

LA TRAVIATA



CLEVELAND
OPERA THEATER

GRADE
9-12

CLEVELAND OPERA THEATER

Have questions about Verdi or *La Traviata* for our Director of Education and Outreach?

Contact Megan Thompson at
mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org



Follow us on social media!

Instagram: @cleoperatheater

Facebook: @ClevelandOperaTheater

Twitter: @CLEOperaTheater

LinkedIn: @ClevelandOperaTheater

Pinterest: @clevelandoperatheater

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

Booklet by Nicole Veigas

Welcome!

We are excited to bring you this opportunity to explore Cleveland Opera 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 designed for young opera novices, not adults. We aimed to create something a bit more mature for you to use as you watch our production.

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 to focus on the beauty of the music and exciting visuals rather than trying to follow the plot. You may even want to pause the recording and go back-and-forth from the packet to the screen, but however you decide to experience *La Traviata*, we hope you have fun and take joy in the beauty of Verdi's vision come to life!

Happy listening,

Megan Thompson
Director of Education and Outreach
Cleveland Opera Theater

Stephanie Ruozzo
Education and Outreach Associate
Cleveland Opera Theater

About Verdi



Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi (1813-1901) was born in Le Roncole, near the larger town of Busseto, in Northern Italy's Duchy of Parma. Despite his claims in later life of being born to illiterate peasants, Verdi was born to a comfortably middle-class innkeeper father and spinner mother. His formal education began at the early age of four with local Jesuit priests, and the young Verdi acquired a spinet at the age of seven. By his ninth year, Verdi became the full-time organist for his neighborhood church of San Michele, even composing some pieces for liturgical use. He held this post for only a brief time, however, as he moved to Busseto to begin studying at the *ginnasio*, where he learned composition from Ferdinando Provesi. Again, the evidence of this youthful training is at odds with Verdi's later self-mythologizing as a natural genius who excelled at music largely untutored. While in Busseto, Verdi attracted the attention of a wealthy patron Antonio Barezzi, who welcomed the young composer into his home as a music tutor for his daughter, Margherita. Verdi and Margherita developed an instant rapport, and married within a few years; Verdi's professional life advanced at the same time, and he gave his first public performance in Antonio Barezzi's home.



Recognizing the need for travel and establishment in the intellectual and cultural capital of Milan, Verdi and his young bride transferred there so that he could begin composing full-scale operas. In Milan, Verdi studied with another composer,

Vincenzo Lavigna, whose job involved arranging orchestrations for *La Scala* Opera House. In his maturity, Verdi lamented that Lavigna's tutelage did not provide sufficient scope for creativity because Lavigna focused strictly on exercises in counterpoint (i.e. the combining of multiple melodic lines in such a way that consonant sounds are the only acceptable ones, and dissonances must resolve in very specific ways). Success was not immediate, and the tragic period of 1838-1839 spelled disaster for the family as Verdi suffered the deaths of his two small children.

His fortunes revived in November of 1839 with the premiere at Milan's most prestigious opera house, *La Scala*, of his first opera, *Oberto*. This first venture was a moderate success, and gained him a commission for three more operas to be staged at the same house. In the following year, Verdi's second opera, *Un Giorno di Regno*, failed so spectacularly that it almost ruined his entire career. *Un Giorno di Regno* was a comic opera, an unusual feat for Verdi, and - despite his prolific output over several decades - the composer did not write another comic opera (*Falstaff*, 1893) until the last decade of his life. In a corresponding blow to Verdi's personal life, Margherita died in June 1840. Disheartened, the young composer considered giving up his career at this point.

Fortunately, eighteen months after the failure of *Un Giorno di Regno*, Verdi's *Nabucco* cemented his reputation as the voice of the Italian people. This opera tells the story of ancient Israelites during the Babylonian exile longing for freedom in their homeland. The Chorus of Hebrew Slaves, or "Va, pensiero," has since become an patriotic anthem for Italians. Verdi's advocacy of Italian independence during the decades of the Risorgimento (or Resurgence) led to cries of "Viva Verdi!" as a political rallying slogan during the nation's three wars against foreign occupation. Government censors did not recognize Verdi's name as an acronym representing Vittorio Emmanuele, Re d'Italia (Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of a unified Italy), but the composer did, and actively encouraged the association. Revolutionary undertones were a common theme of Verdi's operas, and his nonpareil choral features signified a society bound together in purpose and will, united in their desire to reclaim their homeland.

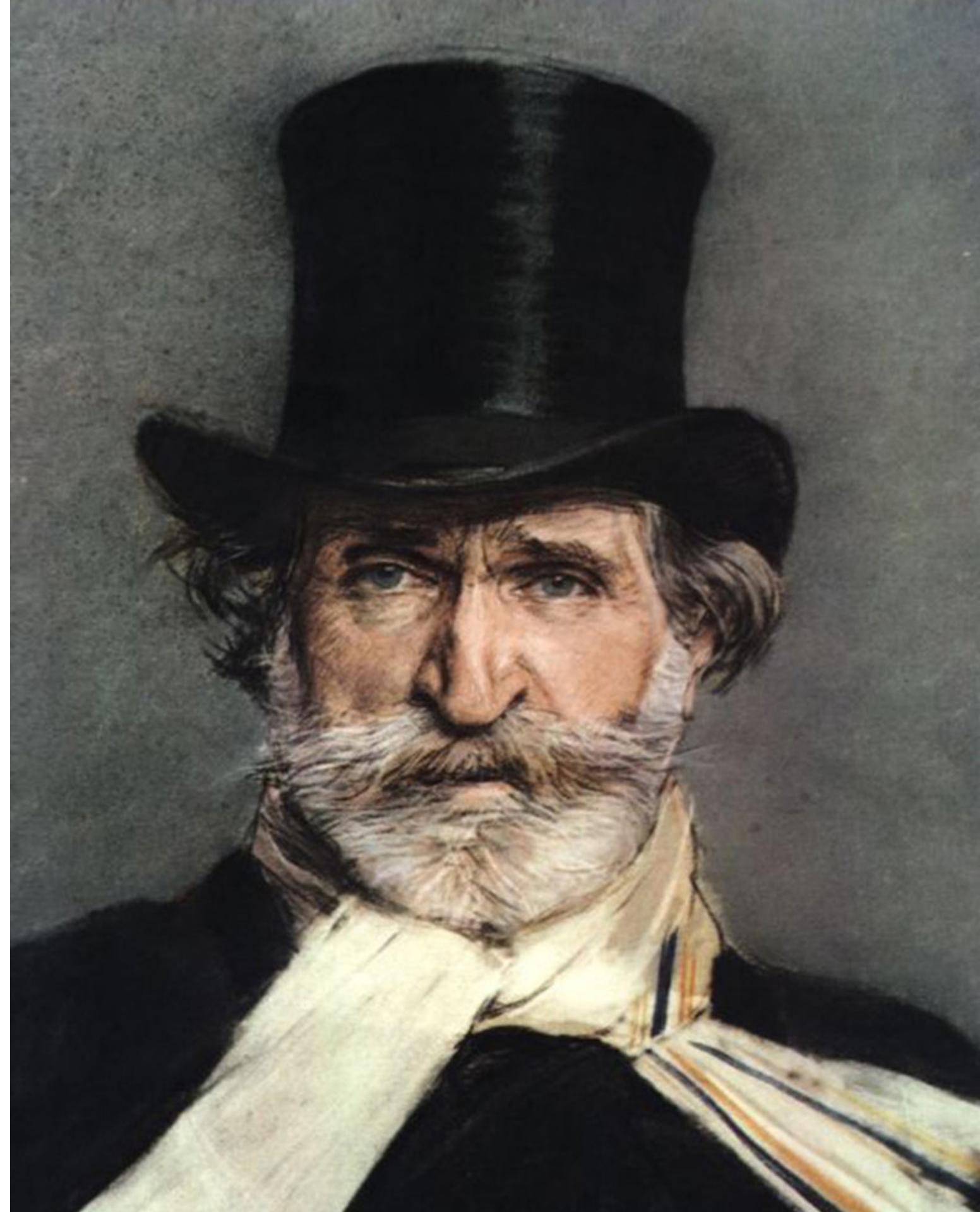
Verdi called his early period of success, from 1839 until 1853, his "galley years" because they were a time of constant, numerous contractual obligations. During this time, Verdi composed and oversaw the production of a total of sixteen



