LA TRAVIATA



CLEVELAND OPERA THEATER GRADES

K-3

CLEVELAND OPERA THEATER

Have questions about Verdi or *La Traviata* for our Director of Education and Outreach?
Contact Megan Thompson at
mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org



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Cleveland Opera Theater 5000 Euclid Avenue, #1001 Cleveland, Ohio 44103 p. 216-512-0268

Booklet by Nicole Veigas

Welcome!

Theater's production of Giuseppe Verdi's masterpiece, *La Traviata*. Cleveland Opera Theater's mission is to produce vibrant, accessible, innovative, and engaging opera in Greater Cleveland. When we embarked on this project, the first thing we did was explore what resources exist for families to experience, explore, and engage in this opera. What we discovered is that most of the resources that are easily accessible are actually designed for a traditional classroom space. We wanted to create something for the home. The contents of this packet are designed to enhance your family's enjoyment of the opera through discussion prompts and activities, so it's still quite educational, but we designed the questions to create a connection between you and the young opera-viewers in your life.

We are excited to bring you this opportunity to explore Cleveland Opera

Unlike most media, we in the opera world believe "spoilers" actually enhance your enjoyment of the opera, so we suggest reviewing the synopsis and the characters before watching our production. Knowing what is about to happen on stage makes it easier, particularly for younger viewers, to focus on the beauty of the music and exciting visuals rather than trying to follow the plot. We also suggest breaking up your experience. Try watching a scene or two, then taking a break to discuss it with your opera novice. The best part of using this video and these materials is that you can stretch out the fun over a day or two!

Happy listening,

Megan Thompson Director of Education and Outreach Cleveland Opera Theater

Stephanie Ruozzo Education and Outreach Associate Cleveland Opera Theater

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About Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi was a musician from Italy more than 150 years ago. He studied music from the time he was a boy, and wrote a lot of operas when he grew up. Operas are stories we tell through music, and Verdi's stories made Italian people proud of their country. In the first part of his career, Verdi had to work very hard to compose a large number of operas in a short time. Once he got famous, he was able to concentrate more on each opera, allowing him to compose fewer operas at a slower pace.





Timeline of Events

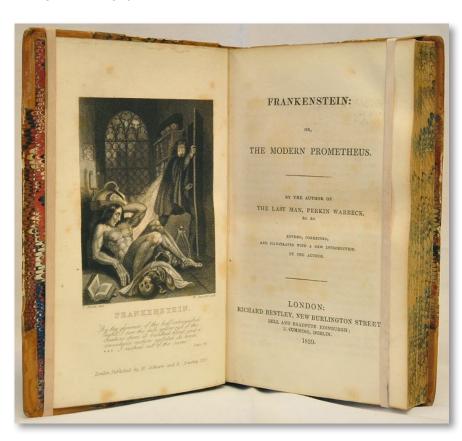
1810

1813
Guiseppe Fortunino
Francesco Verdi
is born in
Le Rencole, Italy



1818

Mary Shelley publishes Frankenstein



1830

1840

1850

1833

British Empire abolishes slavery



1848

First Women's right convention takes place in the United States

1853

La Traviata premiers in Venice



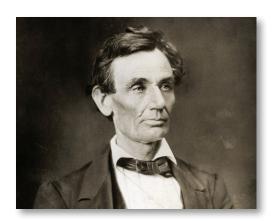
1860

1860

Abraham Lincoln is elected

1861

The Civil War between the North and South takes place over slavery



1880

1885

Automobile is invented



1900

1886

Statue of Liberty is gifted to the United States by France

1890

1896

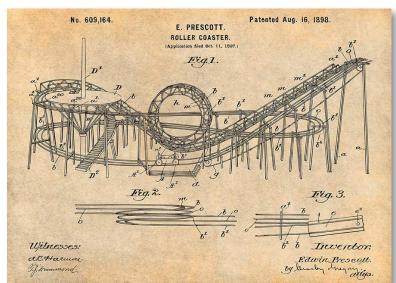
First Olympic Games take place in Athens, Greece



1898

The rollercoaster

is invented



1901

Verdi dies on January 27, a few days after having a stroke

Opera Synopsis

Violetta is normally a happy girl and is excited to find out Alfredo loves her, but Alfredo's family doesn't like Violetta, so they have to break up. Afterwards, Violetta becomes sick, and when Alfredo finds out, he rushes to see her again, so he can apologize to her.







