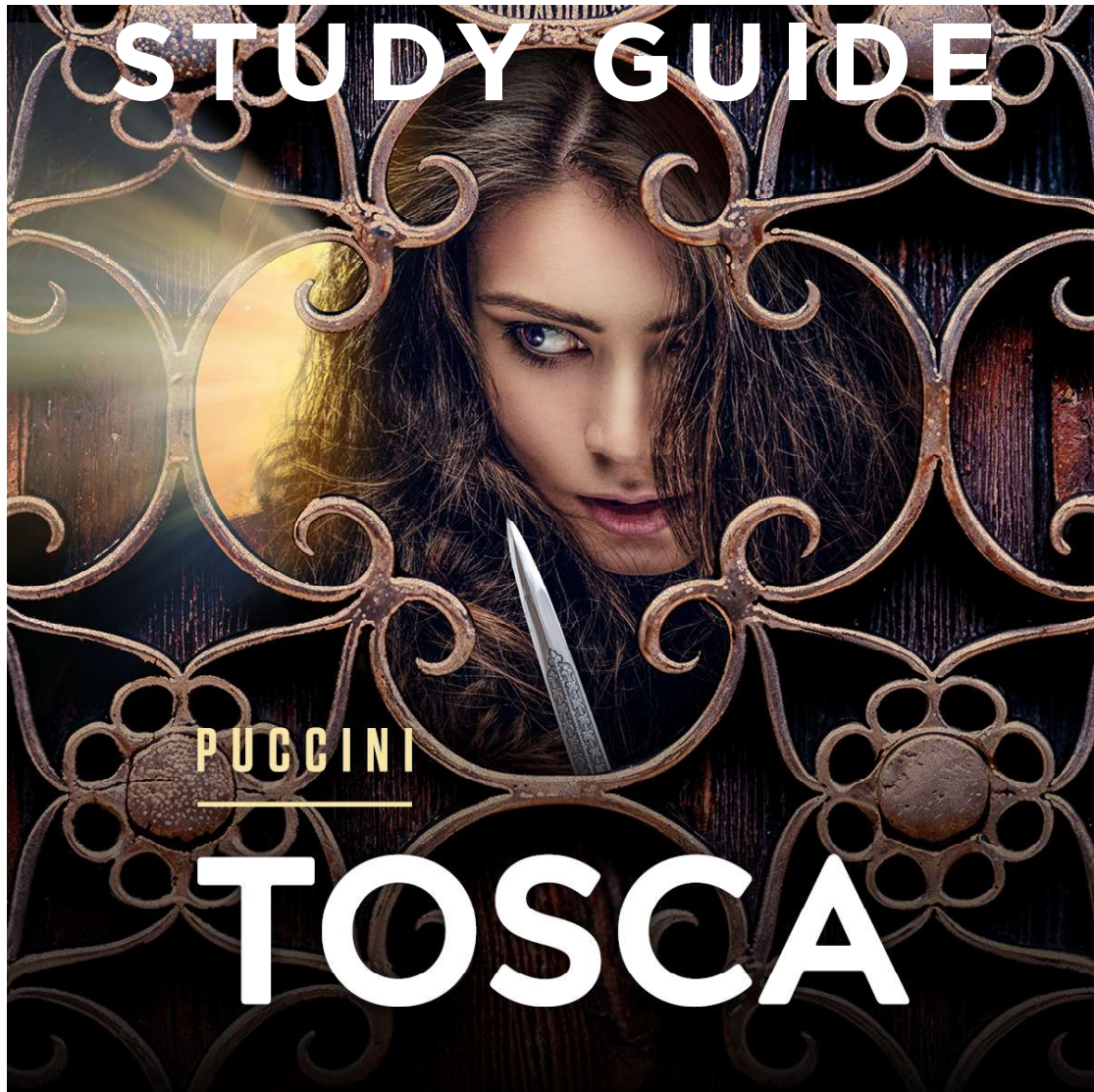




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2025/26 STUDY GUIDE

TOSCA

THE PRODUCTION

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THE PRODUCTION

FAST FACTS

- The premiere performance of *Tosca* was a highly anticipated social and cultural occasion. It was attended by Roman dignitaries including Queen Margherita and Prime Minister Luigi Pelloux, and several contemporary composers including Pietro Mascagni (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Francesco Cilea (*Gina*), and Alberto Franchetti (*Cristoforo Colombo*).
- Each act of *Tosca* is set in a historic Roman landmark: The church of Sant'Andrea della Valle (Act 1), the Palazzo Farnese (Act 2), and the Castel Sant'Angelo (Act 3)
- *Tosca* was an immediate success, and continues to be one of the world's favourite operas, ranking as the 5th most performed opera in the world.
- The church bells heard in the Te Deum at the end of Act 1 are specifically pitched to match the tones produced by the bell of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.
- Tosca's Act 3 aria "Vissi d'arte" is traditionally staged with the singer prone on the floor. This began in 1920 when soprano Maria Jeritza fell during a performance at the Vienna State Opera, but remained there to sing the aria, amplifying the despair and resilience the character feels in that moment to great dramatic effect and critical acclaim.
- Although the character of Floria Tosca is supposed to be an opera star, it was illegal for women to appear on opera stages in Rome until 1798, only a few years before *Tosca* is set.



THE PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

November 22, 26, 28

Dress Rehearsal / Student Night: November 20

Centennial Concert Hall

Music composed by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Based on the French melodrama *La Tosca* (1887) by Victorien Sardou.

