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## Performance Model for The Role of *Tosca* in Puccini's Opera

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on the performance model of the role of Tosca in Puccini's opera, and the purpose of the study is to establish a performance model of the role of Tosca, so as to help teachers better teach the role of Tosca in their teaching, and for students to understand and express the role better through the model. The scope of the study included six interviews with experts and different portrayals of the role by ten nationally and internationally renowned singers. The results of the study were elaborated in terms of the deconstruction of the image of Tosca and the deconstruction of the performance of Tosca, and a preliminary performance model of the role of Tosca was formed.

**Keywords:** Tosca, characterization, performance mode

### Introduction

Puccini is one of Italy's greatest opera composers and his works are widely sung and appreciated. Among them, the opera *Tosca* has won the love of the audience with its profound emotion, rich music and unforgettable characters. In China, *Tosca* is not only a musical work, but also a cultural symbol, representing the promotion of classical music and the vitality of vocal art. However, because the role of *Tosca* has complex emotional and technical requirements, how to portray the role of *Tosca* well in the teaching and performance process has become a challenge. Therefore, this study creates a performance model of the role of *Tosca* by ten outstanding Chinese and international sopranos to help teachers better teach the role to students, and students understand and express the role better through the model.

Opera is not a commonly known and appreciated art form in China. However, *Tosca*'s story and music are extremely appealing and successfully break the mold. The role of *Tosca*



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represents the image of a woman who dares to fight for love, but at the same time faces the contradictory conflicts between love and profession. Her tenacity, bravery and passion for art not only triggered the audience's empathy, but also inspired many young people's passion for music and performance. Therefore, the performance model of the role of Tosca is not only academically significant, but also important in cultural development and promotion.

### Objectives

1. In order to study the approach to the characterization of Tosca
2. In order to study the background and characteristics of the characterization of Tosca.

### Research Scope

#### 1. Population

The scope of the interview subjects in this study combines the multidisciplinary cross-research method to categorize the interview subjects into three types based on historical and literary perspectives; based on sonology and artistic perspectives, and based on psychology and aesthetics perspectives. Two experts were selected to be interviewed under each of the above three research perspectives, and six experts were interviewed totally. The reason for choosing these experts is that they all have rich research experience in their respective research fields, and they all have a deeper understanding of Puccini, opera, vocal music, art, etc., and the interviews with them enable the researchers to obtain more accurate research information.

#### 2. Scope of study variables

This study takes the performance model of the role of Tosca in Puccini's opera as the theme, and combines the different portrayal versions of ten famous singers from outside China, and to study the presentation techniques of the role of Tosca in Puccini's opera Tosca.

The scope of the research variables points to the observation object, based on the audio and video recordings of the ten singers who portrayed the role of Tosca, which are obtained through the Internet search. Based on this selection, the ten singers were selected to be observed in their respective video recordings, which are representative of the ten singers.

#### 3. Timing scope

This study Ten singers performing different versions of the show ranging from 1952-2023



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## Research Methodology

### 1. Research methodology

1) Interview method: Through interviews with six experts of three types based on vocal and artistic perspectives and six experts based on psychological and aesthetic perspectives, the researchers directly obtained information on the theory and practice of Puccini's operas and Tosca's image-making in different disciplinary dimensions.

2) Observational method: through the observation of the portrayal of ten selected singers Tosca at, the researcher analyzed the characteristics of the characterization and summarized them

3) Literature research method: By combing and studying the literature related to the topic, the researchers obtain the theoretical basis of this study and find theoretical basis for the advancement of this study.

### 2. Research steps

#### 1) Interview sample selection

The selection of interviewees was combined with a multidisciplinary cross-sectional study that categorized the sample of selected interviews into three categories:

Category 1: Historical and Literary Studies Threshold, Interviews with experts in Western music history and literature to obtain the background of the composition of Tosca, the author's experience, etc., and to analyze the author's creative intentions.

Category 2: Interviews with vocal pedagogues, artistic directors and soprano opera singers on the second creation of the image of Tosca in Tosca, in the perspective of vocal and artistic research.

Category 3: Psychology and aesthetics research threshold, interviews with art psychologists and aesthetics researchers, discussing the psychology of the image portrayed in the work, Puccini's creative psychology and the psychological dynamics of performers and appreciators, and analyzing the aesthetic elements.

