THE PUCCINI EFFECT

PRESENTER PACK
08/2026



WELCOME NOTE

Dear Presenters,

I'm excited to share my new work 'The Puccini Effect' - a passionate blend of drama and operatic performance that brings to life the fascinating stories behind opera's most beloved music.

The show has been crafted to work across various venue sizes, and we've designed flexible engagement opportunities to create meaningful connections with your local community.

Best wishes,

Vanessa West



THIS PACK

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SHOW OVERVIEW



SYNOPSIS

'**The Puccini Effect**' is a captivating one-woman show that delves into the passionate world of opera's most beloved composer through the lens of his tumultuous love life. This innovative production weaves together Puccini's real-life romances with the immortal suffering heroines they inspired, creating a powerful narrative that brings new depth to his masterpieces.

Written and performed by lyric soprano Vanessa West, and shaped by Queensland dramaturg Dr. Tarita Botsman, this unique hybrid of dramatic storytelling and operatic recital reveals the fascinating connections between Puccini's personal relationships and his iconic female characters. From the fiery Tosca to the tragic Madama Butterfly, each aria takes on new meaning when performed alongside the stories of the real women who inspired them.

The show's emotional centerpiece is a reimagined court testimony from Elvira Bonturi, Puccini's long-suffering wife, bringing to life the complex web of love, jealousy, and passion that fueled his creative genius. Stage Whispers praised West's "sheer power" and "impassioned delivery" in this pivotal scene.

Directed by Margaret Taylor OAM, accompanied by Associate artist Denis Feletto and production styling by Celine Arif, 'The Puccini Effect' offers audiences a fresh perspective on some of opera's most beautiful and beloved music.



SHOW STRUCTURE

Act I



MARIA JERITZA
CZECH SOPRANO
1887 - 1982



ROSE ADER
AUSTRIAN SOPRANO
1890 - 1955



CORINNA

LAW STUDENT
20YRS PUCCINI'S JNR



SYBIL SELIGMAN
CREATIVE CONFIDANTE
1868 - 1936

Act II



ELVIRA GEMIGNANI
PUCCINI'S DE FACTO
1860 - 1930



DORIA MANFREDI
PUCCINI'S MAID
1886 - 1909



ELVIRA PUCCINI
PUCCINI'S WIFE
1860 - 1930

Run time - 65mins (without interval)

'The Puccini Effect' is told trough the lens of six women Giacomo Puccini loved; the sopranos Maria Jeritza and Rose Ader, a mysterious Corinna from Turin, friend and creative confidant Sybil Seligman, de facto then wife Elvira Puccini, and finally Puccini's maid Doria Manfredi.

KEY SELLING POINTS

The untold stories behind some of opera's greatest heroines.
The Puccini Effect turns the spotlight away from the celebrated composer and onto six real women who shaped Puccini's life, his music and the emotional world of his most enduring female characters.

Real life as dramatic as the operas.
Affairs, jealousy, betrayal, tragedy and a century-old family secret - these remarkable true stories are brought to life through intimate theatrical vignettes, woven together with beloved arias from La Bohème, Tosca, Madama Butterfly and more.

Opera, without the barriers.
Part theatre, part storytelling, part operatic recital, The Puccini Effect gives opera lovers a fascinating new perspective while making Puccini's music immediate and accessible to newcomers - a richly human story of the women too often left in the margins of history.

The women he loved. The music they inspired.



TARGET AUDIENCES

BRIDGING TWO AUDIENCES

The Puccini Effect sits at the intersection of classical opera and contemporary theatre, appealing to both dedicated opera and classical music audiences and theatre-goers who may have never set foot inside an opera house.

For opera lovers, it offers a fresh perspective on Puccini's life and much-loved works. For newcomers, the compelling true stories provide an accessible way into the music - without requiring any prior knowledge of opera.



The Puccini effect

Full house for Puccini Effect

By Sonia Isaacs

A FULL house for Maleny Arts Council on Saturday June 29 with the extraordinary production of The Puccini Effect.

This one woman 'Puccini Powerhouse' performance at the Maleny Community Centre was written and performed by the talented soprano Vanessa West.

Featuring associate artist, Angus Grant on piano, the Puccini Effect tells the tale of the real life women who inspired Puccini's operatic heroines including Tosca, Madama Butterfly and Mimi.

Margaret Taylor and Vanessa West

Vanessa West on stage

Hayley Ballinger and Kelly Smith

John and D'Arcy Wilson

Dale and Michael Brennan

Nico Hernuit, Fraser Thom and Garry West

TARGET AUDIENCES

OPERA WITHOUT THE BARRIERS

Theatre and storytelling lead the audience into the music. Real-life drama, intimate characterisation and humour are woven together with instantly recognisable arias including O mio babbino caro, Un bel dì vedremo and Vissi d'arte.

The result is an experience that demystifies opera without diminishing its emotional power - giving existing opera audiences new context and leaving newcomers surprised by just how engaging opera can be.

"I didn't think I liked opera until now!"



AUDIENCE QUOTES

"I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE SUPER BORED COMING WITH MY MUM TO THE OPERA, BUT IT WAS ACTUALLY AMAZING!