complete operas. This is not to mention the considerable number of revivals of earlier operas that he oversaw. He collaborated with various librettists, such as Temistocle Solera and Salvadore Cammarano, but it was with Francesco Maria Piave (librettist of *La Traviata*) that Verdi felt most comfortable to alter text and shape the drama according to musical concerns, rather than vice versa. His experimentation with the musical forms and scene structures established by the previous generation of bel canto composers (Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti most prominent among them) allowed for innovative dramatic representations. Verdi felt free to cut arias or scenes short, omit sections, or add extra sections to reflect the emotions of characters in certain situations. The massive success of *La Traviata* upon its premiere at Venice's Teatro La Fenice in 1853 permitted Verdi to relax the pace of his compositions and be more judicious about commissions to accept, thus ending the galley years.

The next period of Verdi's life was a cosmopolitan one, giving rise to two opera premieres in Paris, two in Russia, and travels to London and Madrid. He also became more politically active at this time, accepting a post as a deputy (what we may recognize as a senator or representative) in the First Italian Parliament in 1861. Because of his renowned status, Verdi was also freer to exert influence over his subject matter, libretti, larger orchestras and choruses, and formal experimentation. We see in these middle period works a rejection of the *melodramma* genre conventions and the emergence of less-defined structures where the distinction between individual "numbers" in the opera disappears. This period of composition culminated in the premiere of *Aida* in 1871, after which Verdi would not compose another opera for sixteen years. We now know these sixteen years as the "interregnum," and though he produced no new operas in this era, Verdi occupied himself by overseeing new stagings of previous operas, composing chamber music, and completing his Requiem for the celebrated Risorgimento author, Alessandro Manzoni. These professional duties coincided with his charitable work, contributions to curricula for the newly established national conservatories, and political career.

The last period of Verdi's career - and life - was dominated by Shakespeare (a lifelong fascination for the composer) and revisions of earlier works with the help of librettist Arrigo Boito. His final two operas, *Otello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893) were both adaptations of Shakespeare plays, the latter being a combination of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and parts of *Henry IV*. Verdi devoted significant time and money to his charitable projects, most notably the Casa di Riposo, a retirement home for musicians in his beloved home of Sant'Agata. Verdi died in January of 1901, and his legacy celebrated by the illustrious conductor, Arturo Toscanini, who led a tribute of "Va, pensiero."



Timeline of Events

1810

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

1815
Underground Railroad is established in Indiana by Levi Coffin

1817
Francis Johnson becomes the first black bandleader and composer to publish sheet music

1818
Mary Shelley publishes Frankenstein

1820

1821
First black acting company, The Africa Grove Theatre Group, is founded in New York

1828
The United States first public railroad is constructed between Baltimore and Ohio

1828
Noah Webster publishes the American Dictionary

1830

1833
British Empire abolishes slavery

1837
Queen Victoria takes the British throne

1837
Francis Johnson, an African American, is the first American to perform for Queen Victoria

1838
Trail of Tears - Andrew Jackson forces Native Americans to leave their lands

1840

1845
Potato famine begins in Ireland, lasting until 1849

1848
California Gold Rush - many Americans move out west to California to mine for gold

1848
First Women's right convention (Seneca Falls Convention) in the United States, launching the women's suffrage movement

1850

1851
***Rigoletto*, an opera by Verdi, premiers in Venice**

1853
***La Traviata*, by Verdi, premiers in Venice**

1859
Charles Darwin publishes *The Origin of Species*



1860

1860
Abraham Lincoln is elected

1861
The Confederate States are formed

1861
The Civil War between the North and South takes place over the expansion of slavery

1863
Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves

1863
Gettysburg address is delivered by Abraham Lincoln

1865
Civil War ends and slavery is abolished in America

1866
Ku Klux Klan is formed

1870

1872

Yellowstone Park becomes the first established national park in the United States

1874

First Impressionist art exhibit is curated, featuring such artists as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro & Berthe Morisot



1880

1878

Salvation Army is founded by Reverend William Booth

1882

U.S adopts standard time (Ex. Eastern Time)

1885

Automobile is invented

1886

Statue of Liberty gifted to the United States by France

1888

Kodak box camera is created by George Eastman

1889

Eiffel Tower is completed in Paris, France

1890

1892

Tchaikovsky composes *The Nutcracker*



1896

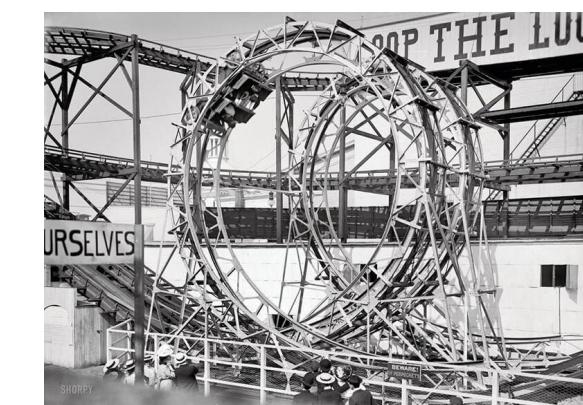
First Olympic Games take place in Athens, Greece

1898

Spanish-American War ends Spanish rule in the Americas

1898

The loop-de-loop rollercoaster is invented by Edwin Prescott in Coney Island, New York



1900

1901

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

Opera Synopsis



ACT I

Violetta Valéry knows that she will die soon, exhausted by her restless life as a courtesan. At a party she is introduced to Alfredo Germont, who has been fascinated by her for a long time. Rumor has it that he has been enquiring after her health every day. The guests are amused by this seemingly naïve and emotional attitude, and they ask Alfredo to propose a toast. He celebrates true love, and Violetta responds in praise of free love (Ensemble: "Libiamo ne' lieti calici"). She is touched by his candid manner and honesty. Suddenly she feels faint, and the guests withdraw. Only Alfredo remains behind and declares his love (Duet: "Un dì felice"). There is no place for such feelings in her life, Violetta replies. But she gives him a camellia, asking him to return when the flower has faded. He realizes this means he will see her again the following day. Alone, Violetta is torn by conflicting emotions—she doesn't want to give up her way of life, but at the same time she feels that Alfredo has awakened her desire to be truly loved ("Ah, fors'è lui... Sempre libera").

