

**August 28, 2017 - For Immediate Release**

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents Puccini's Tosca**

***Opera's ultimate melodrama, at the Benedum for the first time in five years***

<b>What:</b>	Giacomo Puccini's <a href="#">Tosca</a>
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center for the Performing Arts, Downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	Saturday, Oct. 7, 2017 * 8:00 PM Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2017 * 7:00 PM Friday, Oct. 13, 2017 * 7:30 PM Sunday, Oct. 15, 2017 * 2:00 PM
<b>Run Time:</b>	2 hours 45 minutes, including 2 intermissions
<b>Language:</b>	Sung in Italian with English texts projected above the stage
<b>Tickets:</b>	Single tickets start at \$12 for all performances. Group Discounts available. Call 412-456-6666 for more information or visit <a href="http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets">pittsburghopera.org/tickets</a> .
<b>Media Events</b>	<i>Please contact <a href="mailto:ccox@pittsburghopera.org">ccox@pittsburghopera.org</a> for reservations</i>  Photo Call (9/25, 12:30 PM) – location TBA  Full Dress Rehearsal (10/5, 7:00 – 10:00 PM), Benedum Center
<b>Related Events</b>  <i>See pages 6-7 of this release.</i>	Opera Up Close (9/24)  WQED Preview (9/30 & 10/6)  Meet the Artists (10/10)  Audio Commentary (10/10)  Brown Bag concert (10/14)



Scarpia threatens Tosca. Photo: David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera © 2012

## Pittsburgh, PA...

Pittsburgh Opera opens its 79th season with Puccini's powerful **Tosca**, at the Benedum Center October 7<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>.

Set in Rome, and taking place over the course of 24 hours in June of 1800, Puccini's **Tosca** is the ultimate in opera melodrama.

**Tosca** combines political intrigue, love, loyalty, betrayal, and murder with powerful music to create an unforgettably operatic experience.

We are thrilled to present [Leah Crocetto](#) in the title role of Tosca. Perennial favorite [Mark Delavan](#) sings the role of Scarpia, one of the great villains not just in opera, but in the canon of Western storytelling. Tenor [Thiago Arancam](#) returns to Pittsburgh Opera after his sizzling debut in March as Prince Calaf in Puccini's **Turandot**.

Police chief Scarpia is hunting escaped political prisoner Cesare Angelotti. Angelotti is aided by artist Mario Cavaradossi, who is dating opera star Floria Tosca. Scarpia imprisons and tortures Cavaradossi to force Tosca to reveal Angelotti's hiding place, and has even more sadistic intentions as well. Will Tosca submit? Will Scarpia keep his end of the bargain? See for yourself why **Tosca** is one of the most powerful operas ever written.

Music Director Antony Walker conducts the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra and Chorus in this traditional 19<sup>th</sup>-century production.

**Tosca** features a superlative cast, including three returning favorites:

- [Leah Crocetto](#) (Floria Tosca) is making her role debut. Crocetto, who sang the role of Mimi in Pittsburgh Opera's **La bohème** in 2014 to great acclaim, was a Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Lauded for singing "with incredible agility and gleaming high notes" at Glimmerglass Festival 2017's **The Siege of Calais**, she will be singing the title role of Verdi's **Aida** with Washington National Opera this fall.
- [Mark Delavan](#) (Police Chief Scarpia) is sought after throughout the United States and Europe for the most demanding roles in his operatic repertoire. His most recent Pittsburgh Opera performance was the title role of Verdi's **Nabucco** in 2015, and he also sang Scarpia the previous time Pittsburgh Opera performed **Tosca**, in 2012. A Metropolitan Opera veteran, Delavan is hailed for his "rich, resonant voice," with "impressively clear high notes."
- [Thiago Arancam](#) (Mario Cavaradossi) returns to Pittsburgh Opera after his sizzling debut in March as Prince Calaf in Puccini's **Turandot**. Called "one of the greatest voices of the century", the award-winning Italian-Brazilian graduate of La Scala wowed Pittsburgh with his performance of the Nessun dorma both [on the set of Pittsburgh Today Live](#) and [at the Benedum](#).