Characters

Violetta - soprano

A happy and popular girl who becomes very sick

Alfredo - tenor

A rich boy who falls in love with Violetta

Mr. Germont - baritone

Alfredo's father who does not like Violetta and makes her go away

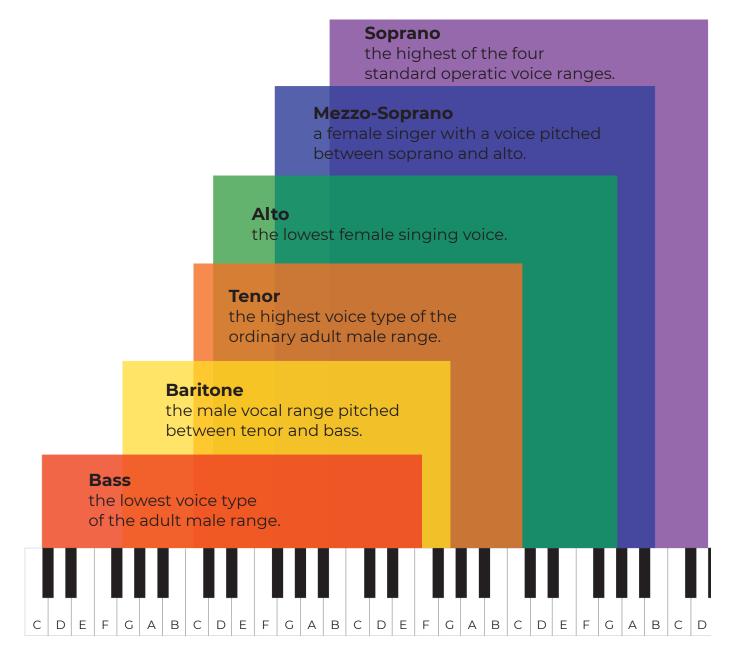
Annina - soprano

Violetta's maid who helps Violetta when Alfredo leaves and when Violetta gets sick



Voice Type

Operatic voices can be classified by a variety of means. Here, we take a look at the voice types Verdi utilized in *La Traviata*:



Cast

Violetta - Angela Mortellaro
Alfredo - Banjamin Werley
Mr. Germont - Grant Youngblood
Flora - Elizabeth Frey
Dr. Grenvil - James Eder
Annina - Alexis Reed

Gastone de Letorières - Brian Skoog Barone Douphol - Daewon Seo Marchese d'Obigny - Bryant Bush Giuseppe - Joshua Sanchez Muniz Commissioner - Johathan Stuckey



Chorus

Sopranos

Julia Mihalich Samantha Ksiezyk-DeCrane Andrea Soncina Nicole Futoran

Tenors

Robert Bordon Brian Skoog Cory Svette Joshua Sanchez Muniz Christian Thomas

Mezzo

Amanda Krohne-Fargo Elizabeth Frey London Long-Wheeler Jennifer Woda

Bass

Bryant Bush Michael Borden James Eder Daewon Seo Jonathan Stuckey

Supernumeraries - Sue Hundermark and Beshoy Hanna

Artistic & Productions Staff

Conductor - Domenico Boyagian

Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master - Dean Buck

Rehearsal Pianist - Tatiana Loisha

Stage Director - Scott Skiba

Scenic Design and Technical Direction - Matthew D. McCarren

Lighting Design - Steve Shack

Costume Coordinator - Esther Haberlen

Costume / Wardrobe / Props - Vanessa Cook: Cook Theatre Designs LLC.

