

**TEATRO LIRICO D'EUROPA**  
**TOSCA**  
**By Giacomo Puccini**  
**Libretto By Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa**  
**After the play of the same name by V. Sardou**

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Stage Director    | Giorgio Lalov          |
| Musical Director  | Krassimir Topolov      |
| Set and Costumes  | Giorgio Lalov          |
| Lighting Designer | Giorgio Bajukliev      |
| Super Titles      | Maestro Internationale |

**DISTRIBUTION**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Floria Tosca, a famous opera singer | Elena Razgylaeva<br>Olga Chernisheva            |
| Mario Cavaradossi, a painter        | Orlin Goranov<br>Michael Hayes<br>Rafael Davila |
| Baron Scarpia, chief of police      | William Powers                                  |
| Cesare Angelotti                    | Plamen Dimitrov                                 |
| Spoletta                            | Guergui Dinev                                   |
| Sacristan                           | Hristo Sarafov                                  |
| Sciarrone                           | Vladimir Hristov                                |

Church chorus, Servers at Mass, Crowd Members  
Setting: Rome, June 1800

*There will be a 20- minute intermission after Act I*

**Synopsis of the Opera**

**ACT I.**

Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, rushes into the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle to hide in the Attavanti chapel. As he vanishes, an old Sacristan shuffles in, praying at the sound of the Angelus. Mario Cavaradossi enters to work on his portrait of Mary Magdalene - inspired by the Marchesa Attavanti (Angelotti's sister), whom he has seen but does not know. Taking out a miniature of the singer Floria Tosca, he compares her raven beauty with that of the blonde Magdalene ("Recondita armonia"). The Sacristan grumbles disapproval and leaves. Angelotti ventures out and is recognized by his friend

and fellow liberal Mario, who gives him food and hurries him back into the chapel as Tosca is heard calling outside. Forever suspicious, she jealously questions him, then prays, and reminds him of their rendezvous that evening at his villa ("Non la sospiri la nostra casetta?"). Suddenly recognizing the Marchesa Attavanti in the painting, she explodes with renewed suspicions, but he reassures her ("Qual' occhio al mondo"). When she has gone, Mario summons Angelotti from the chapel; a cannon signals that the police have discovered the escape, so the two flee to Mario's villa. Meanwhile, the Sacristan returns with choirboys who are to sing in a Te Deum that day. Their excitement is silenced by the entrance of Baron Scarpia, chief of the secret police, in search of Angelotti. When Tosca comes back to her lover, Scarpia shows her a fan with the Attavanti crest, which he has just found. Thinking Mario faithless, Tosca tearfully vows vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshippers. Scarpia, sending his men to follow her to Angelotti, schemes to get the diva in his power ("Va, Tosca!").

## ACT II.

In the Farnese Palace, Scarpia anticipates the sadistic pleasure of bending Tosca to his will ("Ha più forte sapore"). The spy Spoletta arrives, not having found Angelotti. To placate the baron he brings in Mario, who is interrogated while Tosca is heard singing a cantata at a royal gala downstairs. She enters just as her lover is being taken to an adjoining room: his arrogant silence is to be broken under torture. Unnerved by Scarpia's questioning and the sound of Mario's screams, she reveals Angelotti's hiding place. Mario is carried in; realizing what has happened, he turns on Tosca, but the officer Sciarrone rushes in to announce that Napoleon has won the Battle of Marengo, a defeat for Scarpia's side. Mario shouts his defiance of tyranny ("Vittoria!") and is dragged to prison. Scarpia, resuming his supper, suggests that Tosca yield herself to him in exchange for her lover's life. Fighting off his embraces, she protests her fate to God, having dedicated her life to art and love ("Vissi d'arte"). Scarpia again insists, but Spoletta interrupts. Faced with capture, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. The baron pretends to order a mock execution for the prisoner, after which he is to be freed. Spoletta leaves. No sooner has Scarpia written a safe-conduct for the lovers than Tosca snatches a knife from the table and kills him. Wrenching the document from his stiffening fingers and placing candles at his head and a crucifix on his chest, she slips from the room.