ACT II

Violetta has chosen a life with Alfredo, and they enjoy their love in the country, far from society ("De' miei bollenti spiriti"). When Alfredo discovers that this is only possible because Violetta has been selling her property, he immediately leaves for Paris to procure money. Violetta has received an invitation to a masked ball, but she no longer cares for such distractions. In Alfredo's absence, his father, Giorgio Germont, pays her a visit. He demands that she separate from his son, as their relationship threatens his daughter's impending marriage (Duet: "Pura siccome un angelo"). But over the course of their conversation, Germont comes to realize that Violetta is not after his son's money—she is a woman who loves unselfishly. He appeals to Violetta's generosity of spirit and explains that, from a bourgeois point of view, her liaison with Alfredo has no future. Violetta's resistance dwindles and she finally agrees to leave Alfredo forever. Only after her death shall he learn the

truth about why she returned to her old life. She accepts the invitation to the ball and writes a goodbye letter to her lover. Alfredo returns, and while he is reading the letter, his father appears to console him ("Di Provenza"). But all the memories of home and a happy family can't prevent the furious and jealous Alfredo from seeking revenge for Violetta's apparent betrayal.

At the masked ball, news has spread of Violetta and Alfredo's separation. There are grotesque dance entertainments, ridiculing the duped lover. Meanwhile, Violetta and her new lover, Baron Douphol, have arrived. Alfredo and the baron battle at the gaming table and Alfredo wins a fortune: lucky at cards, unlucky in love. When everybody has withdrawn, Alfredo confronts Violetta, who claims to be truly in love with the Baron. In his rage Alfredo calls the guests as witnesses and declares that he doesn't owe Violetta anything. He throws his winnings at her. Giorgio Germont, who has witnessed the scene, rebukes his son for his behavior. The baron challenges his rival to a duel.

ACT III

Violetta is dying. Her last remaining friend, Doctor Grenvil, knows that she has only a few more hours to live. Alfredo's father has written to Violetta, informing her that his son was not injured in the duel. Full of remorse, he has told him about Violetta's sacrifice. Alfredo wants to rejoin her as soon as possible. Violetta is afraid that he might be too late ("Addio, del passato"). The sound of rampant celebrations are heard from outside while Violetta is in mortal agony. But Alfredo does arrive and the reunion fills Violetta with a final euphoria (Duet: "Parigi, o cara"). Her energy and exuberant joy of life return. All sorrow and suffering seems to have left her—a final illusion, before death claims her.



Characters



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 de Letorières - 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

Commissioner
bass

Voice Type



Operatic voices can be classified by a variety of means. At base we define singers by the vocal range of their voice (basically what notes they can sing), but opera has also determined other ways to classify singing voices based on other qualities of the voice. Here, we take a look at the voice types Verdi utilized in *La Traviata*:

Soprano: the highest female voice, sopranos often take the leading roles in operas.

Lyric Soprano: lyric sopranos are the most common in opera. Annina is usually sung by a lyric soprano.

Dramatic Coloratura Soprano: these ladies have more powerful, rich, emotive voices that can sing over a large orchestra while still being agile. Usually, Violetta is cast as a dramatic coloratura soprano.

Mezzo-Soprano: Singing slightly lower than the soprano, mezzos very often sing supporting roles in opera, particularly older women and pants roles. Flora Bervoix is usually cast as a mezzo-soprano in *La Traviata*.

Tenor: the highest male voice, tenors are often the leading role. Gastone de Letorières and Giuseppe are both tenors.

Lyric Tenor: Usually, this is the character that "gets the girl." Lyrics have warm voices with full, bright timbres that are strong, but nowhere near as heavy as dramatic tenors. In this opera, Alfredo Germont is a lyric tenor.

Lyric Baritone: Singing in a range between tenor and bass, the lyric baritone is a light, mid-range male voice. In *La Traviata*, Verdi wrote two roles for lyric baritone - Baron Douphol and Giorgio Germont.

Lyric Bass: This is the lowest male voice type of all. Rarely do these singers get the girl, but they often portray supporting characters. Doctor Grenvil is a lyric bass role as are Marchese d'Obigny and the Commissioner.

Cast



Violetta Valéry - [Angela Mortellaro](#)

Alfredo Germont - [Banjamin Werley](#)

Giorgio Germont - [Grant Youngblood](#)

Flora Bervoix - [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

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 and Production 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:

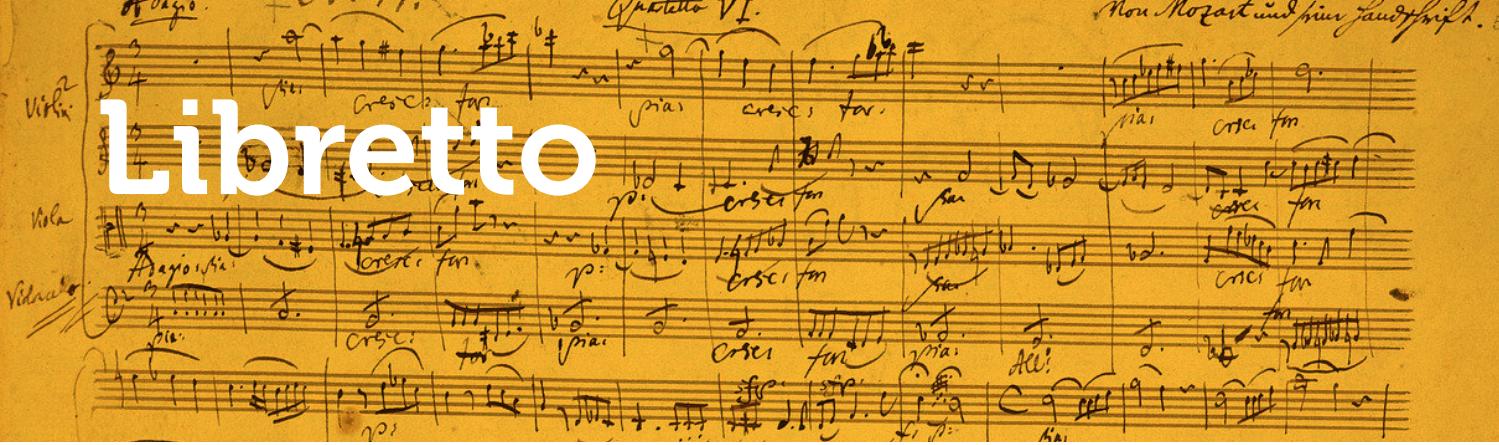
Executive Director - [Randall Barnes](#)

Director of Operations - [Jason Cohen](#)

Production Manager - [Joe Piccolo](#)

House Manager - [Jordan Davis](#)

Libretto



English

Italian

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

Personaggi

Violetta Valéry (soprano)
 Flora Bervoix, sua amica (mezzosoprano)
 Annina, serva di Violetta, (soprano)
 Alfredo Germont (tenore)
 Giorgio Germont, suo padre (baritono)
 Gastone, Visconte di Létonières (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

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.)

