

Tosca

GIACOMO PUCCINI

MUSIC I: The Characters

Students will

- Read the *Tosca* Synopsis
- Read the information sheet “The Characters” included with the lesson
- Listen to audio selections from *Tosca* online
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the Activity Worksheet.

Copies for Each Student: *Tosca* Synopsis, “The Characters”, Activity Worksheets

Copies for the Teacher: Music I lesson plan, *Tosca* Synopsis, “The Characters”, Activity Worksheets

Getting Ready

Decide which section(s) of the worksheet you wish your group to complete

Pass out “The Characters” and the Activity Worksheet

Prepare internet access to the *Tosca* online listening selections

Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group

Introduction

Have your students read the *Tosca* Synopsis and “The Characters”, or display it on the screen. Read through the information, discussing each character and listening to the online selections as you go.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet. Have students complete the portion(s) of the Activity Worksheet you have chosen with opportunity for questions. If students are working with a partner or in small groups, give them time to discuss their answers before writing them down. Have students share their answers individually or by groups and tell why they gave their answers.

Evaluation

Have students discuss and evaluate the answers of others. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the samples answers provided. After individual or small group responses have been shared and/or turned in, the class can then formulate comprehensive answers for the class with the teacher asking leading questions to guide the discussion.

For Further Study

The teacher may want to have students do more research on *Tosca*. Students may also want to do additional research on Giacomo Puccini, his life and other works, or other related topics online or in their school library. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

TEKS

Music

6th Grade

117.33.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to describe aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and cultures.

7th Grade

117.36.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and cultures

8th Grade

117.39.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and cultures.

Music I

117.60.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to listen to and classify music by style and/or by historical period.

Music II

117.61.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify aurally-presented music by genre, style, and historical period.

Music III

117.62.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify by style and by historical period or culture representative examples of music, justifying the classifications.

Music IV

117.63.C.5.A

Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify representative examples of music by style and by historical period or culture, justifying the classifications.

Language Arts

6th Grade

110.18.B.6.A

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to summarize the elements of plot development (e.g., rising action, turning point, climax, falling action, denouement) in various works of fiction.

7th Grade

110.19.B.6.B

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the development of the plot through the internal and external responses of the characters, including their motivations and conflicts.

8th Grade

110.20.B.6.B

Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how the central characters' qualities influence the theme of a fictional work and resolution of the central conflict.

English I

110.31.B.5.B

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters in works of fiction through a range of literary devices, including character foils.

English II

110.32.B.5.B

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze differences in the characters' moral dilemmas in works of fiction across different countries or cultures.

English III

110.35.B.5.B

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the internal and external development of characters through a range of literary devices.

English IV

110.34.B.5.B

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the moral dilemmas and quandaries presented in works of fiction as revealed by the underlying motivations and behaviors of the characters.

Correlates: Language Arts, Drama, Music

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Sources:

Tosca Libretto

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Online Resources:

www.oxfordmusiconline.com

Tosca

Synopsis

ACT ONE

Inside the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

Cesare Angelotti, former consul of the Roman Republic and now an escaped political prisoner, runs into the church and hides in the Attavanti private chapel – his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti, has left a key to the chapel hidden at the feet of the statue of the Madonna. The elderly Sacristan enters and begins cleaning. The Sacristan kneels in prayer as the Angelus sounds. The painter Mario Cavaradossi arrives to continue work on his picture of Mary Magdalene. The Sacristan identifies a likeness between the portrait and a blonde-haired woman who has been visiting the church recently (unknown to him, it is Angelotti's sister the Marchesa). Cavaradossi describes the “hidden harmony” (“Recondita armonia”) in the contrast between the blonde beauty of his painting and his dark-haired lover, the singer Floria Tosca. The Sacristan mumbles his disapproval before leaving.