Production Stage Manager - Robert Pierce

Assistant Stage Manager - Jenna Fink

Makeup and Wigs - Francine Grassi

Makeup and Wigs Assistant - Danielle Tapp

Follow Spot Operators - Hayley Baran and Julia Aylward

Supertitle Operator - Dawna Warren

Production Assistant - Rocco Grassi

Supertitles by - Chadwick Creative Arts

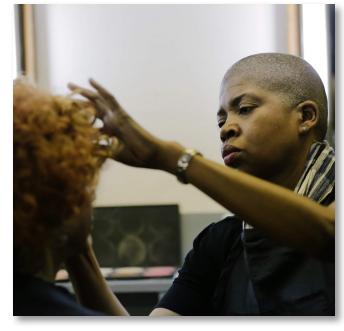
Maltz Performing Arts Center staff:

Executive Director - Randall Barnes

Director of Operations - Jason Cohen

Production Manager - Joe Piccolo

House Manager - Jordan Davis



Libretto

English

Cast

Violetta Valéry, a courtesan (soprano)

Alfredo Germont, a young bourgeois from a provincial family (tenor)

Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father (baritone)

Flora Bervoix, Violetta's friend (mezzo-soprano)

Annina, Violetta's maid (soprano)

Gastone, Alfredo's friend (tenor)

Barone Douphol, Violetta's lover, a rival of Alfredo (baritone)

Marchese d'Obigny (bass)

Dottore Grenvil (bass)

Giuseppe, Violetta's servant (tenor)

Flora's servant (bass G. Tona)

Commissioner (bass)

PRELUDE

ACT ONE

A drawing room in Violetta's home. In the background a door, opening to another room. There are two other lateral doors; to the left, a fireplace with a mirror over the mantel. In the centre of the room, a huge table richly laden. (Violetta is seated on a sofa, talking with Dr Grenvil and other friends. Some of her friends go to greet various guests as they arrive. Among them, the Baron and Flora, escorted by the Marquis.)

Personaggi

Violetta Valéry (soprano)

Flora Bervoix, sua amica (mezzosoprano)

Annina, serva di Violetta, (soprano)

Italian

Alfredo Germont (tenore)

Giorgio Germont, suo padre (baritono)

Gastone, Visconte di Létorières (tenore)

Il barone Douphol (baritono)

Il marchese d'Obigny (basso)

Il dottor Grenvil (basso)

Giuseppe, servo di Violetta (tenore)

Un domestico di Flora (basso)

Un commissionario (basso) Servi e signori amici di Violetta e Flora, Piccadori e mattadori, zingare, servi di Violetta e Flora, maschere

PRELUDIO

ATTO PRIMO

Salotto in casa di Violetta. Nel fondo c'è la porta che immette in un'altra sala; ve ne sono altre due laterali: a sinistra un caminetto con sopra uno specchio. Nel mezzo c'è una tavola riccamente imbandita. (Violetta seduta su un divano sta discorrendo col Dottore e con alcuni amici, mentre altri vanno ad incontrare

CHORUS I

You were invited for an earlier hour. You have come late.

CHORUS II

We were playing cards at Flora's, and the time passed quickly.

VIOLETTA (going to greet them)
Flora, my friends, the rest of the
evening will be gayer because you
are here. Surely the evening is livelier
with good food and drink?

FLORA, MARQUIS And can you be lively?

VIOLETTA

I must be. I give myself to pleasure, since pleasure is the best medicine for my ills.

ALL

Indeed, life is doubly heightened by pleasure. (The Viscount Gastone de Letorières enters with Alfredo Germont. Servants are busily engaged at the table.)

GASTONE

My dear Madam, in Alfredo Germont I present a man who greatly admires you; few friends are so fine as he.

VIOLETTA

(She offers her hand to Alfredo, who kisses it.) My dear Viscount, thank you for this gift.

MARQUIS My dear Alfredo

ALFREDO Marquis -(They shake hands.) quelli che sopraggiungono, tra i quali il Barone e Flora al braccio del Marchese.) misurando l'impiantito. Susanna allo specchio si sta mettendo un cappellino.)

CORO I

Dell'invito trascorsa è già l'ora. Voi tardaste.

CORO II

Giocammo da Flora, e giocando quell'ore volar.

VIOLETTA (va loro incontro) Flora, amici, la notte che resta d'altre gioie qui fate brillar. Fra le tazze più viva è la festa.

FLORA, MARCHESE E goder voi potrete?

VIOLETTA

Lo voglio; al piacere m'affido, ed io soglio con tal farmaco i mali sopir.

