

Washington National Opera presents

Tosca

**Puccini's twisted political love triangle returns to D.C. with local favorites
Keri Alkema and Alan Held**

May 11–25, 2019 in the Kennedy Center Opera House

(WASHINGTON)—Puccini's story of the strong-willed diva returns to the Kennedy Center stage in WNO's ***Tosca***, from May 11–25, 2019. Tickets start at \$35.

Two casts feature Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist (DCYA) alumna Keri Alkema and WNO newcomer Latonia Moore in the title role. Praised as “brilliant, mesmerizing” (*Globe & Mail*, Toronto) with “incisive musicality” (*New York Times*), Alkema has performed around the world since her days as a DCYA with WNO. Moore made her Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Aida* on short notice in 2012, prompting the *New York Times* to mark “a notable debut of a richly talented singer” who “brought palpable emotion to her portrayal.” Both sopranos will return to WNO in the 2019–2020 season—Alkema as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and Moore as Serena in *Porgy & Bess*.

Alan Held, who most recently appeared with WNO in the *Ring* Cycle, will reprise his 2011 role of Scarpia, the spiteful police chief. Riccardo Massi portrays Cavaradossi, the artist and *Tosca*'s lover; Massi has performed the role at the Royal Opera House in London, at the Hamburg State Opera, and at Opera Australia. On May 12 and 19, American tenor Robert Watson takes the stage as Cavaradossi opposite Latonia Moore.

Rounding out the cast is David Cangelosi, who most recently appeared on the Opera House stage alongside Alan Held in the 2016 WNO production of the *Ring* Cycle, as the conniving Spoletta. DCYA alums Wei Wu—who wowed audiences last season in *The Barber of Seville*—returns to WNO as Sacristan, and baritone Michael Hewitt sings the role of Angelotti. Current DCYA baritone Samson McCrady, who has been heard this season in *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* and *Faust*, sings the role of Sciarrone.

WNO's *Tosca* is led by the rising Italian conductor Speranza Scappucci, who currently serves as principal conductor of Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Belgium, and who made her U.S. debut at the Glimmerglass Festival. Scappucci has led productions around the world, including at the prestigious Vienna State Opera, as well as at the opera houses of Zurich, Los Angeles, and Rome. She triumphantly returns to D.C. four years after her WNO debut in *La Cenerentola*. *Tosca* is directed by D.C. native Ethan McSweeney, a frequent leader in WNO's American Opera Institute who is also known for his acclaimed productions of Shakespeare and classical theater, both in the U.S. and internationally.

This sumptuous period production of the beloved operatic cornerstone made its debut at the Seattle Opera. Since the opera's original premiere in 1900 in Rome, *Tosca*'s character has become a symbol of the ideal opera diva—a role only for artists of the highest technical ability. Set in 1800 in Italy amid the invasion of Napoleon's army, *Tosca* tells the epic story of Floria Tosca's fight to save her lover, Cavaradossi, from the cruel police chief Baron Scarpia. Tosca's pursuit of love leads her towards an epic death that has become a staple of operatic culture.

Written by Victorien Sardou for the French actress Sarah Bernhardt in 1887, Puccini was immediately inspired to set music to the heart wrenching story and collaborated with Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa to translate the five-act dramatic play into a musical work. Last performed by WNO in 2011, the opera features the timeless arias "Vissi d'arte" and "E lucevan le stelle." Puccini wrote *Tosca* as a through-composed work and weaved Wagnerian leitmotifs throughout the score, identifying characters, objects, and big ideas.

The creative team is spearheaded by Costume Designer Lena Rivkina and Lighting Designer Gary Marder, who previously designed the lighting for WNO's *Madame Butterfly* in 2017.

All performances are sung in Italian with English surtitles. The opera's running time is approximately two hours, plus two 25-minute intermissions, and runs for eight performances. Visit WNO's [website](#) for more information.

Washington National Opera's 2019–2020 season begins with Verdi's *Otello* (October 26–November 16, 2019) and Mozart's final opera *The Magic Flute* (November 2–23, 2019) with a guided rehearsal and a special family look-in. [Tickets](#) for the 2019–2020 season are available starting June 4, 2019.

Tosca Performance and Ticket Information

Saturday, May 11 at 7 p.m. ▪ Sunday, May 12 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Friday, May 17 at 2 p.m.
Sunday, May 19 at 2 p.m. ▪ Monday, May 20 at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, May 22 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Saturday, May 25 at 7 p.m.

Ticket Information

Tickets start at \$35 and are available [online](#), in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, and by calling (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324. Groups of 10 or more receive discounts up to 15% for *Tosca* purchases by calling (202) 467-8400. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center's *MyTix* program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. *MyTix* discounts will be available for select performance of *Tosca*. For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/mytix

Tosca Production Information

Music by Giacomo Puccini / Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa
In Italian with projected English titles.

Scenery provided by Seattle Opera.