Angelotti emerges and tells Cavaradossi, an old friend who has republican sympathies, that he is being pursued by the Chief of Police, Baron Scarpia. Cavaradossi promises to assist him after nightfall. Tosca's voice is heard, calling to Cavaradossi. Cavaradossi gives Angelotti his basket of food and Angelotti hurriedly returns to his hiding place. Tosca enters and suspiciously asks Cavaradossi what he has been doing – she thinks that he has been talking to another woman. Cavaradossi reassures her and Tosca tries to persuade him to take her to his villa that evening: “Non la sospiri, la nostra casetta” (“Do you not long for our little cottage”). She then expresses jealousy over the woman in the painting, whom she recognises as the Marchesa Attavanti. Cavaradossi explains the likeness; he has merely observed the Marchesa at prayer in the church. He reassures Tosca of his fidelity and asks her what eyes could be more beautiful than her own: “Qual'occhio al mondo” (“What eyes in the world”). After Tosca has left, Angelotti reappears and discusses with the painter his plan to flee disguised as a woman, using clothes left in the chapel by his sister. Cavaradossi gives Angelotti a key to his villa, suggesting that he hide in a disused well in the garden.

The sound of a cannon signals that Angelotti's escape has been discovered. He and Cavaradossi hasten out of the church. The Sacristan re-enters with choristers, celebrating the news that Napoleon has apparently been defeated at Marengo. The celebrations cease abruptly with the entry of Scarpia, his henchman Spoletta and several police agents. They have heard that Angelotti has sought refuge in the church. Scarpia orders a search, and the empty food basket and a fan bearing the Attavanti coat of arms are found in the chapel. Scarpia questions the Sacristan, and his suspicions are aroused further when he learns that Cavaradossi has been in the church; Scarpia mistrusts the painter, and believes him complicit in Angelotti's escape. When Tosca arrives looking for her lover, Scarpia artfully arouses her jealous instincts by implying a relationship between the painter and the Marchesa Attavanti. He draws Tosca's attention to the fan and suggests that someone must have surprised the lovers in the chapel. Tosca falls for his deceit; enraged, she rushes off to confront Cavaradossi. Scarpia orders Spoletta and his agents to follow her, assuming she will lead them to Cavaradossi and Angelotti. He privately gloats as he reveals his intentions to possess Tosca and execute Cavaradossi. A procession enters the church singing the Te Deum; exclaiming ‘Tosca, you make me forget even God!’, Scarpia joins the chorus in the prayer.

ACT TWO

Scarpia's apartment in the Palazzo Farnese, that evening

Scarpia, at supper, sends a note to Tosca asking her to come to his apartment. He has been unable to find Angelotti, but has arrested Cavaradossi. As Cavaradossi is brought in and questioned, the voice of Tosca,

singing a celebratory cantata in another room in the Palace, can be heard. Cavaradossi denies knowing anything about the escape of Angelotti. Tosca arrives, just in time to see her lover taken to an antechamber to be tortured. He is able to speak briefly with her, telling her to say nothing. Tosca is told by Scarpia that she can save her lover from indescribable pain if she reveals Angelotti's hiding place. She resists, but hearing Cavaradossi's cries of pain, eventually tells Scarpia that Angelotti is in the well in the garden of Cavaradossi's villa.

Scarpia orders the torture of Cavaradossi to cease and the wounded painter is brought back in. He recovers consciousness and, learning of Tosca's betrayal, is furious with her. Sciarrone, a police agent, enters with news of Napoleon's victory at Marengo; Cavaradossi gloats, telling Scarpia that his rule of terror will soon be at an end, before being dragged away by Scarpia's men. Scarpia, left with Tosca, proposes a bargain: if she gives herself to him, Cavaradossi will be freed. She is revolted, and repeatedly rejects his advances. Outside she hears the drums that announce an execution; as Scarpia awaits her decision, she prays to God for help, asking why He has abandoned her: "Vissi d'arte" ("I lived for art"). Scarpia remains adamant despite her pleas. When Spoletta brings news that Angelotti has killed himself, and that everything is in place for Cavaradossi's execution, Tosca, in despair, agrees to submit to Scarpia in return for Cavaradossi's freedom. Scarpia tells his deputy Spoletta to arrange a mock execution, both recalling that it will be "as we did with Count Palmieri".

Following Spoletta's departure, Tosca imposes the further condition that Scarpia provide a safe-conduct out of Rome for herself and her lover. While he is signing the document, Tosca quietly takes a knife from the supper table. As Scarpia triumphantly embraces her, she stabs him, crying "this is Tosca's kiss!". As Scarpia falls dead, she declares that she now forgives him. She removes the safe-conduct from his pocket, lights candles in a gesture of piety and places a crucifix on the body before leaving.

