



A Night at the Opera

Experience the lyric side of the Eternal City with a performance of Puccini's *Tosca*.

Tiffany Parks has the details.

Concluding this year's regular season at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma is the incomparable *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini. The three-act opera premiered at Teatro Costanzi (still Rome's principal opera house) back in 1900, and over a century later, it's still one of the most frequently performed operas in the classical canon. There's no better place than the Eternal City to see this most Roman of all operas, but just what is that makes it so Roman?

It's not simply that the opera is set here, but that each separate act takes place at a famous Roman landmark. From the splendid mannerist church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, to the gilded halls of Palazzo Farnese, to the final dramatic act set on the ramparts of Castel Sant'Angelo, the opera is a virtual walking tour of the city. This is especially true in this production, as the scenic

department of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma has recreated each site so faithfully, you almost feel as if you're there.

Set in the year 1800 during a time of political chaos, the opera tells the story of the impetuous singer Floria Tosca, and her mission to save the man she loves from persecution by the corrupt government. Along the way, she experiences jealousy, obsession, and betrayal, all culminating with the dramatic final act, when, faced with a firing squad, she throws herself to her death off the battlements of Castel Sant'Angelo.

This exciting new production, originally staged this past March and back for a reprise by popular demand, uses the original sketches and notes from the 1900 premiere to recreate what that very first performance must have been like. *Tosca* runs from 24–28 June at Teatro Costanzi, the original venue of its premiere (p54).