Approximately 2 hours, 45 minutes
(including two 20-minute intermissions)

Premiere Performance: Teatro Costanzi, Rome, January 14, 1900

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

Conducted by Tyrone Paterson

Directed by Anna Theodosakis

PRINCIPAL CAST

Floria Tosca	Soprano	MARINA COSTA-JACKSON
Mario Cavaradossi	Tenor	DAVID POMEROY
Baron Scarpia	Baritone	GREGORY DAHL
Sacristan/Jailor	Bass	PETER MCGILLIVRAY
Spoletta	Tenor	JAMES MCLENNAN
Cesare Angelotti	Bass	DAVID WATSON

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS & CHILDREN'S CHORUS

WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



SYNOPSIS

SYNOPSIS

Place: Rome **Time:** June, 1800

ACT I.

Rome, June 17, 1800. Morning.

Inside the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle.

Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, rushes into the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle. After finding the key his sister has hidden for him, he hides in his family's private chapel. Soon, the painter Mario Cavaradossi arrives to work on his portrait of Mary Magdalene. The painting has been inspired by Angelotti's sister, the Marchesa Attavanti, whom Cavaradossi had seen praying in the church. Angelotti, who

was a member of the former Bonapartist government, emerges from his hiding place. Cavaradossi recognizes him and promises help, then hurries him back into the chapel as the singer Floria Tosca, his lover, calls from outside. When he lets her into the church, she jealously asks Cavaradossi to whom he has been talking and reminds him of their rendezvous that evening. Suddenly recognizing the Marchesa Attavanti in the painting, she accuses him of being unfaithful, but he assures her of his love. When Tosca has left, Angelotti again comes out of hiding. A cannon signals that the police have discovered the escape, and he and Cavaradossi flee to the painter's home. The sacristan enters with choirboys who are preparing to sing in a Te Deum celebrating the recent victory against Napoleon at the Battle of Marengo. At the height of their excitement, Baron Scarpia, chief of the secret police, arrives, searching for Angelotti. When Tosca comes back looking for Cavaradossi, Scarpia shows her a fan with the Attavanti crest that he has just found. Seemingly confirming her suspicions about her lover's infidelity, Tosca is devastated. She vows vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshippers. Scarpia sends his men to follow her to Cavaradossi, with whom he thinks Angelotti is hiding. While the congregation intones the Te Deum, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will.

ACT II.

Scarpia's apartment in the Palazzo Farnese that evening.

That evening in his chambers in the Palazzo Farnese, Scarpia anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca in his power. The spy Spoletta arrives with news that he was unable to find Angelotti. Instead, he brings in Cavaradossi. Scarpia interrogates the defiant painter while Tosca sings at a royal gala in the palace courtyard. Scarpia sends for her, and she



Richard Margison (Cavaradossi),
Tosca, 2010. Manitoba Opera. Photo: R. Tinker.

THE PRODUCTION

appears just as Cavaradossi is being taken away to be tortured. Frightened by Scarpia's questions and Cavaradossi's screams, Tosca reveals that Angelotti is hiding in the well at Cavaradossi's villa. Henchmen bring in Cavaradossi, who is badly hurt and hardly conscious. When he realizes what has happened, he angrily confronts Tosca, just as the officer Sciarrone rushes in to announce that Napoleon actually has won the battle, a defeat for Scarpia's side. Cavaradossi shouts out his defiance of tyranny, and Scarpia orders him to be executed. Once alone with Tosca, Scarpia calmly suggests that he would let Cavaradossi go free if she'd give herself to him. Fighting off his advances, she declares that she has dedicated her life to art and love and calls on God for help. Scarpia becomes more insistent, but Spoletta bursts in; faced with capture, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, now forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. Scarpia orders Spoletta to prepare for a mock execution of Cavaradossi, after which he is to be freed. Tosca demands that Scarpia write her a passage of safe conduct. After he has done so, he attempts to make love to Tosca,

but she grabs a knife from the table and stabs him. She takes the pass and flees.

ACT III.

The upper parts of the Castel Sant'Angelo, early the next morning.

At dawn, Cavaradossi awaits execution on the ramparts of Castel Sant'Angelo. He bribes the jailer to deliver a farewell letter to Tosca, and then, overcome with emotion, gives in to his despair. Tosca appears and explains what has happened. The two imagine their future in freedom. As the execution squad arrives, Tosca implores Cavaradossi to fake his death convincingly, then watches from a distance. The soldiers fire and depart. When Cavaradossi doesn't move, Tosca realizes that the execution was real, and Scarpia has betrayed her. Scarpia's men rush in to arrest her, but she cries out that she will meet Scarpia before God and leaps from the battlement.

Synopsis courtesy of The Metropolitan Opera



Wendy Nielsen (Tosca) and Richard Margison (Cavaradossi). *Tosca*, Manitoba Opera, 2010. Photo: R. Tinker.

THE PRODUCTION

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES

**denotes Manitoba Opera debut*



MARINA COSTA-JACKSON*
FLORIA TOSCA (a famous singer)

Internationally acclaimed for her portrayals of emotionally complex heroines, Italian-American Marina Costa-Jackson brings a radiant vocal presence and dramatic insight to the iconic roles of the operatic repertoire. She has earned acclaim in both Europe and North America for her performances as Tosca (*Tosca*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Tatiana (*Eugene Onegin*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), and Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*).

Notable recent debuts include Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where she was praised for her “lustrous tone” as Giulietta; LA Opera as Mimì, described as “hauntingly beautiful”; and Seattle Opera, where she portrayed both

Fiordiligi and Tatiana with dramatic intensity and vocal elegance. Her international appearances include Desdemona in *Otello* at the Savonlinna Festival, later touring to the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and returning to Tokyo’s New National Theatre, where she sings *La Bohème* in 2025 after performing Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.



