

OPERA AND CLASSICAL

Tosca

Puccini's *Tosca* depends on the convincing portrayal of the relationships between its three leading characters. In this respect, West Australian Opera's presentation of Christopher Alden's provocative production is only partly successful. Dario Volonte, as Cavaradossi, had an easy tone well suited to the banter and wit of the first act, but he struggled with the passionate high notes in the second and third acts, and his limited acting range made it impossible to believe in the love between Cavaradossi and Tosca. Anke Hoppner as Tosca, by contrast, was dramatically convincing and vocally thrilling in the big moments, yet in recitatives her lower register lacked the penetration necessary to carry through the orchestral texture. In his debut in the role, Teddy Tahu Rhodes, with an astonishingly powerful yet subtle voice and a genuinely menacing stage presence, was an utterly memorable and repulsive Scarpia. The second act, which explores Scarpia's sadistic and lustful relationship with Tosca, was compelling and chilling.

PAUL HOPWOOD

His Majesty's Theatre. 825 Hay St, Perth.
Tonight, 7.30pm. Tickets: \$42.50-\$152.50.
Bookings: (08) 9484 1133. Until April 16.