Tosca

Nashville Opera
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Dear Teachers~

We are so pleased to be able to partner with Nashville Opera to bring students to the invited dress rehearsal of Tosca.

This guidebook includes Nashville Opera’s extensive study guide for adults with synopsis, background, and musical information. We have also added some additional material for you to use with students.

Please look particularly at the opera rehearsal information which will help students understand the special factors present in an invited dress rehearsal.

Enjoy!

TPAC Education.

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Nashville Opera Guidebook written by Stuart Holt
TPAC Guidebook compiled by Lattie Brown

Photo of the inside of the real church of Sant’Andrea della Valle where Act 1 of the opera is set.

## A note from our Sponsor - Regions Bank

Regions is proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee Community. We care about our customers, and we care about our community. We also care about the education of our students.

That is why we are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is - reaching over 25,000 students and teachers - some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to our community and education and, in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we will have over 76 associates teaching financial literacy in local classrooms this year.

**Thank you, teachers,** for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

Jim Schmitz
Area President
Middle Tennessee

[Regions logo]
Most final dress rehearsals are almost exactly like a performance. The director will stop the action if needed, but it is exceedingly rare and generally only for a technical malfunction on the stage. Like theatre, an opera dress rehearsal is the final chance before the performance to make a complicated collaboration come together seamlessly.

The Nashville Opera’s rehearsal schedule begins with two weeks at the opera rehearsal space in the new Noah Liff Opera Center. Stage action is mapped out, the performers experiment with their characters, and the director’s ideas for the flow of the opera are shared with the cast. The time period may seem short for such a large production. It only works because opera singers begin rehearsals knowing every bit of their music by heart and having rehearsed it themselves over a period of months, sometimes years. If they do not know the role on the first day, the director has the right to replace them immediately. The opera company will fly in a new singer to take over their part. Once opera singers learn a particular role, they keep it in their repertory and play the role many more times at different opera companies around the world.

Opera rehearsals use a skilled piano accompanist, but once during the two weeks, the performers will have a Sitzprobe rehearsal (a German word meaning to sit and try out.) The Sitzprobe is a “sing-thru” with the orchestra and conductor, concentrating on the nuances of the music only without staging. It is the first time that the orchestra and singers put together the work that they have been doing in separate orchestra rehearsals and staging rehearsals.

Four to five days before the first performance, the set is “loaded in” to the theater, and the lights are hung and focused. Students will notice a table in the middle of the orchestra level seats for the stage manager, the director, and the designers. This serves as a central location for communicating with the singers and crew onstage, the conductor orchestra pit, and the technicians in the lighting booth. During the final dress rehearsal, students may notice lighting changes as the designer makes final adjustments.

A piano tech rehearsal is held without costumes to let the singers get used to the set and give the set crew their first chance to practice scene changes. The next rehearsal is a piano dress rehearsal that adds costumes (because of a tight schedule for Tosca, these two rehearsals will be combined into one.) Finally, the orchestra dress rehearsal puts all the elements together: lighting, set changes, costumes, the orchestra, and the supertitles (the English translations of the words to the opera, called the libretto.) The supertitles will also be in operation at the final invited dress rehearsal.

The final dress rehearsal allows the last polish before the performance, and invited dress rehearsals add the final important element to the opera, an audience. Because of the strenuous nature of the singing, a singer may choose to “mark” on the final dress rehearsal in order to preserve their voices for all the performances. “Marking” does not have the same meaning in opera as it does in theatre. In theatre, it means just going through the blocking and the words of the lines. In opera, it specifically means that the singer may choose not to sing at full volume, pushing their voice to the utmost. All of their acting will be at full power with all the passion and conviction that opera requires. You will be their first audience; they are ready and excited to give you the story and the music.
**Step 1~Know the story!**

In opera, it is important to know as much as possible about what is going on beforehand, including the ending. Once the music, the voices, the setting, the lights, and the dramatic staging come together at the performance, audience members will be able to fit all the elements seamlessly together into the plot which becomes the springboard for the real power of opera.