On stage October 7, 10, 13 & 15, **Tosca** is an unforgettable way to open the opera season. Tickets start at just \$12 and are [available online](#).

## Fun facts about Tosca

1. The opera is based on a play which starred Sarah Bernhardt, who [Biography](#) called "perhaps the most famous actress of all time." Ms. Bernhardt injured her leg during her leap at the end of the opera, and eventually had to have it amputated.
2. Pittsburgh Opera will be using painted backdrops designed by Ercole Sormani representing locations in Rome as part of the production's set. These amazing pieces of vintage stagecraft were painstakingly restored by Seattle Opera to their full glory, as seen in [this video on their YouTube channel](#).
3. Fourteen members of the [Pittsburgh Youth Chorus](#) (PYC) will appear as child choristers in Act 1. This continues Pittsburgh Opera's strong partnership with PYC, Pittsburgh's premier choral organization for young voices. PYC members most recently appeared in **Turandot** in March of this year.

## The story, in brief

Our story opens in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome in June of 1800. Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, enters and hides in a private chapel within the church. His friend, the artist Mario Cavaradossi, arrives to continue painting a picture of Mary Magdalene. Angelotti tells Cavaradossi that the evil police chief Scarpia is in hot pursuit. Cavaradossi promises to help Angelotti, who returns to his hiding place.

Cavaradossi's lover, the jealous opera star Floria Tosca, then enters the church. She'd overheard Cavaradossi talking to someone, and is suspicious it's another woman. He reassures her he is faithful, asking 'what eyes in the world' could be more beautiful than her own. Tosca leaves the church, and Cavaradossi takes Angelotti to his villa to hide.

Meanwhile, Scarpia enters the church in search of Angelotti, whom he believes Cavaradossi is protecting. Tosca returns. Scarpia hatches a vile plot, and begins to convince Tosca that Cavaradossi is cheating on her. Enraged, Tosca storms out. Scarpia has his agents follow her, hoping she will lead them to Cavaradossi and Angelotti.

Act Two opens at Scarpia's headquarters in the Farnese Palace. His agents have captured Cavaradossi, but not Angelotti. Scarpia sings how he looks forward to forcing Tosca to give herself to him- he "pursues what he desires, takes his fill, and throws it away."

Scarpia's plot is simple and ruthless. First, torture Cavaradossi, so that Tosca will reveal Angelotti's hiding spot. Then, tell Tosca that he will have Cavaradossi executed unless she gives herself to him. Finally, after forcing himself on Tosca, have Cavaradossi killed anyway.

When Scarpia tells Tosca he will have Cavaradossi executed if she does not give herself to him, she laments her cruel fate in "Vissi d'arte", one of the most famous arias in opera history. In it, she pleads "I lived for art, I lived for love" and asks "In my hour of grief, why oh Lord do you repay me like this?"

Tosca agrees to give herself to Scarpia if he spares Cavaradossi's life. Scarpia tells Tosca he will stage a fake execution for Cavaradossi, and that once it's over she and Cavaradossi can leave Rome freely. Tosca makes Scarpia give her a document assuring them safe passage. But when Scarpia begins to passionately embrace Tosca, she suddenly and dramatically stabs him with a knife from the dinner table, killing him.

Act Three takes place in the Castel Sant'Angelo. Cavaradossi, imprisoned, writes a letter to Tosca. He has bribed a guard with his last possession, a ring, to get the guard to deliver the letter. Tosca rushes to the Castel to see Cavaradossi, where she explains what has happened. She tells him he must make his fake execution look real, and that he should lie still after the guards pretend to shoot him.

However, Scarpia has betrayed her - the execution is real after all. Distraught, and with guards approaching to arrest her for Scarpia's murder, Tosca flings herself off the prison walls and plummets to her death.