THE STORIES BEHIND THE MUSIC WERE REALLY INTERESTING, AND WHEN SHE STARTED SINGING THOSE FAMOUS SONGS I RECOGNIZED FROM MOVIES AND TV, I GOT GOOSEBUMPS.

CHARLIE W, 12
BUDERIM

"I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OPERA WAS TEDIOUS, BUT VANESSA'S PERFORMANCE WAS THE PERFECT MIX OF DIALOGUE AND SINGING.

I FELT LIKE I WAS ENJOYING A HIGHLIGHTS PACKAGE OF PUCCINI'S GREATEST HITS WHILE LEARNING ABOUT HIS LIFE. THE WAY SHE CONNECTED THE MUSIC TO HIS PERSONAL DRAMA MADE EVERYTHING JUST CLICK FOR ME.

JONNY W, 51
EUDLO



REVIEW QUOTES

In a case of art imitating life, lyric soprano Vanessa West presents a cleverly staged, 90-minute exploration through spoken word and song of how women's emotional pain was used as inspiration via four of the 19th-century Italian maestro's lovers, as well as his wife and an ingenue.

Meanwhile, the sheer power of the operatic soprano is showcased during West's impassioned delivery of Elvira's (imagined) court testimony, and here West also lets her acting ability shine.

Marie Blanche, Stage Whispers
30 June 2024

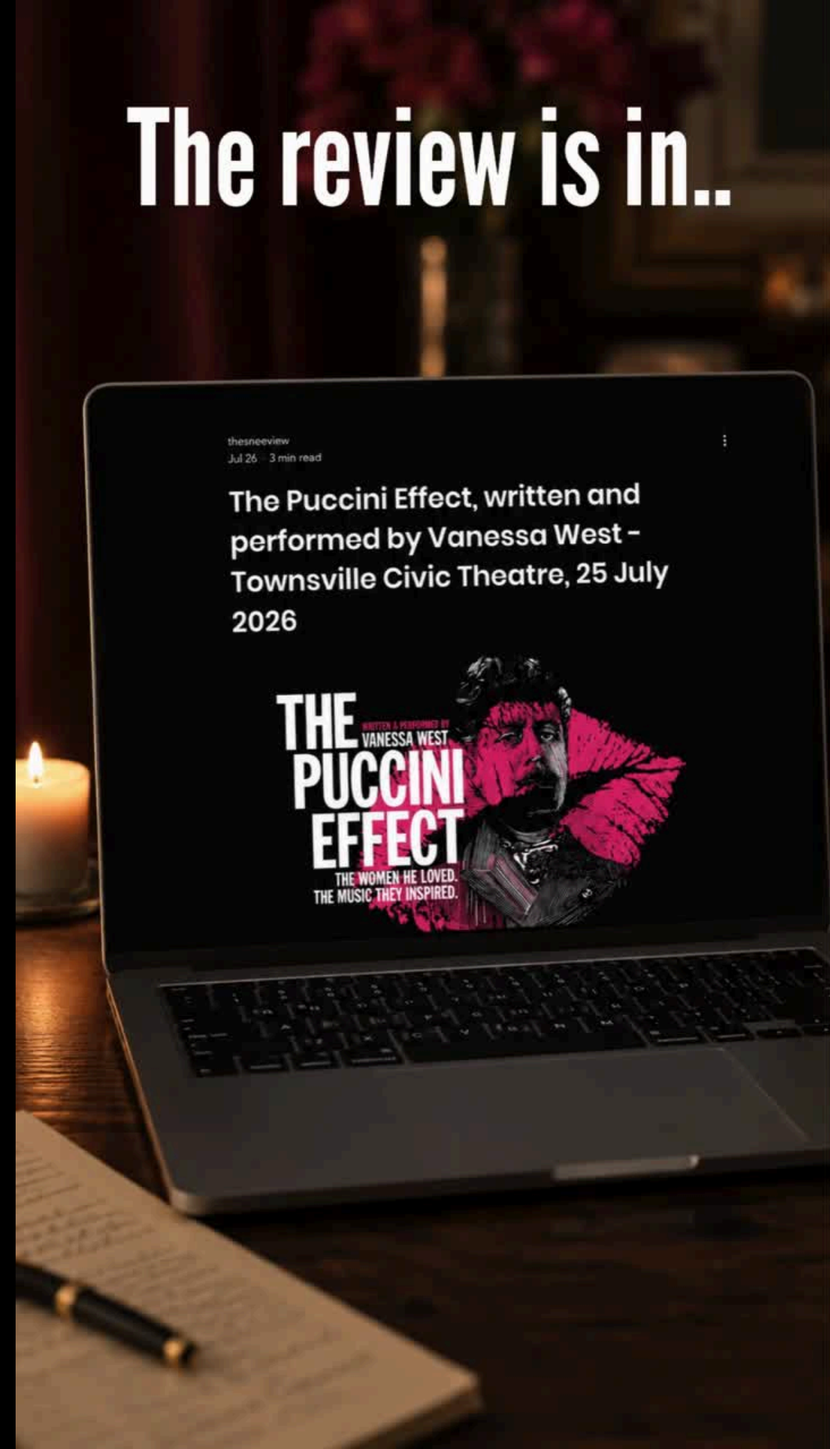


REVIEW QUOTES

Thought-provoking, entertaining and emotionally resonant



Andrew Snee,The Snee Review
26 July 2026



VANESSA WEST
BIO

Queensland-based lyric soprano Vanessa West combines international performance experience with innovative storytelling through her original works.