DAVID POMEROY
MARIO CAVARADOSSI (a painter)

Canadian tenor David Pomeroy has become a familiar sight to Winnipeg audiences. David is enjoying a career that is placing him in the spotlight on the world’s most important stages. The Newfoundland native made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2009, portraying the title role of Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, opposite soprano Anna Netrebko under the baton of Maestro James Levine. He has performed with Manitoba Opera several times, including the roles of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (2017) and Florestan in *Fidelio* (2014).

David created the role of Stefano for the world premiere of *Filumena* with Calgary Opera in 2003 and proceeded to perform remounts in Banff, Ottawa and Edmonton. He is a graduate of Memorial University of Newfoundland, having received a Bachelor of Music (Vocal Performance). While continuing his studies at the University of Toronto, Opera Division he spent summer semesters at the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh, England. He later entered the Canadian Opera Company’s COC Ensemble Studio – Canada’s premier training program for young opera professionals.

David most recently appeared with Manitoba Opera in the role of Don José in *Carmen* (2024).

THE PRODUCTION

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES

**denotes Manitoba Opera debut*



GREGORY DAHL
BARON SCARPIA (chief of police)

Baritone Gregory Dahl is one of Canada's most in demand performers for the works of Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, and Strauss. The former Winnipegger has appeared at every Canadian opera company, with highlights including the title role of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Hollander* (Opéra de Québec), Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca* (Calgary Opera, Opéra de Montréal, & Manitoba Opera), and the title role of Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Calgary Opera & Opéra de Québec). Equally at home on the concert stage, he has performed across Canada, as a featured soloist in some of the most renowned works of the canon.

A consummate musician, Gregory has premiered roles with great acclaim, including Rolfe's *Beatrice Chancy* and Estacio's *Filumena*. In 2020, he performed and directed a new, filmed production of *Filumena* with Brott Music Festival. Pursuing his passion for education, Dahl is currently on the voice faculty of the University of Toronto.

Gregory last performed with Manitoba Opera as a soloist in the 50th Anniversary Concert (2022), with his most recent role appearance as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* (2017).



PETER MCGILLIVRAY
SACRISTAN/JAILOR

Born in Saskatchewan and now based in northern Ontario, baritone Peter McGillivray has been described in the national press as "a gifted comic actor," with a "rich, flexible and strong voice." In recent seasons he has been seen on opera and concert stages from coast to coast, specializing in comic roles such as Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and Falke in *Die Fledermaus*. He also excels in interpreting more dramatic fare such as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and concert performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, Haydn's *Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. He has performed lead roles with the Canadian Opera Company as well as opera companies in Dallas, Victoria,

Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Manitoba, Hamilton, Ottawa and Quebec City. Additionally he spent the 2010-11 season on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in New York in productions of *La Bohème* and Strauss' *Capriccio*.

Peter most recently appeared with Manitoba Opera as Dr. Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love* last fall.

THE PRODUCTION

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS & ROLES

**denotes Manitoba Opera debut*



JAMES MCLENNAN
SPOLETTA (a policeman)

James McLennan has appeared on opera and concert stages across Canada in a wide range of leading and supporting roles.

In 2023, James debuted the roles of Jacques LaCrosse and The Englishman in the world premiere of *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* with Manitoba Opera. He had recently made his role debut as Little Bat in *Susannah* with the company (2019). Additional recent credits include Gastone in *La Traviata* with Pacific Opera Victoria and Edmonton Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and a company debut with Dry Cold Productions as the "coldly sadistic prison warden" (CBC) in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

James is also sought after as an adjudicator, most recently for the Southeastern Manitoba Festival and Opera Idol.

An alumnus of the Second City Training Centre in Toronto, he is also a certified French translator and a board member of the Association of Translators, Interpreters and Terminologists of Manitoba.



DAVID WATSON
CESARE ANGELOTTI (former Consul of the Roman Republic)

David Watson's operatic career began here in Winnipeg when he appeared in Manitoba Opera's 1979 production of *La Traviata*. He has since performed on concert and operatic stages throughout Canada, including over 50 roles with Manitoba Opera.

David most recently appeared with Manitoba Opera in *La Bohème* this past April in the roles of Benoît and Alcindoro.

THE PRODUCTION

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**denotes Manitoba Opera debut*



ANNA THEODOSAKIS*
DIRECTOR

Anna Theodosakis is a rising figure on the operatic scene, with critically acclaimed productions featuring “crisp and dynamic treatment” (*Opera Ramblings*) and “clean and uncluttered direction” (*Opera Canada*).

She has directed across the country and is passionate about working with emerging artists. Anna teaches acting and dance for the University of Toronto’s Opera Division. She served as a sessional lecturer in Theater Techniques and Staging & Directing for the University of British Columbia. She has also been an invited guest stage director and lecturer of acting, movement, and digital techniques with nine universities.

Anna holds a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in Opera Performance from the University of British Columbia, as well as an Artistic Diploma in Operatic Stage Performance from the University of Toronto. During her tenure at U of T, Anna was the first student in the program’s history to direct a mainstage opera production.

Anna directed Manitoba Opera’s production of *La Bohème* last April.



TYRONE PATERSON
CONDUCTOR

Canadian conductor Tyrone Paterson was the Music Advisor and Principal Conductor for Manitoba Opera for twenty-one seasons. He has led performances throughout Europe, the US, Asia, and with the majority of Canada’s opera companies.