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.

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 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.

VIOLETTA

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

MARQUIS
My dear Alfredo

ALFREDO
Marquis -
(They shake hands.)

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.

tal dono.

MARCHESE
Caro Alfredo -

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

GASTONE
I do not deceive you.

VIOLETTA
It is true then? But why?
I don't understand.

ALFREDO
Yes, it is true.

VIOLETTA
I thank you.
You, Baron, were less attentive.

BARON
I have only known you for a year.

VIOLETTA
And he for just a few minutes.

FLORA (in a low voice, to the Baron)
It would have been better to say
nothing.

BARON (softly, to Flora)
I don't like this young man.

FLORA
Why not? I think he's very pleasant.

GASTONE (to Alfredo)
And you have nothing more to say?

MARQUIS (to Violetta)
It's up to you to make him talk.

VIOLETTA
Cessate. Nulla son io per lui.

GASTONE
Non v'inganno.

VIOLETTA
Vero è dunque? Onde ciò?
Nol comprendo.

ALFREDO
Sì, egli è ver.

VIOLETTA
Le mie grazie vi rendo.
Voi, barone, non faceste altrettanto.

BARONE
Vi conosco da un anno soltanto.

VIOLETTA
Ed ei solo da qualche minuto.

FLORA (sottovoce al Barone)
Meglio forse se aveste tacito.

BARONE (piano a Flora)
M'è increscioso quel giovin.

FLORA
Perché? A me invece simpatico
egli è.

GASTONE (ad Alfredo)
E tu dunque non apri più bocca?

MARCHESE (a Violetta)
È a madama che scuotelo tocca.

To continue reading the libretto, click [here!](#)

Things to Listen For



- When the party ends, everybody leaves, still singing. Notice how the music here is fast and repeats a lot of short lines, much like a whirlpool. This music is illustrative of the exhausting, pleasure-seekers' lifestyle.
- The tradition in opera at this time was to use duets to move the action forward between two characters. Most often, these duets would be constructed for four distinct sections:
 - **Tempo d'attacco** - a fast movement performed by one or both singers
 - **Cantabile** - a slower, more lyrical section than the first
 - **Tempo di mezzo** - a short, quick transition section
 - **Cabaletta** - a rapid, energetic conclusion
- Can you find a place in the opera where this happens? (Hint: There's a great example in Act III!)
- How does the chorus interact with Violetta throughout the opera? Do you think their music fits together or goes against each other?
- Violetta dies of consumption (tuberculosis), which is a respiratory disease. Can we hear her breathing affected in any way while listening to her sing? Are her melodies/voice the same at the end of La Traviata as they are at the beginning?
- When Violetta is on her deathbed, she is suddenly able to let for a powerful high B-flat. Why would Verdi write this music for someone dying? There's actually a scientific reason - this moment depicts "spes phthisica" — a fleeting sensation just before death when the dying person momentarily felt as though they were recovering. It is actually caused by a surge of adrenal hormones that often precedes death.

La Traviata in Pop Culture



Due to its popularity, *La Traviata* has made its way into pop culture. Here are just a few of the instances:

- The 1990 blockbuster *Pretty Woman*, starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere featured *La Traviata* prominently. This opera was chosen specifically because of the parallels between the movie's storyline and that of the opera. Not only do the characters attend a performance of *La Traviata*, but the music is brought back at the end of the film.
- As the camera dollies by the traffic jam at the start of *La La Land* (2016), each car radio is tuned to a different station, showcasing a wide variety of genres, and we hear a very brief snippet of the final Act I chorus of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Unlike *Pretty Woman*, the theme of the opera doesn't really relate to that of the movie other than the fact that both stories center on the relationships between a young man and a young woman, and neither features a classically happy ending.
- Often, operatic music is utilized in marketing vehicles because of the subliminal message that opera is high class, so this vehicle must be, too. Kia has featured Puccini, Volvo utilized Mozart, but Nissan chose "Sempre Libera" from *La Traviata* to advertise the *Nissan Qashqai*.

Discussion Questions

- What was your first exposure to opera? What do you remember about it? What do you think about opera now? Have your views changed in the meantime or have they been reinforced by later experiences?
- Define what opera is, and what it is not. How does it differ from other musical and/or theatrical forms? Pick your favorite TV show, movie, book, and song. Discuss how each is like an opera and how each is different. If you had to write your own opera, what subjects would you want to write about? What makes a story appropriate for the opera genre or not?
- What did you expect to experience with this opera? Were your predictions correct? In what ways were your expectations met or not met? What experiences did you base your expectations on?
- Did you identify with any characters in this opera? Why or why not? Do you think Verdi wanted us to identify with any of the characters, and why or why not?
- How did the technical elements (sets, costumes, lighting, sound effects, special effects) support the story? What do the sets and costumes tell us about the characters, and how do they help to tell the story? Did anything in particular stand out? What challenges do you think the singers, conductor, orchestra, costumer, set designer, lighting designer, and prop master faced while staging this production? What changes would you make if you got to stage the production?
- Are there any props that play a role in driving the plot of the story? Are props more important to the actors/singers or to the audience, and why?
- How did the music reinforce the action on stage? What musical changes did you note throughout that marked the change of setting or atmosphere? Were there any times when the music did not match the text/lyrics? The action onstage? The feelings of the character(s) singing? What was your reaction if you noticed the music did not match some other part of the production?

- In what ways do the actors embody the characters to make their personalities and desires clearer to the audience? How does Verdi's music add to your understanding of the characters?
- What upsets the countess about her husband's affairs, besides the affairs themselves?
- Women in the 19th century did not get to make many choices about their lives. How many choices do you think Violetta made in her life leading up to the events of *La Traviata* and what might her options have been? In what ways was she strong? In what ways was she weak? Would you consider a role model for modern women?
- Do you think Mr. Germont had a good reason for asking Violetta to end her relationship with Alfredo, and why or why not? Is there another way he could have handled the situation?
- Violetta keeps receiving letters from friends like Flora who want her to return to Paris and the "party scene." Alfredo wants Violetta to stay alone with him in the country. Who do you think loves her more and why? Does anybody really love Violetta or are they projecting their own emotions/wishes onto her?
- The authors of *La Traviata* actually drew inspiration from a real-life courtesan named Marie Duplessis. Find out as much as you can about her, and compare her life to Violetta's life. What other pieces of art (literary, filmic, and musical) were inspired by Duplessis' life? What do these other pieces have in common with *La Traviata* and how are they different?
- Do you think this opera is relevant to audiences today, especially in light of a COVID-19 pandemic? What lessons can we learn from *La Traviata*? Or is this story so tied to its 19th century setting that we should not divorce it from that context?
- "La traviata" translates to "the fallen woman" in English. Does this affect your interpretation of the Violetta character? Do you think Verdi wanted us to see Violetta as "fallen" and why or why not? Is she fallen in the way that the characters around her (or the original audience members) might expect, and why or why not?
- A lot of modern popular art (movies, musicals, plays) is based on the story of *La Traviata*. What pieces can you think of that are still popular today that use the same story arc? How are they alike, and how are they different?
- What were the ideals of the Romantic Era? How did artists express these ideals in the fine and performing arts? What tropes are common among these pieces of art? What statements, actions, or scenes in the opera relate to ideas of the Romantic era (N.B. that "Romantic" does not "romantic" in terms of centering on a love story)?