### ACT III.

The voice of a shepherd boy is heard as church bells toll the dawn. Mario awaits execution at the Castel Sant'Angelo. He bribes the jailer to convey a farewell note to Tosca. Writing it, overcome with memories of love, he gives way to despair ("E lucevan le stelle"). Suddenly Tosca runs in, filled with the story of her recent adventures. Mario caresses the hands that committed murder for his sake ("O dolci mani"), and the two hail their future. As the firing squad appears, the diva coaches Mario on how to fake his death convincingly. The soldiers fire and depart. Tosca urges Mario to hurry, but when he fails to move, she discovers that Scarpia's treachery has transcended the grave. The bullets were real. When Spoletta rushes in to arrest Tosca for Scarpia's murder, she cries to Scarpia to meet her before God, then leaps to her death.

### Artists Biographies

#### **ELENA RAZGYLYAEVA (Tosca)**

The young soprano is a principal soloist of Opera Rostov-na Dom, Russia, where she performs leading soprano roles in the lyric and spinto fach. Ms. Razgylyaeva has also performed many principal soprano roles in performances of opera in central Europe, and the United Kingdom. She made her U.S. debut in winter 2006 as Mimì in Puccini's LA BOHÈME to outstanding critical acclaim at Boston's historic Majestic Theatre. She has had major successes in the United States in operatic performances as Michaëla in CARMEN, Cio-Cio-San in MADAMA BUTTERFLY, the title role in AÏDA, Liù in TURANDOT, Nedda in I PAGLIACCI and Donna Elvira in DON GIOVANNI.

"As Mimì (LA BOHÈME), Elena Razgylyaeva was simply outstanding. She has a glorious voice that she can modulate to the exact tone appropriate to the scene. She is one of the few to play Mimi who leave no doubt about why Rodolfo should fall in love at first sight. PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde – April 2006

"Soprano Elena Razgylyaeva as Liù (TURANDOT) was fabulous. Her voice was of such clear purity and she sang with such immaculate phrasing, diction and superb control of her range that her two big arias didn't seem enough! She was also a great actress..." SCHENECTADY GAZETTE – Geraldine Freedman – February 2007

The Liù of Elena Razgylyaeva was touching and rose to tragic grandeur in her Act II confrontation with Turandot." BOSTON GLOBE – David Perkins – February 2007

"Elena Razgylyaeva embodied the heroine Cio-Cio-San. Her gleaming lyric-spinto soprano is effortlessly produced. Cio-Cio-San's treacherously difficult entrance aria was capped by a fearless high C. A consummate singing actress, Razgylyaeva turned Un bel di into a dramatic declaration of faith rather than mere vocal display. Her agitated death scene proved a final musico-dramatic tour de force. Razgylyaeva encompassed the heroine's emotional spectrum in a radiant vocal palette that could ring out in fury and rhapsodize in romantic ecstasy."

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL – Lawrence Budmen – February 2008

**OLGA CHERNISHEVA (Tosca)**

Career highlights have included Maria in MAZEPPA, Prilepa in PIQUE DAME, Brigitta in IOLANTA, Anne Trulove in THE RAKE'S PROGRESS, Mlle. Jouvenot in ADRIANA LECOUVREUR, and Ninetta in Prokofiev's THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES with the Bolshoi Opera; Mimi in LA BOHÈME with the Kazan' Opera Theater, Gold Coast Opera, and Teatro Lirico; Micaela in CARMEN with the Stanislavksy Opera Theater and Teatro Lirico; Musetta in LA BOHÈME with the Bolshoi Opera, Sweden's Malmo Opera Theater, and San Francisco Opera Center's Merola Opera Program; Tatiana in EUGENE ONEGIN and Persephone in the European premiere of Joel Feigin's opera MYSTERIES OF ELEUSIS with the Moscow Conservatory Opera Studio; the title role in TOSCA with Opera Illinois; Liù in TURANDOT with Opera Hong Kong; the title role in MADAMA BUTTERFLY with Gold Coast Opera and Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre; the title role in MANON LESCAUT with West Bay Opera; LE DONNE DI GIACOMO PUCCINI with Opera Santa Barbara; and First Soprano in the Russian premiere of McNally's MASTER CLASS, produced as an independent theater project. Concert highlights have included the title role in Rachmaninoff's FRANCESCA DA RIMINI with Dicapo Opera Theatre; Bach's MASS IN B-MINOR at the Nizhny Novgorod Concert Hall, at the Grand Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory, and with Russia's Saratov Opera Theater; Bach's EASTER ORATORIO at Moscow's Cathedral Catholic Church; Mahler's FOURTH SYMPHONY at the Grand Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory; and CARMINA BURANA at the Grand Hall of Moscow's Gnessin College.