**Step 2~Experience the music!**

Composers use many tools to communicate with music. They create melodies that evoke a variety of emotions. They use tempos (how slow or fast) and dynamics (how loud or soft) and rhythms (the frequency and pattern of beat.) They choose particular instruments to add color to the music they have written. Think of instrument choice as a type of painting for your ears! The term “soundscape” is often used in describing the music of an opera, and it can set the atmosphere, give information about characters, and the plot. What is it telling you?

**Step 3 ~Understand the singers!**

Opera singers are vocal athletes. They practice every day to exercise their vocal chords and their enormous breath control. The combinations of notes that they have to sing are very difficult, and the things that they can do with their voices are extreme. You can easily compare a regular singing voice and an opera singing voice to a weekend jogger and a gold-medal-winning Olympic track champion! BUT, the reason that their voices are prized is that they can express so much emotion on a grand scale.

**Step 4~Plunge in!**

This is the most important step. Everything about opera is over-the-top, on the edge, enormous in every way. It’s an art form that thrives on its intensity and passion. Opera stories portray people at their most extreme, and the singers and the music communicate in ways that words alone cannot. You have to let go, allow yourself to stop thinking and analyzing and simply FEEL THE EMOTION!

(with acknowledgements to Opera 101 by Fred Plotkin for idea organization above)
Go Back in Time

Floria Tosca is a singer and the man she loves, Mario Cavaradossi, is a painter. Think about the impact of these two professions during the time this opera is set (1800) as well as during the time Puccini was writing it (late 1890’s.)

Think about how people heard music back then. They either made music or sang themselves, went to a live performance of some kind, or heard it in church. They did not have radios or i-pods or CD players to listen to music; there were no recordings of music to buy. Think about your favorite singer or band and imagine that the only chance to hear them was a performance.

In the 1800’s, what kind of access did people have to visual art? True photography was not yet invented, there was no television, movies, magazines, or computers. Paintings were much more important and the people who could create them were highly revered.

Plan out your week in the 1800’s (without television, radio, phones, i-pods, or computers.) How and where would you listen to music? How and where would you see cool art?

Breathe like Singers

The power of opera singer’s breath control is formidable. They must be able sing very complicated musical passages, to sustain long notes, and to project their voices without microphones. They work all the time on their abdominal muscles, particularly the diaphragm which runs along the bottom of the ribcage.

☞ Pay attention to your breathing. What part of your body is moving? Place your hands on your stomach just below your ribcage and try to push them out slightly as you breathe in.

☞ Keep your hands in place, take a breath in, and say “ha!” You should feel your diaphragm jump under you hands.

☞ Try to fill your lungs with the biggest breath you can and let it out as slowly as you can with a hissing sound.

☞ Try it again and while you are hissing have a partner count how long you can make the hissing sound or (harder) how long you can make the sound “ahhh.” If you were to practice this every day, you would build the muscle and be able to make sound for longer periods of time.

Every once in a while during the performance, try to pay attention to which passages would require the most breath control.
Nashville Opera & Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund
present

**Tosca**
*The Patricia & Rodes Hart Production*

Music by Giacomo Puccini  
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica  
Based on Victorien Sardou’s play *La Tosca*  
First performance: Teatro Costanzi, Rome, Italy January 14, 1900

Directed by John Hoomes  
Conducted by Steven White

**Cast and Characters**

Floria Tosca, a singer………………………………………………………Erika Sunnegårdh, soprano  
Mario Cavaradossi, a painter………………………………………………….William Joyner, tenor  
Baron Scarpia, Chief of Police………………………………………………….Luis Ledesma, baritone  
Cesare Angelotti, a political prisoner…………………………………………Matthew Treviño, bass  
Sacristan……………………………………………………………………………Stefan Szkafarowsky, bass  
Spoletta, a spy……………………………………………………………………….Tracy Wise, tenor  
Sciarrone, police sergeant …………………………………………………….Stefan Szkafarowsky, bass  
Jailer………………………………………………………………………………Matthew Treviño, bass

**Performances**

Thursday, October 8, 2009, 7:00 PM  
Saturday, October 10, 2009, 8:00 PM  
Andrew Jackson Hall  
Tennessee Performing Arts Center  
Nashville, Tennessee

Featuring the Nashville Symphony Orchestra

Opera Insights Preview Talk 1 hour prior to curtain.