Activities



Social Studies:

The plot of *La Traviata* is based on a contemporaneous French novel by the author Alexandre Dumas fils, which was in turn based on the real life of a Parisian woman known as Marie Duplessis. Read the background story from Britain's Royal Opera House and listen to or read the transcript of the BBC's podcast diving into the history of Marie Duplessis and the art based on her life.

Compare and contrast:

- a) Duplessis' real life
- b) Dumas' novel
- c) Verdi's opera.

What do all three have in common? What makes each version of the story stand out from the others?

[The Real Traviata: The tragic true story that inspired *La Traviata*](#)

[The Tragic Story of La Traviata](#)

ELA:

Mr. Germont is arguably the hardest character to understand or sympathize with in the entire opera. After reviewing the plot again, rewrite *La Traviata* as a short story from his perspective. Consider his motivations, values, and culture. When writing his side of the story, include his discoveries and impressions of the events as they occur.



Art:

Alfredo offers Violetta flowers as a sign of his love, but Violetta maintains that they will wither soon. Do you have any flowers near your home? Gather a bouquet of flowers (with permission!) and dry them by hanging them upside down. You can use the directions provided by FTD By Design to help you:
<https://www.ftd.com/blog/create/how-to-dry-flowers>

No flowers nearby? Try making these flowers out of paper!

<https://theartofsimple.net/crepe-paper-flowers-for-mothers-day/>

Science:

Violetta is sick with a respiratory illness (a sickness of the lungs that affects the patient's ability to breathe) known during the 19th century as consumption. Today we call this same illness tuberculosis, or TB. Try doing some preliminary research on public medical databases (something like WebMD) about tuberculosis. What causes it? How is it treated? Was tuberculosis a prevalent disease at any point in time? Why isn't tuberculosis prevalent today? How does tuberculosis compare to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) - the disease causing the 2020 pandemic?

After learning all you can about tuberculosis, listen to Act III of *La Traviata* again; do you hear any signs or symptoms of the illness in Violetta's singing? How about in the way the orchestra plays when she sings or when people are talking about her?

Math:

When Alfredo gets mad at Violetta, he throws a stack of money at her. In Paris during the 19th century, they would have used a form of currency known as the franc. Use the tables at the website below to convert U.S. dollar amounts into French francs. Try to exchange as many dollar amounts as possible. Try 10 dollars, then \$20, \$50, \$100 and \$1,000. Once you've mastered the process, reverse it by converting francs to dollars (again, try 10, 20, 50, 100, and 1,000). **HINT:** If you had to divide to go from dollars to francs, you'll have to multiply to go from francs to dollars.



[1 FRF to USD | Convert French Francs to Dollars | French Franc to Dollar Conversion](#)

Music:

La Traviata is a story that has been adapted many times in the 19th, 20th, and even 21st century. In the current age of streaming, put together a playlist of at least ten songs that, when strung together, would tell Violetta's story to an audience today. Try to represent as many characters as possible, and search for songs that fit the situation and/or feelings throughout the story. Can't find the perfect song? Try asking an adult for suggestions from when they were your age, or try your hand at writing your own! If you're really proud of your playlist-opera, post it on social media and tag Cleveland Opera Theater!

Physical Education:

Most of the numbers in *La Traviata* are variations of waltzes. Look at this American dance manual published around the same time that Verdi's opera premiered. Follow the instructions and dance the waltz at different tempos to "Libiamo nei lieti calici" ([9:08 in our recording](#)), "Sempre libera" ([25:54](#)), and "Parigi, o cara" ([1:43:15](#)).
[19th Century Dance Manual](#)



Global Languages:

"Addio del passato" ([1:37:10 in Cleveland Opera Theater's recording](#)), Violetta's farewell aria from Act III, is a slow-moving one where listeners have the ability to catch each word. Listen again to this aria while looking at the Italian text on the page. Highlight, circle, or underline any words that you think look familiar or similar to English words you know. Try to guess the meanings of these similar words (called "cognates"), and "rewrite" your own version of what Violetta is saying in modern English.

Once you've finished your version, look at the English translation and compare how close your meaning is to Verdi's and Piave's original. Now that you've used your own vocabulary and compared the Italian and English texts side-by-side, can you guess the meaning of any more Italian words?

Italian

Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti,
Le rose del volto già son pallenti;
L'amore d'Alfredo pur esso mi manca,
Conforto, sostegno dell'anima stanca
Ah, della traviata sorridi al desio;
A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio,
Or tutto finì.

Le gioie, i dolori tra poco avran fine,
La tomba ai mortali di tutto è confine!
Non lagrima o fiore avrà la mia fossa,
Non croce col nome che copra quest'ossa!
Ah, della traviata sorridi al desio;
A lei, deh, perdona; tu accoglila, o Dio,
Or tutto finì.

English

Farewell past, happy dreams of days gone bye;
The roses in my cheeks already are faded.
Even Alfredo's love is lacking,
To comfort and uphold my weary spirit.
Oh, comfort, sustain a tired soul,
And may God pardon and make her his own!
Ah, all is finished

The joys, the sorrows will be soon over,
The tomb confines all mortals!
Neither tears or flowers will my grave have,
No cross with a name that covers my bones!
Oh, comfort, sustain a tired soul,
And may God pardon and make her his own!
Ah, all is finished.

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.

ASIDE: A comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.

ARTIST MANAGER OR ARTIST

REPRESENTATIVE: An agent who represents artists by publicizing their talents, finding roles for them, negotiating their contracts and handling other business matters for them.

B

BATON: A short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.

BEL CANTO: An Italian phrase literally meaning "beautiful singing." A traditional Italian style of singing that emphasizes tone, phrasing, coloratura passages and technique. Also refers to opera written in this style.

BUFFO: From the Italian for "buffoon." A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa).

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

BOW, BOWING: The bow is the wand used to play string instruments. The concertmaster determines when the bows should rise or fall, and this bowing is noted in the score so that all move in the same direction.

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

CABALETTA (cah-bah-LEHT-tah): Second part of a two-part aria, always in a faster tempo than the first part.

CADENZA (kuh-DEN-zuh): A passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.