**MICHAEL HAYES (Mario Cavaradossi)**

Career highlights include: Don José in CARMEN with New York City Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and Portland Opera; Cavaradossi in TOSCA with Florida Grand Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Kentucky Opera, and Opera Santa Barbara; Radames in AIDA with Manitoba Opera and Portland Opera; title role in OTELLO with Opéra de Nantes; title role in LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN and Erik in DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER with Fort Worth Opera; title roles in FAUST, LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN, and WERTHER with Portland Opera; title roles in LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN and FAUST with Cleveland Opera; Calaf in TURANDOT with Knoxville Opera, Edmonton Opera, Virginia Opera, Calgary Opera, and Opera Grand Rapids; Rodolfo in LA BOHÈME with New York City Opera, Portland Opera, and Austria's Kamptal Festival; Schwalb in MATHIS DER MAHLER and Danilo in THE MERRY WIDOW with New York City Opera; fully-staged DAS LIED VON DER ERDE with L'Opéra de Rouen; Turridu in CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA with Opera Delaware; the Duke in RIGOLETTO with Cleveland Opera, Dayton Opera, and Manitoba Opera; Tichon in KATYA KABANOVA with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; title role in OTELLO and Canio in PAGLIACCI with Washington D.C.'s Summer Opera Theatre; Steva in JENUFA with Sarasota Opera; title role in FAUST with Nashville Opera; and Pinkerton in MADAMA BUTTERFLY with the Princeton Festival. Concert highlights include: Radames in AIDA with L'Orchestre National de Lyon; Steva in JENUFA with Washington Concert Opera; Samson in SAMSON ET DALILA with Boston's Chorus pro Musica; title role in SIEGFRIED (final scene) with the Nashville Symphony; title role in Weill's THE PROTAGONIST with the American Symphony Orchestra; DAS

LIED VON DER ERDE with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall; and the VERDI REQUIEM with Connecticut Grand Opera.

**ORLIN GORANOV** (Mario Cavaradossi)

A two-time GOLDEN ORPHEUS first-place winner of the International Festival in Bulgaria, Mr. Goranov is a laureate of several international opera festivals, including the DRESDEN FESTIVAL in Germany, BRATISLAVA LYRE International Slovakia Vocal Festival and the INTERTALENT FESTIVAL in Prague. He has been a principal soloist of the Sofia National Opera since 1990 and has toured with the company in the Far East and central Europe singing such roles as B. F. Pinkerton in MADAMA BUTTERFLY, Cavaradossi in TOSCA, Rodolfo in LA BOHÈME and Alfredo in LA TRAVIATA. Mr. Goranov has performed all of the major tenor roles in the most popular operettas throughout Europe and has participated in both the Christmas and New Year's Berliner Symphoniker concerts since 1991. Mr. Goranov has made numerous recordings for both the BULGARIAN NATIONAL RADIO and BULGARIAN NATIONAL TELEVISION. In the United States Mr. Goranov has performed in opera productions to outstanding critical acclaim.

“Tenor Orlin Goranov as Rodolfo (LA BOHÈME)...has an Italianate sound coupled with a smooth legato that could melt the heart of any soprano. The fact that he is tall and slim also helps make him a believable young lover.”

MUSIC AND VISION DAILY – October 2009

“The tenor of Orlin Goranov (B.F. Pinkerton in MADAMA BUTTERFLY) is astoundingly melodic, powerful and emotional.”

NAPLES DAILY NEWS – Harriet Heithaus – March 2008

As Pinkerton, tenor Orlin Goranov was vocally splendid. He cleaved the house with his high notes, and yet was capable of beautiful soft singing, too.”

