

# TOSCA

By Giacomo Puccini

## Lighting Concept

Lighting Design by Madeleine Reid

# Concept

The tensions ran high in Rome during the Napoleonic War as there was great political turbulence. Puccini uses this melodramatic opera to expose the misconduct of Roman politicians by following the Chief of Police, Scarpia, in his attempt to court Tosca at any cost; the price of his greed brings torture, secrets, jealousy, and death.. Led by the cinematic orchestration, *Tosca* uses the three staples of Roman power, church, palace, and prison, as the environment for mishappenings in order to reveal the corruption of those in power.

With the explosion of the violins and tremble of the drums, the escaped prisoner, Angelotti, shrouded in the darkness of the early morning, fearfully searches for an entrance into the Sant'Andrea Della Valle. Once finding a way in, he frantically looks around his surroundings before succumbing to the golden holy glow of the grand church. The gentle sounds of the woodwinds mimic the heavenly teal glimmer of the holy water which shimmers onto the Madonna, providing him a moment of breath before he exits into the chapel with the crash of the brass instruments. Coming out of the shadows and flooding the church with a bright honey morning, Sacristan enters outraged with the way the paint brushes were cleaned. As the bell tolls, the room fades to focus on Sacristan's prayers. However, the moment is interrupted by Cavaradossi's entrance that paints the room with streaks of cerulean blue skylight which reflects off the decorated church walls that tower above.

The trill of the flute and pluck of the harp propels tuscan rays of the fading evening sun through the two towering windows of The Palazzo Farnese, flooding the extravagant room, cascading Scarpia in a confident mustard glow as he makes his attempt to court Tosca in a letter. As the sun dips below the horizon, a deep cobalt blue creeps in to replace the evening warmth, accompanying the flood of violent hostility as Cavaradossi is escorted into the room by two policemen for his interrogation. The tremors of the string instruments flare with the fiery glow of the flickering fireplace that casts the long shadow of Scarpia over Cavaradossi as the severity of the interrogation tactics crescendos.

With a piercing scream of terror, Tosca realizes Cavaradossi is dead. The crash of the symbols flashes the bright azure blue of skylight through the arches that line the hallway to focus on Tosca who weeps over Cavaradossi's lifeless body. Cast in a dramatic canary yellow, Tosca flees up the stairs leaving the men who chase her in the crisp blue morning skylight that reaches through the ancient architectural shadows of the prison. Tosca finally lands at the top of the stairs and is graced in daffodil sunlight as she looks down at the men. The buildup of the dramatic violins and brass is interrupted by the sudden collision of the cymbals, creating a final look of pained, sorrowful tragedy. With the last ring of the thunderous instrumentation, Tosca jumps and the lights flash in front of the men who tried to stop her. Left in silence after the final explosion of music, the hallway slowly fades to black.



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