an opera on the Tosca theme. Puccini immediately signed one himself!

Puccin now set to work, and had recourse to three librettists to assist him, Illica, Giuseppe Giacosa and Sardou himself. The latter concerned himself with telescoping his five act play into a three act opera, laying emphasis not so much on its political as its human elements, Illica provided the lyric portions, and Giacosa the dialogue sections.

TOSCA

SYNOPSIS

The action is laid in Rome in June 1800

ACT I

THE CHURCH OF SANT' ANDREA DELLA VALLE

Three chords played fff, tutta forza depicting the sinister and powerful Scarpia, preface the rise of the curtain.

Cesare Angelotti, former consul of the Roman Republic who has escaped from the Castelo San' Angelo where he has been held as a political prisoner, seeks refuge in the Attavanti Chapel. His sister, the Marchese Attavanti, has left the key of the chapel hidden at the foot of the statue of the Madonna.

The Sacristan of the church enters and busies himself dusting and cleaning up. The Angelus sounds, and as the Sacristan is kneeling in prayer, Mario Cavaradossi the painter enters. He admits that the portrait he is painting of the Madonna has been inspired both by his mistress, the singer Floria Tosca, and the Marchese Attavanti (Recondita Armonia) When the Sacristan leaves, Angelotti emerges from his hidding place. Cavaradossi recognises him, and promises to help him. Tosca's voice is heard calling 'Mario, Mario', Cavaradossi thrusts his basket of food into Angelotti's hands and hurries him once more into the chapel; he then admits Tosca.

She is a naturally jealous woman, and thinks that Cavaradossi has been talking to a secret lover. He succeeds in calming her; and she then pleads with him to accompany her to her little cottage in the country (Non la sospiri la nostra casetta). Her gaze then falls on the portrait and she recognises in it the features of the Marchesa Attavanti; once more Cavaradossi soothes her, and asks her what eyes could be more beautiful than her own (Qual' occhio al mondo).

Tosca having departed, Cavaradossi summons Angelotti from the chapel. A cannon shot announces that Angelotti's escape has been discovered. Cavaradossi suggests that he hides in an old disused well in the grounds of his villa, and they rush off together.

The Sacristan returns to announce to the choristers that Bonaparte the victory; and that very evening at the Farnese Palace there will be a cantata with Floria Tosca. This joyful news is interrupted by the entrance of Scarpia, the dreaded chief of police, and his agent Spoletta, who have tracked Angelotti to the church. A search is ordered, and as well as the empty food

INTERVAL

Warning bells will be sounded five and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

SCARPIA'S APPARTMENT AT THE FARNESE PALACE

Scarpia, supping alone, anticipates the pleasure of the conquest of Tosca. He sends her a note asking her to come to his apartment. Spoletta returns from his mission; it was not successful, for he was unable to find Angelotti, but he has arrested Cavaradossi. The painter is led in and as Scarpia begins to question him Tosca's voice is heard singing at the concert in Queen Caroline's

apartment below. Cavaradossi refuses to answer any of Scarpia's questions and as he is led off to the torture chamber. Tosca arrives. Scarpia tells Tosca that his men are trying to wring a confession from Cavaradossi by torture, and he opens a concealed panel in the wall so that she can hear her lover's cries. Unable to bear this, she reveals Angelotti's hiding place. Scarpia orders the torture to cease and Cavaradossi, fainting and bleeding from the temples, is brought in. Tosca reassures him that he has betrayed nothing, but when Scarpia in a loud voice instructs Spoletta to go to the well in the garden. Cavaradossi realises that Tosca has given away Angelotti's hiding place and turns on her. At that moment Sciarrone, a police officer, rushes in with the news that Bonaparte has triumphed at Marengo. *Vittoria! Vittoria!* shouts Cavaradossi, and he is dragged struggling from the room.

*Vittoria! Vittoria!' shouts Cavaradossi, and he is dragged struggling from the room.

Tosca is now left alone with Scarpia and he bargains with her for her lover's life. She pleads in vain for mercy (Vissi d'arte—Love and Music, these have I lived for). Finally she promises to give herself to Scarpia at the price of her lover's freedom. Scarpia instructs Spoletta to arrange a mock execution after which the lovers will be free. As Scarpia is writing out a free conduct for them, Tosca's eyes alight on a sharp pointed knife on the supper table, concealing it behind her back she plunges it into Scarpia's breast as he turns to embrace her. She searches for the safe conduct, finds it in the dead man's hands, and then gazing on the corpse utters the words—"E avanti lui tremava tutta Roma" 'And before him all Rome trembled'. Placing a crucifix on his breast and candles at his head and feet she slips quietly out of the room.

INTERVAL

Warning bells will be sounded five and two minutes before the rise of the curtain

ACT III

THE FORTRESS OF SANT' ANGELO

It is just before dawn, the jangle of sheep bells is heard in the distance and a shepherd boy sings his song. One by one the bells of Rome strike the hour. Cavaradossi is led in and handed over to the jailer to whom he offers his ring so that he can write a last farewell to Tosca. (E lucevan le stelle—When the Stars were brightly shining). Tosca arrives with the safe conduct and news of Scarpia's death. Cavaradossi can hardly believe that Tosca's gentle hands committed the deed (O dolci mani); the lovers ecstatically plan their future (Amaro sol per te). Tosca tells Cavaradossi of the mock execution and warns her lover to remain lying as if dead until she calls him. The firing party and Spoletta arrive. Cavaradossi refuses to have his eyes bandaged. The soldiers take aim, Cavaradossi falls. The soldiers file out, and Tosca hurries to rouse Cavaradossi only to find that Scarpia has betrayed his promise, the execution was real. Distant shouts are heard, Scarpia's murder has been discovered, Tosca hurries to the parapet, and with the words 'O Scarpia we will meet before God' on her lips, leaps to her death below.

H. D. R.

H. D. R.

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