**Tickets**

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Or  
The Nashville Opera Offices  
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**Study Guide Contributors:**

Stuart Holt, Education Director
Act 1 – The church of Sant’Andrea della Valle

Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, seeks refuge in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle where his family has a chapel. His sister, the Marchesa Attavanti, while praying for his release, has unwittingly served as a model to the painter, Mario Cavaradossi, for his portrait of Mary Magdalene. A few minutes before the church sacristan enters (followed shortly by Cavaradossi), Angelotti conceals himself in his family’s chapel. The sacristan assists the painter, washing his brushes. When Cavaradossi stops his work for a moment, he removes a medallion from his pocket: the medallion contains a miniature portrait of Floria Tosca, his lover. The painter makes a comparison between Tosca and the model he has been using for the portrait.

The sacristan leaves Cavaradossi alone to paint and Angelotti, a friend and political ally comes out of his chapel. Angelotti begins to tell of his escape from Castel Sant'Angelo (papal Roman prison), but the arrival of Tosca interrupts their conversation. Cavaradossi gives Angelotti some food and helps him return to hide in the chapel.

Floria Tosca is a singer, and she goes to the church to invite Cavaradossi to meet her after her performance that evening. Tosca is unreasonably jealous, however, and her suspicions have been aroused, having heard Cavaradossi speaking to someone upon her arrival. She imagines he is cheating on her, and her fears are apparently confirmed by the developing portrait of Mary Magdalene. She tells Mario that the blue-eyed model looks very familiar. Finally, Tosca realizes Mario has used Marchesa Attavanti as the model, but he assuages her suspicions. Tosca has brown eyes, whereas the woman in the portrait has blue. Tosca, her jealousy abated, leaves, but not before playfully insisting he make the Magdalene’s eyes dark, like hers.

Angelotti reappears, and his escape is planned: Angelotti will don woman's attire—that his sister had hidden in the altar—and flee to Cavaradossi's villa; if necessary, Angelotti will hide in the painter's well. Cavaradossi swears, even if it costs him his life, he will save Angelotti from the authorities. A cannon shot from the Castel Sant'Angelo warns that the dissident's escape has been discovered and compels him to flee; the painter exits the church with him.

The sacristan returns surrounded by a laughing crowd of choir boys and acolytes. They falsely believe that Napoleon has been defeated and are there to sing a thankful Te Deum, when Baron Scarpia, chief of police, arrives with his deputy, Spoletta, and some of his men in search of the escaped prisoner. In the Attavantis' chapel, Spoletta finds the fan of the Marchesa and the painter's basket emptied of food and wine. Scarpia threateningly asks the sacristan about this, but the latter maintains that Cavaradossi did not have the key to the chapel and had not expressed any interest in the food. Scarpia shrewdly surmises that Cavaradossi is somehow connected with Angelotti's escape.

Tosca returns to explain to Cavaradossi that she must perform in a cantata and will not be able to meet him later after all. Finding that Cavaradossi has left, she again begins to feel suspicious. Meanwhile the church fills up and a Cardinal prepares for the Te Deum.

Scarpia arouses Tosca's jealousy by producing Attavanti's fan, and she departs in anger. Ordering his agent to follow her, he passionately avows his desire for the singer, and then kneels devoutly in prayer.
Act 2 - Scarpia's room at Palazzo Farnese

Scarpia is dining alone while celebrations are heard outside. He sends a servant to give a note to Tosca to invite her to join him when she finishes with her recital. Cynically he sings of pleasure, presuming she will surrender to his power.

Spoletta enters with Cavaradossi in custody but without Angelotti, who has eluded him. Scarpia closely questions the painter, but Cavaradossi reveals nothing. Tosca arrives and the painter whispers to her not to say anything about Angelotti. Scarpia sends Cavaradossi off to be tortured, then turns his attention to Tosca. Scarpia describes to her in detail her lover's anguish under torture. She can hear his groans but is powerless to help him. At last, utterly prostrated, she divulges Angelotti’s hiding place. The painter is brought out, and Scarpia indicates he knows where Angelotti is hiding. In his pain and humiliation, Cavaradossi denounces Tosca for her betrayal of the secret.

