

LA TRAVIATA



Minnesota
OPERA

OPERA BOX

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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MARY STUART

JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 6, 2011

LA TRAVIATA

MARCH 5 - 13, 2011

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

APRIL 16 - 23, 2011

FOR SEASON TICKETS, CALL 612.333.6669

Dear Educator,

Thank you for using a Minnesota Opera Opera Box. This collection of material has been designed to help any educator to teach students about the beauty of opera. This collection of material includes audio and video recordings, scores, reference books and a Teacher's Guide.

The Teacher's Guide includes Lesson Plans that have been designed around the materials found in the box and other easily obtained items. In addition, Lesson Plans have been aligned with State and National Standards. See the Unit Overview for a detailed explanation.

Before returning the box, please fill out the Evaluation Form at the end of the Teacher's Guide. As this project is new, your feedback is imperative. Comments and ideas from you – the educators who actually use it – will help shape the content for future boxes. In addition, you are encouraged to include any original lesson plans. The Teacher's Guide is intended to be a living reference book that will provide inspiration for other teachers. If you feel comfortable, include a name and number for future contact from teachers who might have questions regarding your lessons and to give credit for your original ideas. You may leave lesson plans in the Opera Box or mail them in separately.

Before returning, please double check that everything has been assembled. The deposit money will be held until I personally check that everything has been returned (i.e. CDs having been put back in the cases). Payment may be made to the Minnesota Opera Education Department. All forms of payment are accepted.

Since opera is first and foremost a theatrical experience, it is strongly encouraged that attendance at a performance of an opera be included. The Minnesota Opera offers Student Matinees and discounted group rate tickets to regular performances. It is hoped that the Opera Box will be the first step into exploring opera, and attending will be the next.

I hope you enjoy these materials and find them helpful. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to call or e-mail me any time.

Sincerely,



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La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN UNIT OVERVIEW WITH RELATED ACADEMIC STANDARDS

LESSON TITLE	MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS: ARTS K-12	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION
1 – Women and <i>La traviata</i>	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9
2 – How effective is the text?	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9
3 – Life and times of Verdi	Music 9.1.1.3.1 Music 9.1.1.3.2 Theater 9.1.1.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	6, 7, 8, 9
4 – Acting in opera	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2	8, 9
5 – Acting out scenes from <i>La traviata</i>	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2	7, 8, 9
6 – Emotions found in Verdi’s music I	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9

7 – Emotions found in Verdi’s music II	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9
8 – That was a great performance and I know why!	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	8, 9

OPERA BOX LESSON PLANS WITH RELATED STANDARDS

The lessons in this Teacher’s Guide are aligned with the current Minnesota Academic Standards, Arts K–12, and the National Standards for Music Education. It is not the intention of these lessons to completely satisfy the standards. This list only suggests how the standards and lesson objectives relate to each other.

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ARTS K–12

The Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts set the expectations for achievement in the arts for K–12 students in Minnesota. The standards are organized by grade band (K–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–12) into four strands that foster the development of students’ artistic literacy.

The strands are as follows:

1. Artistic Foundations
2. Artistic Process: Create or Make
3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present, and
4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique.

Each strand has one or more standards that can be implemented in the arts areas of dance, media arts, music, theater and/or visual arts. The benchmarks for the standards in each arts area are designated by a five-digit code. In reading the coding, please note that for code 0.3.1.5.2, the 0 refers to refers to the 0–3 (K–3) grade band, the 3 refers to the Artistic Process: Perform or Present strand, the 1 refers to the first (and only) standard for that strand, the 5 refers to the fifth arts area (visual arts), and the 2 refers to the second benchmark for that standard.

See the Minnesota Department of Education website for more information: education.state.mn.us/mde

Grades 9–12

STRAND: Artistic Foundations

STANDARD 1: Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the elements of music and related concepts such as repetition, pattern, balance and emphasis are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the characteristics of a variety of genres and styles contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of theater, including plot, theme, character, language, sound and spectacle are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how forms such as musical theater, opera or melodrama, and structures such as chronological or nonlinear are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the characteristics of Western and non-Western styles, such as Kabuki, Noh, Theater of the Absurd or classical contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.1.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of visual arts such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

9.1.1.5.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the principles of visual art such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

STANDARD 2: Demonstrate knowledge of and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.2.3.1

BENCHMARK: Read and notate music using standard notation system such as complex meters, extended ranges and expressive symbols, with and without the use of notation software in a variety of styles and contexts.

9.1.2.3.2

BENCHMARK: Sing alone and in small and large groups (multi-part), or play an instrument alone in and in small or large groups, a variety of music using characteristic tone, technique and expression.

9.1.2.3.3

BENCHMARK: Use electronic musical tools to record, mix, play back, accompany, arrange or compose music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.2.4.1

BENCHMARK: Act by developing, communicating and sustaining character; or design by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations; or direct by interpretations dramatic text and organizing and rehearsing for informal or formal productions.

9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Use technology for purposes of research, feedback, documentation or production.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Integrate the characteristics of the tools, materials and techniques of a selected media in original artworks to support artistic purposes

STANDARD 3: Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts that influence the arts areas.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.3.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.3.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.3.4.2

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.3.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.5.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of visual arts.

STRAND 2: Artistic Process: Create or Make

STANDARD 1: Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts areas using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.2.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Improvise, compose or arrange new musical compositions in a variety of styles and contexts using available technology to preserve the creations.

9.2.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a musical composition or arrangement based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.2.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Create a single, complex work or multiple works in theater such as a script, character or design.

9.2.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a creation based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

STRAND 4: Artistic Process: Respond or Critique

STANDARD 1: Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.4.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of musical works of performances by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

ARTS AREA: Theater

9.4.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of works in theater by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

- 1 Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- 2 Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
- 3 Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
- 4 Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
- 5 Reading and notating music.
- 6 Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
 - A analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices
 - B demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music
 - C identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity, variety, tension and release in a musical work and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques
 - D demonstrate the ability to perceive and remember music events by describing in detail significant events occurring in a given aural example
 - E compare ways in which musical materials are used in a given example relative to ways in which they are used in other works of the same genre or style
 - F analyze and describe uses of the elements of music in a given work that make it unique, interesting, and expressive
- 7 Evaluating music and music performances.
 - A evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and the effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music
 - B evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models
 - C evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain it to similar or exemplary models
- 8 Understanding relationships between music, the others arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
 - A explain how elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts and cite examples
 - B compare characteristics of two or more arts within a particular historical period or style and cite examples from various cultures
 - C explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music
 - D compare the uses of characteristic elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles among the arts in different historical periods and different cultures
 - E explain how the roles of creators, performers, and others involved in the production and presentation of the arts are similar to and different from one another in the various arts
- 9 Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

OPERA BOX CONTENT LIST

La traviata

There is one (1) of each of the following items:

_____ *La traviata* LIBRETTO (Schirmer)

_____ *La traviata* FULL SCORE (Dover)

_____ *La traviata* VOCAL SCORE (Schirmer)

_____ DVD *La traviata* movie (Zeffirelli)

_____ DVD *La traviata* stage performance [Solti (conductor), Gheorghiu, Lopardo]

_____ CD *La traviata* [Bonyngue (conductor), Sutherland, Pavarotti] (DECCA)

_____ CD *La traviata* [Ceccato (conductor), Sills, Gedda] (EMI CLASSICS)

_____ BOOK *Verdi* by Julian Budden (Schirmer Books)

_____ BOOK *Camille: The Lady of the Camellias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils* (Mass Market Paperback)

_____ BOOK *The Complete Operas of Verdi* by Charles Osborne (Alfred A. Knopf)

_____ Teacher's Guide

The entire deposit will be withheld until all items are returned. Any damaged items will be charged to renter for the amount of replacement. *Thank you* for using the Minnesota Opera's Opera Box and teaching opera in your school!

REFERENCE/TRACKING GUIDE

La traviata

This is a chart that coordinates each track or chapter number for the CDs and DVDs in the Opera Box. If you are doing a lesson where you are comparing differing interpretations, this chart shows you where each excerpt is, its relationship to the other recordings, and the related pages of the scores.

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	LONDON CD	EMI CD	DECCA DVD	MOVIE DVD
PAGE 1	PAGE 1	TRACK 1/1	TRACK 1/1	TRACK 2	TRACK 1
PAGE 7	PAGE 3	TRACK 1/2	TRACK 1/2	TRACK 3	TRACK 2
PAGE 31	PAGE 18	TRACK 1/3	TRACK 1/3	TRACK 4	TRACK 3
PAGE 48	PAGE 29	TRACK 1/4	TRACK 1/4	TRACK 5	
PAGE 55	PAGE 39 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 1/5	TRACK 1/5	TRACK 6	TRACK 4
PAGE 60	PAGE 43		TRACK 1/6		
PAGE 65	PAGE 47		TRACK 1/7		TRACK 5
PAGE 80	PAGE 58	TRACK 1/6	TRACK 1/8	TRACK 7	TRACK 6
PAGE 82	PAGE 59		TRACK 1/9		
PAGE 89	PAGE 62 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 1/7	TRACK 1/10	TRACK 8	TRACK 7
PAGE 92	PAGE 67		TRACK 1/11		TRACK 8*
PAGE 108	PAGE 70	TRACK 1/8	TRACK 1/12	TRACK 9	TRACK 9
PAGE 111	PAGE 71 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 1/9	TRACK 1/13		
PAGE 115	PAGE 74		TRACK 1/14		TRACK 10
PAGE 118	PAGE 78	TRACK 1/10	TRACK 1/15	TRACK 10	
PAGE 133	PAGE 81		TRACK 1/16		
PAGE 139	PAGE 85	TRACK 1/11	TRACK 1/17	TRACK 11	TRACK 11
PAGE 144	PAGE 87		TRACK 1/18		
PAGE 152	PAGE 90 (BOTTOM)		TRACK 1/19		
PAGE 158	PAGE 94	TRACK 1/12	TRACK 1/20	TRACK 12	TRACK 12
PAGE 164	PAGE 97		TRACK 1/21		

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	LONDON CD	EMI CD	DECCA DVD	MOVIE DVD
PAGE 169	PAGE 99		TRACK 1/22		
PAGE 181	PAGE 104	TRACK 1/13	TRACK 1/23	TRACK 13	
PAGE 186	PAGE 106		TRACK 1/24		
PAGE 192	PAGE 109		TRACK 2/1		
PAGE 198	PAGE 111 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 1/14	TRACK 2/2	TRACK 14	TRACK 13
PAGE 205	PAGE 114 (BOTTOM)		TRACK 2/3		
PAGE 209	PAGE 116	TRACK 1/15	TRACK 2/4	TRACK 15	
PAGE 224	PAGE 121	TRACK 2/1	TRACK 2/5	TRACK 16	TRACK 14
PAGE 231	PAGE 124		TRACK 2/6		TRACK 15
PAGE 250	PAGE 132		TRACK 2/7		TRACK 16
PAGE 277	PAGE 143	TRACK 2/2	TRACK 2/8	TRACK 17	TRACK 17
PAGE 299	PAGE 154		TRACK 2/9		TRACK 18
PAGE 311	PAGE 160		TRACK 2/10		
PAGE 320	PAGE 165	TRACK 2/3	TRACK 2/11	TRACK 18	TRACK 19
PAGE 326	PAGE 170		TRACK 2/12		
PAGE 342	PAGE 191	TRACK 2/4	TRACK 2/13	TRACK 19	TRACK 20
PAGE 346	PAGE 192		TRACK 2/14	TRACK 20	
PAGE 352	PAGE 196	TRACK 2/5	TRACK 2/15	TRACK 21	
PAGE 353	PAGE 198		TRACK 2/16		TRACK 21
PAGE 360	PAGE 202	TRACK 2/6	TRACK 2/17		TRACK 22
PAGE 366	PAGE 206	TRACK 2/7	TRACK 2/18	TRACK 22	
PAGE 374	PAGE 210	TRACK 2/8	TRACK 2/19	TRACK 23	TRACK 23
PAGE 386	PAGE 215		TRACK 2/20		TRACK 24
PAGE 392	PAGE 218		TRACK 2/21		
PAGE 404	PAGE 223	TRACK 2/9	TRACK 2/22	TRACK 24	TRACK 25
PAGE 409	PAGE 225		TRACK 2/23		