As a Puccini specialist, she has crafted and performs the acclaimed one-woman show 'The Puccini Effect', which dramatically weaves together the composer's passionate love affairs with his immortal operatic heroines.

Her international debut came in Florence performing Liú (Turandot) and Flora (La Traviata) at the L'estate Fiesolana Opera Festival, followed by performances across Italy, including Rome's Festival Euro Mediterraneo and the prestigious Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago. In Australia, her notable roles with Melbourne Opera include Gilda (Rigoletto), Cio-Cio-San (Madama Butterfly), Fiordiligi (Cosi fan tutte), and Donna Anna (Don Giovanni). Most recently, she performed Santuzza in Maleny's production of Cavalleria Rusticana, and she is currently preparing the role of Nedda for their upcoming production of Pagliacci in June 2025.

A versatile artist who bridges classical and contemporary worlds, Vanessa also pioneers '80s power ballad Popera' – creating orchestrated Italian arrangements of beloved '80s classics that showcase her distinctive artistic vision and passion for making classical music accessible to new audiences.



COLLABORATORS

MARGARET TAYLOR OAM



DIRECTOR

Margaret Taylor OAM is a highly respected singer and director based in Maleny, Queensland. With a distinguished career spanning performance, arts leadership and community advocacy, she is known for championing regional arts. Her work has shaped generations of performers, earning national recognition for her contribution to music and cultural life.

DENIS FELETTO



ASSOCIATE ARTIST

Denis Feletto is an Italian-born pianist, arranger, and conductor based in Queensland, Australia. A skilled and expressive performer, he brings a deep understanding of operatic and orchestral repertoire to his work, with a particular passion for the music of Puccini. As an arranger and conductor, he has crafted and led performances across a range of genres, from classical and opera to jazz and contemporary styles. His extensive experience includes collaborating with vocalists, ensembles, and orchestras, both in live settings and studio productions.

CELINE SUTHERLAND



HAIR, MAKE-UP & COSTUME STYLING

Celine Arif, globetrotting make-up dynamo has done it all: from running MAC Cosmetics Regional Training in Dubai, to glamming up Dubai Film Festival, magazine editorials and even avant-garde body painting. Now, she's sharing her expertise on the sunny Sunshine Coast through her makeup education business at www.byceline.com.au

DR. TARITA BOTSMAN



CREATIVE CONSULTANT & DRAMATURG

Dr. Tarita Botsman is a multi-faceted artist with a distinguished background as an opera singer, stage director, producer and writer. A former Young Australian of the Year, she is also the Artistic Director for the international female vocal ensemble, The 7 Sopranos. Throughout her diverse career, she has endeavoured to constantly redefine and blur art forms, creating vibrant, challenging theatre.

MARKETING ASSETS



MARKETING

'**The Puccini Effect**' is supported by a comprehensive suite of professional marketing assets, designed by experienced creative professionals right here in Queensland.

The show's distinctive visual identity captures both its classical heritage and contemporary theatrical elements. A complete brand kit has been developed and implemented in Canva, enabling quick customization of marketing materials for different venues and regions.

Presenters receive complimentary access to print-ready posters, programs, social media campaigns, and high-resolution photography. This streamlined approach ensures brand-consistent, high-quality promotion while allowing venues to easily tailor materials to their specific audience and marketing channels.

All artwork assets are provided free-of-charge to support maximum audience engagement.



SIZZLE REEL



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

FB & IN REELS & STORIES STATICS & VIDEOS

















PROGRAM - 6PP TRIFOLD DL

Puccini loved women. His operatic heroines of Tosca, Madama Butterfly and Mimì are what legends are made of – but so far little has been told about what – or more importantly who – inspired these passionate women of opera.

'The Puccini Effect' is told through the lens of six women Giacomo Puccini loved; the sopranos Maria Jeritza and Rose Ader, a mysterious Corinna from Turin, friend and creative confidant Sybil Seligman, de facto then wife Elvira Puccini, and finally Puccini's maid Doria Manfredi.

MARIA JERITZA



CZECH SOPRANO
1887 – 1982

Maria was a much-loved artist on both sides of the Atlantic and famed for her portrayal of Tosca. She provides rare insight into Puccini's artistic world as she experienced his passion for his operas, heroines and leading ladies first-hand. Her monologue is based on a 1958 BBC radio interview.

ROSE ADER



AUSTRIAN SOPRANO
1890 – 1955

Rose and Puccini were lovers later in his life and it's believed that the role of Liu in Turandot was written with her voice in mind. An affair that was largely conducted via correspondence, this scene is inspired by the final letter Puccini ever wrote Rose.

CORINNA



LAW STUDENT
20 YEARS PUCCINI'S JUNIOR

Not a lot is known about the mysterious 'Corinna from Turin' other than they met on a train, had a passionate affair which became so serious Puccini bought her a house only a couple of miles away from his, and they were close to marrying at one point before Puccini's publisher Giulio Ricordi intervened.