Sciarrone enters to announce that earlier reports were mistaken: Bonaparte has defeated the royalist forces at the Battle of Marengo. Cavaradossi is taken away to prison. Tosca attempts to follow him but is held back by Scarpia. She asks what the price will be to secure Mario’s release. Scarpia avows his passion for the singer and lasciviously demands her body, her virtue, and herself, as the price. Tosca attempts to flee but is restrained by Scarpia as he attempts to rape her. During the struggle, drums are heard – Scarpia indicates that they are the drums beating Cavaradossi to the scaffold. Tosca finally collapses and asks the Lord the reason for all this cruelty. Spoletta enters to announce that Angelotti has committed suicide just as Scarpia’s agents discovered him—in the well at Cavaradossi’s villa.

Feeling as if she has no alternative, Tosca finally agrees to yield. Scarpia orders Spoletta to organize for a mock execution of Cavaradossi, while Tosca demands a safe-conduct for herself and the painter to leave the country. While she is waiting for Scarpia to write it, she notices a knife on the table and makes the decision to kill Scarpia rather than allow him to kiss her. As he advances to embrace her, she plunges the knife into him. Having piously composed the body for burial, she departs to the sound of drums in the distance.

Act 3 - Top floor of Castel Sant’Angelo

Church bells announce the beginning of the day while a Shepherd boy sings a folk song in romanesco, the Roman dialect. Cavaradossi, in prison, awaits his execution. For the price of a ring (his last possession), Cavaradossi persuades the Jailer to deliver a note to Tosca, then starts writing a farewell letter. With the last line, he bursts into tears.

Tosca enters with Spoletta and a sergeant, bringing the safe-conduct letter, and explains to him how she killed Scarpia in order to save them both. She then explains the mock execution which she believes to be arranged for him, and with triumphant and high emotion, they begin to dream of their future together.

The soldiers fire; Mario falls. Tosca playfully compliments Mario on his marvelous acting. When the executioners leave, Tosca runs to Mario and tells him to get up. When he does not respond, Tosca realizes the truth: Scarpia had never intended to spare Cavaradossi, but had given Spoletta orders to execute him. Cavaradossi lies dead. As Tosca comes to this realization, Spoletta, who has discovered Scarpia’s death, enters with soldiers, denouncing her as a murderer. He comes forward to take Tosca prisoner, but she pushes him away. She then jumps from the ramparts of the castle and falls to her death.
What to Listen For

Act I

“Recondita armonia”- In this famous aria, Cavaradossi compares Tosca and the Marchesa, his two models for his painting.

“Mario! Mario! Mario!”- This is one of the great diva entrances of opera. We first hear Tosca call from offstage and then make a sweeping entrance into the chapel.

Te Deum – This is the end of the Act I and is excellent example of Puccini’s ability to weave a scene with the soloist and chorus, each involved in their own thoughts.

Act II

“Vissi d'arte” – In this famous aria, Tosca begs God to know why all these terrible things are happening.

“Si adempia il voler” – In this final scene of the act we hear a sweeping melody as Scarpia writes the letter, the “kiss of Tosca” is heard and seen as she stabs Scarpia. The scene ends with the death rattle of drums.

Act III

“E lucevan le stelle” – Cavaradossi sits down to write a farewell letter to Tosca, but becomes overwhelmed by memories.
Recommended Recordings

**AUDIO**

*Label*: London/Decca  
*Performers*: Mirella Freni, Placido Domingo, Samuel Ramey. Philharmonia Orchestra  
*Conductor*: Giuseppe Sinopoli

*Label*: London  
*Performers*: Mirella Freni, Luciano Pavarotti, Sherrill Milnes. National Philharmonic  
*Conductor*: Nicola Rescigno

*Label*: EMI  
*Performers*: Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, Tito Gobbi  
*Conductor*: Victor de Sabata