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 1: Women and *La traviata*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will gain a basic understanding of the role of women during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and how that role relates to Violetta in *La traviata*.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO of *La traviata*
- *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils
- Various texts and periodicals that deal with women in some way. For example, women's magazines, (anti-) feminist authors from the 19th century to the present, literature with women as significant characters. See ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S) for more details. (*not in Opera Box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Students are to read libretto of *La traviata*. Notes should be made regarding the elements of each main character. For example, why does Violetta decide to follow Giorgio Germont's advice and discontinue the relationship with Alfredo?
- (2) Have class discuss their reactions toward Violetta and explain feelings toward her choice not to see Alfredo anymore.
- (3) Create chart of student answers. Find students' tendencies toward positive or negative personal reactions of the situation. Focus on content. For example, students of today might find it hard to understand why Violetta would listen to the father and leave Alfredo. Such circumstances seem far-fetched today. Students might view Violetta's actions as negative. (Keep chart for future reference.)
- (4) Assign students to read various texts, paying significant attention toward the female characters. Divide the class up and have various students read 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century literature and periodicals. Another variation of this lesson could be to research the current state of prostitution and sexual violence and compare that to the romantic perception of prostitution portrayed in *La traviata*.
- (5) Again, have class discussion similar to step #2 above. Lead discussion toward similarities and differences of the various texts. Discuss the students' attitudes towards the "historical" perception of women versus a contemporary perception. Compare earlier chart with new one.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Students will essay choosing either the idea that women (in literature and society) are viewed the same as today or that progress has been made with the role of women being much more free and desirable in current society. Evidence from text and class discussion must be used as supporting evidence. Another topic could be to compare Violetta to a woman (or perceptions of women) found in the supplemental readings. Evidence from text and class discussion must be used as supporting evidence.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

Resources for these articles may come from many sources. An Internet search on “feminism” will bring numerous sites reflecting many viewpoints on the subject.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (www.nsrc.org) can provide many facts and details about the current state of prostitution and sexual violence. There is also a Minnesota chapter called Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (www.mncasa.org). Both of these sites provide numerous links to other related sites.

For current political points of view look at the web site for National Organization for Women (www.now.org) and their Minnesota Chapter (www.mnnow.org).

A group that reflects the role of women in music is The International Alliance for Women in Music (IAWM).

A great site that can get you started in exploring the world of literature is www.classiclit.about.com. The site is very user-friendly and lets you search topics across many time periods very easily.

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 2: How effective is the text?

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn the effectiveness of text by comparing an aria and a popular song.

MATERIAL(S)

- CD *La traviata*
- LIBRETTO *La traviata*
- Popular song lyrics and recording (*not included in Opera Box*)
- HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TEXT? RUBRIC (*see following pages*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have class read the text of Violetta's Act I aria "Sempre libera" (NO. 6), p. 10–11. As a group, have students list the emotions Violetta sings about (love, sadness, freedom, etc.).
- (2) As a class, read the lyrics of a popular song(s) and list the emotions that are conveyed in the text.*
- (3) Have students listen first to a performance of the popular song(s), then "Sempre libera." Ask them to rank the effectiveness of each piece in conveying emotion through music. Discuss if the music adds or takes away from the text and emotion. Which piece is more powerful, more meaningful, and why?
- (4) Create a rubric (as a class or individually) that can chart the differences the class discussed in #3. See HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TEXT? RUBRIC as a point of reference.
- (5) Assign the class to listen to three other songs/arias and chart their opinions. Suggested excerpts from *La traviata* are Alfredo's Act I aria "Un dì felice" (NO. 4), or Germont's Act II aria "Di Provenza" (NO. 10). Discuss their findings.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be given for class participation and creation of a detailed rubric.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

*The popular song(s) should be something to which the students are currently listening too. Using a rap song might lend itself to additional conversation about the use of melody and its musical merits. A suggestion might be to ask students to bring in a recording from their personal collection. Most popular CDs have lyrics included. If not, a quick search on the internet under "popular song lyrics" should provide the necessary information.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TEXT? RUBRIC

Lesson 2

DIRECTIONS

- (1) After reading the text to Violetta's aria "Sempre libera" describe and list the emotions found in the text.
- (2) Find a popular song (something that you currently enjoy) and list the emotions found in those lyrics.
- (3) Create a rubric listing the emotions found in each example. Determine what level the various emotions are in each example and rank them. See below for an example.

Ranking Key for LOVE:

- 1 = No references about love. The piece is not about this emotion.
- 2 = Contains some words about love. Describes a relationship.
- 3 = Contains words about love. Describes a significant relationship.
- 4 = Contains many powerful words about love. Describes an intense, passionate relationship.

Ranking Key for FREEDOM:

- 1 = No references about freedom. The piece is not about this emotion.
- 2 = Contains some words about freedom. Describes an understanding of the word.
- 3 = Contains many words about freedom. Describes a personal understanding and belief in the concept.
- 4 = Contains many powerful words about freedom. Describes a personal commitment about the concept of freedom.

Ranking Key for SADNESS:

- 1 = No references about sadness. The piece is not about this emotion.
- 2 = Contains some words about happiness. Describes some joy.
- 3 = Contains many words about happiness. Describes meaningful joy and an up lifted spirit.
- 4 = Contains many powerful words about happiness. Describes uncontrollable, intense passion and joy.

Aria: "Sempre libera" (Violetta from *La traviata*)

A = aria

LOVE		FREEDOM		SADNESS		OTHER	
<i>text alone</i>	<i>with music</i>						
1		1		1		1	
2		2		2 A		2	
3 A		3 A		3	A	3	
4	A	4	A	4		4	

EMOTION RUBRIC

A) _____ (EMOTION)

1 =

2 =

3 =

4 =

B) _____ (EMOTION)

1 =

2 =

3 =

4 =

C) _____ (EMOTION)

1 =

2 =

3 =

4 =

(1) ARIA/SONG _____ EMOTION _____

<i>text alone</i>	<i>with music</i>						
I		I		I		I	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	

(2) ARIA/SONG _____ EMOTION _____

<i>text alone</i>	<i>with music</i>						
I		I		I		I	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 3: Life and Times of Verdi

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand the life, times and culture of Verdi.

MATERIAL(S)

- Reference books about Verdi.
- RESEARCH CHECKLIST (see following page)
- General reference and history books about 19th-century Europe (specifically Italy) (*not in Opera Box*).
- Poster board or Powerpoint for student presentations (*not in Opera Box*).
- Poster board (for timeline on wall) (*not in Opera Box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) Divide class into groups, give each student the RESEARCH CHECKLIST and assign topics related to Verdi. Direct class to research their specific topics and to prepare a presentation on that topic.

Possible topics: (*all topics should focus during in the 19th century*)

- Political culture of Italy (and the world)
- Scientific achievements
- Social life and class divisions
- Artistic and musical life in Italy and Europe
- Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy

(2) Upon completion of the research, student groups are to create a presentation with all group members participating.

(3) Each group is to create pieces (at least five points of interest) of a timeline based on their research. (It is recommended that the format for the timeline should be predetermined. For example, post a timeline on a wall between the years 1800–1900 with the beginning of each decade marked as well. Leave space for students to include their points of interest.)

(4) As each group gives its presentation, the other class members are to serve as audience and to provide feedback.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Assign value to class participation, quality of presentations, and group cooperation. Also, each piece of the timeline must have a certain number of relevant points presented in a clean and clear manner.

LIFE AND TIMES OF VERDI RESEARCH CHECKLIST

GROUP MEMBERS _____

TOPIC _____

RESEARCH CHECKLIST

- _____ List 20 facts related to the topic and how they relate to Verdi.
- _____ Organize all facts into chronological order.
- _____ Write 3 sentence descriptions of each fact to be put on timeline.
- _____ Proofread all sentences prior to putting them on the timeline.
- _____ Put each fact on the timeline for public display.

CLASS PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

- _____ Prepare an outline of class presentation.
- _____ Based on this outline, create 5 questions that your group feels address the most important points of the presentation.
- _____ Submit 5 questions to teacher prior to presentation.
- _____ Assign speaking parts for each group member.
- _____ Practice speech.
- _____ Give presentation.
- _____ Put piece of timeline on wall.

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 4: Acting in opera

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand how the movements of the main characters enhance the story of the opera.

MATERIAL(S)

- both DVDs of *La traviata*
- *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils
- other opera/musical videos (*not in Opera Box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have the class make a list of gestures used in everyday life to convey emotion. Examples include, raising a hand to ask a question, raising the eyebrows, shaking a finger, etc. Discuss why gestures are used as a part of conversation. Do they enhance or detract from a conversation?
- (2) Show (part or all) of one *La traviata* DVD. Suggested excerpts include the beginning of Act I, Violetta's aria "Sempre libera" (NO. 6), the Act II duet "Pura siccome un angelo" between Violetta and Germont (NO. 8), or the finale scene of Act III (NO. 19). Students should take notes on physical movements of main characters. For example, during Violetta's aria "Sempre libera, what are the physical gestures used to describe freedom, love or sadness.
- (3) Have students discuss how the singers' movements relate to the drama. What were the artistic decisions behind the gestures? Students should be able to relate the text to the gestures. For example, words about love include gestures with hands over the heart. Tell students that certain movements help an audience understand what the performer is trying to convey. Live theater audiences in the 19th century expected performers to strike certain poses to order to understand the story. Emphasize that audiences of today look at theatre differently and have different expectations of performers from the time when *La traviata* was written. For a possible extension, have students do research about 19th-century theater and its audiences.
- (4) Follow the same procedure with a similar excerpt from the other DVD of *La traviata*. Follow the viewing with similar discussion as in #3.
- (5) Compare and contrast the performances. Discuss the effectiveness of all performers. Which performance conveys more emotion or which performance was more effective? Does one need to know the libretto to understand the acting?
- (6) For a possible extension, have students watch various performances of operas or other theater and analyze the physical movement used by the main characters. Relate that information towards the specific drama.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Students will watch a portion of one *La traviata* DVD and be able to describe the gestures displayed and the emotional intent of the performers.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

A study in the history of theatrical motion and its relationship to opera is strongly encouraged. Connections can easily be made between pre-Stanslovsky acting methods and the inclusion of his theories. Much of the drama of opera has been conveyed via known physical movements and positions for many years. Today, with the advent of televised opera, acting has taken on yet another dimension that composers of most of the standard repertoire had never anticipated.