SYBIL SELIGMAN



SOCIALITE & PUCCINI'S CREATIVE CONFIDANTE
1868 – 1936

Sybil was rumored to have begun an affair with Puccini before dropping it in fear of a scandal. She became Puccini's closest friend and confidant, and was likely to be the only person aware of Puccini's greatest secret surrounding the infamous Doria Manfredi affair.

ELVIRA GEMIGNANI



PUCCINI'S DE FACTO
1860 – 1930

Elvira was married to Puccini's schoolfriend when Puccini was hired to give Elvira piano lessons. They soon began an affair, sewing the seeds for the longest, and most turbulent love story of Puccini's life.

DORIA MANFREDI



PUCCINI'S MAID
1886 – 1909

Doria was only 16 when she joined the Villa Puccini as their maid. The scandal that later ensued was of operatic proportions, with the truth around Puccini's true motives only coming to light a century later in 2008.

ELVIRA PUCCINI



PUCCINI'S WIFE
1860 - 1930

Puccini's lifelong pursuit of his "little gardens" had taken a toll on his wife Elvira - and her jealousy peaked when she became convinced her maid Doria was sleeping with her husband. Elvira's actions were the subject of a trial that she never recovered from.

IMAGERY

















SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT

We understand just how much content venues now need to build awareness and drive ticket sales - particularly through owned channels and organic social.

One post is rarely enough. Successful promotion requires a steady rhythm of relevant content and multiple audience touchpoints, from the initial show announcement and ticket launch through to rehearsals, behind-the-scenes moments and the final countdown.

That’s why we’ve built a strong bank of video, photography and promotional assets that can be quickly tailored to each venue’s channels, audiences and marketing needs - helping marketing teams maintain momentum without having to create content from scratch.



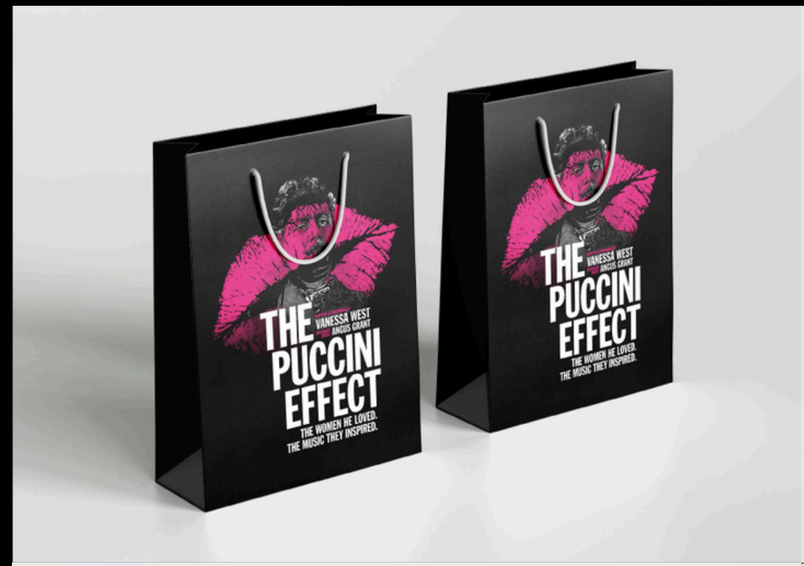
SOCIAL MEDIA - REELS
‘ONE WEEK TO GO’ POST



MERCHANDISE

Professional merchandise designs have been created to enhance audience engagement and provide additional revenue opportunities for venues.

All designs and print-ready files are provided free-of-charge to presenters.