May 11, 12m, 14, 17, 19m, 20m, 22, and 25

Cast and Creative Team

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|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tosca | Keri Alkema ± Latoria Moore * | Conductor | Speranza Scappucci |
| | | Director | Ethan McSweeney |
| Cavaradossi | Riccardo Massi * Robert Watson * | Costume Designer | Lena Rivkina |
| Scarpia | Alan Held | Lighting Designer | Gary Marder |
| Spoletta | David Cangelosi | Surtitles Operator | Corinne M. Hayes |
| Sciarrone | Samson McCrady ‡ | Cover Conductor | Giovanni Reggioli |
| Angelotti | Michael Hewitt ± | Assistant Conductors | Michael Baitzer John Arida * |
| Sacristan | Wei Wu ± | | Thomas Morris ‡ |
| Jailer | Samuel J. Weiser ‡ | Chorus Master | Steven Gathman |
| Shepherd Boy | Holden Browne Aidan Stanton-Brand | Assistant Director | David Carl Toulson ▲ |
| | | Stage Manager | Lynn Krynicki ▲ |

* Washington National Opera Debut

± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

▲ Washington National Opera production staff member with 10 or more seasons of service

Tosca Related Programs and Events

Opera Insights before every performance, Kennedy Center Opera House

WNO presents a free pre-performance education event prior to every performance of *Tosca*. These events begin one hour prior to curtain in the Opera House and last approximately 20–25 minutes. Musicologist Saul Lilienstein’s Opera Insights on Wednesday, May 22, begins at 6:15 p.m. and lasts approximately 35-40 minutes.

Artist Q&As: *Tosca*

Sunday, May 12, Sunday, May 19, and Monday, May 20, post-performance, Kennedy Center Opera House

Following the performances on Sunday, May 12, Sunday, May 19, and Monday, May 20 in the Kennedy Center Opera House, please join WNO artistic staff for a wide-ranging discussion with the artists for an inside scoop on the production. These events are free to patrons presenting a *Tosca* ticket and begin immediately after the performance.

“Touch Cart” and Audience Experience

Friday, May 17, and Wednesday, May 22, pre-performance, Kennedy Center Grand Foyer

WNO’s Touch Cart will be open one hour prior to the performances on Friday, May 17 and Wednesday, May 22 to experience first-hand real props and costume items featured in the opera. WNO’s Education Department invites patrons to come early to touch and explore items from the production.

WNO Young Associates Program

The 2018-2019 WNO Young Associates Program will center on the production of *Tosca*. This program is open to high school students in the greater Washington, D.C. area who are interested in exploring the professional world of opera. Whether pursuing an interest in performing onstage or in the orchestra; designing sets, costumes, or lighting; working behind the scenes; bringing the production and audiences together through public relations and marketing; using art for social change; the program mentors students on the various aspects that go into making opera and related art forms happen.

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of General Director Timothy O’Leary and world-renowned Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse repertory of grand opera across three main venues of the Kennedy Center. From classic operas to more contemporary pieces each season, WNO’s artistic output also includes several commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts, youth operas, and events.

Recent celebrated productions have included the world premiere of Philip Glass’s reconceived *Appomattox*, presented in conjunction with cultural events throughout Washington, D.C.; the powerful performances of Kurt Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*; and the massive feat of WNO’s first-complete *Ring* cycle, which was helmed by Zambello and played to sold-out houses following international acclaim.

Founded in 1956 and an artistic affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of more than 100 new productions, plus world premieres, international tours, live recordings and radio broadcasts, as well as innovative education and community-engagement programs. Throughout its history, WNO has been led by titans in the opera field, including the legendary Plácido Domingo who headed the company for 15 years, as well as luminaries such as Music Director Heinz Fricke and Director of Artistic Operations Christina Scheppelmann.

Among the company’s most successful programs is the American Opera Initiative (AOI), a commissioning program that develops new one-act works for WNO’s annual festival. By mentoring emerging composers and librettists, the Initiative works to expand the American operatic repertory and enhance its relevance to our time. Since its inception, AOI has commissioned 28 chamber opera world premieres, with some going on to future productions around the country.

With a commitment toward youth, WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 17th season, is one of the nation’s most competitive professional training programs, providing two years of intensive study to a highly selective cadre of young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to

successful careers at major opera houses worldwide. The WNO Opera Institute nurtures the ambitions of high-school-age singers from across the nation during an intensive three-week summer program held at American University in Washington.

The most popular of WNO's community-engagement programs is *Opera in the Outfield*[®], a free Kennedy Center Opera House production broadcast on the high-definition scoreboard at Nationals Park. The company's other education programs include the Kids Create Opera program at local elementary schools, Look-In performances for students in grades 3–8, and the Student Dress Rehearsal Program for middle and high school students. The company also offers free Opera Insights programs before every performance in the Opera House.

Discover [Washington National Opera](#) on social media:



#ToscaDC

FUNDING CREDITS

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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