Highlights include *Otello* (Germany); *Rigoletto* (Montreal); *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Edmonton); *Don Giovanni* (Hawaii); *Medea* (Il Teatro Greco, Italy); *Fidelio* (MOA); *Manon* (Calgary); *Salome* (MOA), *Turandot* (Vancouver); *Eugene Onegin* (Ottawa); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Carolina); *Aïda* (Nashville); *Prince Igor* (National Theater of Moravia-Silesia); *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* (Romania); *Tosca* (Austria); *Jenufa* (Hukvaldy Festival); *Blue Beard’s Castle* (Czech Republic);

The Magic Flute (Beijing); *Susannah* (MOA); concerts in San Remo (Italy) and Opera Cracow (Poland).

He previously served as Principal Conductor/Artistic Director for Opera Lyra Ottawa and as Resident Conductor for Calgary Opera.

THE COMPOSER



GIACOMO PUCCINI

Giacomo Puccini was born in Lucca, Italy, in 1858. Born into a long line of musicians and composers, Puccini was trained as an organist after studying music with his uncle. At

the age of 18, after hearing a performance of *Aida*, Puccini resolved to become an opera composer. He soon earned a diploma from the Institute of Music in Lucca, and later graduated with honours from the Milan conservatory. While in Milan, Puccini was surrounded by compositional geniuses: one of his instructors was Amilcare Ponchielli (composer of the opera *La Gioconda*). He and Ponchielli shared accommodations with Pietro Mascagni (composer of the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*). In 1882, Puccini entered his first opera *Le villi* into a competition run by the publishing firm of Sonzogno. It didn't win, but it garnered the attention of the publisher Giulio Ricordi, with whom Puccini was to enjoy a lifelong association.

After several moderately successful operas, his first major international success was *Manon Lescaut*, which premiered in 1893 in Turin. After the success of this opera, he built himself a villa in a small town near Lucca. Music publisher Giulio Ricordi connected him with Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, who would come to write the libretti for three of his greatest works: *La Bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. *La Bohème*, one of Puccini's most famous

works, premiered in 1896 and was not a great success when it was first produced. It has since become one of the most loved and performed operas in the world. *Tosca*, another one of Puccini's best-loved operas, premiered successfully in Rome in 1900.

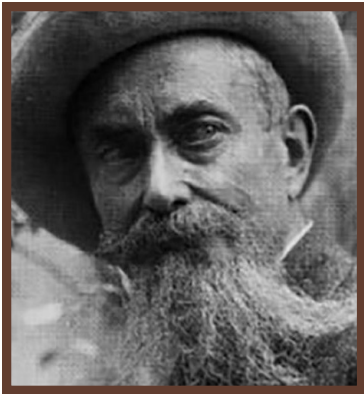
During a visit to London in 1900, Puccini saw David Belasco's one-act play *Madam Butterfly*, which served as the inspiration for his opera. *Madama Butterfly* premiered at La Scala in Milan in 1904.

There was a long break before his next premiere, partly due to a tragedy in his domestic life. In 1906, Puccini had begun living with a married woman, Elvira Gemignani, and was only able to marry her himself when her first husband died. Their marriage was not an easy one and eventually Elvira accused Puccini of having an affair with a servant girl. The tension in the household became intolerable and the girl died by suicide. A court case determined that she had not had an affair with Puccini and Elvira was jailed for five months. The resulting publicity caused Puccini to withdraw from the public eye for a time, and also to separate from his wife. They later reconciled, but their marriage was permanently damaged.

In 1910, Puccini composed *La Fanciulla del West* for the Metropolitan Opera in New York; his trio of one-act operas *Il Trittico* also premiered at the Met, in 1918. He died in 1924 of throat cancer before he could finish the final scene of his last opera, *Turandot*. The opera was eventually completed by Franco Alfano and premiered in 1926 at La Scala.

Article courtesy of Canadian Opera Company.

THE LIBRETTISTS



LUIGI ILLICA

Luigi Illica was an Italian librettist who wrote for Giacomo Puccini (usually with Giuseppe Giacosa), Pietro Mascagni, Alfredo Catalani, Umberto Giordano, Baron Alberto Franchetti and other important Italian composers.

His most famous opera libretti are those for *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Andrea Chénier*.

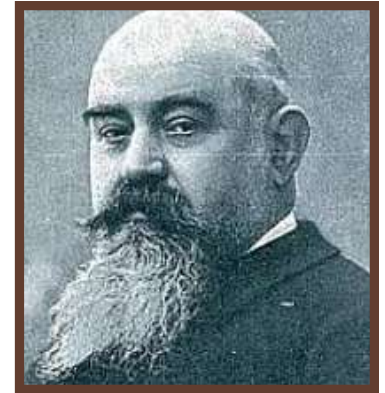
Illica was born at Castell'Arquato. His personal life sometimes imitated his libretti. The reason he is always photographed with his head slightly turned is because he lost his right ear in a duel over a woman. When silent films based on Illica's operas were made, his name appeared in large letters on advertisements because distributors could only guarantee that his stories would be used, and not that they would be accompanied by the music of the appropriate composer.

As a playwright of considerable quality, he is today remembered through one of Italy's oldest awards: the Luigi Illica International Prize which was founded in 1961, and goes to world famous opera singers, opera conductors, directors, and singers.

GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

Giuseppe Giacosa began his professional life, not as a writer, but as a lawyer. He graduated in law from Turin University and immediately joined his father's firm in Milan. He moved

permanently into the literary world, however, when his one-act verse comedy, *Una partita a scacchi*, became a popular success. From 1888-1894 Giacosa held the chair of literature and dramatic art at the Milan Conservatory. He collaborated with Luigi Illica on the libretti for *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Madama Butterfly*. Illica provided the dialogue, which Giacosa crafted into verse.