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 5: Acting out scenes from *La traviata*

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will act out scenes from *La traviata* to reinforce the concepts of the importance of the acting and the understanding of the libretto.

MATERIAL(S)

- LIBRETTO of *La traviata*
- ACTING EVALUATION WORKSHEET (one copy per student) (*see following page*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have students read all or portion of the *La traviata* libretto. If there is not enough class time to read the entire libretto, the following are suggested excerpts: Violetta and Germont duet in Act II “Pura siccome un angelo” (NO. 8), the Act III finale “Prendi, quest’è l’immagine” (NO. 19), or the chorus scene in Act I “Dell’invito trascorsa è già l’ora” (NO. 2).
- (2) Divide the class into small groups and assign them an excerpt of the libretto to perform. Special attention must be given to physical gestures. Exact reading of text must also be included (no ad lib will be acceptable). Students should carefully read each line and think about how to physically interpret them.
- (3) Each group will perform their selected scene for the rest of the class serving as an audience. The class should take notes on the effectiveness of each performance. Students should be able to make specific comments regarding physical movement and vocal articulation. Discuss the rubric prior to performances. Remarks should be written on the ACTING EVALUATION WORKSHEET. (*see the following page*)
- (4) After all performances are completed, have a class discussion as to the effectiveness of each one. This lesson can be taught following various activities that may involve the study of drama and history of acting. This lesson can be maximized when used as reinforcement of prior activities.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value should be given to quality of the peer reviews, class participation in discussion and acting performance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson can be taught following various activities that may involve the study of drama and history of acting. This lesson can be maximized when used as reinforcement of prior activities.

Videotaping the performances and presenting them on a public access or school channel may provide valuable public relations.

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 6: Emotion found in Verdi's music I

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn about Verdi's ability to convey emotion through the universal language of music.

MATERIAL(S)

- CD of *La traviata*
- Blank paper for students (*not in Opera box*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Listen to parts of *La traviata* as a class. Suggested excerpts: Overture of Act I (NO. 1), beginning of Act III (NO. 16) or the chorus of Gypsies/chorus of Spanish Matadors (NOS. 12 and 13). Do not give any information about the connecting story line.
- (2) Students are to journal their personal reactions toward these excerpts and include why they have come to their decisions. For example, if a student says that he or she feels that the overture "sounds like someone dying or like music at a funeral," encourage the student to support the statement with musical descriptions (minor key, high violins, slow tempo, etc.).
- (3) Discuss students' thoughts and opinions as a class.
- (4) Tell students the connecting story line and text being sung. Discuss Verdi's success at conveying emotion, and why or why not.
- (5) Repeat process with another excerpt.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Collect journals from students and assign value for class participation.

EMOTION FOUND IN VERDI'S MUSIC JOURNAL

NAME _____

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their responses to the journal prompt.

La traviata OPERA BOX

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 7: Emotions found in Verdi's music II

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand how Verdi uses both the voice and the orchestra to convey emotion.

MATERIAL(S)

- CD of *La traviata* (either recording will work for this lesson)
- Score (vocal or full) of *La traviata*
- Any other recordings and scores of Verdi (*not in Opera Box*)
- MUSIC EMOTION CHART WORKSHEET (See following pages) (*one for each student*)

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Have students make a list of emotions that are conveyed through music in general. For example, suggest how movie music creates tension, i.e. high violins and dissonant harmony in the famous *Psycho* shower scene which represent terror, and how evil is famously represented by the brassy march of Darth Vader in *Star Wars*.
- (2) Create a list of emotions described musically from the class discussion.
- (3) Play excerpts of *La traviata* and discuss what emotions are being conveyed. Suggested excerpts are: choral introduction in Act I "Dell'invito trascorsa" (NO. 2), Violetta's aria "Sempre libera" in Act I (NO. 6), and the Act II duet between Violetta and Germont "Pura siccome un angelo" (NO. 8)
- (4) Students are to fill out the Music Emotion Chart after listening to each example. Then read the text of the arias being sung and listen to excerpts again and ask students if they hear the music differently after knowing the text.
- (5) Choose a different excerpt and repeat steps 1-4.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Students are to demonstrate Verdi's musical language by listening to *La traviata* excerpts and describing what emotions are being conveyed, then finding other example of emotion in art.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

This lesson can be altered to fit many different types of subject areas. For example, a music ensemble student should be encouraged to make connections between the music he/she is performing and the recordings. Discussion could also include other composers and artists. A general music class could look at this from the point of view by identifying musical characteristics of different styles and genres.

MUSIC EMOTION CHART

Lesson 7

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

Emotion can be conveyed in every musical medium of every genre. This lesson will help you understand how various mediums convey emotion can lead to deeper appreciation of all art forms.

(1) Listen to various examples played by your teacher and try to identify what emotions are being presented. Check to see if you are able to identify what Verdi intended. The examples that are given are for your reference.

EMOTION	WHO	WHY	HOW
evil	Darth Vader	evil character	low brass, march
terror	shower scene in the movie <i>Psycho</i>	to show madness of main character	high strings short, quick rhythms dissonant harmony
sadness	Violetta from <i>La traviata</i>	she is dying	minor key slow tempo mournful melody
love			
happiness			
anger			

(2) Pick an assortment of media (movies, music, literature, etc.) and identify how and what emotion is being conveyed. Pay close attention to **how** the emotion is being communicated. In visual mediums, emotion is usually conveyed by more than just words. Emotions can be listed more than once.

EMOTION	WHO	WHY	HOW
evil			
terror			
sadness			
love			
happiness			
anger			

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 8: “That was a great performance and I know why!”

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn about applying objective and subjective statements toward a musical performance. Students will apply this knowledge of criticism by writing a critique of a performance. *Ideally this lesson should be used in conjunction with attending a live performance.*

MATERIAL(S)

- Both *La traviata* DVDs
- “THAT WAS A GREAT PERFORMANCE AND I KNOW WHY!” OBJECTIVE/SUBJECTIVE CHART (see following page)
- Various reviews from newspapers and magazines of opera, concerts, musicals, theater, movies and other media. (not in Opera Box)

Depending on your particular subject area, you may choose to focus on different aspects of reviewing. For example, a music class might choose to limit themselves and only look at musical reviews.

PROCEDURE(S)

- (1) Play an excerpt from *La traviata*. Suggested excerpts would be A) a complete act, or B) shorter excerpts, such as: Zeffirelli film, UNIVERSAL DVD
 - DVD Chapters 6–7
 - DVD Chapters 23–26
- (2) After listening or viewing, ask students to make objective and subjective statements about the performance. Chart and categorize the class comments into two categories, objective and subjective.

DISCUSSION POINTS

 - Differences between objective and subjective statements
 - Which is easier to make, subjective or objective statements?
 - Which type of statement provides more information about a performance for a potential listener?
- (3) Explain that the role of any critic (and all musicians!) is to balance the differences between the two. *A possible extension for this lesson could be to have students conduct research on the professional critic.*
- (4) Assign students to find and read three reviews from a newspaper, magazine or online source. Students are then to analyze the reviews, identifying the subjective and objective attributes. They will put their answers on the “THAT WAS A GREAT PERFORMANCE AND I KNOW WHY!” OBJECTIVE/SUBJECTIVE CHART.
- (5) Students are to share findings with the class; question students about their findings.
- (6) In class, have students write a review about a common, singular topic. For example, have everyone write about their experiences passing in the halls between periods or eating in the cafeteria. Discuss the subjective and objective elements involved.
- (7) Assign students to write a review outside of class. This review could be based on the performance the class will attend.

ASSESSMENT(S)

OPTION ONE

Evaluation shall include the successful completion of the reviews found, analyzed and written. Class participation should also be included.

OPTION TWO

Evaluation shall include the successful completion of the reviews found, analyzed, and written. In addition, students are to fill out another “**THAT WAS A GREAT PERFORMANCE AND I KNOW WHY!**” WORKSHEET evaluating an additional excerpt from *La traviata*. Suggested excerpts are (1) the same excerpts used in this lesson, performed on the DECCA DVD or (2) Act I (CHAPTERS 1–5) or Act III (CHAPTERS 14–16). Class participation should also be assessed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

Encourage students to write a review about a live performance of another ensemble within the school or a professional group. A group of students could also review a new movie. Also, if possible, inquire if some of these reviews could be included in a school or local newspaper.

THAT WAS A GREAT PERFORMANCE AND I KNOW WHY!

SUBJECTIVE/OBJECTIVE CHART

Lesson 8

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

After listening to a piece of music, create a list of five (5) objective statements regarding the overall performance itself, the quality of the piece(s) and the performers. Then make a list of five (5) subjective statements regarding the same criteria. In the “criteria” box, identify what you are (sub) objectifying.

CRITERIA		CRITERIA		CRITERIA	
OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
1		1		1	
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4		4		4	
5		5		5	

Create your own Opera Box Lesson Plan and send it to us.

OPERA BOX LESSON PLAN

NAME(S)	SCHOOL
	PHONE/EMAIL
TITLE OF LESSON	CLASS AND GRADE LEVEL

OBJECTIVE(S)

MATERIAL(S)

PROCEDURE(S)

ASSESSMENT(S)

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

PLEASE INCLUDE ANY ORIGINAL MATERIALS, IF POSSIBLE.

LA TRAVIATA

MUSIC BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

LIBRETTO BY FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

AFTER LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS FILS (1849)

WORLD PREMIERE AT THE TEATRO LA FENICE, VENICE

MARCH 6, 1853

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, AND 13, 2003

ORDWAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

SUNG IN ITALIAN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VIOLETTA VALÉRY, A COURTESANSOPRANO

ALFREDO GERMONT.....TENOR

GIORGIO GERMONT, ALFREDO'S FATHERBARITONE

FLORA BERVOIX, VIOLETTA'S FRIENDMEZZO-SOPRANO

GASTONE, ALFREDO'S FRIENDTENOR

BARON DOUPHOL, VIOLETTA'S PROTECTORBARITONE

MARQUIS D'OBIGNY, FLORA'S PROTECTOR.....BARITONE

ANNINA, VIOLETTA'S MAIDSOPRANO

DOCTOR GRENVILBASS

A MESSENGER, SERVANTS, FRIENDS OF VIOLETTA AND FLORA,

MATADORS, PICADORS, GYPSIES

SETTING: IN AND AROUND PARIS

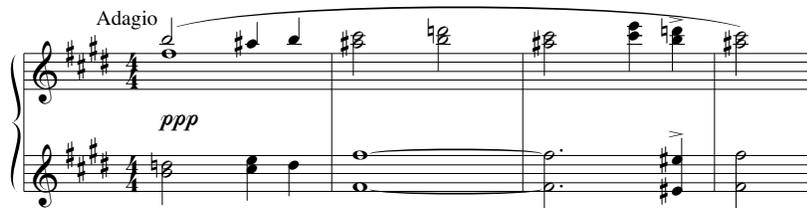


SYNOPSIS AND MUSICAL EXCERPTS

PRELUDE

The short prelude is dominated by two themes, setting the mood or *tinta* of the opera. The first is associated with Act III and Violetta's fatal illness.

(IA) PRELUDE (ORCHESTRA)



The second is the sad, yet impassioned melody of Violetta's parting from Alfredo at the end of Act II, scene i.

(IB) PRELUDE (ORCHESTRA)



ACT I

A late night soirée is in progress at the home of Violetta Valéry.

