

SCHOLARS, AND FANS PLAN A FETE FOR TOSCA

by MIA ROWAN



Exactly two hundred years ago the news that Napoleon had won the Battle of Marengo arrived in Rome. One hundred years later, Giacomo Puccini used that announcement as part of the action for *Tosca*, his dramatic opera set in the previous century's tumultuous times of struggle for control over Italy. In mid-June, to coincide with the dates of the historic events of the opera, scholars, performers and others will convene in Rome where the story takes place and the opera's premiere was held.

The public is welcome to attend the international conference entitled "Tosca 2000," which will be held from June 16 to 18 at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome. Among the events scheduled are:

- A roundtable discussion on "Who is Tosca?" by performers and opera professionals, moderated by musicologist William Weaver.
- A concert of two *Te Deum* (one by Giacomo Puccini, the other by his grandfather, Domenico Puccini) at the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, the setting of the first act of *Tosca*.
- Virtual Tosca, a multimedia presentation by Tito Schipa, Jr.

The organization of "Tosca 2000" is the result of a collaboration

among experts on both sides of the Atlantic, led in the United States by Deborah Burton, Harvard University lecturer and noted Puccini scholar, and by Susan Vendiver Nicassio, University of Louisiana history professor and author of *Tosca's Rome: The Play and the Opera in Historical Perspective* (University of Chicago Press, 2000). The group in Italy includes Guido Salvetti, director of the Giuseppe Verdi Music Conservatory and Agostino Ziino, professor of music at the University of Rome at Tor Vergata.

Participants include divas Magda Olivero and Beverly Sills, musicologists William Weaver and Julian Budden, historian Eugen Weber and the composer's granddaughter, Simonetta Puccini. Franco Zeffirelli, Luciano Pavarotti, Carlo Bergonzi, Licia Albanese and Italy's newly named premier Giuliano Amato are also among those invited. The Teatro dell'Opera of Rome, the American Academy in Rome, the Italian Society of Musicology, University of Rome at Tor Vergata, and the Friends of the Humanities in the United States are sponsors.

For a complete list of events, as well as registration information, see: www.ToscasRome.com, or contact Dr. Burton by telephone at (978)448-0693, fax 448-0692.

Later in the summer, there will be additional occasions to celebrate Puccini. The Festival Pucciniano at Torre Del Lago, where he wrote *Tosca*, will begin with a performance of *Tosca* on July 28 and will end on August 19 with *La Bohème*. The Teatro dell'Opera will stage performances of *Tosca* at an outdoor venue in Rome between July 30 and August 10. Other upcoming Puccini anniversaries are the centennials of *Madama Butterfly* (2004) and *La Fanciulla del West* (2010), and the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the great composer's birth in Lucca in 2008.

Left, composer Giacomo Puccini with librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, who wrote *Tosca*, *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*.

Right, a still life of musical instruments by 17th-century painter Evaristo Baschenis.