WHAT IS A LIBRETTO?

Libretto means "little book" in Italian. It refers to the written text of an opera set to music by the composer. Today, we commonly refer to an opera as being "by" the composer of the music, but the text is a vital component and is normally written first. In earlier times it was often regarded as more important than the music, and it was common for audience members to purchase the libretto to read.

Early composers were usually contracted to set music to a pre-existing text. Only later did composers (such as Mozart and Verdi) work in close collaboration with their librettists. A few composers - notably Wagner - wrote their own texts.



MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

RECONDITA ARMONIA (Act I)

In this aria, Cavaradossi compares his beloved Tosca to a portrait of Mary Magdalene that he has been painting.

<https://youtu.be/Iyh7r1uOhM0?si=ygqtSCKLLxPRpfmq&t=7>



VISSI D'ARTE (Act II)

Tosca sings as she ponders her fate, feeling distraught and alone as she thinks about Cavaradossi who is at the mercy of Baron Scarpia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLR3lSrqlww>



E LUCEVEN LE STELLE (Act III)

Considered one of the most famous of all opera arias, this somber moment finds Cavaradossi reminiscing about Tosca as he awaits his execution.

https://youtu.be/1SkBPCKiVqY?si=duZZHT_9FsBZjJsX&t=6060



THE LOST ART OF SOFT SCENERY

Who Designed this *Tosca*?

Manitoba Opera's 2025 production of *Tosca* is performed on a set with a fascinating history: "soft" *Tosca* sets purchased in 1969 by Seattle Opera from Milan's Sormani workshop. This workshop, founded in 1838, was in especially high demand for creation of opera and ballet sets throughout the 20th century, and is still active today as Sormani Cardaropoli Scenography.

What is "Soft Scenery"?

"Soft scenery" consists of painted canvas backdrops that hang from pipes above the stage which are raised and lowered by a series of pulleys. Sets often include staircase units, which offer levels for visual interest and function as risers for opera choruses.

Theaters first borrowed this technology from sailing ships, back when opera was born in the late Renaissance. Soft scenery was the norm in opera up until the 1970s, when "hard scenery" started to become more popular.

Acoustically, hard scenery's solid surfaces can help direct singers' voices out into the theater, instead of absorbing sound the way the cloth of soft scenery does. But soft scenery is functional and practical, and it can contribute to a compelling opera production while keeping costs down.

Trompe l'oeil

The designers and artists of the Sormani workshop knew how to create the illusion of depth with two-dimensional painted backdrops. For instance, *Tosca*'s first act church location looks much deeper than it actually is, thanks to the clever placement of columns and a hemispherical apse at back, which look cavernous but actually take up no space at all. In Act Two the ceiling of Scarpia's dining room at the Palazzo Farnese appears to curve out overhead, full of decorated niches. But no—it's just a piece of cloth!

Italian visual artists have been fooling viewers' eyes since the days of ancient Rome



Tosca, Act 1. Interior of the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle Seattle Opera 2015. Photo: Robert Reynolds.

THE LOST ART OF SOFT SCENERY

using a technique called *trompe l'oeil*, “trick the eye,” a term coined by a French art theorist in the eighteenth century.

For *Tosca*, the choice of a *trompe l'oeil* approach is particularly appropriate for an opera about a painter and a singer—an opera that digs deep into the space between art and reality.

Maintaining Soft Scenery

Opera productions don't last forever. There's wear and tear every night, onstage. And a popular production like this one, which has been shipped all over the U.S. and Canada, is sometimes treated more roughly than is suitable for a valuable work of art. Before it is sent off for rental, the experienced hands of Seattle Opera's backstage crew gave the show a little TLC.

The enormous canvas drops are hung to flatten out any wrinkles from how they'd been folded for shipping. Where there were small rips and tears, thin muslin patches are added from behind (and painters make sure everything looks right on the other side).



Seattle Opera's backstage crew fixes tears where the Act 1 cloth backdrop had been folded. Photo: Glenn Hare

Torn screens and mesh are replaced. Where there are small pieces of wood for framing, screw holes are filled in. According to Justin Loyd, Head Flyman at Seattle Opera, “This is a great old production, and it still has life in it. We just need to take good care of it. It's like a part of our family.”

Adapted from Seattle Opera Blog, Thursday, April 10, 2025. Politics, War, and the World of Opera



Tosca, Act 2. Scarpia's apartment in the Palazzo Farnese. Seattle Opera 2015. Photo: Robert Reynolds.

ROME AND THE PAPAL STATES, 1791-1800

Politics, War, and the World of Opera

Between 1791 and 1800, the Papal States and the city of Rome were caught up in the political storms spreading across Europe. These events were linked to the French Revolution, which had shaken France and was now reaching into Italy.

In 1791, French forces occupied papal territories in Avignon and Comtat Venaissin. By 1796, Napoleon's armies moved into northern Italy, seizing parts of the Papal States and adding them to the new "Cispadane Republic." Two years later, in 1798, French General Louis-Alexandre Berthier entered Rome and declared a Roman Republic. Pope Pius VI fled the city, later dying in exile in 1799.

Control of Rome switched hands several times. Neapolitan troops briefly restored papal power, but French soldiers returned almost immediately, pushing the Neapolitans out. By 1800, the French had decided not to restore the Roman Republic and instead focused their campaigns further south. The newly elected Pope Pius VII came to power in Rome, though the French remained an ever-present threat.