CANZONE, CANZONETTA (Cahn-TSOH-neh, cahn-tsoh-NEHT-tah): A folk-like song commonly used in opera buffa.

CARPENTER: The carpenter works on the construction of the sets. Production Carpenter is the title given to the one in charge of the backstage crew, even though working with wood may not be involved.

CAVATINA (cah-vah-TEE-nah): The meaning of this term has changed over the years. It now usually refers to the opening, slow section of a two part aria. In Rossini's time it referred to the entrance, or first aria sung by a certain character. Norma's "Casta diva" is an example of a cavatina in both senses. See also SCENA

CHOREOGRAPHER: The person who designs the motions of a dance.

CHOREOGRAPHY: The act of setting movement to create a dance.

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

CHORUS MASTER: The one in charge of choosing chorus members and rehearsing them for performance. If there is a backstage chorus, it is usually conducted by the chorus master who is in communication with the conductor of the orchestra.

CLIQUE (klak): A group of people hired to sit in the audience and either applaud enthusiastically to ensure success or whistle and boo to create a disaster. In past years, leading singers were sometimes blackmailed to pay a clique to insure that claqueurs would not create a disturbance. Even now, a clique is sometimes used but rarely acknowledged.

COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE (cohm-MEH-dee-ah dehl-AHR-teh): A type of comic opera popular in Italy in the 16th to 18th centuries that involved improvisation using stock characters and gestures. The characters were often masked to represent certain archetypes.

COMPOSER: A person who writes music.

COMPRIAMARIO (cohm-pree-MAH-ree-oh): A secondary or supporting role or a person singing such a role.

CONCERTATO (cohn-chehr-TAH-toh): A large ensemble of soloists and chorus generally found in the second movement of a central finale, to which it forms the lyrical climax.

CONCERTMASTER: The first-chair violinist who plays occasional solos and is responsible for coordinating all of the stringed instruments. The concertmaster decides on the bowing so that all of the string players' bows move in unison.

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.

CONTINUO (cohn-TEE-noo-oh): An extemporized chordal accompaniment for recitativo secco, usually by a harpsichord, cello or double bass. Opera seria continuo often used an ensemble of harpsichord and theorbo (member of the lute family). Opera buffa continuo used a single keyboard and string bass.

CORD, VOCAL: The 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."

COSTUME DESIGNER: Works with the set designer to prepare costumes that are appropriate for the rest of the production. Often oversees the preparation of the costumes.

COSTUME SHOP: A special area set aside for the making of the costumes or for adjusting those that are rented.

COVER: The name given to an understudy in opera; someone who replaces a singer in case of illness or other misfortune.

CRESCENDO (kri-SHEN-doh): A gradual increase in volume. Orchestral crescendos were one of Rossini's trademarks.

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

DA CAPO ARIA (DAH CAH-poh): An aria in the form ABA. A first section is followed by a shorter second section. Then the first is repeated, usually with added ornamentation.

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

DIAPHRAGM: A muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach which acts as a trampoline does, pushing the air from the lungs at a desired rate.

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.

DIVA: Literally "goddess," it refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is divo.

DOUBLE ARIA: An aria which consists of two parts. The first part, or cavatina, is usually slow and the second, or cabaletta is faster. There is often recitative between the two sections.

DOWNSTAGE: See STAGE AREAS.

DRAMATIC (Voice type): The heaviest voice, capable of sustained declamation and a great deal of power, even over the largest operatic orchestra of about 80 instruments. This description applies to all voice ranges from soprano to bass.

DRAMATURG: One who suggests repertory, advises on the suitability of competing editions of operas and writes or edits material for program books and supertitles.

DRESS (a wig): To prepare a wig for use.

DRESSER: A member of the backstage staff who helps the artists change their costumes. The principal singers usually have their own dresser. Supers and chorus members share dressers.

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.

DUET: An extended musical passage performed by two singers. They may or may not sing simultaneously or on the same musical line.

DYNAMIC: The degree of loudness and quietness in music. See *PIANO* and *FORTE*.

E

ELECTRICIAN: One who is charged with executing the lighting design according to the specifications of the lighting designer.

ENCORE: Literally means "again." It used to be the custom for a singer to repeat a popular aria if the audience called "encore" loudly enough. This is still done in the middle of an opera in countries such as Italy, but it is rare elsewhere. Soloists frequently give encores at the end of a concert but not an opera.

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

F

FALSETTO: A method of singing above the natural range of the male voice. Often used in opera for comic effects such as a man imitating a woman.

FINALE: The last musical number of an opera or the last number of an act.

FLY, FLY TOWER: A high space above the stage where pieces of the set are

often raised up or flown out of sight when not in use.

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.

G

GENERAL DIRECTOR: The head of an opera company. The one ultimately responsible for all artistic and financial aspects of everything in which the company is involved.

GRAND OPERA: Specifically, a serious opera of epic proportions with no spoken dialogue, composed in 19th-century France (such as *Les Huguenots* by Meyerbeer); more broadly, an opera sung and produced in the "grand manner."

H

HELDEN: Prefix meaning "heroic." Applicable to other voices but usually used in Helden tenor.

HOUSE MANAGER: For performances, the person who is responsible for the audience and all that happens from the entry to the theater, to the box office, to the seating and audience behavior in the hall.

I

IMPRESARIO: A person who sponsors entertainment. In opera, the general director of an opera company.

INTERLUDE: A short piece of instrumental music played between scenes or acts.

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

L

LEITMOTIV (LEIT-moh-tif) or MOTIF: A short, recurring musical phrase associated with a particular character or event.

LIBRARIAN: In charge of preparing the music for the orchestra. Scores are usually rented and have to be annotated to reflect cuts and other changes for a given production.

LIBRETTO: The text or words of an opera.

LIGHTING DESIGNER: One who designs and coordinates the light changes that help create opera's overall effect. Much of this is now computerized.

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.

MAGIC OPERA: An opera in which there are many magical effects and often animals appearing on stage. Often the plot of a magic opera involves the rescue of one of the major characters.

MAKEUP DESIGNER: One who designs and applies makeup to actors in order to appear properly under stage lighting, or to appear older, younger, as a creature, etc.

MARK: To sing very softly or not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer's voice so most mark during rehearsals. During dress rehearsals singers try to sing at full voice for at least some of the time.

MELODRAMA: In a technique which originated with the French; short passages of music alternating with spoken words.

N

NUMBER OPERA: An opera composed of individual numbers, such as recitative, arias, duets, ensembles, etc. Between the numbers there is often a chance for applause. Most of the operas of Mozart, Rossini and Bellini can be called number operas.

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.

OPERA BUFFA (BOOF-fah): An opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic, which first developed in the 18th century. Don Pasquale is an example of opera buffa.

OPERA SERIA (SEH-ree-ah): A "serious" opera. The usual characters are gods, goddesses or ancient heroes. Rossini was one of the last to write true opera serie, such as his last opera, Guillaume Tell.

OPERA TEXT: See *SUPERTITLES*.