#### 2) Observation sample selection

The sample of observations for this study was mainly selected from ten different singers portraying versions of Tosca's image:



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Table 1: Observation sample table of singing versions by different singers

serial number	singer	Observation sessions	time limit	Observation method
1	Maria Callas	3 games	1952-1958	Video observation
2	Angela Georgiou	2 games	2017-2014	Video observation
3	Wang Xiufen	2 games	2017-2019	Video observation + on-site observation
4	Zhang Liping	2 games	2021-2023	Video observation + on-site observation
5	Monica Zanetin	1 game	2023	On-site observation
6	Hehui	3 games	2006-2012	Video observation
7	Sun Xiuwei	2 games	2022-2023	Video observation + on-site observation
8	Monzkrat Cabaye	1 game	1965	Video observation
9	Li Xiuying	1 game	2004	Video observation
10	Anna Netrebko	1 game	2008	Video observation

Source: Rui Wang (2023)

### 3) Relevant Literature

In the course of the study, the researchers have sorted out and analyzed a large amount of research-related literature, which includes both publicly published academic papers and research reports, as well as other internal materials and so on. By sorting and analyzing this literature, the researchers were able to better understand the background and other contents of the research questions, thus providing a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective for the study.

### 3. Data collection

This study combines three research methods to collect the information obtained during the research process:



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1) Collection of interview information: Semi-structured interviews were adopted, and after interviewing six experts, the researchers organized the contents of the interview conversations, formed an interview report, and made a return visit to the experts at the two time nodes of 15 and 30 days after the interviews to validate the effectiveness of the collection of information from the interviews.

2) Collection of observation information: In conjunction with the selection of observation samples, an observation report is made after observing the different versions of the ten singers' portrayals, summarizing and collecting the similarities and differences in the portrayal of Tosca by different singers.

3) Literature collection: During the research process, the researcher organizes the literature related to the topic, formulate a literature review report, and summarize the academic views related to Puccini's opera Tosca and the image building of Tosca.

#### 4. Data analysis

The researcher analyzed the data after the information data collection was completed. For the information obtained from interviews, the researcher used the interdisciplinary research method to conduct a comprehensive analysis and research, summarizing the research of the opera Tosca from different disciplinary perspectives; for the information obtained from observations, the researcher used the comparative research method to analyze and summarize the differences and convergences in the portrayal of Tosca by the ten Chinese and foreign singers; for the information obtained from literature research, the researchers compared it with the information obtained from interviews and observations in this study. For the information obtained from observation, the comparative research method is used to analyze and summarize the differences and convergence of the image building of Tosca between ten singers from China and foreign countries; for the information obtained from literature research, the researchers compare it with the information obtained from interviews and observation in this study, so as to validate each other and at the same time to obtain a wider range of research perspectives and research contents in the literature.

### Research results

#### 1. Deconstruction of the image of Tosca

1) Good and Jealousy in the Image of Tosca - Revealing the Complex Side of Human Nature





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With this spiritual power, the actors need to combine their own rich imagination to deeply analyze the meaning of the lyrics, and then vividly show Tosca's spiritual world to the audience. The song shows Tosca's longing for a better future and his deep longing for Mario. In the process of singing, the actor needs to grasp the inner feelings of the character, so that the audience can empathize with Tosca's spiritual strength.

2) Support and application of singing techniques in Tosca performances

The aria "Non La Sospiri, La Nostra Casetta" is technically difficult. Those who sing need to pay attention to the change of pitch, especially at the highest note the second group of small letters b7, to do it on the dot, do not do too long stay. The ending passage of the song is the extension of the second group of small letters b6, this tone corresponds to the lyrics in the "amor", meaning "love". Therefore, when singing in this place, it is important to sing with fullness, passion and intensity, reflecting the fiery intensity of love. In the case under observation, Angela Georgiou's handling of is exemplary.

Summary: Actors want to Tosca performance to deal with performance problems, need to fully understand the spiritual power of the role, and at the same time master the singing skills. In the process of interpretation, not only to show the inner world of the character, but also focus on the technical processing of the song, so that the audience in the appreciation of the song at the same time, feel Tosca's spiritual strength and love faith. This will make the performance of this opera more colorful and unforgettable for the audience. In Tosca in the most famous singing should be "for art, for love", this work in the singing needs some skills, from the voice, to have a coherent breath support, the score gives a lot of lines and expression marks, these details of the aspects to be shown in the singing time. In addition, from the aspect of emotional expression, there should be a strict degree of control between moving the audience and moving oneself. Combined with the observation of the case study, such treatment is shaped best by the performances of Maria Callas and Chinese soprano Wang Xiufen.

## Discussion

In Puccini's opera Tosca, the characterization of Tosca involves complex and profound aesthetic elements, including: contradictory character, revealing the inner emotional world, reflecting the social and cultural background and integrating the elements of Chinese music, as well as the integration of music and drama. Together, these elements make Tosca an artistic image with profound aesthetic value.



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The conclusions of this study are based on the deconstruction of the image and performance of Tosca from the perspectives of aesthetics and art, and the preliminary formation of its character performance model, which provides a reference for the teaching and performance of this character image. At the same time, however, there are some shortcomings in this study, and there is still room for exploring the profound and complex artistic image of Tosca. This study provides some references for the teaching and performance of the role image of Tosca, but more research is needed to improve and expand this model.

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