BOSTON GLOBE – David Perkins – October

**RAFAEL DAVILA** (Mario Cavaradossi)

In 2003 Rafael Davila made his Italian debut at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples as Riccardo in Verdi's UN BALLO IN MASCHERA. The next year he made his debut with the New Zealand Opera where he appeared as Don Jose in CARMEN and Alfredo in LA TRAVIATA. That same year he made his debut with the Sarasota Opera in Florida where he sang the title role in WERTHER, becoming the company's favorite tenor and returning for eight consecutive seasons to perform the roles of Canio in PAGLIACCI, Turiddu in CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA, Cavaradossi in TOSCA and Verdi's Foresto in ATTILA the Duke of Mantua in RIGOLETTO, and Carlo VII in Giovanna D'Arco and next year as Oronte in I LOMBARDI continuing the Verdi cycle for which Sarasota Opera is world renowned. In the 2009-2010 season, he made his debut with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Cavaradossi in Puccini's TOSCA, and for Palm Beach Opera as Don Jose in CARMEN. Mr. Davila has also toured with Teatro Lirico D'Europa singing the roles of Don Jose in CARMEN and Alfredo in LA TRAVIATA. For Opera de Puerto Rico Mr. Davila has sung the roles of Pinkerton in Puccini's MADAMA BUTTERFLY,

Edgardo in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, Alfredo in LA TRAVIATA, and Rinuccio in GIANNI SCHICCHI. For the Fundacion de Zarzuela y Opereta de Puerto Rico he sang Alfredo in Strauss' DIE FLEDERMAUS, Camille in THE MERRY WIDOW as well as Leonardo in the Cuban zarzuela CECILIA VALDÉS, and Javier in LUISA FERNANDA.

He has also sung the role of Calaf in TURANDOT for Connecticut Grand Opera as well as for Opera Di Capo in New York for which he returned the next year and sang the Duke of Mantua in RIGOLETTO. Mr. Davila has also appeared with L'Opéra du Montréal, National Lyric Opera of New York, San Antonio Opera, Sarasota Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Tampa, Austin Lyric Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Opera Roanoke. Mr. Davila sang the Mozart's roles of Tamino in DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE and Belmonte in DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERIAL, in Salzburg, Steyr, and Attersee in Austria.

### **WILLIAM POWERS** (Baron Scarpia)

Since making his New York City Opera debut in 1972, Chicagoan William Powers has performed over 100 operatic roles with the major opera companies in the United States, Europe, and South America. While the stylistic range of his portrayals spans the gamut from Renaissance (Monteverdi's ORFEO for San Francisco) to Contemporary (Pasatieri's SEAGULL for Washington, D.C.), Mr. Powers has earned an enviable reputation as a "heavy," due in large part to the dark, penetrating color of his voice; thus, the portrayal of rogues and villains has dominated his career. His teachers and mentors, George London and Norman Treigle, have also contributed to the dramatic intensity of his delivery, for which Mr. Powers has become well known.

Mr. Powers created many new roles through world premiers or important revivals, most recently singing the villain Meyer Wolfsheim for the premier of Harbison's THE GREAT GATSBY at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Other new creations have included Penderecki's PARADISE LOST for Chicago's Lyric Opera, Herrmann's WUTHERING HEIGHTS for Portland, Copeland's HOLY BLOOD AND CRESCENT MOON for Cleveland and Petrassi's SESTINA D'AUTUNNO for Italy's Spoleto Festival. Of recreations, Mr. Powers offered the role of Celio for the 50th anniversary production of Prokofiev's THE LOVE OF THREE ORANGES for Chicago, Donizetti's rarely heard BETLY for Strasbourg and the French version of Donizetti's LA FAVORITE for the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Opéra Comique in Paris. His creations also include the Italian version of THE LADY MACBETH OF THE MTZENSK DISTRICT for Spoleto and the American premiere of Handel's PORO, RE DI INDIE for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Handel Festival.

Mr. Powers' voice has been widely recorded and heard in hundreds of broadcasts. In 2000, he released a solo CD on the Centaur label, entitled Rogues and Villains. In 2009, he followed with yet another collection of wicked evildoers and miscreants, called The Worst of William Powers, containing dozens of arias from many under-handed characters, including Rossini's Basilio, Dr. Bartolo, Mustafa and Don Magnifico, Verdi's Iago from OTELLO, Beethoven's Pizzaro, Ponchielli's Alvisè and Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov. The various devils Mr. Powers has reincarnated include Gounod's Mephistopheles, Meyerbeer's Bertram and Boito's Mefisto. Villains the celebrated bass has portrayed include Four Villains of Offenbach's LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN, Floyd's Reverend Blicht, Wagner's Alberich, Mozart's Leporello, Puccini's Gianni Schicchi, Gruenberg's Jones, and the ultimate rascal of them all, Verdi's Falstaff.