ACT THREE

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

A shepherd boy sings (in Romanesco dialect) "Io de' sospiri" ("I give you sighs") as church bells sound for matins. Cavaradossi is led in by guards and informed that he has one hour to live. He refuses to see a priest, but asks permission to write a letter to Tosca. He begins to write, but is soon overwhelmed by memories: "E lucevan le stelle" ("And the stars shone"). Tosca enters and shows him the safe-conduct. She tells him that she has killed Scarpia and that the imminent execution is a sham: Cavaradossi must feign death, but afterwards they can leave Rome together, before Scarpia's body is discovered. Cavaradossi is amazed at the courage shown by one so gentle and tender: "O dolci mani" ("Oh sweet hands"). The pair ecstatically plan the life they will live away from Rome. Tosca then anxiously instructs Cavaradossi on how to play his part in the mock execution convincingly. She tells him that he will be shot with blanks by the firing squad and instructs him to fall down as if dead. He agrees to act "like Tosca in the theatre".

Cavaradossi is led away, and Tosca watches with increasing impatience as the execution is prepared. The men fire, Cavaradossi falls, and Tosca exclaims "Ecco un artista!" ("What an actor!"). When the soldiers have all left, she hurries towards Cavaradossi, only to find that he is really dead; Scarpia has betrayed her. Heartbroken, she clasps his lifeless body and weeps. The voices of Spoletta, Sciarrone and soldiers are heard, indicating that Scarpia's body has been found, and that Tosca is known to have killed him. As Spoletta, Sciarrone and the soldiers rush in, Tosca rises, evades their clutches, and runs to the parapet. Crying "O Scarpia, Avanti a Dio!" ("O Scarpia, we meet before God!"), she hurls herself over the edge to her death.

The Characters

Floria Tosca: (soprano) A celebrated singer and Cavaradossi's lover. Scarpia uses Tosca's love for Cavaradossi to betray Angelotti.

Mario Cavaradossi: (tenor) A painter and Tosca's lover. Friends with Angelotti, he helps him hide from Scarpia after his escape from prison.

Baron Scarpia: (baritone) The chief of police who is searching for Angelotti after his prison escape.

Cesare Angelotti: (bass) Former Consul of the Roman Republic, on the run after escaping prison.

Spoletta: (tenor) A police agent.

Sciarrone: (bass) Another agent.

Links to Musical Excerpts:

“Vissi d’arte” (I lived for art, I lived for love): In the midst of an uncomfortable conversation with Scarpia about the fate of Tosca's lover, Tosca sings of the two great driving forces in her life: love and music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIExoUb8jk>

“E lucevan le stele” (And the stars shone): Cavaradossi trades his last possession, a ring, to get a guard to take a letter to the imprisoned Tosca. As he writes the letter, he sings of his love for Tosca and for life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mX7ugJ5NM8>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Tosca
Activity Worksheet

Part I

1. Floria Tosca reveals early in the opera that she suspects Cavaradossi has eyes for the Marchesa. Do you think she has a reason to be suspicious?

2. When Angelotti escapes from prison, Cavaradossi helps him hide from the police and ends up paying with his life. Who in your life would you help no matter what it cost you? Why?

3. Scarpia tries to use Tosca's jealousy to lead him to Angelotti, the escaped prisoner. Describe a time when you or someone you know has tried to use another person's weakness to get them to do something. What was the outcome?

Part II

4. When Scarpia is torturing Cavaradossi to learn Angelotti's location, Tosca gives up the answer to stop her lover from being hurt. Cavaradossi is then furious with Tosca for leaking the information. If she had kept the location a secret, how would that have changed the plot?

5. Have you ever told someone something you shouldn't have in order to protect someone else? Describe the situation. What was the outcome?

6. Later in the opera, Scarpia tells Tosca if she gives herself to him he will free Cavaradossi and let them both leave Rome. If she had, do you think he would have lived up to his promise? Why or why not?

7. Is there someone you know that cannot be trusted to do what they say they will do? Give an example.

Part III

8. What main emotion do you think motivated Tosca to end her life at the end of the opera? Did she have another choice?

9. What do you think is the intended lesson or moral of this story?

Many operas are treated as concept operas, with stories that can take place in any time or location. The story of *Tosca* was originally set in Rome in the year 1800. Other authors have imagined new settings for the story.

10. Would changing the time or place of this story change it in any real way? Why or why not?

11. If you were to perform this opera, what location and time period would you like to use? Describe any changes you would make to the characters or the plot.