TUTTI

Sì, la vita s'addoppia al gioir. (Il Visconte Gastone de Letorières entra con Alfredo Germont. I servi frattanto avranno imbandite le vivande.)

GASTONE

In Alfredo Germont, o signora, ecco un altro che molto v'onora; pochi amici a lui simili sono.

VIOI FTTA

(Violetta dà la mano ad Alfredo, che gliela bacia.) Mio Visconte, mercé di tal dono.

MARCHESE Caro Alfredo - GASTONE (to Alfredo)
As I told you, here friendship joins with pleasure. (Meanwhile the servants have finished setting the table.)

VIOLETTA

Is everything ready? (A servant nods in affirmation.)

Please be seated: it is at table that the heart is gayest.

ALL

Well spoken - secret cares fly before that great friend, wine. (They take their places at the table. Violetta is seated between Alfredo and Gastone. Facing her Flora takes her place between the Marquis and the Baron. The remaining guests take their various places around the table. A moment of silence as the food is served. Violetta and Gastone are whispering to each other.) It is at table that the heart is gayest.

GASTONE Alfredo thinks of you always.

VIOLETTA
You are joking?

GASTONE

While you were ill, every day he called to ask about you.

VIOLETTA

Don't talk like that. I am nothing to him.

ALFREDO Marchese -(Si stringono la mano.)

GASTONE (ad Alfredo) T'ho detto: l'amistà qui s'intreccia al diletto. (Nel frattempo i servi hanno finito di preparare la tavola.)

VIOLETTA
Pronto è il tutto?
(Un servo fa cenno di sì.)

Miei cari, sedete: è al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

TUTTI

Ben diceste - le cure segrete fuga sempre l'amico licor. (Siedono in modo che Violetta resti tra Alfredo e Gastone; di fronte vi sarà Flora tra il Marchese ed il Barone; gli altri siedono a piacere. C'è un attimo di silenzio mentre vengono servite le portate. Violetta e Gastone si sussurrano.) È al convito che s'apre ogni cor.

GASTONE Sempre Alfredo a voi pensa.

VIOLETTA Scherzate?

GASTONE

Egra foste, e ogni dì con affanno qui volò, di voi chiese.

VIOLETTA

Cessate. Nulla son io per lui.

To continue reading the libretto, click **here!**

Things to Listen For

• Look at this chart of orchestral instruments. While you're watching the opera, try to pick out each instrument when it has a solo. What instruments do we hear the most when Violetta sings? When Alfredo sings? Mr. Germont? The chorus?



Learn more about orchestral instruments, click here!

- As you listen to the opera, listen to how the singers sing their lines.
 Does it all sound the same? Do you notice differences?

 Hint for grownups: your child should notice that sometimes the singers sound more like they're speak-singing (recitative) and sometimes sound like they're singing a regular "song" (arias).
- Violetta and Alfredo like to go to parties with lots of dancing. Can you make up some fast and slow dances to their first duet, "Libiamo nei lieti calici," and their last duet, "Parigi, o cara?"



Discussion Questions

- What is art? What is music? How do these fit into our lives?
- When do you listen to music? When do you look at art? Are there any times you experience art when you're not thinking about it (like hearing music at a grocery store)?
- Define what opera is, and what it is not.
 How does it differ from other musical and/or theatrical forms?
- Think of some of your favorite songs. Do they tell stories? If they do, what kinds of stories do they tell? Does the music help you understand the story?
- Do you consider yourself an artist? What is the criteria for being an artist? What kind of art do you like making and why?
- What do the sets and costumes tell us about the characters, and how do they help to tell the story?
- What words can we use to describe the sets and costumes?
 Can we use the same words to describe the characters?
- Are there any props that play a role in driving the plot of the story?
 How do props help the singers tell the story?
 How do they help the audience understand the story?
- What do you think Violetta is feeling throughout the opera?
- Is Violetta a good woman or a bad woman? What good things does she do? What bad things does she do? Is Alfredo a good guy or bad guy and why? What good things does he do? What bad things does he do? What about Mr. Germont?

Activities

Social Studies:

The characters of *La Traviata* live in a city called Paris, which is the capital city of a country called France. Can you find France on a map? Now, try to locate Paris on a map of France.