Mr. Powers has not ignored symphonic repertoire, performing in Beethoven's NINTH and MISSA SOLEMNIS, the requiems of Verdi, Mozart, Dvořák, Brahms and Fauré and MESSIAH, as well as many oratorios of Handel. These standards are joined by contemporary works of William Schuman and Ned Rorem, in conjunction with the symphonies of Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Antonio, Los Angeles and Dallas, as well as the symphonies of Paris, Cologne, Strasbourg, Trieste, Prague, Bratislava, Hague, Amsterdam and Vienna.

Recent performances have included the Chicago premiere of DER KAISER VON ATLANTIS, and THE TALES OF HOFFMANN (in the controversial Ratner version) for the Chicago Opera Theater. Mr. Powers performed WERTHER of Massenet for the Klangbogen Festival of Vienna, as well as the Basque National Opera of Bilbao, DEAD MAN WALKING for Cincinnati, THE DAMNATION OF FAUST for Chicago's Grant Park Festival and the Pablo Casal's Festival of San Juan. He sang in the Opera Gala for the Festival of the Aegean in Athens and Styros, FAUST for Trieste, THE BARBER OF SEVILLE for Charlotte and Buenos Aires, THE MAGIC FLUTE for Bozeman, Maryland, FIDELIO for Cedar Rapids, the national tour of Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of Puccini's TOSCA and RIGOLETTO for Baltimore Opera Theatre.

**PLAMEN DIMITROV** (Cesare Angelotti)

Bulgarian baritone, Plamen Dimitrov, has performed various roles with Teatro Lirico on tour in the United States during the last five seasons, including Schaunard in LA BOHÈME, Morales in CARMEN, PING in TURANDOT, Sharpless in MADAMA BUTTERFLY, Giorgio Germont in LA TRAVIATA, the title role in RIGOLETTO and Escamillo in CARMEN. He performs as a principal soloist in Bulgaria with Sofia National Opera and Opera Varna and has been a guest artist in other Eastern and Western European opera companies. Mr. Dimitrov studied at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria and is a laureate of several academic competitions. For five years, he worked in the Musical Theater-Sofia in the part of Charlie in CHARLIE'S AUNT and Cascada in DIE LUSTIGE WITWE.

**GUEORGUI DINEV** (Spoletta)

The Bulgarian actor has worked professionally in his native country for more than 20 years, onstage as an actor, in film, and as a soloist in opera and operetta performances. He has performed secondary roles with Teatro Lirico D'Europa on tour in the United States since the winter 2000 in almost every single production.

**HRISTO SARAFOV** (Sacristan)

Mr. Sarafov has been active on the stage for his entire adult life as a soloist in operetta, opera and as an actor. The talented baritone graduated from the National Academy of Music in Sofia and was immediately engaged by the Sofia National Opera for the role of Bartolo in Rossini's IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. He has performed numerous roles for Teatro Lirico D'Europa on tour in Europe and the United States since 1990 to outstanding critical acclaim and is always an audience favorite.

**VLADIMIR HRISTOV** (Sciarrone)

Bulgarian bass Vladimir Hristov graduated from the National Academy of Music in Sofia. He has been a soloist with Teatro Lirico D'Europa on its U.S. tours since winter 2003. Mr. Hristov is also a soloist with Sofia National Opera and is a frequent guest soloist with other regional opera companies throughout Bulgaria and Eastern Europe.

**KRASSIMIR TOPOLOV** (Conductor)

The young Bulgarian maestro was educated in Vienna, Austria. In addition to conducting hundreds of performances for Teatro Lirico D'Europa on tour in central Europe and the United States since 1995, he is a guest conductor with opera companies in Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries.