(2) OPENING TO ACT I (ORCHESTRA)

Allegro brillantissimo e molto vivace

Gastone presents to his hostess Alfredo, an admirer. It is soon learned that, while Violetta was recently taken ill, Alfredo visited her home daily for hopeful news of her recovery. Violetta retorts that it is more attention than she has received from her current protector, Baron Douphol, who is incensed by the behavior of the youthful upstart. When the baron declines to make the evening toast, Violetta gives the honor to Alfredo.

(3) BRINDISI: LIBIAMO... (ALFREDO)

con grazia leggerissimo

Li - bia - - - mo, li - bia - mo ne' lie - ti ca - - li - ci,
 che la bel - lez - za in fio - - - ra; e la fug -
 ge - vol, fug - ge - vol o - - - ra s'in - ne - bria a vo - lut - tà.

TRANSLATION: BE HAPPY, AND RAISE YOUR GLASS WITH ME, HERE IN THE PALACE OF BEAUTY;
 EACH HOUR THAT PASSES WE FEEL A DUTY TO DRINK AND TO TASTE EVERY JOY.

As the guests retire to the ballroom, Violetta feels faint and rests for a moment. Alfredo lingers behind and soon professes his love for her.

(4) UN DÌ FELICE (ALFREDO)

Andantino

Un dì fe - li - ce, e - te - re - a mi ba - le -
 na - ste in - nan - - - te, e da quel dì — tre - man - te

TRANSLATION: ONE DAY, ELATED I SAW AN ETHEREAL VISION GLITTERING BEFORE ME; AND FROM THAT GLORIOUS DAY I WAS IN LOVE FROM AFAR.

Friendship is all she can offer, but as he leaves, she gives him a flower from her breast and tells him to return when it has faded. As dawn approaches, the guests bid adieu, and Violetta reflects on the feelings Alfredo has aroused within her heart. She ponders whether or not she could ever give up her life of pleasure for true love.

(5) SEMPRE LIBERA (VIOLETTA)

assai brillante

tr *tr*

3

f

tr

Sem-pre li - be - ra — deg - gi - o fol - leg - gia - re di gio - ja in gio - ja, vo' che
scor - ra il vi - ver mi - o pei sen - tie - ri del — pia - cer. Na - sca il gior - no, o il gior - no
muo - ja, sem - pre lie - ta ne' — ri - tro - - - vi, —

TRANSLATION: GIVE ME THE FREEDOM TO BE JOYOUS, ALL MY LIFE ENJOYING; LET ME DRINK AT EVERY PARTY, LET ME DANCE AT EVERY BALL,
NEVER WEeping AND NEVER SIGHING; ALWAYS LAUGHING.

ACT II

Scene one It is several months later, and Violetta and Alfredo are deeply in love. They have abandoned city life, taking residence in Violetta's country home.

(6) DE' MIEI BOLLENTI SPIRITI (ALFREDO)

p

p *stent.* *ppp*

De' miei bol-len - ti spi - ri - ti il gio - va - ni - le ar - do - re
el - la tem - prò col pla - ci - do sor - ri - so del - l'a - mor, del - l'a - more!

TRANSLATION: MY LIFE WAS TOO IMPETUOUS, THOUGHTLESS, ENTIRELY SELFISH. SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO REALIZE THE TENDER LOVE OF THE HEART.

Alfredo soon learns from Annina that Violetta has had to sell many of her possessions in order to maintain their current lifestyle. Intending to set things right, Alfredo rushes back to Paris.

Violetta receives an invitation to a party that evening thrown by friend and fellow courtesan, Flora Bervoix. Violetta laughs at the notion of returning to her former life. She is then visited by Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father, who rebukes her for ruining his son. Impressed by her graciousness in the face of his own rude behavior, Germont soon learns of Violetta's footing the bill and of how she intends to put her past behind. Still, he presses his case – his daughter is about to marry, but the union is in jeopardy as Alfredo's relationship with Violetta is a scandal for the family. It must be broken off.

(7) PURA SICCOME UN ANGELO (GERMONT)

dolciss. cantabile

Pu - ra sic - co - me un an - ge - lo, Id - dio mi diè u - na fi - glia;

se Al - fre - do ne - ga rie - de - re in se - no al - la fa - mi - glia,

TRANSLATION: I HAVE A DAUGHTER HEAVEN-SENT, INNOCENT AND APPEALING; ALFREDO NOW DISOWNS US BOTH AND SCORNS THE FAMILY NAME.

Reluctantly Violetta agrees, but Germont must promise to one day tell Alfredo of her sacrifice.

(8) DITE ALLA GIOVINE (VIOLETTA)

Andantino cantabile

Di - te al - la gio - vine sì bel - la e pu - - - ra,
ch'av - vi u - na vit - ti - ma del - la sven - tu - ra,

TRANSLATION: COMFORT YOUR GENTLE GIRL, SO PURE AND LOVELY; TELL HER HOW A VICTIM ONCE SUFFERED SO ALONE.

Violetta responds to Flora's invitation, then dashes off a farewell note to Alfredo. Upon receiving the note, Alfredo is heartbroken. He is comforted by his father, who urges him to return to their home in Provence.

(9) DI PROVENZA (GERMONT)

Di Pro - ven - za il mar, il suol chi dal cor ti can - cel - lò? chi dal cor ti can - cel - lò di Pro - ven - zail mar, il suol?

TRANSLATION: IN PROVENCE, YOUR NATIVE LAND, WE ALL LONG FOR YOUR RETURN.

Instead, an enflamed Alfredo pursues Violetta, suspecting she has returned to her former life and lover.

Scene two That evening at the party, Flora and her guests gossip over Violetta and Alfredo's recent split. After a brief diversion of dancing gypsies and matadors, Alfredo shows up unexpectedly. Violetta and the baron arrive shortly thereafter, and Alfredo sends Violetta several bitter jibes which enrages the baron. He challenges Alfredo at the gaming tables, yet Alfredo is consistently the winner. As the guests retire to the dining room, Violetta pulls Alfredo aside and urges him to leave. He asks if she truly loves the baron, and she continues her deception, saying yes. Alfredo calls everyone before him and throws his winnings at Violetta, declaring he has paid for her services in full. Giorgio Germont enters at that same moment and angrily rebukes his son for the improper outburst.

(10) DI SPREZZO DEGNO SESTESSO (GERMONT)

Largo

Di sprez - zo de - gno se stes - so ren - de chi pur nel - l'i - ra la don - na of - fen - de.

TRANSLATION: DISGRACEFUL OUTRAGE! WE ALL DESPISE YOU! YOU SHOUT IN ANGER AND SHAME A WOMAN!

Violetta collapses from the strain.

(I 1) ALFREDO, ALFREDO... (VIOLETTA)

Al-fre-do, Al-fre-do, di que-sto co-re non puoi com-pren-de-re tut-to l'a-mo-re,

TRANSLATION: ALFREDO, YOU HATE AND SCORN ME. YOU DO NOT REALIZE THE BITTER STORY.

The baron, demanding satisfaction for such an insult, challenges Alfredo to a duel.

ACT III

Several months later, Violetta lies in her bed, desperately weak from the final stages of consumption. Doctor Grenvil attends her, but confides in Annina that the end is near. Violetta rereads a letter from Giorgio Germont – Alfredo wounded the baron during the duel and was forced to go abroad. As promised, Germont told his son of her sacrifice, and he is hurrying back to beg her forgiveness. Violetta fears that he will not return in time.

(I 2) ADDIO DEL PASSATO (VIOLETTA)

dolente e pp *legato e dolce*
Ad-di-o del pas-sa-to, bei so-gni ri-den-ti,

TRANSLATION: GOODBYE TO THE PAST, TO HAPPY MEMORIES.

Yet moments later Alfredo rushes to Violetta's side. Reunited, the lovers ecstatically plan for the future.

(I 3) DUET: PARIGI, CARA (ALFREDO, VIOLETTA)

leggero e stent.
De' cor-si af-fan-ni com-pen-sa
Pa-ri-gi, ca-ra, noi la-sce-re-mo, sì, noi
vra-i, tut-to il cre-a-to ne ar-ri-de-rà.
la-sce-re-mo, la-vi-ta u-ni-ti tra-scor-re-re-mo,

TRANSLATION: COME BID PARIS A FINAL FAREWELL. WE WILL BE HAPPY TOGETHER/NEITHER MAN NOR DEVIL NOW WILL DARE DIVIDE US FOR EVERMORE.

Violetta tries to rise but cannot summon the strength. As a last gesture of love, she gives Alfredo a miniature portrait of herself, saying that she will always be watching over him.

(14) PRENDI QUEST'È L'IMMAGINE... (VIOLETTA)

Andante sostenuto

Violetta

Orchestra

Pren - di, quest' è l'im - ma - gi - ne de' miei pas - sa - ti gior - ni, a
ram - men - tar ti tor - ni co - lei che si fa - mò.

TRANSLATION: HERE, TAKE THIS PORTRAIT OF ME, WHEN I WAS HAPPY AND YOUNG.

Suddenly overcome by a euphoric feeling, Violetta cries out that she feels life returning, then falls dead in her lover's arms.



La traviata
FLOW CHART
KEY AND DETAILS

Scene

Usually the tempo marking is the indication, but scene numbers are also used. Page numbers relate to Ricordi vocal and full scores.

Musical Description

Again, tempo markings are usually used as with the first line of text in an aria, etc. “Key” refers to key at beginning of section. Verdi does change keys and give hints as to other harmonic shifts, the most significant are noted. Time signature and metronomic markings come from the Ricordi scores.

Orchestration

Comments made here are in a general nature designed to give the reader/listener some insights to the style and language of Verdi.

Theme

Melody used to convey a certain part of the story. Names given are in a general nature used to best and most easily describe the nature of the theme.

Drama

Basic story line. Shorthand used: v = Violetta, A = Alfredo, G = Germont

Related Information

Other interesting facts about specific parts of the opera.

La traviata
FLOW CHART

ACT I

Scene	Prelude	No. 2 – Introduzione (p. 7)
Musical Description	<i>Adagio</i> (=66) key: B minor, E major (m 29)	<i>Allegro brillantissimo e molto vivace</i> key: A major
Orchestration	high violins ethereal, mystic “crying” in high violins (m?) death – full orchestra (m25)	full orchestra with chorus builds momentum by slower “two” feeling, then increases to a “four” feel
Themes	“dying” theme  “love” theme (“Amore...”) (m18) 	“party” theme 
Drama	Verdi starts the opera in a quiet manner, unlike a traditional overture which is intended to hush audience. This gives a very thoughtful, intimate feeling to the opera.	v is throwing a party, celebrating her return to good health. Gastone introduces v to A, who has admired her from afar and visited her home every day while she was ill.
Related Information	This prelude has not been as popular as a separate concert piece in comparison to other preludes and overtures of Verdi.	