CONTENT SERIES

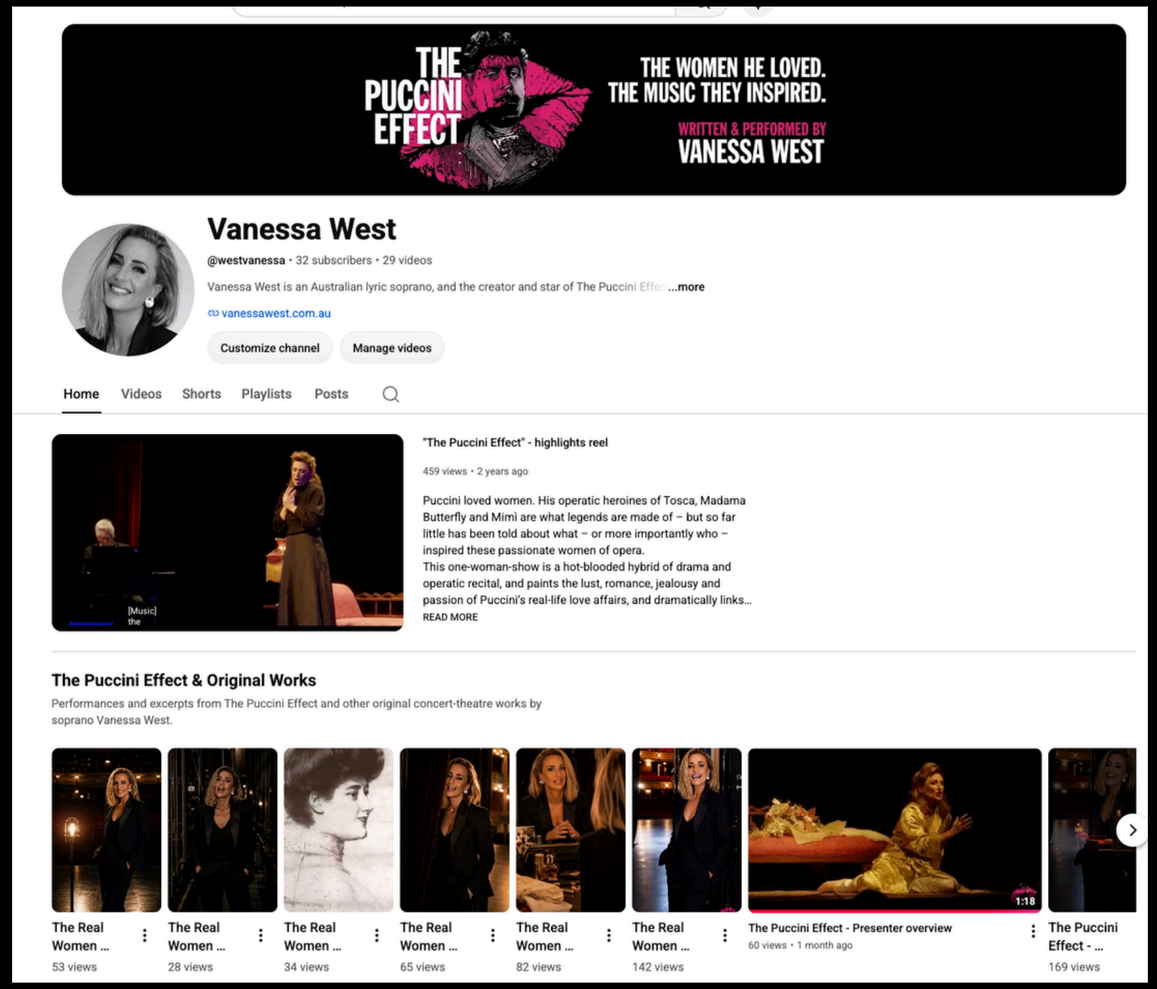


‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ CONTENT SERIES

A six-part social content series that introduces audiences to the real women at the heart of The Puccini Effect.

Each short-form video reveals the story of one of the women who loved, influenced or was profoundly affected by Puccini - bringing to life the fascinating real-world relationships behind the celebrated composer and his music.

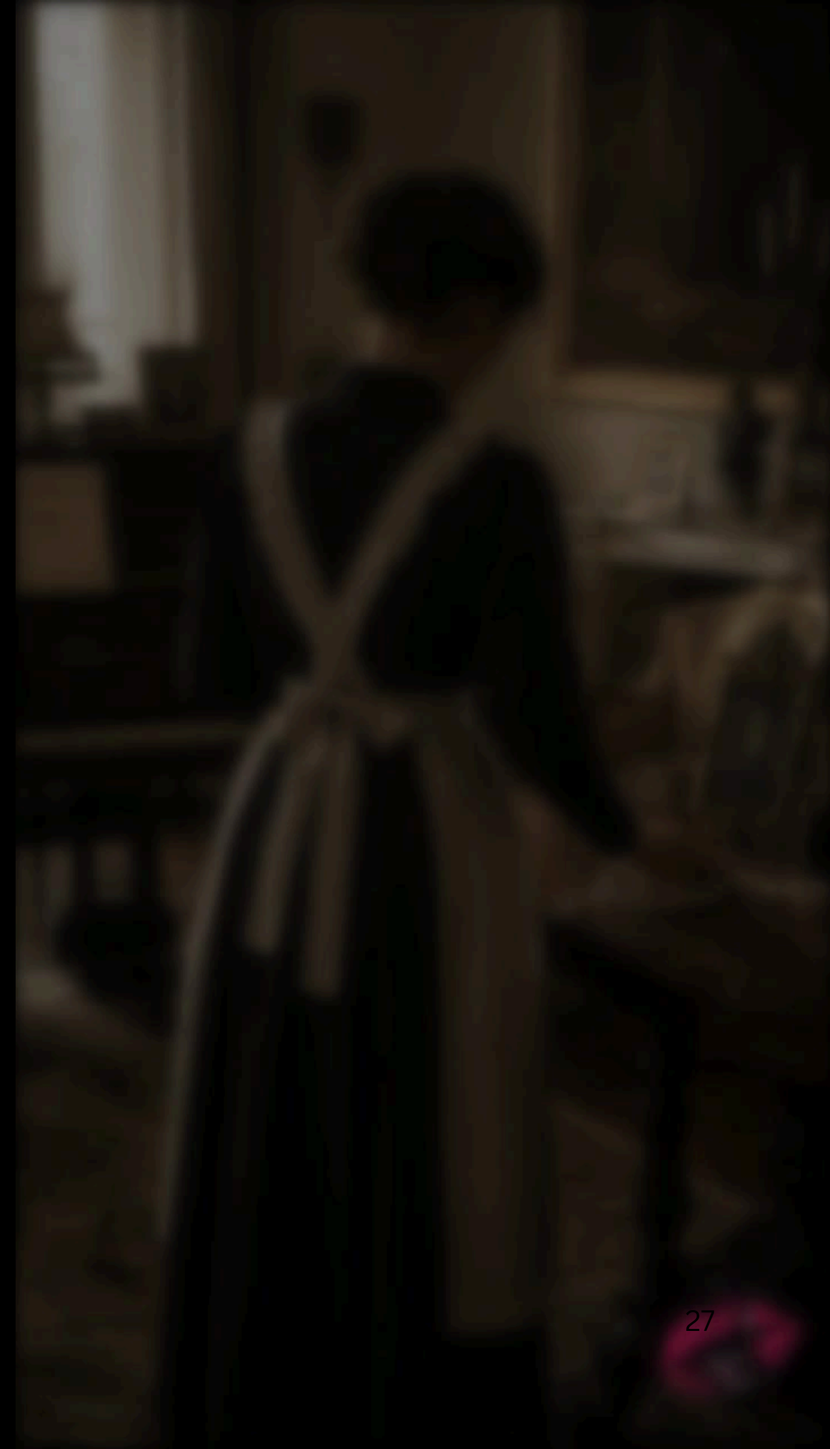
Designed to create intrigue without giving away the show, the series gives venues six ready-made opportunities to build awareness and deepen the story in the lead-up to a performance. Each piece connects the human drama to The Puccini Effect, helping audiences understand that this isn’t simply a show about opera - it’s about the untold stories of the women behind it.



‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
ELVIRA GEMIGNANI



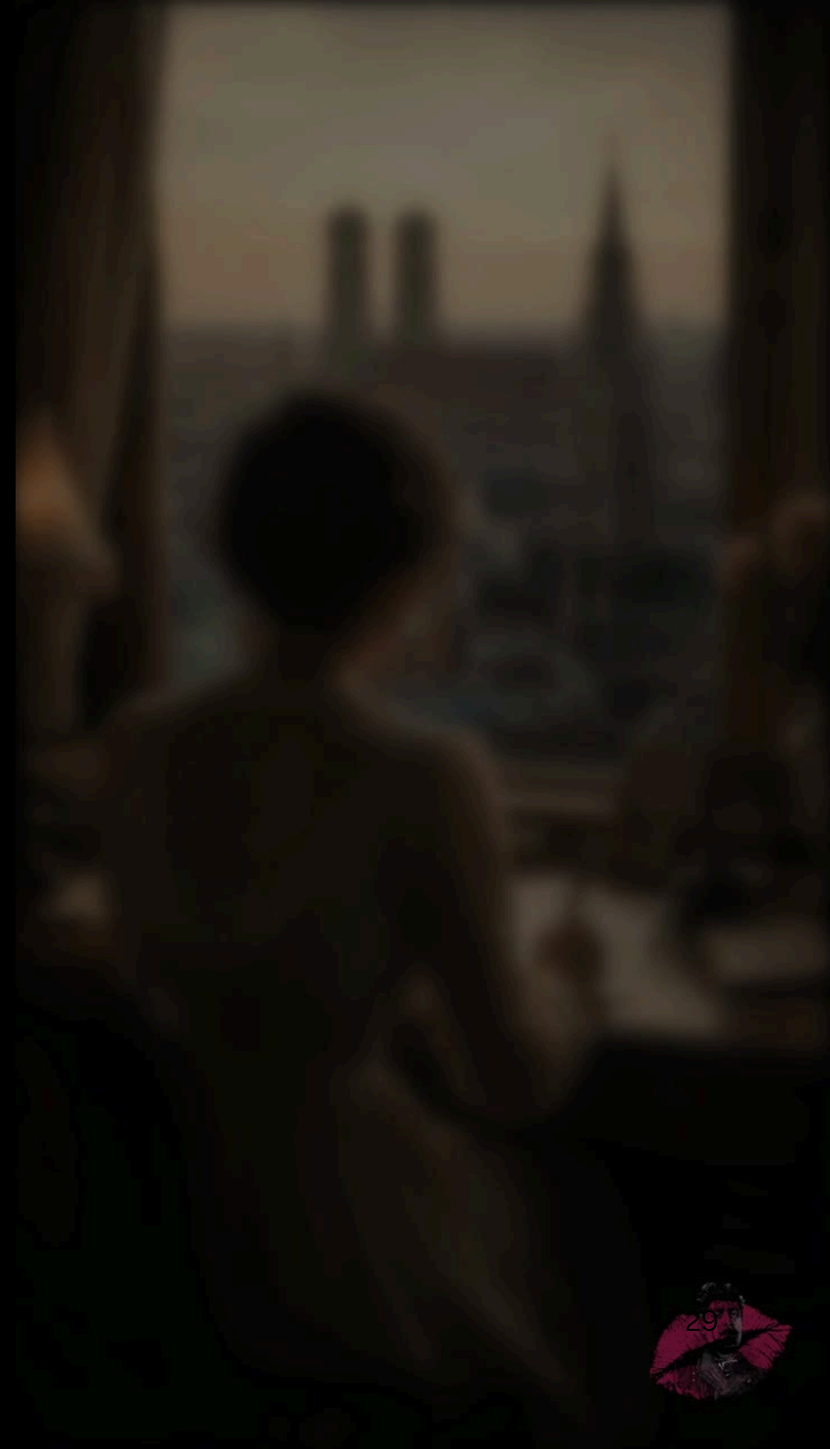
‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
DORIA MANFREDI