OPERETTA or MUSICAL COMEDY: A play, some of which is spoken but with many musical numbers. See also *SINGSPIEL*.

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

ORCHESTRATION: The art of applying orchestral color to written music by assigning various instruments different parts of the music. This requires a complete knowledge of instrumentals and their timbre, range, etc.

OVERTURE: An orchestral introduction to an opera. (French: ouverture; German: ouverture; Italian: sinfonia).

P

PANTS ROLE or TROUSER ROLE: A role depicting a young man or boy but sung by a woman (can be a soprano or mezzo).

PARLANDO (pahr-LAHN-doh): A style of singing like ordinary speech. It can occur in the middle of an aria.

PATTER SONG: A song or aria in which the character sings as many words as possible in a short amount of time.

PIANO-VOCAL SCORE: Usually a reduction of an opera's orchestral score. See *SCORE*.

PIT: A sunken area in front of the stage where the members of the orchestra play.

PIZZICATO (pit-tsee-CAH-toh): Playing a string instrument by plucking the strings instead of using the bow.

PRELUDE: Usually a short introduction that leads into an act without a break, as opposed to an overture which is longer and can be played as a separate piece. Wagner called his introductions preludes even though some are quite long.

PRIMA DONNA: Literally "first lady;" the leading woman singer in an opera. Because of the way some have behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who acts in a superior and demanding fashion. The term for the leading man is primo uomo.

PRINCIPAL: A major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.

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

PRODUCTION CARPENTER: Carpenter in charge of organizing and handling all aspects of the sets and equipment.

PRODUCTION MANAGER: The administrator responsible for coordinating the sets, costumes, rehearsal facilities and all physical aspects of a production. Often, the person who negotiates with the various unions representing stage hands, musicians, etc.

PROMPT: To help a singer remember lines, some opera houses will place a person (prompter) in a box below and at the very front of the stage.

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

PROPERTY MASTER: One who is responsible for purchasing, acquiring and/or manufacturing any props needed for a production.

Q

QUARTET: An extended musical passage performed by four singers.

QUINTET: An extended musical passage performed by five singers.

R

RECITATIVE: Words sung in a conversational style, usually to advance the plot. Not to be confused with aria.

REDUCTION: In a piano reduction, the orchestra parts are condensed into music which can be played by one person on the piano.

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

RÉPÉTITEUR (reh-peh-ti-TEUR): A member of the music staff who plays the piano for rehearsals and, if necessary, the piano or harpsichord during

performances. They frequently coach singers in their roles and assist with orchestra rehearsals.

RIGGER: One who works on ropes, booms, lifts and other aspects of a production.

ROUADE or RUN: A quick succession of notes sung on one syllable.

S

SCENA (SCHAY-nah): Literally "a scene;" a dramatic episode which consists of a variety of numbers with a common theme. A typical scena might consist of a recitative, a cavatina and a cabaletta. An example is the "Mad Scene" from Lucia di Lammermoor.

SCENIC CHARGE: One who is responsible for painting by reproducing color, texture, preparation and aging of stage surfaces.

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

SET, SET DESIGNER: The background and furnishings on the stage and the person who designs them.

SERENADE: A piece of music honoring someone or something.

SEXTET: A piece for six singers.

SINGSPIEL (ZING-shpeel): German opera with spoken dialogue and usually, but not necessarily, a comic or sentimental plot. Examples include The Abduction from the Seraglio and Der Freischütz.

SITZPROBE (ZITS-proh-bah): Literally, "seated rehearsal," it is the first rehearsal of the singers with the orchestra and no acting.

STAGEHAND: One who works behind-the-scenes setting up lighting, props, rigging, scenery and special effects for a production.

STAGE AREAS: The various sections of the stage. Left and right are as seen by

those on stage, not in the audience. Since many stages are raked, that is higher in back than in front, upstage is at the back and downstage at the front. If an actor stays upstage, all the others have to turn their backs to the audience when speaking to him. This is the origin of the phrase "to upstage someone."

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.

STROPHIC: Describes an aria in which the same music repeats for all stanzas of a text.

SUPERNUMERARY: Someone who is part of a group on stage but doesn't sing. It is usually shortened to Super.

SUPERTITLES: Translations of the words being sung, or the actual words if the libretto is in the native language, that are projected on a screen above the stage.

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

T

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.

TESSITURA: Literally "texture," it defines the average pitch level of a role. Two roles may have the same range from the lowest to the highest note, but the one with a greater proportion of high notes has the higher tessitura.

THROUGH-SUNG: An opera in which the music is continuous, without divisions into recitative and aria.

TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE: Early form of French opera that recognized a distinction between the main scenes and divertissements consisting of choruses, dances, etc.

TREMOLO: The quick, continuous reiteration of a pitch.

TRILL: Very quick alternation of pitch between two adjacent notes. See coloratura.

TRIO: An ensemble of three singers or the music that is written for three singers.

V

VERISMO: Describes the realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. Although the peak of the movement was past by the time of Puccini, his operas are a modified form of verismo.

VIBRATO: A natural wavering of frequency (pitch) while singing a note. It is usually inadvertent as opposed to a trill.

VOCAL COACH: A member of an opera company who coaches singers, helping them with the pronunciation, singing and interpretation of a role.

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."

W

WIG DESIGNER: Designs and oversees the creation of the wigs used in a production.

*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 books and resources

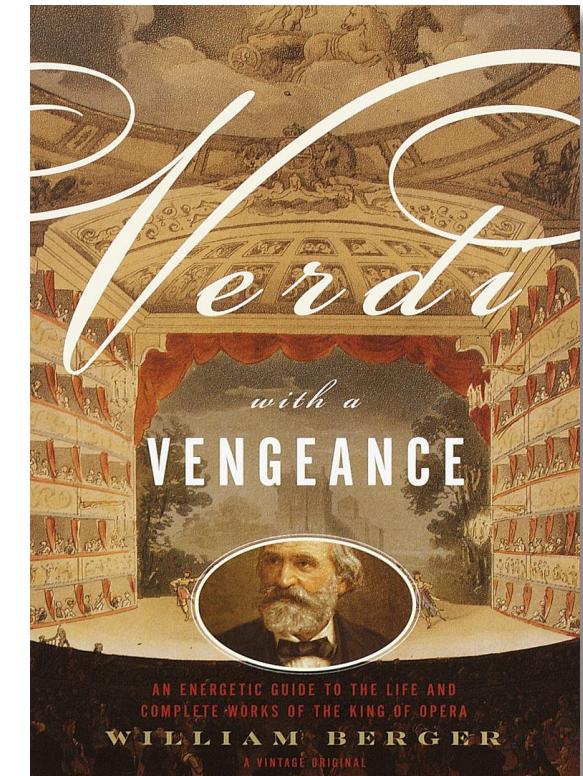


If you have enjoyed our production of Verdi's *La Traviata* and would like to learn more about the composer and the opera, please check out these resources we've compiled!