La traviata
FLOW CHART
ACT I

Scene	Brindisi: “Libiamo, ne’ lieti calici” (p. 31) (V.’s party has an internal structure: A, B	→ C	→ B
Musical Description	<i>Allegretto</i> (=69) key: B-flat major in 3: waltz feel	<i>Andantino</i> (=96) piano key: F major continue 3 feel in 3/8 time	(=80) key: starts in C minor and returns to E-flat major
Orchestration	full orchestra and chorus octave melody doubling in strings and woodwinds	string accompaniment (<i>arco</i> then <i>pizz.</i>) woodwind coloring V. = <i>secco</i> flute / A. = <i>arco</i> strings (p. 57) V. / flute coloring	offstage band <i>pizz.</i> stings on “tomorrow”
Themes	“drinking” theme 	“Di quell’amor” theme (p. 55) 	“Un dì...” and “Di quell’amor...” continues in fragments
Drama	v invites A to lead the toast with a drinking song.	v suddenly feels faint. The rest of the guests go into the other room to dance. A emains with her and professes his love.	v gives A one of her flowers and tells him to return when it withers – tomorrow. A and the guests leave.
Related Information	One of Verdi’s most popular melodies that pop culture tends to use (for commercials, etc.).		

La traviata
FLOW CHART
 ACT I – FINALE

Scene	<i>stretta</i> (p. 65) Scena IV → A)	No. 3 – Scena ed Aria v (p. 80) “È strano!... Sempre libera” (V.’s solo scene follows a well-established <i>bel canto</i> formula in four parts.)			
Musical Description	<i>Allegro vivo</i> key: A-flat major (starts in E-flat major)	<i>Allegro</i> (recit.) (p. 80) key: C minor → <i>scena</i>	<i>Andantino</i> (p. 96) F minor (“reflective”) slow tempo <i>cantabile</i>	<i>Allegro</i> (p. 89) F major situation changes <i>tempo di mezzo</i>	<i>Allegro brillante</i> (p. 92) A-flat major <i>cabaletta</i>
Orchestration	full orchestra add piccolo (highest tessitura yet)		solo clarinet on “alone in the crowd” oboe solo on “sickness and fever”	alberti-like accomp. in clarinet <i>pizz.</i> strings – unmoving feeling	full orchestra <i>pizz.</i> to <i>arco</i> – feeling of movement
Themes	music used at beginning – “party” theme				A.’s love theme (p. 96) V.’s “Follie!” leads back to repetition of cabaletta. She blots out his voice with scales
Drama	V is moved by A’s words and ponders whether or not she really loves him.				
Related Information		This is a standard show piece for sopranos.			

La traviata
FLOW CHART
ACT I – FINALE

Scene	<i>finale</i>			
Musical Description	<i>Allegro</i> common time; key: C minor start with recit.	<i>Andantino</i> (=96) in 3 (3/8 time) key: F minor	key: F major (p. 84) F minor (p. 84-5) F major (p. 87)	<i>Allegro brillante</i> in 2 (6/8 time) key: A-flat major
Orchestration		solo clarinet – “alone in the crowd” oboe solo – “sickness and fever”	“Alberti-like” accompaniment in clarinet pizzicato strings short, unmoving feeling	full orchestra strings – <i>pizz.</i> to <i>arco</i> in accompaniment gives feeling of movement
Themes			“A (Di) quell’amor...” (p. 84) from A.’s earlier aria	“Amor...” comes from off-stage during “Sempre libera”
Drama				
Related Information				

La traviata
 FLOW CHART
 ACT II, SCENE ONE

Scene	No. 4 – “De ’miei bollenti spiriti “ (p. 108)	“Oh mio rimorso...”	No. 5 – Scena e Duetto (p. 133)
Musical Description	<i>Allegro vivace</i> (=132) (recitative) Common time, in 3 key: C/E, E-flat major <i>piano</i>	<i>Andante</i> (1 st part of aria) (p. 111) key: E-flat major, in 3 (<i>cantabile</i>) <i>Allegro</i> (2 nd part of aria) (=108) (p. 118) key: C major, in 4 (<i>cabaletta</i>)	<i>Allegro</i> m1-76 recit.
Orchestration	strings (romantic harmony) solo woodwinds – “lived like one in heaven”	orchestral accompaniment – “galloping excitement” (p. 118)	<i>Allegro</i> (p. 135) – Verdi uses the <i>diabolus in musicas</i> (a tritone) between Germont and orchestra
Themes			“Quell’amor” melody with changed text – sung by V.
Drama	A and V have moved to the country where they have been living for three months. A laments being away from V even for a moment (1 st part of aria).	Annina enters. A questions her and learns that she has been in Paris arranging the sale of some of V’s possessions to pay for their expenses. A, angry that V has been footing the bill, goes to Paris to buy her possessions back and to settle the debt himself (2 nd part).	V enters holding an invitation to a party at Flora’s. She laughs at the thought of returning to her former life. A guest is introduced – it is Giorgio Germont, A’s father.
Related Information			Famous Verdian father/daughter duet (or in this case, father/potential daughter-in-law)

La traviata
 FLOW CHART

 ACT II, SCENE ONE

Scene		No. 6 – Scena v
Musical Description (pgs. 139-158) m77-108 <i>Allegro</i> (p. 139) m109-130 <i>Vivacissimo</i> (p. 144) m131-161 <i>Ancora piu vivo</i> (p. 146) m162-226 <i>Andante</i> (p. 150)	keys: A-flat major E-flat major C major F minor	(pgs. 181-191) <i>Adagio</i> (=63) key: E-flat major E major
Orchestration		“Dite alla giovine” (p. 158) “weeping” – descending lines/arching phras-
Themes	“Quell’amor” melody sung by v (p. 155)	Mournful clarinet solo during letter writing Principal melody from Prelude is heard only other time.
Drama	At first G is brusque, but he is impressed by v’s manners. Nevertheless, he asks v to stop seeing his son. His daughter can’t marry the man she loves because of this scandal associated with her family.	At first v refuses to leave A forever. G convinces her that A will one day tire of her, and v comes to realize that the sacrifice is just punishment for her past. v writes A a farewell note. When A returns unexpectedly, v hides the note, then lies, telling A she is crying because she is happy to see him. She exits into the garden. Moments later Giuseppe delivers the note to A.
Related Information		

La traviata
FLOW CHART

ACT II –
SCENES ONE AND TWO

Scene	Scena ed Aria – Germont (pgs. 192-223)	No. 7 – Finale (p. 224) Scena IX	Scene Two → Scena X Scena XI	
Musical Description	<i>Andante</i> (=80) “Di Provenza il mar, il suo!” (p. 198)	<i>Allegro brillante</i> (p. 224)	<i>Allegro moderato</i> (p. 231) “Noi siamo zingarelle” Chorus of Gypsies	<i>Allegro assai mosso</i> (p. 250) “Di madride noi siam mattidori” Chorus of Matadors
Orchestration				
Themes				
Drama	A is crushed after having read the letter’s contents. His father reappears and comforts him by telling him to return to their home in Provence.	A spies the invitation to Flora’s party and vows to pursue V there.	Flora is throwing a masquerade ball. Gastone joins the masked matadors. Gypsy girls lead the chorus.	
Related Information			This scene provides Verdi a chance to include some local color or ethnic flavor. This was popular at the time in opera.	

La traviata
FLOW CHART

ACT II, SCENE TWO

Scene	(Flora's party might have been as rounded and symmetrical as V.'s, but A. enters.)		
	Scena XII	Scena XIII	Scena XIV (p. 309); Scena XV (p. 313)
Musical Description	<i>Allegro</i> (p. 277); key: G major <i>Allegro agitato</i> ; key: F minor	<i>Allegro agitato assai vivo</i> (p. 298); key: F minor	<i>Allegro sostenuto</i> (p. 311); key: C major <i>Piu animato</i> ; key: unstable <i>Velocissimo</i> ; key: C minor
Orchestration		The baron whispers to v three times – scoring is different for “God to take pity on her.”	Verdi conveys irony by jarring the major key melody against dissonate chords.
Themes			
Drama	A enters alone. He joins the guests at the gambling table.	v enters on the arm of the baron. Seeing A, the baron forbids v to speak to him. v sits with Flora and the baron goes to the gambling table. A continually beats the baron at cards, which angers him. All guests adjourn to the dinning room. v pulls A aside, tells him that she no longer loves him and urges him to leave, or he may be in danger of the baron's wrath.	A calls everyone back into the room, throws his winnings at v and exclaims that he has paid for her services in full. All the guests are shocked and demand that A leave.
Related Information			

La traviata
FLOW CHART

ACT II, SCENE TWO; ACT III

Scene	<i>finale</i>	Act III No. 8 – Scena ed Aria (p. 342)	Scena II (p. 348)	Scena III (p. 350)
Musical Description	<i>Largo</i> (p. 320) “Di sprezzo degno se stesso rende...”	<i>Andante</i> (=66); key: C minor; A-flat major; C minor, D-flat major		
Orchestration		16 violins (same as Prelude to Act I)	strong feeling of finality underlines Dr. Grenvil’s words to Annina	
Themes		Prelude to Act III has same melody as Prelude to Act I (key is one step higher)		
Drama	The baron challenges A to a duel. G emerges from the crowd and criticizes his son’s behavior. v faints from the humiliation.	v lies in her bed, close to death. Annina sits beside her.	Dr. Grenvil enters and reassures v that she is getting better. Secretly, he confides in Annina that v will die by nightfall.	v hears commotion in the street and remembers that it is a holiday. She asks Annina to give half of her remaining money to the poor and needy.
Related Information				

La traviata
FLOW CHART
ACT III

Scene	Scena IV (p. 352) → “Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti”	Baccanale (p. 360)	
Musical Description	Letter Scene: <i>Andino</i> (=88); 3/8; key: G-flat major “E tardi!...”: C minor (harmonic contrast)	<i>Andante mosso</i> (=50) 6/8; key: D major	<i>Allegro vivacissimo</i> 2/4; key: D major <i>Andante mosso</i> (=112) “Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo” (p. 374)
Orchestration	speaking of the letter aloud (standard convention in Italian opera), but with “Quell’amor” theme in violins (new technique)	first Italian opera aria to end in a minor key	typical <i>La traviata</i> waltz-like, simple melody
Themes	“Quell’amor” during letter reading (solo violin)		
Drama	Once alone, V rereads a letter sent by G. A has learned of her sacrifice and is rushing back abroad where he has had to live since wounding the baron in the duel.	V realizes that he is too late – her days are numbered.	A rushes in. V’s health is encouraged by the sight of A. They make plans for the future.
Related Information			

La traviata
FLOW CHART

ACT III

Scene	No. 11 – Finale ultimo →	
	(p. 404)	“Prendi, quest’e l’immagine de’ miei” (p. 409)
Musical Description	<i>Allegro</i> (=120) Common time	<i>Allegro assai vivo</i> (=92) key: A major (highly chromatic)
Orchestration	brass union	<i>Andante sostenuto</i> (=56) 3/4 time, funeral-march rhythm triple <i>piano</i>
Themes	Melody has pathos from its accents, phrasing and melodic intervals (not harmony or tonality).	Orchestra reflects her growing excitement with v in a expressionless, low register, quasi- <i>parlando</i> manner
Drama	v tries to get up but cannot. She realizes her illness is too severe, and she will certainly die.	A’s love theme in violins, shifts from minor to major (v’s acceptance of death, then back to minor (ensemble lamentation)
Related Information	G enters, and keeping his promise, embraces v as a daughter.	v attempts to make it possible for A to live without her. She gives him a portrait of herself, telling him to give it to his future wife, as someone who will be praying in heaven for both of them. She dies.

b Roncole, October 9/10, 1813; *d* Milan, January 27, 1901

Giuseppe Verdi was born in Le Roncole, a small village in the Duchy of Parma. Contrary to the composer's claim that he was of illiterate peasants, Carlo and Luigia Verdi both came from families of landowners and traders – together they ran a tavern and grocery store. As a youth Verdi's natural fascination with music was enhanced by his father's purchase of an old spinet piano. By the age of nine he was substituting as organist at the town church, a position he would later assume and hold for a number of years. Carlo Verdi's contact with Antonio Barezzi, a wealthy merchant and music enthusiast from nearby Busseto, led to Giuseppe's move to the larger town and to a more formalized music education. Lodging in his benefactor's home, Verdi gave singing and piano lessons to Barezzi's daughter, Margherita, who later became the composer's first wife.