Meanwhile, Napoleon was securing his position in Italy. In May 1800, he led his army across the snowy Alps in a daring march. At first, his campaign seemed to fail when Austrian forces nearly defeated him at the Battle of Marengo on June 14. But a last-minute French counterattack turned the tide, giving Napoleon a major victory. This battle forced the Austrians to retreat and allowed France to dominate northern Italy.

Arts and Culture in a Time of Upheaval

Even though the Papal States and Rome were shaken by war, the arts—especially opera—continued to play an important role in people's lives. The Catholic Church had long been a major supporter of the arts, but



political instability meant fewer resources for churches and theatres. Despite this, opera houses in Rome, Naples, and other Italian cities remained cultural centres.

Composers like Domenico Cimarosa and Giovanni Paisiello created operas that were loved not only in Italy but across Europe. Napoleon himself admired their works, and opera became a meeting ground of politics and culture. Sometimes operas carried political messages, either celebrating freedom or warning against tyranny. Other times they simply offered audiences a welcome escape from the struggles of daily life.

Why It Matters

The story of Rome and the Papal States during the 1790s shows how political change and culture are often deeply connected. Wars and revolutions reshaped who held power, but they also influenced the way people created and experienced art. Opera, in particular, became a mirror of society—reflecting both the turmoil and the hope of a Europe in transition.

ACTIVITY #1 USING THE FIVE C'S

HAVE YOUR STUDENTS ANALYZE THE OPERA AS DRAMA

CHARACTERS

Are they interesting? Believable? Are their actions, words, thoughts consistent?

CONFLICT

What conflicts are established? How are they resolved?

CLIMAX

To what climax does the conflict lead?

CONCLUSION

How well does the conclusion work? Is it consistent? Satisfying? Believable?

CONTEXT

What are the historical, physical, and emotional settings? Sets and costumes?

DIRECTIONS

- Give students the synopsis to read and have them re-tell the story after they have read it.
- Ask comprehensive questions.
- Present and discuss the composer and librettists.
- Listen to excerpts from the opera. Watch a video of the opera. Have students identify and recognize recurring themes.
- Discuss the historical background, emphasizing the visual and performing arts and history-social science frameworks. Discuss the results of certain events. Whom did they affect? How? Why? Did any changes occur as a result?
- Review the glossary of terms.
- Have the students watch for references to themes in the opera in their everyday lives. The internet, radio, TV, magazines, and movies often refer back to classics.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.2.1; 2.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M2; DR-C1; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-M2; M-C2; M-R1

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Curriculum Connections to the Manitoba Curriculum Frameworks for Grade 9 - 12 are provided below each activity. For a more in-depth look at the connections, view our Manitoba Curriculum Connections documents at <http://mbopera.ca/school-programs/study-guides/>

ACTIVITY #2 CREATE A PRODUCTION

- Choose a time and place to set your production.
- Have the students design a poster for *Tosca* including such details as the date, the time, and the people involved.
- Have them draw a set for a production of the opera.
- They might also sketch a costume, wig, and makeup for a character in *Tosca*.
- Have the students write a media release about *Tosca* including the date, the time, the people involved, and why it would be exciting or fun to attend.
- Have the students create an ad for the opera. Include whatever you feel is the biggest “selling point” of the opera - what makes it exciting? Why should people come to see it?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 4.1.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2; DR-C3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-C3

ACTIVITY #3 A REVIEW

STEP 1 THINK-GROUP-SHARE

Individually, students will write, in point-form, the answers to the following questions:

- What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?
- What did you think about the sets, props, and costumes?
- If you were the stage director, would you have done something differently? Why?
- What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
- What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed.

STEP 2 CLASS DISCUSSION

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

STUDENT RESOURCES

STEP 3 OUTLINING YOUR REVIEW

Go over the essential aspects of a review including a clearly stated purpose, a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern, a summary paragraph capturing the interest of the reader, precise nouns, and revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for arts events – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline, then complete a rough draft.

- Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)
- Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)
- Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Summary/Closing Paragraph

STEP 4 PEER CONFERENCING

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

STEP 5 CREATING THE FINAL DRAFT

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces and organize them into a newspaper.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections:

1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 3.1.3; 3.3.1; 4.1.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.2.2; 5.2.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1; DR-R2; DR-R3; DR-R4

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R1; M-R2; M-R3; M-R4

ACTIVITY #4 ACT OUT THE STORY

Have students consider the characters and the role they play in the story. Choose one of the following:

TOSCA / CAVARADOSSI / SCARPIA / SPOLETTA / ANGELOTTI

If you were going to play this character, you would have to discover, create, and imagine background, personality, and physical qualities. Some clues are provided in the story and the music and some you need to make up yourself.

PRETEND YOU ARE THAT CHARACTER
AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What motivates you? How does this affect your actions? What obstacles stand in your way?
- What steps in the opera do you take to achieve your objectives? What are the results?
- What obstacles are beyond your control (laws, social status, others' actions)?
- What are your (character's) greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
- What is your relationship to the other characters?
- How is your character's personality expressed through the music of the opera?
- Can you think of a modern-day character who has similar characteristics and traits?
- If your character were alive today, how would s/he be more or less successful?
- What different steps would s/he take to achieve an objective?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 2.1.2; 3.3.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-M2; DR-M3

ACTIVITY #5 WRITE A LETTER

Have the students choose a moment in the story and have one character write a letter to another. Explore how they would be feeling about the events of the day.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 1.1.3; 2.3.5; 4.2.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R3

ACTIVITY #6 CAST *TOSCA*

Have the students cast modern-day singers or actors as the performers in *Tosca*. Who did you choose? What are their costumes like? What did you base your decisions on?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 4.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-C3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-R4

ACTIVITY #7 RESEARCH AND REPORT

Have the students study the history and politics of Italy at the time that Puccini was writing *Tosca*. What authors were popular? What scientific discoveries were being made? How did the social and political life in Italy compare to that in Canada at the time?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections:

2.2.1; 2.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.3; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2

ACTIVITY #8 *TOSCA* MOOD BOARD

Often before artists and designers create their work, they make a mood board to set the tone for the piece. This is usually a poster-sized piece of paper covered in images and words, usually from the pages of magazines and newspapers, that together communicates the complex mood of the piece in a way that words can't. It's the same as making a collage, except a mood board is for the purpose of communicating a focused concept.