**GIORGIO LALOV** (Artistic Director/Stage Director/Set, costumes)Gueorgui (Giorgio)

Lalov was born in Telesh, Bulgaria in June 1958. His father, "Lalo," a doctor, and his mother, Stoiyanka, an elementary school teacher and Bulgarian folk singer, were educated patrons of the arts. When Lalo Lalov died, Giorgio was only nine years old, but because he was an excellent student, he had the good fortune to be accepted at an elite boarding school in the capital city of Bulgaria, where all the lessons were taught in French. When he graduated from high school in 1976, he was fluent in French and English. That fall he entered the Bulgarian National Academy of Music and went on tour throughout Italy with a choir from the university. While in Milan, he auditioned for the famous International School for Young Opera Singers at La Scala, was accepted and went on to make his operatic debut at La Scala at the age of 25.

After living in Italy for a short time, Mr. Lalov became fluent in Italian. In 1986, while on tour with an opera company in France, he met Yves Josse, a former ballet dancer who was booking opera and ballet tours. They became business partners. Mr. Lalov had many resources: He spoke several languages, was able to organize the creation of sets and costumes in Bulgaria and put together an excellent orchestra and chorus. He also knew many fine opera singers in Bulgaria, central Europe, and the United States. By 1988, Messrs. Josse and Lalov were collaborating on what was to become the most successful opera touring company in Europe. At the time of Mr. Josse's death in 1995, Teatro Lirico presented over 250 performances a season throughout Europe.

In 1990, Mr. Lalov established the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Winter 2000 marked Teatro's first major American tour. The reviews from the 10 consecutive tours Teatro Lirico D'Europa has completed thus far in the United States speak for the high quality and consistency of the company. The fact that the company is able to tour with many different productions is an indication of Mr. Lalov's hard work, excellent organizational skills and unfailing dedication to the art of opera. In spring 2009, the impresario became the artistic director of Baltimore Opera Theatre where he donates his time and talents salary free.

**About Teatro Lirico D'Europa**

Teatro Lirico D'Europa was created in 1988 by the late Yves Josse, a former ballet divo and brilliant French arts promoter, and Giorgio Lalov, a young Bulgarian opera singer

who made his debut at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, at the age of 25 while participating in Scala's famous international training program for young singers. The collaboration between Josse and Lalov was a huge success in a very short time, resulting in tours with over 250 performances a season throughout France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Sicily, and Portugal including performances for Opera Dijon, performances at Salle Pleyel, Paris, Pavillion Baltard, Paris, Okinawa Performing Arts Center, Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen, Theatre Carre, Amsterdam, Congresshaus, Zurich, Theatre Trinidad, Lisbon, Teatro Atlantida, Barcelona, Salida de La Compania, Madrid, Teatro Cervantes, Madrid, Teatro Bueno Vallejo, Madrid, Teatro Lope de Vega, Seville, Le Cirque Royale, Brussels and L'Atrium Theatre on the Island of Martinique. Lalov created the sets and costumes for the productions and organized the chorus and orchestra in Bulgaria. He drew soloists for the productions from a huge reservoir of operatic talent in Bulgaria, central Europe and the USA. Josse booked the performances for the company from his office in Paris. From the very beginning, the company established itself as highly competent in delivering traditional, full-scale productions featuring a professional orchestra and chorus, and outstanding soloists who performed at the top national theatres in their native countries. The unusual chemistry of the company proved to be very popular with European audiences. Teatro Lirico D'Europa had completed over 2000 performances worldwide at the time of Josse's passing in 1995.

1995 marked a new beginning for Teatro Lirico D'Europa with the birth of Lalov's American son. He shifted his focus from touring in Europe, to touring in the USA. Teatro Lirico D'Europa had developed a firm history of success with a huge portfolio of hundreds of rave reviews for full scale opera productions that had been presented all over Europe at 180 different venues including international summer festivals such as Festival Busetto, Festival San Giovanni Valdarno, and open air festivals in Spello, Montecatini Terme, Siena, Chianciano Terme, Cortona, Padova and Aimini in Italy. The company also had accomplished a fine collection of outstanding, professionally mastered live CD recordings. Lalov's wife, Jenny Kelly, organized these materials and began to make offers to theaters in the US. By winter 2000, she had booked the first major American tour for the company. The response to the debut tour from both press and theater management was very positive indeed. Teatro Lirico D'Europa has now completed over 600 performances in the USA at 108 different venues including multiple performances for 9 different regional opera companies, and has recently added performances in South America to its list of touring regions.

