

Giuseppe Giacosa

Born Oct. 21, 1847, in Collettero Parella, near Turin, Giuseppe Giacosa was a Piedmont Italian dramatist who collaborated with Luigi Illica to write the libretti for three of Giacomo Puccini's most famous operas.

The son of a Piedmontese lawyer, Giacosa earned a law degree from the University of Turin but soon abandoned the law to write for the theatre. His first successful comedy, *Una partita a scacchi* (1873; "A Game of Chess"), was set in the European Middle Ages. Giacosa followed this with several more comedies and light historical dramas. He then gradually turned to examining contemporary social problems in the manner of Henrik Ibsen. Giacosa's best plays, among which are *I diritti dell'anima* (1894; "Sacred Ground") and *Come le foglie* (1900; "Like Falling Leaves"), are psychological investigations of people in crisis.

In 1891 Giacosa was one of several writers asked to work on the libretto for Puccini's opera *Manon Lescaut*. Giacosa suggested that Illica assist him, and this led to a collaboration between the two men on the texts of *La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), and *Madama Butterfly* (1904). In their collaborations, Illica devised the operas' structure and first draft, which Giacosa then polished and converted into verse.