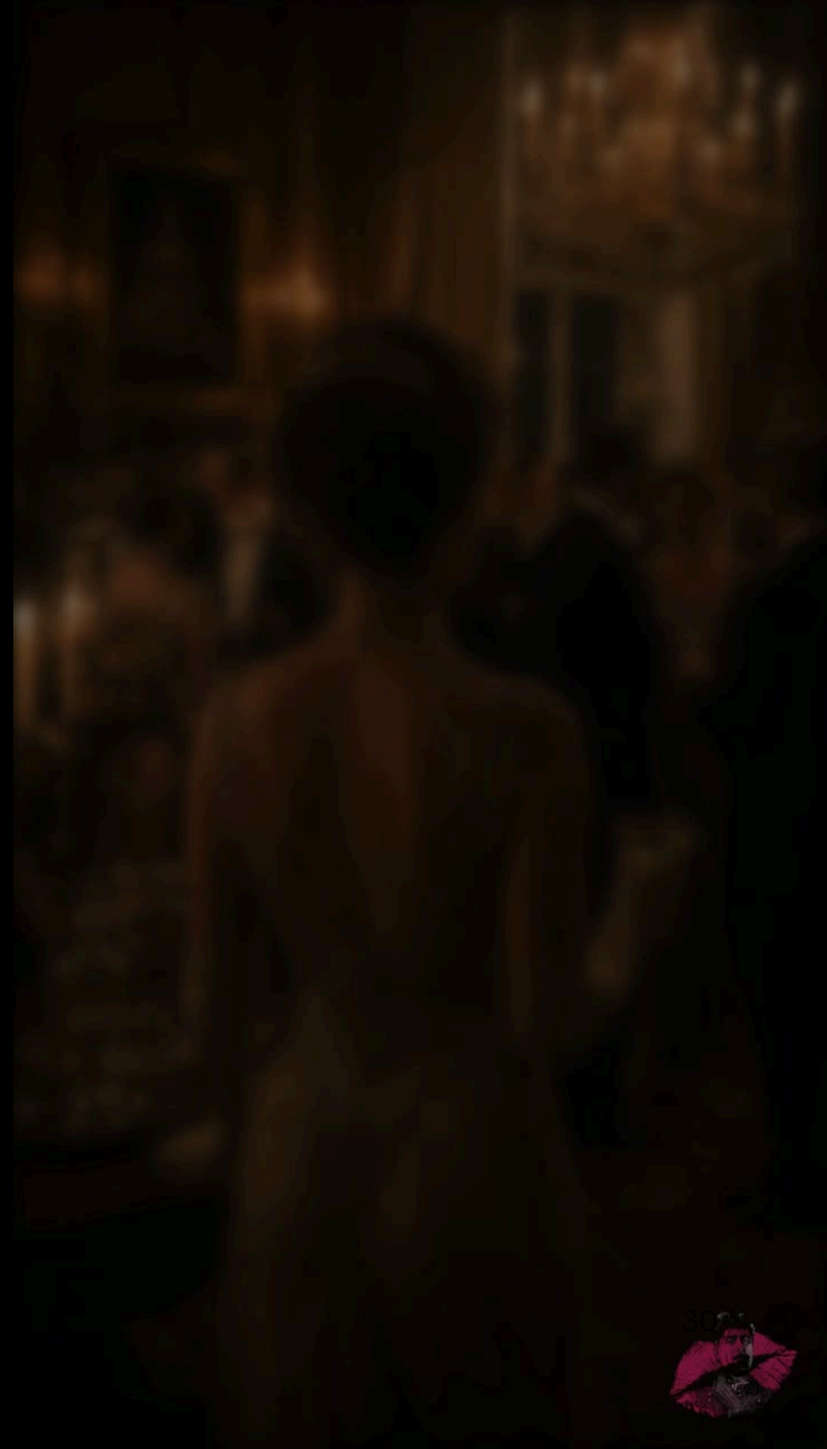
‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
CORINNA