[La Traviata in Pop Culture](#)

[The Verdi-Boito Correspondence](#)

[Verdi With a Vengeance: An Energetic Guide to the Life and Complete Works of the King of Opera](#)



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:

[Cleveland Opera Theater's 2019 Production](#)
[La Traviata - Teatro Real \(2015\)](#)

"Libiamo ne' lieti calici" Alfredo and Violetta Duet

["Libiamo ne' lieti calici" - Anna Netrebko & Rolando Villazón \(Anna Netrebko - A Decade on Stage\)](#)
["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 \(pre 2007\)](#)

Bibliography

About the Composer:

"Giuseppe Verdi: Composer Biography." Royal Opera House. Accessed June 18, 2020. <http://www.roh.org.uk/people/giuseppe-verdi>.

"Giuseppe Verdi." Opera Philadelphia. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.operaphila.org/whats-on/on-stage-2019-2020/verdis-requiem/giuseppe-verdi/>.

Kerman, Joseph and Dyneley Hussey. "Giuseppe Verdi." Encyclopaedia Britannica. Last modified April 23, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Giuseppe-Verdi>.

Parker, Roger. "Verdi, Giuseppe." Grove Music Online. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029191>.

"Verdi: Facts, Compositions, and Biography on the Great Composer." Classic FM. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/verdi/guides/verdi-facts/>.

About the Opera:

Cantoni, Linda and Betsy Schwarm. "La Traviata: Opera by Verdi." Encyclopaedia Britannica. Last modified Sep. 27, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/La-traviata>.

"La Traviata: An Opera by Giuseppe Verdi." The Opera 101. Accessed June 20, 2020. <https://www.theopera101.com/operas/traviata/>.

"La Traviata by Giuseppe Verdi: The Synopsis." Opera-Online. Last modified Feb. 25, 2019. <https://opera-inside.com/la-traviata-by-giuseppe-verdi-the-synopsis/>.

"La Traviata in Pop Culture." English National Opera. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://eno.org/discover-opera/la-traviata-in-pop-culture/>.

"La Traviata in Pop Culture." MN Opera. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://mnopera.org/blog/la-traviata-in-pop-culture/>.

"La Traviata." Seattle Opera. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.seattleoperablog.com/p/spotlight-on-la-traviata.html>.

"La Traviata Synopsis." Opera Philadelphia. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.operaphila.org/whats-on/on-stage-2015-2016/la-traviata/full-synopsis/>.

"La Traviata: The Fallen Woman." English National Opera. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://eno.org/discover-opera/the-fallen-woman/>.

"La Traviata: Verdi's Everlasting Story of Fate and Sacrifice." The Kennedy Center. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/opera/la-traviata/>.

Metropolitan Opera Guild. A Teacher's Guide to La Traviata. New York: Education Department, 1969.

Reed, Philip, editor. *La Traviata: Giuseppe Verdi*. Richmond, Surrey: Overture, 2013.
• N.B.: Contains Libretto with English translation by Andrew Huth

Service, Tom. "Verdi's La Traviata: Falling for the Fallen Woman." The Guardian. Last modified June 16, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jun/16/la-traviata-giuseppe-verdi-opera-victorian-love-and-sex>.

Smillie, Thomson and David Timson. An Introduction to Verdi, *La Traviata*. Hong Kong: Naxos Music Library, 2004.

"Synopsis: La Traviata." The Metropolitan Opera. Accessed June 18, 2020. <https://www.metopera.org/discover/synopses/la-traviata/>.

Verdi, Giuseppe and Burton D. Fisher. *Verdi's La Traviata*. Coral Gables, FL: Opera Journeys, 2001.

Wies, René. "The Real Traviata: The Tragic True Story that Inspired *La Traviata*." Royal Opera House. Last modified Dec. 2, 2019. <https://www.roh.org.uk/news/the-real-traviata-the-tragic-true-story-that-inspired-la-traviata>.

For Historical Context:

Edgecombe, Rodney Stenning. "Some Observations on the Love Duets in *La Traviata*." *Opera Quarterly* 21 no. 2 (2005): 217-221.

Gossett, Philip. "Becoming a Citizen: The Chorus in Risorgimento Opera." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2 no. 1 (1990): 41-64.

Groos, Arthur. "'TB Sheets': Love and Disease in *La Traviata*." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7 no. 3 (1995): 233-260.

Hepokoski, James A. "Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: 'Addio, del passato' (*La Traviata*, Act III)." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1 no. 3 (1989): 249-276.

Jensen, Luke. *Giuseppe Verdi and Giovanni Ricordi with Notes on Francesco Lucca: From Oberto to La Traviata*. New York: Garland Publications, 1989.

Kerman, Joseph. "Verdi and the Undoing of Women." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18 no. 1 (2006): 21-31.

Lee, M. Owen. "The Requisite Miracle: *La Traviata*." In *A Season of Opera: From Orpheus to Ariadne*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998: 78-83.

Leicester, H. Marshall, Jr. "In and Out of Opera: Technologies of 'Jouissance' in *La Traviata*." *Repercussions* 9 no 2 (2001): 91-113.

Marvin, Roberta Montemorra. "The Victorian Violetta: The Social Messages of Verdi's *La Traviata*." In *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honor of Julian Rushton*, edited by Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper, and Clive Brown. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2010: 222-240.

_____. "Verdian Opera Burlesqued: A Glimpse into Mid-Victorian Theatrical Culture." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15 no. 1 (2003): 33-66.

Parker, Roger. "Of Andalusian Maidens and Recognition Scenes: Crossed Wires in *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*." In *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2006: 22-41.

Pistorius, Juliana M. "Inhabiting Whiteness: The Eoan Group *La Traviata*, 1956." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31 no. 1 (2019): 63-84.

Roos, Hilde. *The La Traviata Affair: Opera in the Age of Apartheid*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018.

Sala, Emilio. *The Sounds of Paris in Verdi's *La Traviata**. Translated by Delia Casadei. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Wiebe, Heather. "Spectacles of Sin and Suffering: *La Traviata* in Victorian London." *Repercussions* 9 no. 2 (2001): 33-67.

Zicari, Massimo. "A Moral Case: The Outburst of *La Traviata*, 1856." In Verdi in Victorian London. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016: 139-170.

Libretto:

"*La Traviata* Libretto: English Translation." Opera-Arias. Accessed June 18, 2020.
<https://www.opera-arias.com/verdi/la-traviata/libretto/english/>.

Loy, Jon. "Addio, del passato." The Aria Database. Accessed June 22, 2020.
<http://www.aria-database.com/search.php?individualAria=310>.

Piave, Francesco Maria. "*La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi: Libretto (English and Italian)." DM's Opera Site." Accessed June 18, 2020. http://www.murashev.com/opera/La_traviata_libretto_English_Italian.

Verdi, Giuseppe and Francesco Maria Piave. *La Traviata/Giuseppe Verdi*, translated by Edmund Tracey. London: J. Calder, 1981.

Verdi, Giuseppe and Francesco Maria Piave. *La Traviata: Opera in Three Acts*, translated by Ruth and Thomas Martin. New York: G. Schirmer, 1961.

CLEVELAND OPERA THEATER