**VIDEO**


The original play by Victorien Sardou was produced in Paris in 1887; the composer first saw it that same year in Milan, with Sarah Bernhardt in the title role. Puccini immediately asked his editor, Giulio Ricordi, to acquire the rights for him to adapt the work. Unfortunately, by the time Puccini finished La bohème and Manon Lescaut, the rights had been acquired by the composer Alberto Franchetti. Puccini was not satisfied with this and sent Ricordi and librettist Luigi Illica to con Franchetti out of the rights, telling him that the opera was far too violent (rape, torture, execution) and too political for Roman taste. It was a pushover, and the next day Puccini had a contract with Sardou for the operatic adaptation of his play. He began working on it in 1896 with librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica. There were problems from the beginning as Giacosa did not perform up to his own standards, and had several personal disputes with Sardou. Puccini too had disputes with Illica, Giacosa and Ricordi together.

One of the major problems for both composer and librettists was that the plot of Tosca plays with passions rather than feelings. In La bohème the villain was fate, represented by illness, and the characters had to accept it while moving toward an unavoidable ending. In Tosca both heroes and villains are humans who struggle on stage, and you can expect a coup de théâtre at any moment. The clashes are always between single individuals. History, politics, and ideals are in the background and sometimes serve as pretexts, but the real motivations are strictly personal. The action has the structure of a series of duos: in the first act Tosca, Cavaradossi, the sacristan, Scarpia and Angelotti appear always in pairs. In the second act Tosca and Scarpia struggle on stage while Cavaradossi is tortured in another room. The authors steadily focus on the psychology of the individuals to delineate the characters.

The other problem was Puccini’s meticulous attention to detail. He wanted to achieve a near perfect correspondence between stage action and historic reality. Puccini insisted that the costume designs (particularly the sacred vestments and Swiss Army Uniforms) be based on research of historical documentation. The designs for the scenes were made by Adolfo Hohenstein, the leading artist at the publishing house of Ricordi (he designed the scenery for all important premieres of Ricordi’s scores in the period from Falstaff to Madama Butterfly). The drawings were made from photos of the actual settings provided by Puccini. He even took the sound of the church bells from the pitch of the great bell at St. Peter’s, a familiar sound to all Romans and many other Italians.

In October 1899, after three years of difficult collaboration, the opera was ready for production. Because it is a story about Rome, it was decided that the premiere would be given in the Eternal City, at the Teatro Costanzi. Considerable curiosity surrounded the premiere of Tosca, owing to its long and troubled gestation. Queen Margherita, Prime Minister Luigi Pelloux, and many composers, including Pietro Mascagni, Francesco Cilea, Alberto Franchetti and Giovanni Sgambati, were among the audience.

Tosca’s success was complete and drew capacity crowds for over 20 performances. It enjoyed similar success in productions in Milan, Buenos Aires, London, and New York. While Joseph Kermer, Professor of Music at Oxford in England, thought of Tosca as “a shabby little shocker,” it has remained one of the most popular operas in the repertoire.
About the Composer

Quick Stats

Full Name: Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini  
Dates: December 22, 1858 – November 29, 1924  
Nationality: Born in Lucca, Italy. Died in Brussels, Belgium.

Life and Career

Giacomo Puccini was born into a long line of talented musicians. Giacomo’s great-great grandfather had held the position of choirmaster and organist at the Cathedral of San Martino. This position would be held by four consecutive generations of Puccini men, including Puccini’s father. As a master of counterpoint, which is a musical form that incorporates two simultaneous melody lines, Giacomo’s father helped him to establish a firm knowledge of music and composition.

At the age of fourteen, Giacomo was already an accomplished organist, performing in his hometown of Lucca. It would not be until the age of twenty-two that Giacomo would finally begin to receive a formal education in music. In 1880, Giacomo entered the Milan Conservatory, but only with the assistance of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Puccini was fortunate in that he was exposed to a variety of theatrical styles, including opera and spoken drama in his hometown of Lucca, Italy. It is these experiences at the theatre that planted the ideas for stories that Puccini would later shape into some of his most famous operas.