What country do you live in? What is the capital city of your country, and can you find it on a map? What are capital cities and what happens there?



ELA:

Alfredo's father, Mr. Germont, writes Violetta a letter to tell her how sorry he is. Practice writing a letter by memorizing your address and writing it like this:

Your Name

House Number_Street Name_Apartment Number (if you have one) City, State_ Zip Code

Then write a note to someone in your family beginning "Dear _____" and sign it at the end by saying "From, Your Name."

Science:

When Alfredo is trying to tell Violetta that he loves her, he sings to her from the street outside her window. How does his voice sound different when he is far away? Team up with a friend and take turns singing songs while you're standing right next to each other, then singing songs from across the room. What happens to the sound when you go farther away from each other?

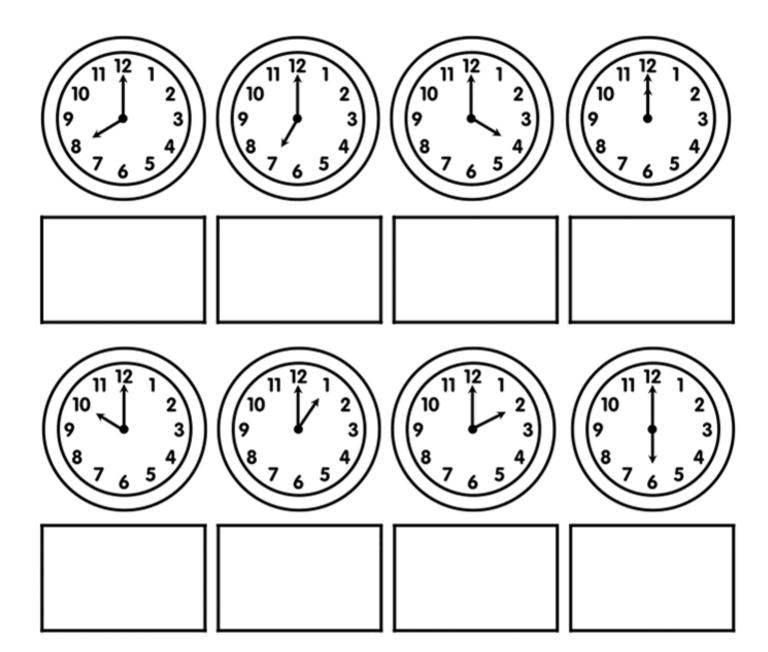
Art:

Costume designers work very hard to design costumes that help tell the story and that make the characters look good on stage. Can you draw your favorite character? How about your least favorite character? Can you draw a new costume for Violetta? What about Alfredo?



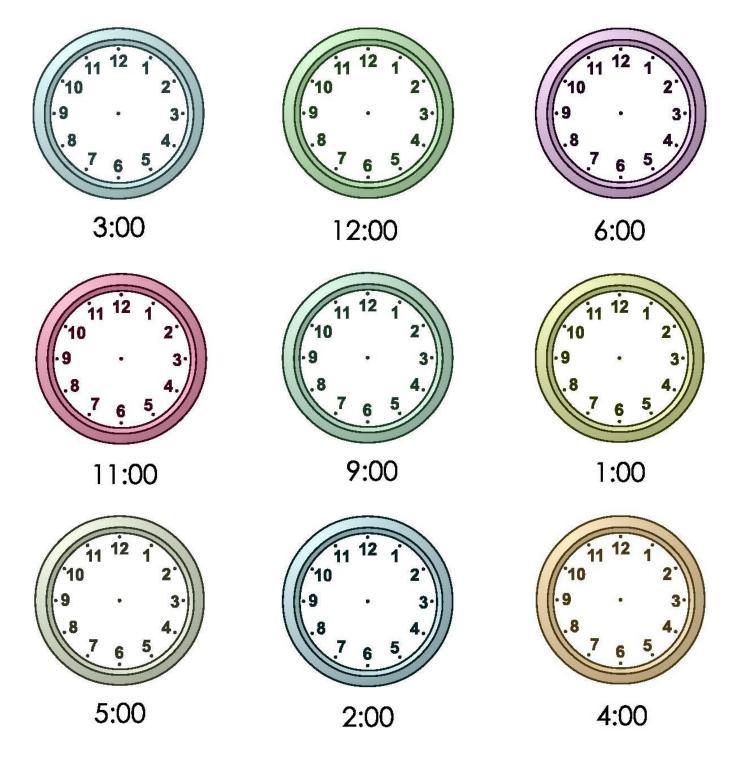
Math:

Violetta is always worried about how fast time goes. Can you tell what time is it on these clocks?



