

Il Tabarro

(The Cloak)

music by **Giacomo Puccini**

libretto by **Giuseppe Adami**

based on the 1910 play *La houppelande* by Didier Gold

premiered December 1918 at the Metropolitan Opera in New York as part of *Il Trittico*,
along with *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*

Orchestral Introduction

The curtain rises on a barge on the Seine. Michele and Giorgetta, who are married, live on this boat. Michele stares at the setting sun while Giorgetta carries out domestic tasks. Stevedores are unloading cargo (sacks) from the hold. We hear the horns of tugboats and cars.

O Michele? Michele?

Giorgetta, Michele, Stevedores - Luigi, Tinca, Talpa

Giorgetta teases Michele, then suggests that they reward the workers (who are singing a song as they labor) with some wine. Michele reminds Giorgetta of his passion, and asks whether she thinks of his wellbeing as well. Michele descends to the hold.

Si soffoca, padrona!

Luigi, Giorgetta, Tinca, Talpa

The workmen complain of the work and the heat. Their mood becomes celebratory when Giorgetta brings them wine and dances with them to the music of an organ grinder (playing dreadfully). The men return to work when Michele emerges.

Dunque, che cosa credi?

Giorgetta, Michele, Song Vendor, Midinettes

On shore, a song vendor hawks his wares and some young women purchase tunes from *La Boheme*. Giorgetta and Michele skirt a fight as they discuss practical and more emotional matters.

O eterni innamorati, buona sera

Frugola (Talpa's wife), Giorgetta

Frugola greets Giorgetta and Michele, who descends again leaving Frugola to share with Giorgetta the treasures she's found while traversing the streets all day.

To'! guarda la mia vecchia!

Talpa, Frugola, Michele, Luigi, Tinca

Everyone gathers to say goodnight. Tinca is hurrying to the bottle, where he plans to drown his sorrows.

Hai ben ragione

Luigi

Luigi agrees with Tinca that life is full of sorrows, that people struggle for no reward.

Segui il mio esempio: bevi!

Tinca, Giorgetta, Talpa, Frugola

Frugola dreams of owning a little house with a garden where she can while away the hours with her husband and her cat.

E ben altro il mio sogno!

**Giorgetta, Frugola, Luigi, Talpa, Women and Men
(offstage)**

Giorgetta and Luigi share happy memories of Belleville, where they both grew up, and the company and customs of the people. Frugola and Talpa go home for the evening, Luigi stays to speak with Michele. Voices of young men and women are heard offstage.

O Luigi! Luigi!

Giorgetta, Luigi

Left alone, Giorgetta and Luigi are drawn to each other. They recall their passion of the previous evening. Giorgetta fears Michele. Luigi would rather die than allow Giorgetta to remain married to Michele.

Come? Non sei andato?

Michele, Luigi, Giorgetta

Michele appears and exchanges a few words with Luigi. Once Michele is gone, Luigi and Giorgetta further express their love and make a plan for the evening - Giorgetta will leave the gangplank down and will light a match to signal to Luigi that it is safe to return. Luigi exits.

Come e difficile esser felici!

Giorgetta, Michele

Michele appears with the lighted safety lamps. Giorgetta and Michele discuss practical matters, then matters of the heart.

Ora le notti son tanto fresche...

Michele, Giorgetta

Michele reminds Giorgetta of how happy they once were together - the three of them. And so we learn that the couple had a baby that died. Michele sings tenderly of the intimacy he and his wife enjoyed in evenings of the past. Giorgetta is pained by the reminiscences; they're older, she says, and they've changed. As Giorgetta disappears into their cabin, Michele hisses: "Slut."

Bocca di rosa fresca...

Pair of Lovers (offstage)

As Michele places the red, green and white safety lamps on the barge, lovers are heard singing on the shore.

Nulla, silenzio

Michele

Michele wonders at the identity of Giorgetta's lover, and urges him to show up to face Michele's wrath.

T'ho colto!

Michele, Luigi, Giorgetta

Michele lights his pipe; Luigi mistakes it for the signal from Giorgetta. Luigi climbs onboard and is quickly overwhelmed by Michele, who forces Luigi to admit his love for Giorgetta before squeezing the life out of him. Giorgetta emerges from the cabin. She apologizes for being unsympathetic to Michele earlier. Michele opens his cloak to reveal Luigi's body. He presses Giorgetta's face against that of her dead lover.