It was not long after his entrance into the Milan Conservatory that Puccini’s interest in opera began to materialize. At the age of twenty-six, Puccini’s first opera, Le Villi, premiered. This opera caught the attention of publisher Giulio Ricordi, who funded Puccini’s second opera, Edgar, in 1889. This relationship between Puccini and Ricordi would last until Ricordi’s death in 1912. Despite moderate attention paid to his first two operas, Puccini’s reputation as a composer did not begin to develop until his third opera, Manon Lescaut in 1893.

While some composers are only remembered for one great masterpiece, Puccini’s status as a composer arose out of three separate operas. Known as Puccini’s “Big Three,” these operas are La bohème (1896), Tosca (1900), and Madama Butterfly (1904). Through the utilization of verismo, or storylines that focus on the rough and gritty aspects of common life, Puccini was able to infuse raw emotion into his characters, as well as the music they sing. This has appealed to countless generations of audiences as Puccini’s characters are completely relatable in that they are passionate, flawed, and ultimately human.

In 1924, Giacomo Puccini was diagnosed with cancer of the throat. He died later that year in Brussels, Belgium. There are disputes as to the cause of Puccini’s death, but most sources believe that he died of a heart attack during an emergency surgical treatment for the cancer. His final opera, Turandot was left unfinished at the time of his death. The last two scenes of the opera were finished by composer, Franco Alfano.
Other Notable Works

*Manon Lescaut* (1893) – libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, based on Abbé Prévost’s 1731 novel

*La fanciulla del West* (1910) - libretto by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini, based on the play by David Belasco

*Turandot* (1926) – libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni, based on the play by Carlo Gozzi

Of Further Interest

Puccini’s operas are marked with beautiful, sensuous melodies, colorful harmonies and brilliant orchestration. As Verdi favored monumental, sweeping arias, Puccini preferred shorter arias with memorable melodies in order to succinctly propel the drama.

Puccini had a special proclivity for his female characters, which he portrayed with glorious melody lines and dramatic sensibility. Heartbreaking tragedy befalls many of his heroines, including Tosca, Butterfly, and Liù of *Turandot*.

Puccini’s American opera, *La Fanciulla del West*, actually premiered in the United States at the Metropolitan Opera in 1910.

A wealthy opera fan from New York, in exchange for a handwritten, autographed copy of “Musetta's Waltz” (*La bohème*), agreed to buy Puccini an extremely expensive motorboat and have it sent all the way to Italy.

Puccini was known for being a reckless driver and was involved in several car crashes.

Two years after his death, Puccini’s remains were interred at his house at Torre del Lago. After his wife’s death in 1930, Puccini’s house was turned into a museum.

Composers and Critics Say

“Puccini looks to me more like the heir of Verdi than any of his rivals.” - George Bernard Shaw, writing on the première of *Manon Lescaut* in London, 1894

Puccini wrote of his own music style: “[It’s] poetry and again poetry — tenderness mixed with pain; sensuality; a drama surprising and burning; and a rocketing finale.”

“While the ground bass of Verdi’s operas is a battle cry, of Puccini’s it’s a mating call.” - Mosco Carner, one of Puccini’s biographers, commenting on the sensuality of the composer’s melodies.

*Puccini’s operas are not always acclaimed by the critics:*

“Puccini was not one of the great composers.” - Donald Jay Grout, respected musicologist.

Joseph Kermer, Professor of Music at Oxford in England, asserts that Puccini’s operas were “false through and through.”

After seeing the première of *Tosca*, one critic remarked that it had “little or no chance of survival.”
All classical singers fall into one of the categories listed below. A singer cannot choose his/her voice-type…it is something he/she is born with. Composers usually assign a voice type to a character based on his/her personality or age. Read these descriptions for specific examples.

**Women**

**Soprano:** The highest female voice, with a range similar to a violin. In opera, the soprano most often plays the young girl or the heroine (sometimes called the Prima Donna), since a high bright voice traditionally suggests femininity, virtue and innocence. The normal range of a soprano is from middle C through two octaves above middle C, sometimes with extra top notes. Most women are sopranos. In *Tosca*, *Floria Tosca* is sung by a soprano.