Encouraged by his benefactor, Verdi applied to the Milan Conservatory, his tuition to be funded in part by a scholarship for poor children and the balance to be paid by Barezzi. The Conservatory rejected his application because of his age and uneven piano technique, but Verdi remained in Milan under the tutorship of Vincenzo Livigna, a *maestro concertatore* at La Scala. After making a few useful contacts in Milan, writing a number of small compositions and some last-minute conducting substitutions, Verdi was offered a contract by La Scala for an opera, *Roccester*. It was never performed, nor does the score appear to exist. It is commonly believed that much of the music was incorporated into his first staged opera, *Oberto*. The score also may have been destroyed with the composer's other juvenilia as Verdi had requested in his will.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2002 production of Don Carlos
(photo: Gary Mortensen)



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Macbeth
(photo: Gary Mortensen)

Oberto achieved modest success and Verdi was offered another commission from La Scala for a comedy. Unfortunately, by this time the composer had suffered great personal loss – in the space of two years his wife and two small children had all died. Verdi asked to be released from his contract, but La Scala's impresario, Bartolomeo Merelli (probably with good intentions) insisted that he complete the score. Written under a dark cloud, *Il regno di giorno* failed in the theater, and Verdi withdrew from any further engagements. It was due to a chance meeting with Merelli (with a new libretto in tow) that led to his return to the stage. *Nabucco* was a huge success and catapulted Verdi's career forward.

Italian theaters at this time were in constant need of new works. As a result, competent composers were in demand and expected to compose at an astonishing rate. Both Rossini and Donizetti had set the standard and Verdi was required to adapt to their pace. These became his “anni di galera” (years as a “galley slave”) – between 1842 and 1853 he composed eleven new operas, often while experiencing regular bouts of ill-health. His style progressed from treating grandiose historical subjects (as was the custom of the day) to those involving more intimate, personal relationships. This transition is crowned by three of his most popular works: *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*.

Toward the end of the 1840s Verdi considered an early retirement, as his predecessor Rossini had done. He purchased land near Busseto once belonging to his ancestors and soon began to convert the farmhouse into a villa (Sant’Agata) for himself and his new companion, Giuseppina Strepponi, a retired soprano who had championed his early works (including *Nabucco*, for which she had sung the leading female role). Verdi had renewed their friendship a few years before; when Verdi and Strepponi were in Paris they openly lived together as a couple. After their return to Italy, however, this arrangement scandalized the denizens of Busseto, necessitating a move to the country.

As Verdi became more interested in farming and less involved in the frustrating politics of the theater, his pace slowed – only six new works were composed over the next 18 years. His style began to change as well, from the traditional “numbers opera” to a more free-flowing, dramatically truthful style. Some of his greatest pieces belong to this era (*Simon Boccanegra*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino*, *Don Carlos*), which concluded with what most thought was his swan song, the spectacular grand opera *Aida*.

Following *Aida*, Verdi firmly stated he had retired for good. He was now devoted to Sant’Agata, and to revising and remounting several earlier works, pausing briefly to write a powerful *Requiem* (1874) to commemorate the passing of Italian poet and patriot Alessandro Manzoni. Coaxed out of his retreat by a lifelong love of Shakespeare, the septuagenarian composer produced *Otello* and *Falstaff* to great acclaim.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2007 production of *Un ballo in maschera*
(photo: Michal Daniel)



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of *Il trovatore*
(photo: Michal Daniel)

Verdi's final years were focused on two philanthropic projects, a hospital in the neighboring town of Villanova, and a rest home for aged and indigent musicians in Milan, the Casa di Riposo. Giuseppina (who Verdi had legally married in 1859) died in 1897, and Verdi's own passing several years later was an occasion of national mourning. One month after a small private funeral at the municipal cemetery, his remains were transferred to Milan and interred at the Casa di Riposo. Two hundred thousand people lined the streets as the “Va, pensiero” chorus from *Nabucco* was sung by an eight-hundred-person choir led by conductor Arturo Toscanini.

GIUSEPPE VERDI – CATALOGUE OF OPERAS

TITLE	PREMIERE
<i>Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio</i> (Oberto, Count of San Bonifacio)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, November 17, 1839 <i>dramma</i> ; libretto by Temistocle Solera, from Antonio Piazza's libretto <i>Rocester</i>
<i>Un giorno di regno</i> (King for a Day)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, September 5, 1840 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Felice Romani, after Alexandre Vincent Pineu-Duval's <i>Le faux Stanislas</i>
<i>Nabucco</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, March 9, 1842 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Temistocle Solera, after Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu's <i>Nabuchodonosor</i> and Antonio Cortesi's <i>Nabuchodonosor</i>
<i>I Lombardi alla prima crociata</i> (The Lombards)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 11, 1843 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Temistocle Solera, after Tommaso Grossi
<i>Ernani</i>	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 9, 1844 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Victor Hugo's <i>Hernani</i>
<i>I due Foscari</i> (The Two Foscari)	Rome, Teatro Argentina, November 3, 1844 <i>tragedia lirica</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Byron's <i>The Two Foscari</i>
<i>Giovanna d'Arco</i> (Joan of Arc)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 15, 1845 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Temistocle Solera, in part after Friedrich von Schiller's <i>Die Jungfrau von Orleans</i>
<i>Alzira</i>	Naples, Teatro di San Carlo, August 12, 1845 <i>tragedia lirica</i> ; libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, after Voltaire's <i>Alzire, ou Les Américains</i>
<i>Attila</i>	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 17, 1846 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Temistocle Solera [and Francesco Maria Piave], after Zacharias Werner's <i>Attila, König der Hunnen</i>
<i>Macbeth</i>	Florence, Teatro della Pergola, March 14, 1847 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave and Andrea Maffei, after William Shakespeare
<i>I masnadieri</i> (The Thieves)	London, Her Majesty's Theatre, July 22, 1847 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Andrea Maffei, after Friedrich von Schiller's <i>Die Räuber</i>
<i>Jérusalem</i>	Paris, Opéra, November 26, 1847 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, from Temistocle Solera's 1843 libretto <i>I Lombardi alla prima crociata</i>
<i>Il corsaro</i> (The Corsair)	Trieste, Teatro Grande, October 25, 1848 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Byron's <i>The Corsair</i>

<i>La battaglia di Legnano</i> (The Battle of Legnano)	Rome, Teatro Argentina, January 27, 1849 <i>tragedia lirica</i> ; libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, after Joseph Méry's <i>La bataille de Toulouse</i>
<i>Luisa Miller</i>	Naples, Teatro di San Carlo, December 8, 1849 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Salvatore Cammarano, after Friedrich von Schiller's <i>Kabale und Liebe</i>
<i>Stiffelio</i>	Trieste, Teatro Grande, November 16, 1850 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Emile Souvestre and Eugène Bourgeois's <i>Le pasteur, ou L'évangile et le foyer</i>
<i>Rigoletto</i>	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 11, 1851 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Victor Hugo's <i>Le roi s'amuse</i>
<i>Il trovatore</i> (The Troubadour)	Rome, Teatro Apollo, January 19, 1853 <i>dramma</i> ; Salvatore Cammarano, after Antonio García Gutiérrez's <i>El trovador</i>
<i>La traviata</i> (The Fallen Woman)	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 6, 1853 <i>opera</i> ; Francesco Maria Piave, after Alexandre Dumas fils's <i>La dame aux camélias</i>
<i>Les vêpres siciliennes</i> (The Sicilian Vespers)	Paris, Opéra, June 13, 1855 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier, after their libretto <i>Le duc d'Albe</i>
<i>Simon Boccanegra</i>	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 12, 1857 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Antonio García Gutiérrez's <i>Simón Bocanegra</i>
<i>Aroldo</i>	Rimini, Teatro Nuovo, August 16, 1857 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, from his libretto for <i>Stiffelio</i>
<i>Un ballo in maschera</i> (A Masked Ball)	Rome, Teatro Apollo, February 17, 1859 <i>melodramma</i> ; libretto by Antonio Somma, from Eugène Scribe's libretto for Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's <i>Gustave III, ou le bal masqué</i>
<i>La forza del destino</i> (The Force of Destiny)	St. Petersburg, Imperial Theatre, November 10, 1862 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Angel de Saavedra's <i>Don Alvaro, o La fuerza del sino</i>
<i>Don Carlos</i>	Paris, Opéra, March 11, 1867 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle, after Friedrich von Schiller
<i>Aïda</i>	Cairo, Cairo Opera House, December 24, 1871 <i>opera</i> ; libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni, from Auguste Mariette's scenario
<i>Otello</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 5, 1887 <i>dramma lirico</i> ; libretto by Arrigo Boito, after William Shakespeare's <i>Othello, or the Moor of Venice</i>
<i>Falstaff</i>	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 9, 1893 <i>commedia lirica</i> ; libretto by Arrigo Boito, after William Shakespeare's <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> and <i>King Henry IV</i>

With *Rigoletto* and *Il trovatore*, *La traviata* completes Verdi's trio of popular middle-period works that rapidly would make his name synonymous with Italian opera. These operas evolved at an especially interesting point in Verdi's personal life. Just a few years prior we find the composer adrift in his "galley years," managing to produce two to three operas per year, in accordance with the insatiable demands of the Italian theater industry of the era. Although he had made a name for himself with works such as *Nabucco*, *Ernani*, and *Macbeth*, he still did not have financial independence. Yet *La traviata*, written in tandem with *Il trovatore* during the winter of 1852 – 53, would be the last of these operas written in relatively quick succession.



Back in 1847 Verdi had just completed *Macbeth* and was heading to London to complete his eleventh opera, *I masnadieri*. On his return he stopped in Paris to negotiate his first work for the Paris Opéra, a French translation and adaptation of his work *I Lombardi*. He also met up with Giuseppina Strepponi, who had gone to Paris the previous fall to establish herself as a vocal teacher. She and Verdi had first met during the production of Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, in which she was to sing the leading role. Though this engagement fell through, Strepponi would return to Milan to create the role of Abigaille in Verdi's third (and first truly successful) opus, *Nabucco*. Already a skilled soprano knowledgeable in the theater business, Strepponi was useful in advising and advancing the young composer's career. They soon established a romantic liaison that continued during Verdi's Paris séjour. There he would remain, and the couple eventually were able to live together openly in the city's more permissive climate.

The year 1847 also marked the passing of a famous Parisian figure, Marie Duplessis. Her meteoric rise to notoriety as one of the city's most sought-after courtesans was accomplished in just a few years, and her life was brief but furious – she died at the age of 23. Strepponi may have seen her at the Paris Opéra, where both frequently attended. In any event, she was the talk of the town, and Verdi likely would have heard about it. One of Duplessis's many lovers, Alexandre Dumas *fils* (not to be confused with his father, Alexandre Dumas *père*, author of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*) produced a loosely autobiographical novel of their eleven-month affair, which was published following year. Though the popular novel was quickly dramatized (as was the custom), the resulting play remained unproduced for three years due to problems with the censors. The triumph of the Second Empire led to more lax definitions of decency, and the play was allowed to go on at the Théâtre du Vaudeville on February 2, 1852, five years almost to the day after Duplessis's death. Its shocking topicality made it a sensation overnight – several real-life characters were surely in the audience.