Math:

Practice telling time on a clock by coloring in the hands at different times on these clock faces. Remember, there are usually two hands on a clock face: a short one, and a long one. The short one points to what hour it is, and the long one points to the minutes past the hour.



Global Languages:

"Addio" means "goodbye" in Italian. Listen again to Violetta's song "Addio del passato," and raise your hand every time you hear her say "addio." After listening to the music, how do you think she feels about saying goodbye?

Physical Education:

Make up a dance that matches the music of "Sempre libera" (25:54 in our production) then make up a dance for "Parigi, o cara" (1:43:15).



Music:

Practice clapping to the beat of "Dell'invito trascorsa è già l'ora" (5:13). Can you march around the room in time with the music?

Glossary

A

ACT: A portion of an opera designated by the composer, which has a dramatic structure of its own.

ARIA: A solo piece written for a main character, which focuses on the character's emotion.

B

BLOCKING: Directions given to actors for on-stage movements and actions.

BRAVO (BRAH-voh): Literally, a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, "bravo" is for a single man, "brava" for a woman, and "bravi" for a group of performers.

C

CHORUS: A group of singers, singing together, who sometimes portray servants, party guests or other unnamed characters; also the music written for them.

COMPOSER: A person who writes music.

CONDUCTOR: The leader of the orchestra, sometimes called Maestro. This person leads all the musicians (instrumentalists and vocalists) in the performance of an opera; an accomplished musician with a strong sense of rhythm and an in-depth understanding of the voice and each orchestral instrument, he or she must also be able to communicate nuances of phrasing and inspire great performances from all players.

CUE: In opera, a signal to a singer or orchestra member to begin singing or playing.

curtain call: At the end of a performance, all of the members of the cast and the conductor take bows. Sometimes this is done in front of the main curtain, hence the name curtain call. Often, however, the bows are taken on the full stage with the curtain open.

CUT: To omit some of the original material from the score.

D

DESIGNER: A person who creates the lighting, costumes and/or sets.

DIRECTOR (STAGE DIRECTOR): One who prepares an opera or play for production by arranging the details of the stage settings and stage effects, and by instructing the performers in the interpretation of their roles.

DRESS REHEARSAL: A final rehearsal that uses all of the costumes, lights, etc. While sometimes it is necessary to stop for corrections, an attempt is made to make it as much like a final performance as possible.

Έ

ENSEMBLE: Two or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.

F

FULL PRODUCTION: A performance that includes all the elements of live theater: lights, costumes, props, makeup, design and audience. In opera, this includes music provided by an orchestra or piano along with the characters' singing.

Ī

INTERMISSION: A long break, usually about 20 minutes, between the acts of an opera, during which the audience is free to move around.

l

LIBRETTO:

The text or words of an opera.

LYRICS: The sung words or text of a musical comedy or operetta song.

M

MAESTRO (mah-EHS-troh): Literally "master;" used as a courtesy title for the conductor. The masculine ending is used for both men and women.

O

OPERA: Simply stated, a play that is sung. In opera, singing is the way characters express feeling; as it often takes longer to say something in music than it would in speech, the action may seem delayed or even interrupted. Opera (the Latin plural for opus, meaning "work") can involve many different art forms (singing, acting, orchestral playing, scenic artistry, costume design, lighting and dance). Like a play, an opera is acted out on a stage with performers in costumes, wigs and makeup; virtually all operatic characters sing their lines, although there are exceptions for a role that is spoken or performed in pantomime.

ORCHESTRA: The group of instrumentalists or musicians who, led by the conductor, accompany the singers.

P

PRODUCTION: The combination of sets, costumes, props, lights, etc.

PROPS (PROPERTIES): Small items carried or used by performers on stage.