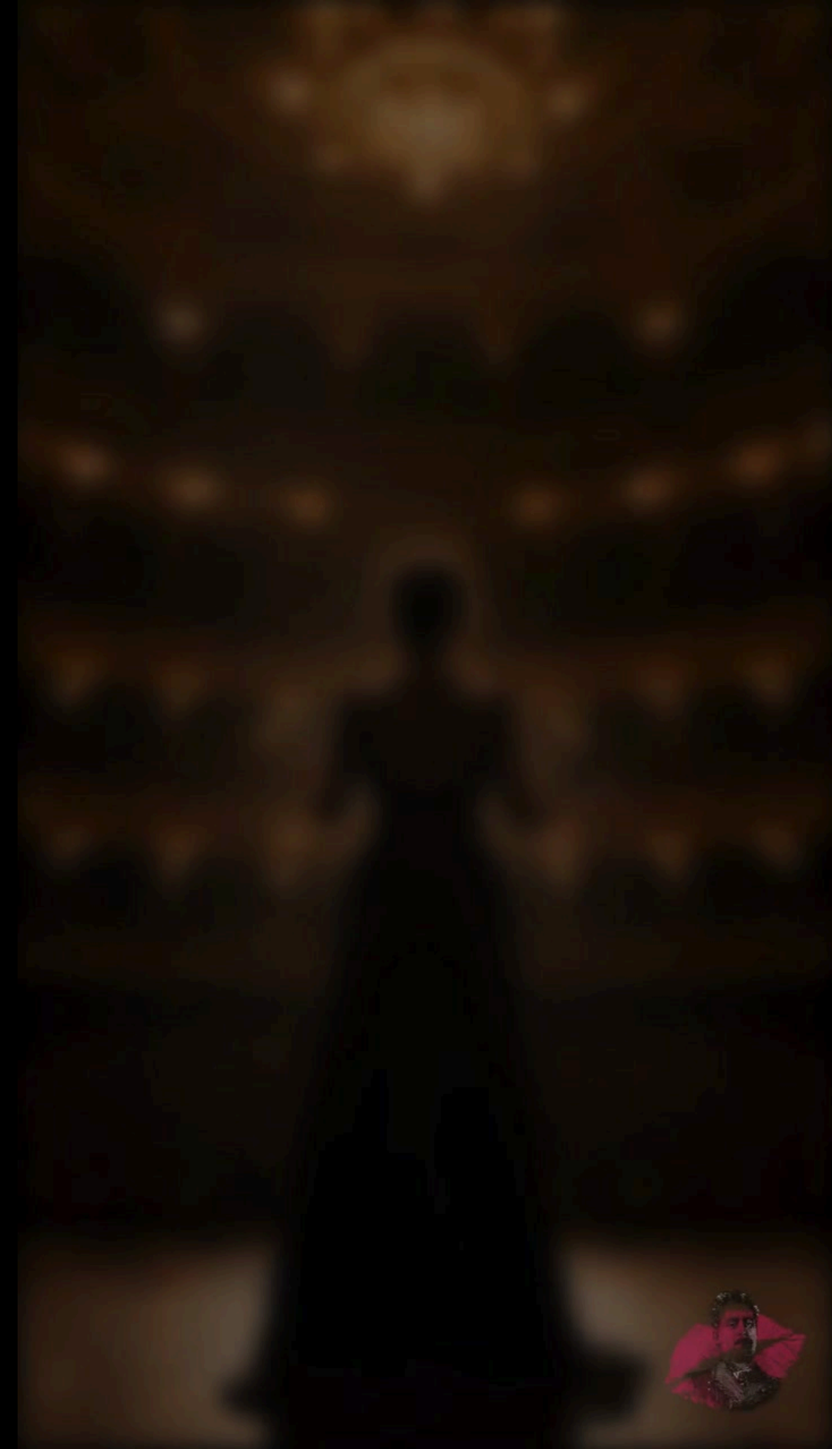
‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
ROSE ADER



‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
SYBIL SELIGMAN



‘REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE MUSIC’ SERIES
9X16 REELS
MARIA JERITZA



PR ASSETS



PR & MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

The story behind The Puccini Effect gives venues a strong hook for earned media - taking promotion beyond traditional arts listings.
The untold stories of the real women behind one of the world’s most famous composers provide a compelling human-interest angle for local newspapers, radio and television, while the combination of opera, scandal and history gives media plenty to work with.

We support venues with ready-to-tailor press releases, media angles, imagery and interview opportunities, making local outreach simple. The show has already demonstrated its ability to attract television news coverage and editorial interest, helping venues extend reach beyond their owned channels and build broader awareness of the performance.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION







Staging

> Minimum stage area: 4m x 3m
> Basic lighting plot with warm and cool washes & follow-spot
> Basic wing space for minimal costume changes

Sound

> Professional quality sound system appropriate to venue size
> 2 x wireless headset bud microphones (discrete lav kits)
> 1 x handheld wireless microphone (back-up)
> Digital mixing console
> Playback capability
> Sound operator for seamless transitions between amplified dialogue and acoustic singing



Equipment provided by company

> All costumes and props
> Recorded audio files for prologue and epilogue
> Digital Lighting plot
> Show script with technical cues

Venue to provide

> Tuned piano
> Stage Manager
> Lighting system & operator
> Sound system & operator
> Dressing room



Set-up Requirements

> Pre-set lighting plot: 3hrs (10am - 1pm)
> Top & tail rehearsal & sound-check: 2hrs (3pm - 5pm)
> Performance - 7pm

Personnel

> Stage Manager
> 1 x sound operator (venue)
> 1 x lighting operator (venue)
> 1 x spot operator (venue)
> 1 x crew (venue)

Bump in/Bump out

> Same-day open

ENGAGEMENT IDEAS



ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

Every community - and every venue audience - is different.

The community outreach ideas below are thought-starters, not a fixed menu. We're happy to work with presenters to co-design experiences that reflect the venue's audience profile, local community and programming objectives. The aim is simple: use the stories and music of The Puccini Effect to create meaningful local connections that extend beyond the performance itself.

"Letters & Arias"
Library Sessions & Aged Care Facilities
(60mins)

- Interactive presentations at local libraries showcasing the actual letters and interviews that inspired the show
- Discussion of how historical documents were transformed into theatrical monologues
- Participants explore the connection between Puccini's real relationships and his music

"From History to Stage"
School Workshop Program
(60mins)

- Designed for senior Drama/Music students
- Demonstration of how to craft dramatic monologues from historical sources
- Practical exercises in bringing historical characters to life

THANK YOU

For more information:

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