During those years, several important events took place. In response to the revolution that rocked Paris and especially Italy in 1848, Verdi composed a blatantly political opera, *La battaglia di Legnano*. Curiously, it was one of his last of this



type – perhaps the ultimate failure to establish Italian independence (at least for the moment) caused Verdi to find refuge within his soul. His next three works, *Luisa Miller*, *Stiffelio* and *Rigoletto*, were domestic tragedies, looking inward to human emotional relationships. Perhaps they are indicative of his own strife at the time, dealing with his parents, his in-laws and his neighbors.

Verdi's lust to own land was satisfied during this same year – borrowing heavily from his father and other creditors, he purchased three parcels of ancestral soil near his childhood town of Busseto, which would become his future and

final residence, Sant'Agata. In order to finance the venture, his parents sold their home and took up residence in the farmhouse. During the summer of 1849, Verdi and Strepponi decided to leave Paris and reside in Busseto, where he had also purchased a palazzo in the heart of the city. Strepponi dutifully followed the man of her life back to Italy. Little did she know what would await her there.

Life had been arduous for Strepponi. Her father died when she was seventeen, leaving his widow to support five children. At that time Strepponi was a promising voice student and would make her debut two years later. Expected to provide for the family, she accepted many engagements, which involved mutual favors in the less morally bound operatic arena. As a result, she had a series of unplanned pregnancies, which disrupted her singing contracts and weakened her health. By the middle of the 1840s Strepponi's voice was in ruin, which led her to pursue another career in Paris. Verdi never judged her for her past, and she was grateful for his unflinching devotion.

Where Paris may have indulged their relationship, Busseto was quite the opposite. In the small town, gossip traveled swiftly, and when the town hero returned and resided with a woman not his wife, the villagers quickly turned against her. Foremost in their disdain were Antonio Barezzi, Verdi's early benefactor and father of his first wife, and Verdi's own parents, who were devout Catholics. Strepponi and Verdi lived in the palazzo for 16 months, but while he could find escape, either in composing or traveling to mount productions in other cities, she was virtually an outcast, exiled in a sea of hatred.

During this tumultuous period, we see the darker side of Verdi's personality. He broke off all contact with his parents during the winter of 1850. Though he was still very much financially indebted to them, he served them notice of impending eviction from Sant'Agata, even though they were in their sixties and in ill-health with no place to go. Verdi and Strepponi took residence in the small farmhouse in May.

With the extended family still surrounding Verdi's hereditary estate, the couple didn't quite find the solace they had sought. In December, 1851, they returned to Paris for



several months. During this time, Verdi negotiated another deal with the Paris Opéra (which would become *Les vêpres siciliennes*) and, presumably, saw Dumas's play. Verdi had already read the novel, and by the fall of 1852, had selected it as a subject to fulfill a contract with Venice's Teatro La Fenice.

But Verdi had to finish another commission first, one for the Teatro Apollo in Rome. No two works could be more different than *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*, written so closely together, the former of the wildly romantic, melodramatic variety popular in the earlier part of the century (Salvadore Cammarano, the quintessential adapter of this type of drama, served as the librettist). It is significant that the composition overlapped, showing the full breath of the composers' inherent talents.

As a consequence of his work on *Il trovatore*, the composer missed a very important deadline – January 15, 1853. This was the date set forth in his contract as to when Verdi could accept or reject the principal singers signed by the La Fenice management. As the commission for what would become *La traviata* had come in May, late in the theatrical season, Verdi could not have the cast of his own choosing as they were already engaged elsewhere. He was not diametrically opposed to Fanny Salvini-Donatelli as the first Violetta, but he hoped to see how the La Fenice season played out before finally accepting her. As it happened, the season didn't fare so well; a new opera by Carlo Bosoni had failed miserably and was quickly replaced by a hastily assembled revival of *Ernani*. Another production earlier in the season, in which Salvini-Donatelli had performed, also had gone poorly, though not by any fault of the soprano. Coupled with these events was an anonymous letter Verdi received in February citing that his new opera was doomed. Verdi took hold of this notion and was convinced *La traviata* would fail.



Francesco Maria Piave's libretto survived the censors surprisingly intact (one of the reasons this particular work was chosen for Venice) – they only required the title, *Amore e morte*, be changed – but the theater's management had its own concerns about the present-day subject matter, relatively uncharted territory in the world of opera at that time). At the last minute, they decided to put the company in Louis XIV costume rather than contemporary dress, as the libretto stipulated. This naturally enraged Verdi who was now certain the premiere would be a fiasco. To his shock, the opening night began with applause for the prelude and most of the Act I numbers, concluding with Salvini-Donatelli's expert

delivery of Violetta's aria "Sempre libera." But during Act II things began to go astray. Felice Varesi (the baritone who created the roles of Macbeth and Rigoletto) was in vocal decline and couldn't negotiate Germont's rather exposed vocal line. By Act III, the audience couldn't grasp the Rubenesque Salvini-Donatelli as a consumptive heroine, and more laughter ensued. *La traviata* lasted nine performances, and Verdi's suspicions had been correct – the opera had truly failed.

Although there was interest from other Italian companies in producing Verdi's newest opera, the composer decided to keep it under wraps for some time – the next viewing of *La traviata* would be produced according to his exact terms and casting. Initially he hoped for a Roman premiere of the work (where *Trovatore* has recently triumphed), but as it turned out, another Venetian theater got the bid – the conductor/impresario was a respected interpreter of his work – 14 months later at the Teatro San Benedetto the opera triumphed. The cast included an appropriately emaciated Violetta, and the score had been touched up a bit, but otherwise, as Verdi would vehemently point out, the opera was identical to the one seen at the La Fenice (yet still presented in Louis XIV costumes, a tradition that would not change until 1906 – by then, of course, the dress was no longer contemporary).



It is tempting to consider Verdi's personal investment in this particular opera and point out its vaguely autobiographical undercurrents. Going back in time a bit, he and Stroppioni did return to Sant'Agata in March, 1852, but not without having received a scathing letter from his ex-father-in-law Barezzi, while in Paris. Verdi was quick to write back, and while showing deference to a man he viewed as a father-figure, politely but firmly stood up to him with respect to his mistress, his own traviata, or "woman led astray." It appears Barezzi got the point – upon their return to Italy, the meddling villagers would eventually subside, the son would mend the fence with both fathers, and Barezzi would come to embrace Stroppioni as his own daughter.



Born in a small town in Normandy, Rose Alphonsine Plessis hardly betrayed her modest origins once she became a high-priced courtesan. Her incredible beauty and aristocratic bearing may have been due to some minor nobility in her family tree, but her more immediate relations left much to be desired: her grandmother was a prostitute, and her father Marin a town-to-town peddler known for his drinking, abusive behavior and a bit of the crazy eye. Poor Alphonsine did not have a happy childhood. Forced to take a position as an English gentlewoman’s chambermaid, her mother was separated from her two daughters, who were split up and sent to different relatives. At one point, Marin Plessis re-entered the picture, removing Alphonsine from a relative happiness and installing her into the farmhouse of a seventy-year-old friend. There is little doubt that she suffered sexual abuse at the hands of one of these two abominable men.

Alphonsine’s big break came when her father dragged her away again, this time to Paris, where she was yet again abandoned to her father’s acquaintances. She escaped, but found herself homeless at the age of 14. Alphonsine soon found employment as one of the countless Parisian *grisettes*, women who worked in the “clean” trades of dressmaking and embroidery, but were forced take students as a live-in lovers to make ends meet (Mimì of *La bohème* serves as a perfect example); thus *grisettes* were women of an enterprising nature. Food, as it was always scarce, was an especial treat, and Nestor Roqueplan (later director of the Paris Opéra 1847 – 1854) would later recognize Alphonsine as one for whom he once bought a bag *pommes frites*, which as he noted in his memoirs, she ravenously consumed with great delight, zealously licking the wrapper when the meal was completed. Alphonsine’s striking beauty would soon attract a middle-aged restaurateur, who set her up in an attractive flat, and it was here the barely literate peasant girl began to reinvent herself. In no time she was up to speed on the authors of the day, played the piano with some assurance, shed the rather clumsy name of Alphonsine for the more stylish Marie, and added a “du” to her last name to give it a bit more clout.



And her efforts quickly paid off. She was soon seen in the company of such young notables as the Comte de Guiche, Count Ferdinand de Monguyon, Vicomte Edouard de Perrégaux and other young lions and dandies of the infamous Paris Jockey Club. She also attracted the attention of Count Stackelberg, an elderly and exceedingly wealthy Russian diplomat whose career had peaked at the signing of the Congress of Vienna peace treaty that concluded the Napoleonic Wars. According to legend, he was struck by Marie’s likeness to his own daughter, who had died of consumption some years before. At any rate, he paid her now-extensive bills as she moved to a



fashionable residence on the Rue de la Madeleine. Marie became a fixture at the Opéra, elegantly dressed and reportedly accompanied by a bouquet of white camellias, or red on days she was “unavailable” (a rather indelicate detail that revealed her true profession as a courtesan). One of Marie’s more ardent admirers obtained for her a noble title from King Louis-Philippe so that she could attend royal weddings and balls. A highly desirable siren who became reckless, extravagant, untruthful and exploitative, Marie Duplessis had enough seductive allure to ruin some of the richest men in France.

One admirer from the vast pool was Alexandre Dumas *filis*, and his past had been only slightly better. Born out of wedlock to Alexandre Dumas *père* (before he became a famous novelist) and a grisette, Catherine Lebay, the crying infant became a constant nuisance to the struggling young writer, who could no longer concentrate in the confines of what had once been a quiet and loving home. Father Dumas finally abandoned mother and child, only to return later to acknowledge his son as his own, remove young Alexandre and set him up into a private boarding school. In spite of his father’s better intentions, Alexandre was miserable away from his mother and bullied in school as a result of his illegitimate birth. He grew up sullen and morose, though matters

improved once he entered higher education at the *lycée*. In spite of Dumas *père*’s poor treatment of his mother and his continued life of excessive philandering, father and son remained quite close.

Like most men in his circle, the 20-year-old Alexandre Dumas *filis* was well-aware of the beautiful Marie Duplessis – he had observed her by day riding in her blue coupé drawn by exquisite thoroughbreds, and in the evenings at all of the major theaters which she regularly attended. At one point he summoned the courage to approach Clémence Pratt, an older woman with a questionable past who served as Marie’s go-between, and the two were introduced in Marie’s drawing room. Not unlike Dumas’s novel and play and Verdi’s opera, the young Dumas immediately professed his love and Marie was not completely unresponsive – indeed life in the fast lane had been wearing her down and the signs of consumption were already apparent. Dumas’s interest was more sanitary than sexual – he had the notion of restoring her health if she would devote herself entirely to him. Thus began the year-long affair which tearfully ended when Dumas realized he could not afford Marie’s taste for luxury, nor could she give up the many lovers who underwrote it. After they parted ways, Marie became passionately involved with Franz Liszt. He professed the love to be genuine, yet he didn’t bother to travel back to Paris once Marie fell mortally ill.