**Mezzo-Soprano:** Also called a mezzo; the middle female voice similar to an oboe in range. A mezzo’s sound is often darker and warmer than a soprano’s. In opera, composers generally use a mezzo to portray older women, villainesses, seductive heroines, and sometimes even young boys. Mezzo-Sopranos also often serve as the friend or sidekick to the soprano. The mezzo-soprano’s normal range is from the A below middle C to the A two octaves above it. In *Tosca*, there is no mezzo-soprano.

**Contralto:** The lowest female voice, similar in range to a clarinet. Contraltos usually sing the roles of older females or special character parts such as witches and old gypsies. The range is two octaves from F below middle C to the top line of the treble clef. A true contralto is very rare – some believe they don’t exist at all! There are no contraltos in *Tosca*.

**Men**

**Counter-tenor:** The highest male voice, which was mainly used in very early opera and oratorio (a genre of classical vocal music similar to opera but generally based on a religious topic and accompanied by a choir). The voice of a countertenor sounds very much like a mezzo-soprano’s voice and they often sing the same repertoire. Like the contralto, true countertenors are very rare. There is no counter-tenor in *Tosca*.

**Tenor:** Usually the highest male voice in an opera. It is similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color, and acoustical ring. The tenor typically plays the hero or the love interest in an opera. His voice ranges from the C below middle C to the C above. The role of Cavaradossi in *Tosca* is sung by a tenor.

**Baritone:** The middle male voice, close to a French horn in range and tone color. The baritone usually plays villainous roles or father-figures. The range is from the G that is an octave and a half below middle C to G above. In Puccini’s *Tosca*, *Baron Scarpia* is a baritone.

**Bass:** The lowest male voice, it is similar to a trombone or bassoon in range and color. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera. In *Tosca*, Angelotti, Sciarrone, the jailer and Sacristan are all basses. The range spans from roughly the F above middle C down to the F an octave and a fourth below.
About our Cast

The Nashville Opera is honored to present the following artists in this production of Tosca:

**Director**

**John Hoomes**, Artistic Director of Nashville Opera  
**Nashville Opera Credits:** Elmer Gantry, Samson & Deliah, Il trovatore, Aida, Romeo & Juliet, Salome  
**Other Appearances:** Florentine Opera, Opera Columbus, Mobile Opera, Opera New Jersey, Indianapolis Opera

**Conductor**

**Steven White**  
**Nashville Opera debut**  
**Other Appearances:** L’Opéra de Montréal, Opera Roanoke, Vancouver Opera, Pittsburgh Opera

**Floria Tosca**  
**Erika Sunnegårdh**, soprano  
**Nashville Opera debut**  
**Other appearances:** Metropolitan Opera, Florentine Opera, Welsh National Opera, Atlanta Opera

**Mario Cavaradossi**  
**William Joyner**, tenor  
**Nashville Opera debut**  
**Other appearances:** Florida Grand Opera, New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera

**Baron Scarpia**  
**Luis Ledesma**, Baritone  
**Nashville Opera Credits:** Samson & Delilah  
**Other appearances:** L’Opéra de Montréal, Florida Grand Opera, Arizona Opera, Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera

**Cesare Angelotti/Jailer**  
**Matthew Treviño**, bass  
**Nashville Opera debut**  
**Other appearances:** Lyric Opera Kansas City, Fort Worth Opera, Dallas Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre
Sacristan/Sciarrone
Stefan Szkafarowsky, bass
Nashville Opera debut
Other appearances: Atlanta Opera, Florentine Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Florida Grand Opera

Spoletta
Tracy Wise, tenor
Nashville Opera debut
Other appearances: Dallas Opera, Utah Symphony & Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Lyric Opera of Kansas City
TOSCA
GIACOMO PUCCINI
October 8 & 10, 2009
Andrew Jackson Hall, TPAC
The Patricia and Rodes Hart Production
Featuring The Nashville Symphony

THE FALL of the
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PHILIP GLASS
November 13, 14, 15, 2009
James K. Polk Theater, TPAC
Book by Arthur Yorinks & Philip Glass
Lyrics by Arthur Yorinks
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RIGOLETTO
GIUSEPPE VERDI
April 10 & 13, 2010
Andrew Jackson Hall, TPAC
Featuring The Nashville Symphony

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