Have your students go through a stack of old magazines and newspapers to create a mood board for *Tosca*. They can create one each or work together on a large one for the class. Consider elements like colours, textures, phrases, faces, patterns, and images that represent the opera.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 2.2.3; 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.4.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2

ACTIVITY #9 MUSICAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

STEP 1 PREPARE A MUSICAL OUTLINE

Working in small groups, have your students choose a play, novel, or story that they've read and think about how they'd go about adapting it into an opera. Have them write out an outline and try to structure the beginnings of the opera. Which parts of the drama would be highlighted with which types of music? Would they have a large chorus to back up the principal singers or would the opera be more intimate? Which singing voices (soprano, baritone, tenor, etc.) would best suit each character?

STEP 2 COMPOSE AND PERFORM AN OVERTURE

How could the elements of music (ie., rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) be used to communicate the mood of the piece within the overture? Which instruments would be used? Allow students some time to work on composing their overture based on their answers to these questions. Students can then perform their overture for the class either as a composed and rehearsed piece or improvised. Alternatively, they may choose to present their overture by describing the characteristics of the elements of the music within their piece.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections:

1.1.2; 2.3.5; 2.2.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 4.1.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.2; 4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5.1.4

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-CR2; DR-M1; DR-M2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-CR2; M-CR3; M-M3

ACTIVITY #10 ACTIVE LISTENING

Play the first few minutes of *Tosca*. Ask your students to listen closely to the music and jot down their thoughts, feelings, and first impressions. Then have your students share their reactions with the classroom. Ask them to listen again and pay close attention to the elements of music (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) then explore questions such as the following:

- What are the instruments used to make the music?
- Does the music have a steady beat or pulse?
- How does this music make me feel?
- What is the size of the ensemble?
- What is the mood of the piece?
- What do the singing voices tell us about those characters?
- What type of emotions do the singers bring forth?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 2.3.1; 2.2.3; 4.4.3; 5.2.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2

ACTIVITY #11 OPERA POP QUIZ

- 1 _____ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
- 2 _____ The lowest male vocal range.
- 3 _____ An instrument introduction to an opera.
- 4 _____ The area where the orchestra is seated.
- 5 _____ Considered the first opera.
- 6 _____ A song for solo voice in an opera.
- 7 _____ The highest female vocal range.
- 8 _____ A song for two voices.
- 9 _____ The lowest female vocal range.
- 10 _____ The Italian word meaning “little book.”
- 11 _____ The middle male vocal range.
- 12 _____ The person who is in charge of all the action on stage.

ACTIVITY #12 *TOSCA* POP QUIZ

- 1 Who is the composer? _____
- 2 Who wrote the libretto? _____
- 3 In what year did the premiere performance take place? _____
- 4 In what language is the opera performed? _____
- 5 In what theatre did the opera premiere? _____
- 6 Where and when is the opera set? _____
- 7 What is Tosca's profession? _____
- 8 When Tosca visits Cavaradossi at the chapel, what is he doing that makes her jealous? _____
- 9 Who is Baron Scarpia trying to locate? _____
- 10 What does Scarpia show Tosca as "proof" of Cavaradossi's infidelity? _____
- 11 Where does Tosca tell Scarpia that the escaped prisoner is hiding? _____
- 12 What battle does Napoleon win, to Scarpia's misfortune? _____

ANSWER KEY POP QUIZ #11 & #12

OPERA

1. Opera
2. Bass
3. Overture
4. Orchestra Pit or “The Pit”
5. Daphne
6. Aria
7. Soprano
8. Duet
9. Contralto
10. Libretto
11. Baritone
12. Stage Director

TOSCA

1. Giacomo Puccini
2. Luigi Illica & Giuseppe Giacosa
3. 1900
4. Italian
5. Teatro Carenzi, Rome
6. Rome, 1800
7. opera singer
8. painting a portrait
9. Angelotti
10. A fan
11. In a well
12. Battle of Marengo

Manitoba Opera would be pleased to receive a copy of any work related to this opera produced by your students. Please forward to:

Scott Miller

Education and Community Engagement Coordinator
Manitoba Opera, 1060-555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3
or
smiller@mbopera.ca

WINNIPEG PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOOKS

Puccini: a biography

Phillips-Matz, Mary Jane.
Boston: Northeastern
University Press, [2002]

Puccini without excuses : a refreshing reassessment of the world's most popular composer

Berger, William, 1961-
New York: Vintage Books,
2005.
Call Number:
782.1092 PUCCINI 2005

The lives and times of the great composers

Steen, Michael
Thriplow, Cambridge: Icon
Books, 2003.
Call Number: 780.922 STE

DVDS

Tosca [DVD videorecording]
Puccini, Giacomo, 1858-1924.
West Long Branch, NJ:
Kultur, [2009]
Call Number: DVD 782.1 TOS

Tosca [DVD videorecording]
Puccini, Giacomo, 1858-1924.
Waldron, Heathfield, East
Sussex : Opus Arte, [2004]
©2004Kultur, [2009]
Call Number: DVD 782.1 TOS