The February 2002 issue of OPERA NEWS presented a 4-page article on Teatro Lirico D'Europa written by former BOSTON GLOBE opera critic Richard Dyer that stated: "In the past couple of years the company has presented TURANDOT, AIDA and NABUCCO in Boston. The physical productions and Lalov's stagings were reassuringly traditional. Lalov's stagings tell the story clearly. The solo and ensemble singing in all three operas was lusty, whole hearted-full throated and honest. Something personal and passionate that is often missing from evenings of opera."

OPERA NEWS - Richard Dyer – Feb. 2002

Teatro Lirico D'Europa embarks on its 12th consecutive season of US tours in Fall 2010 - Winter/Spring 2011 with 70 performances of four different full-scale operas: Puccini's TOSCA, Puccini's MADAMA BUTETRFLY, Puccini's TURANDOT and Donizetti's LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR. The company will resume it's European touring during season 2011-12 after its American tours.

## **A WOMAN OF COURAGE**

Mary Jane Phillips-Matz

Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, which had its world premiere at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome in 1900, is a drama of frightening power. Like all Puccini's operas, it shows his genius as a composer and dramatist, for he made the music and the characters quite simply unforgettable. In *Tosca*, Puccini brings three main figures to life. The title role is Tosca. She is a famous opera singer, deeply religious and spiritual, yet passionate and fatally jealous. Her lover is Mario Cavaradossi, a sensitive artist who courageously tries to help a condemned political prisoner. From the very beginning of the opera, Puccini portrays Cavaradossi as an idealist, honest and good-natured, a man who admits to being madly in love with Tosca, although he understands how jealous she is.

Both Tosca and Cavaradossi are caught in the web of the evil Baron Scarpia, the chief of the Roman police. Scarpia, a power-maddened monster, stands as the most fully realized of all Puccini's villains, a brutal and sadistic killer who delights in the psychological and physical torture of his victims. For a long time, Scarpia has been secretly in love with Tosca, and he is determined to possess her physically.

In Act I, Tosca's jealousy is on full display, from the moment she comes onstage. Believing that Cavaradossi is seeing another woman, she sweeps in and demands her rival's name. Here Puccini gives full rein to the imperious diva. But she quickly lets Cavaradossi reassure her. Then the composer brings out the more subtle aspects of Tosca's character. Her tenderness is evident in her love for Cavaradossi. And she is a woman of great piety and unshakeable faith. She believes in God and the Virgin Mary and lays flowers and other gifts on the Virgin's altar in church. But her flaw, her jealousy, lets Scarpia trap her and her lover.

In Act II, Tosca and Cavaradossi are Scarpia's prisoners. With terrible guile, he interrogates her in a scene that builds excruciatingly when he has Cavaradossi tortured in an adjacent room. Tosca hears her lover's screams. But Scarpia offers to save Cavaradossi's life on one condition: that Tosca have sex with him. That is what he wants. Determined to beg the Queen for help, Tosca starts for the door, but as Scarpia reminds her, not even the Queen can intervene, for he alone has the power of life and death over them. He will have Cavaradossi executed the moment she leaves. In the ferocious physical struggle that follows, Scarpia throws Tosca down.

Utterly defeated, she prays to God. As she says in her prayer, she has always lived for Art and love. In her whole life, she has never harmed anyone. She is devout. She prays. As a singer, she offers her voice to God and the heavens. She helps the poor. Why, then, does God repay her like this?

But Scarpia has no pity. Desperate, Tosca agrees to give him his way; but as he prepares to rape her, she sees a knife on the dinner table, seizes it and fatally stabs him. In a moment of stunning courage, she stands over him and watches him die. The last thing he hears is her shout of triumph: *E ucciso da una donna!* – “And killed by a woman!!” This monster, who has ruled all of Rome by terror, is killed by a woman. But Scarpia, with his wiles, cheats her even after death by having Cavaradossi shot by a firing squad. Still, Tosca has the last word, committing suicide by jumping off the parapet of the prison. Brave to the very end, she cries: “O Scarpia, we will meet before God!”

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