For additional information, videos, musical samples, and cast biographies, visit [pittsburghopera.org/tosca](http://pittsburghopera.org/tosca).

## Tickets and Group Discounts

- Tickets to all performances of **Tosca** start at \$12
- All performances are at the [Benedum Center](#), 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Penn Avenue, in Pittsburgh's Cultural District
- To purchase tickets, call 412-456-6666, visit the Theatre Square Box Office, or buy online at [https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/51747/list\\_performances](https://opera.culturaldistrict.org/production/51747/list_performances).
- Group discounts are available. For discounted group tickets (6 or more), contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, x 213

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2017-18 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor
- Tuesday performance sponsor: [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#).

## Cast and Artistic Team

Floria Tosca  
Baron Scarpia  
Mario Cavaradossi  
Cesare Angelotti/Jailer  
Spoletta  
Sacristan  
Sciarrone  
Offstage Shepherd

[Leah Crocetto](#)  
[Mark Delavan](#)  
[Thiago Arancam](#)  
[Andy Berry](#)\*  
[Eric Ferring](#)\*  
[Matthew Scollin](#)\*\*  
[Benjamin Taylor](#)\*  
[Ashley Fabian](#)\*

Conductor  
Stage Director  
Set Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Wig & Make-up Designer  
Stage Manager  
Asst. Conductor  
Chorus Master  
Associate Coach/Pianist  
Asst. Stage Director  
Asst. Lighting Designer  
Asst. Stage Manager  
Asst. Stage Manager

[Antony Walker](#)  
[Garnett Bruce](#)  
Ercole Sormani  
Andrew Ostrowski  
James Geier  
Cindy Knight  
Glenn Lewis  
Mark Trawka  
James Lesniak  
[Frances Rabalais](#)\*  
Todd Nonn  
Lisa-Marie Shuster  
Emily Duffin

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

## Related Events for Tosca

### **Opera Up Close: Tosca**

**Sunday, September 24, 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM**

**Founder's Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Opera Up Close is an in-depth look at the music and story of Puccini's **Tosca**, with singers and the production's conductor. Admission is \$5; free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#) and \$50+ donors. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/opera-up-close-tosca>

### **Tosca - Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG**

**Saturday, September 30, 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM and**

**Friday, October 6, 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

Hosted by WQED, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3 as well as the WQED website, the **Tosca Preview** gives listeners an engaging introduction to the singers, music, and story of the opera. For more information: <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-tosca>

### **Pre-opera Talks for Tosca**

**One hour prior to each performance**

**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders are invited to attend a free Pre-Opera Talk one hour before each performance's curtain in the Main Floor/Orchestra section of the Benedum Center. Learn about the composer, the story and some juicy details about the opera!

Pre-Opera Talks are free to all ticketholders at all performances.

### **Audio Commentary: Tosca**

**Tuesday, October 10, 7:00 PM**

**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders with visual impairments are invited to use Pittsburgh Opera's Audio Description service at our Tuesday performances. Trained volunteers describe the scenery, costumes, and stage action. The listeners hear these descriptions via assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> performance by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org). Braille and large-print programs are also available.

## **Meet the Artists of Tosca**

**Tuesday, October 10**

**Immediately following the performance, in the Benedum Center's Lower Lobby**

Ticketholders for the Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> performance of **Tosca** are invited to gather in the Benedum Lower Lobby immediately following the performance when [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of the opera. This event is free to all Tuesday performance ticketholders.

## **October Brown Bag concert**

**Saturday, October 14, Noon - 1:00 PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

You're invited to Pittsburgh Opera's free October Brown Bag concert, our first of the season. The program includes some of our 2017-18 Resident Artists' favorite selections. It's free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet the Resident Artists afterward in an informal reception.

Doors open at 11:30 AM. Handicapped parking is available by reservation. For more information: 412-281-0912 or <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/october-brown-bag-concert2>

## ***COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:***

**[Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, November 2017](#)**

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 79th season in 2017-18. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.

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