R

RÉPERTOIRE (REP-er-twahr): Stock pieces that a singer or company has ready to present. Often refers to a company's current season.

S

SCORE: The written music of an opera or other musical work.

STAGE DIRECTOR: The one responsible for deciding the interpretation of each character, the movements of the singers on stage, and other things affecting the singers. Is in charge at rehearsals.

STAGE MANAGER: The person in charge of the technical aspects of the entire opera, including light changes, sound effects, entrances (even of the conductor) and everything else that happens.

SYNOPSIS: A written description of an opera's plot.

Т

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: Supervisor of those who implement the concepts of the designers. He or she works with carpenters, painters, electricians, sound designers and stagehands and oversee the building of sets, props and hanging of lights.

V

VOCAL CORDS: Wishbone-shaped edges of muscles in the lower part of the throat whose movements creates variations in pitch as air passes between them. Often spelled incorrectly as "chord."

*Based on National Opera Teacher and Educator Source (NOTES), "Glossary of Terms," Opera America, Accessed April 11, 2020, https://www.operaamerica.org/Applications/Notes/glossary.aspx.

Recommendations for videos and recordings

About the Opera:

AriaCode Podcast: Verdi's La Traviata: Opera's Original 'Pretty Woman'

Opera Cheats: La Traviata Opera in Brief: La Traviata

Full Productions:

<u>Cleveland Opera Theater's 2019 Production</u> La Traviata - Teatro Real (2015)

"Libiamo ne' lieti calici" Alfredo and Violetta Duet

<u>"Libiamo ne' lieti calici" - Anna Netrebko & Rolando Villazón (Anna Netrebko - A Decade on Stage)</u>

"Libiamo ne' lieti calici" - Michael Fabiano & Venera Gimadieva (Glyndebourne, 2014)

"Libiamo ne' lieti calici" - Saimir Pirgu & Venera Gimadieva (Royal Opera House, 2016)

"Sempre libera" Violetta's Aria

"Sempre libera" - Joan Sutherland

"Sempre libera" - Angela Gheorghiu (Royal Opera House, 1995)

"Sempre libera" - Anna Netrebko (Salzburg Festival, 2005)

"De' miei bollenti spiriti" Alfredo's Aria

"De' miei bollenti spiriti" - Giuseppe Filianoti (Tokyo, 2006)

"De' miei bollenti spiriti" - Roberto Alagna (Teatro alla Scala, 1992)

"De' miei bollenti spiriti" - Piotr Beczala (pre 2012)

"Di Provenza il mar" Giorgio Germont's Aria

"Di Provenza il mar" - Dmitri Hvorostovsky (Vienna State Opera, 2016)

"Di Provenza il mar" - Renato Bruson (LA Opera, 2007)

"Di Provenza il mar" - Giorgio Zancanaro (pre 2007)

Recommendations for books and resources

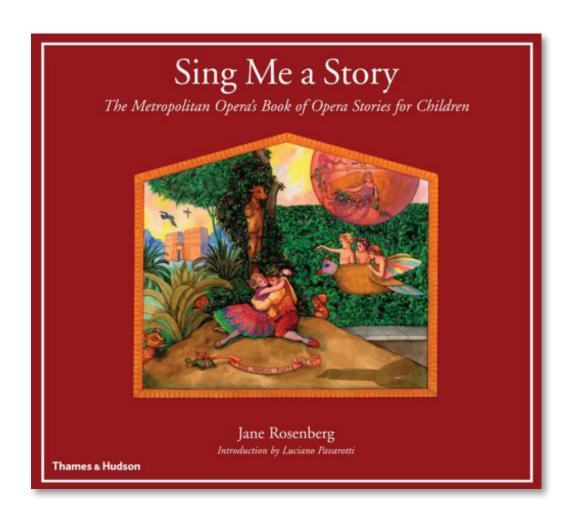
If you have enjoyed our production of Verdi's *La Traviata* and would like to learn more about the composer and the opera, please check out these resources we've compiled!

<u>Diva Delores and the Opera House Mouse</u>

Indy at the Opera: A Kitty Traviata (The Indy Stories) (Volume 1)

La Traviata - Giuseppe Verdi (Paramica)

Sing Me a Story



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