Il bacio di Tosca [DVD
videorecording]
Schmid, Daniel, 1941-2006,
film director.
[United States]: Icarus
Films, [2014]
Call Number: DVD
362.610945 TOS

CDS

Tosca [sound recording]
Puccini, Giacomo, 1858-1924.
EMI Records, [2007]
Call Number:
CD OPERA PUCCINI TOS

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Puccini: Tosca [electronic
resource]
Gatti, Daniele, actor
[United States] Dynamic Srl,
Italy, 2024.
Call Number: STREAMING

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BOOKS

Famous Puccini Operas

Spike Hughes

The Complete Operas of Puccini

Charles Osborne

The Complete Operas of Puccini

Charles Osborne

English National Opera Guides: Tosca

OvertureOpera Guides: Tosca

Tosca [libretto]

G. Schirmer's Collection of
Opera Librettos

**If you need recommendations
for additional resources, contact:**
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Community Engagement
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CDS

Tosca

Slovak Philharmonic
Chorus, Czecho-Slovak
Radio Symphony Orchestra
(Bratislava)
Featuring Nelly Miricioiu,
Giorgio Lamberti, Silvano
Carroli

Tosca

Orchestra and Chorus of the
Royal Opera House, Covent
Garden
Featuring Maria Callas,
Renato Ciono, Tito Gobbi

STUDENT PROGRAMMING

STUDENT NIGHT

EDUCATE THROUGH LIVE EXPERIENCE

Give your students the opportunity to experience the timeless art form of opera at Student Night at the Opera.

Student Night at the Opera occurs at the final dress rehearsal before Opening Night and is an opportunity for students to experience a fully staged professional opera production at a greatly reduced price.



STUDENT NIGHT: TOSCA
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 7:30 PM

Student Tickets: \$15
Adult Chaperones: Free

GROUP TICKETS K-12 schools, home schools, or youth groups.

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS Full-time post-secondary students (must provide valid student ID).

All performances, including the dress rehearsals, take place at the Centennial Concert Hall.

OPERA CLASS

Recommended for Grades 3-6

A FREE CLASSROOM WORKSHOP LED BY A PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED OPERA SINGER

Bring an opera singer to your classroom! Students will participate in hands-on learning activities which explore storytelling through music and experience the power of live operatic singing.

Opera Class connects to all four essential learning areas of the K-8 Manitoba Music curriculum framework.

FREE OF CHARGE | LENGTH: 45 minutes
MAXIMUM # OF STUDENTS PER WORKSHOP: 30



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OPERA IN A TRUNK

Recommended for Grades K-6

Opera Trunks are a simple, fun, and informative way to introduce your students to the world of opera.

Each trunk is filled with costumes, props, activities, books, DVDs, CDs, and a study guide that will bring opera to life for your students.

Free of Charge | Can be borrowed for three weeks at a time

OPERA TRUNKS

AIDA

Verdi

The grandest of grand operas, *Aida* is an epic love story about an Ethiopian princess who longs to be with Radames, leader of the Egyptian army that conquered her homeland.

CARMEN

Bizet

Music that pulsates with the spirit of Spain, including many opera favourites such as the famous Habanera, and the rousing Toreador Song.



HANSEL AND GRETEL

Humperdinck

Based on the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Humperdinck's musical retelling of the story of two mischievous children who discover a delicious gingerbread house hiding a wicked secret combines fantasy, adventure, catchy folk-type songs, and beautiful music.

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Mozart

A fanciful fairytale about a prince out to win his princess with the help of a merry bird catcher.

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ABOUT MANITOBA OPERA

Manitoba Opera was founded in 1969 by a group of individuals dedicated to presenting the great works of opera to Manitoba audiences. Manitoba Opera is the province's only full-time professional opera company. The company attracts internationally renowned artists, highlights the best local talent, and features the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

CHORUS

The Manitoba Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master Tadeusz Biernacki, is hailed for their excellent singing and acting abilities. The chorus boasts a core of skilled singers who give generously of their time and talents. Some are voice majors at university, a few are singing teachers, but most work in jobs that aren't music related.

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Chorus Master & Assistant Music Director

Keely McPeck

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WORKS CONSULTED

Opera Study Guides include information from the following sources accessed since 2000:

BehindTheNames.com	Opera Offstage
Bellevue University	Operas Every Child Should Know
The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Opera	Opera Lyra Ottawa Study Guide
britannica.com	Opera Today
The Canadian Opera Company	Orchestra London Study Guide
cia.gov	Pacific Opera
ClassicalMusic.about.com	Planet Hugill A World of Classical Music
Dmitry Murashev's Opera Site libretti & information	San Diego Opera Study Guide
Encyclopedia of Manitoba	San Francisco Opera Guild Study Guide
Encyclopedia of the Opera by David Ewen	schubincave.com
Fort Worth Opera Study Guide	A Season of Opera
GradeSaver.com	Seattle Opera Blog
The History Blog	Skeletons from the Opera Closet
Interlude	TheBiography.us
La Scena	TheGuardian.com
Lyric Opera of Kansas City	timelines.com
Manitoba Archives	Tulsa Opera Study Guide
Metropolitan Opera	University of Chicago Press
musicwithease.com	University of Manitoba
Music.MSN.com	University of Texas
New York City Opera	University of Waterloo
The New York Times	Rimrock Study Guide
Opera America Learning Centre	Virginia Opera Study Guide
Operabase	The Washington Post
operabuffa.com	Wikipedia
Opera Anecdotes	The World's Great Operas
Opera Columbus Study Guide	
Opera News	