In fact, Perrégaux and her maid Clotilde were her only real friends to the very end. In Marie’s final days, her faithful maid/companion borrowed from her own savings to keep the household going, and it appears Perrégaux was the only man she ever truly loved. At one point Marie and “Ned” spoke of marriage, but his aristocratic family would not allow it. Perhaps sensing her end was near, Perrégaux did eventually marry Marie in secret (at the Kensington Office in England), several months before her death, giving her at least the right to use his title and coat-of-arms (though they never lived together as husband and wife). He was present at her deathbed and paid for her funeral.

All those who come about women like me have an interest in calculating their slightest words, in thinking of the consequences of their most insignificant actions. Naturally we have no friends. We have selfish lovers who spend their fortunes, not on us, as they say, but on their own vanity... We no longer belong to ourselves. We are no longer beings, but things. We stand first in their self-esteem, last in their esteem.

– Marguerite Gautier, *La dame aux camélias*

We can not, then, have, or rather I can not have more than one possible kind of happiness and this is, sad as I sometimes am, suffering as I always am, to find a man superior enough not to ask questions about my life, and to be the lover of my impressions rather than of my body. Such a man I found in the duke; but the duke is old, and old age neither protects nor consoles. I thought I could accept the life which he offered me; but what would you have? I am dying of ennui, and if one is bound to be consumed, it is as well to throw oneself into the flames as to be asphyxiated with charcoal.

– Marguerite Gautier, *La dame aux camélias*

romance that followed. By the end, the narrator is instructed to put Armand's story to paper. The novel includes a grisly scene where Armand is compelled to exhume Marguerite's body to gaze upon her one last time. In fact, it was Perrégaux who ordered the exhumation (though Dumas was likely present) for reburial in a better, more permanent tomb. The viewing and identification of the corpse would have been required by French law, and after eleven days already underground, Marie's remains must have given Dumas quite a start.

The author's other departures from the actual facts are equally telling. The summer séjour (Verdi's Act II, scene one) was more of an out-of-town trip than a permanent settlement, traveling from party to party, and funded by Dumas's creditors more than Marie selling any of her precious possessions. In the novel, Duval's father pays him a visit after receiving no word from his son for quite some time, as they regularly would spend the summer together. There are several father/son confrontations and reconciliations, but we don't learn of father Duval's visit to Marguerite until the very end, as she details the encounter in a letter to Armand shortly before dying. Another fabrication is the existence of the visit itself, which didn't quite occur in the way Dumas portrayed. A stern moralist like Georges Duval (later Giorgio Germont) could hardly have been inspired by Alexandre Dumas *père*, who once accepted an invitation to Marie's box, only to find

Dumas was traveling with his father during Marie's final days and didn't make it back in time to see her die, a significant departure from what is relayed in his novel, play and the opera. Knowing from his father that literature could be used both as a weapon and a release, he poured his feelings out into a sentimental novel, discreetly changing the names to Armand Duval and Marguerite Gautier. He chooses to tell his story as narrated to another person to give added distance, a stranger who purchases Marguerite's copy of *Manon Lescaut* at the auction of her belongings following her death. Armand tracks him down and tries to buy it back. They strike up a friendship, which gives Armand an opportunity to tell about the book's significance (a gift to Marguerite, Manon being another woman with questionable morals), and the ill-fated



CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

REAL LIFE	NOVEL/PLAY	OPERA	VERDI'S LIFE
Alexandre Dumas <i>fils</i>	Armand Duval	Alfredo Germont	Giuseppe Verdi
Alphonsine Duplessis	Marguerite Gautier	Violetta Valéry	Giuseppina Strepponi
Alexandre Dumas <i>père</i>	Georges Duval	Giorgio Germont	Antonio Barezzi
Comte de Stackelberg	Duc de Mauriac	Baron Douphol	
Eugène Déjazet	Gaston Rieux	Gastone de Letorières	
Clémence Prat	Prudence Duvernoy		
Clotilde	Nanine	Annina	
	Olympe	Flora Bervoix	

his son already seated there – as the two share the same name and address, father Dumas supposed the invitation that arrived in the mail was for him. Still, as Marie graciously received him, it allowed Dumas *père* the opportunity to boast that he had received a kiss from the infamous courtesan. The inspiration for Armand Duval’s visit more likely came from an encounter connected to an earlier lover. The father of the Comte de Guiche, the Duc du Gramont, paid Marie a call in much the same way as is played out in the drama and the opera, also claiming that her liaison with his son was ruining the family name. Marie must have relayed the details to Alexandre during their time together.



In the novel, Marguerite abruptly ends their summer stay in Bougival by returning to one of her former lovers, after several days of unexplained tears. Armand goes to the provinces with his father to heal his wounds, but upon his return to Paris, sights Marguerite with another courtesan, Olympe. He makes it his personal mission to possess Olympe by snaring an invitation to her party, knowing Marguerite will be present. A doctor is added to the Act IV party as a harbinger of Marguerite’s approaching death. There is no great condemnation scene (as is later found in the play and the opera), only Armand’s continued pursuit of the shameless and senseless Olympe, appropriately showering her with gifts befitting her station in society, and slandering Marguerite at every opportunity. Armand and Marguerite finally have a impassioned confrontation one evening, followed temporary reconciliation, but when he pays her a visit the next day, Armand finds Marguerite still attended by her protector. He dashes off vicious note and encloses a five hundred franc bill – “You went away so suddenly that I forgot to pay you. Here is the price of your night.” Marguerite leaves for England, and Armand journeys to Marseilles.

Throughout the stormy affair, Prudence is the surprising voice of reason and provides sage advice for Armand. Prudence knows how it all works, herself an embodiment what becomes of a courtesan after her “first death” – the onset of middle age. Once a kept woman, then a marginally talented actress and now the owner of an insolvent hat shop, she is forced to leech off Marguerite by providing perfunctory intermediary services between the courtesan and her clients. She is the

Marie Duplessis did not have all the pathetic adventures that I gave to Marguerite Gautier, but she sought to have them. If she sacrificed nothing to Armand it was because Armand did not wish it. To her great regret she was able to enact only the first and second act of the drama.

– Alexandre Dumas *filis*

archetype of the *demimonde*, a term coined by Dumas to describe the “half-world” occupied by courtesans, their male patrons and fallen society women, all of whom have acceptable manners but loose morals and tend to party late at night until the early morning hours. Destruction is inevitable, and in the end, Prudence is ruined herself, as Marguerite’s valueless promissory notes leave her bankrupt. Her inspiration comes from the real-life Clémence, whose spotty past included the corruption of young girls farmed out for hire. Her

position in the demimonde is subtly indicated in the original French – as Prudence, she and Marguerite use the formal *vous* form when addressing one another versus the informal *tu* that is used between Marguerite and Gaston, who are close friends, and between Marie and Armand when they are intimate (the point at which the word switches is a telling moment as they go in and out of their stormy relationship). During the condemnation scene Olympe uses “tu” with Armand as an insult, a slight Armand makes a point of bringing to our attention. Following Marie’s death, Clémence gave up hat-making and went to the stage, playing matronly duenna roles. She even acted the part of herself once *La*



dame aux camélias became a hit. It is interesting to observe how Dumas transforms her from novel to play as a source of comic relief, displaying his ultimate contempt – in the drama she is depicted as overtly coarse and piggish, always with her hand out for money, even as Marguerite lays dying.

Dumas would later claim Marie Duplessis had only lived the first and second acts of his drama, and possessed only a few of Marguerite’s nobler traits, yet he still described her as the only courtesan who had a heart. Indeed, the rest of her circle probably did not realize she was truly dying, as the art of conspicuous consumption was very much in vogue. Marie d’Agoult (also a one time-lover of Liszt, mother of Cosima Wagner, and a mover in the artistic salons and

society of the day) acidly noted how the Princess Belgiojoso always feigned to appear as though she had one foot in the grave. Marie was believed to suffer more from *ennui*, and it was only when she was seen for her final public appearance in two months before her death, elegantly dressed and gaudily bedecked with nearly every jewel in her possession yet feverish and red-eyed, that her terminal condition was truly assessed. Knowing that her days were numbered, as Dumas relays, she had to experience Paris “ten times more than anyone else.” Her lifestyle finally took its toll on February 3, 1847. Following Marie’s death, the famed courtesan’s enormous debts required the auction of her possessions, an event that garnered citywide interest. Many proper women, so long denied their husbands’ attention by women such as these, gathered to gape at the sumptuous luxury in which she lived. Charles Dickens was there (and maybe even Giuseppina Strepponi, supposes one Verdi biographer), as was the Duchess de Ragusa, Perrégaux’s aunt, intent on recovering the family jewels that her nephew had squandered on his now publicly scandalous love affair. Marie’s sister, Delphine, traveled from the provinces to attend and, rather than bidding on any sentimental remembrance, sensibly purchased eight skirts at a good price. It hardly mattered, for the balance of the auction’s proceeds after the creditors were paid went to her as Marie’s only heir and included among her few truly personal possessions a full-length portrait of the beautiful courtesan. Delphine hung the painting in the basement of her tavern as a tourist attraction, but was forced to sell it after the considerable inheritance had been squandered.

MAKING A DRAMA, THEN AN OPERA

When it came time to make his novel into a drama (a usual practice for the day), Dumas divided his opus into five scenes, four of which made it into Verdi’s opera. The missing second act details Marguerite’s contemplation of Armand’s offer of exclusivity, effectively condensed in Violetta’s Act I aria, “Sempre libera,” and her receipt of the Duke’s money, who becomes the unwitting financier of the venture. The second act also tests the new relationship with a jealous outburst from Armand after he



observes Marguerite willing to dine with one of her protectors just after she and Armand have made plans to leave Paris together and abandon city life. He is placated when Marguerite leaves the count waiting anxiously in his carriage. In the play, Marguerite is portrayed as more of a minx, showing childlike irritation at the tireless efforts for her attention made by Comte de Varville, whom she treats rather poorly. Two new characters – Nichette and Gustave – are added as a respectable and conventional contrast to the amoral life of the demimondaine. Nichette is a seamstress/grisette friend from Marguerite's former days who has remained in the more



honest profession. She and Gustave are about to be married (and are in the church, ready to do so, by Act V as Marguerite lies on her deathbed). It is she who is honored the play's last line, a cloaked moral evaluation of the fallen woman's loving yet empty life – however much Marguerite believed in love, Dumas implies that her past, like the disease, would eventually overcome her. Gaston is given a more sympathetic portrayal than in the book (and the opera), standing vigil over Marguerite's deathbed in Act V before Armand makes his belated entrance. Otherwise, the play provided a sensible guide for the opera's development. Piave and Verdi diverge only to conflate Prudence and Nanine into Annina, singularly devoted to Violetta to the very end, and they dispense with the play's second act, moving us swiftly to Alfredo and Violetta's blissful country idyll, ending the scene with an extended moment for father and son. They quicken the action by moving Flora's party to the very evening of the breakup and they add the curious appearance of Giorgio Germont at climax of Flora's party that begs the question whether or not he is there for dramatic effect or pursuing Violetta for himself (perhaps there is some of Dumas *père* present in his character after all). His inclusion in the opera's final scene is also an interesting variation from the play – it appears he and Violetta have been corresponding for some time.

Following his drama's premiere Dumas quietly dined with his mother rather than enjoy his enormous success with cast and friends, an example of his profound respect for women of Catherine's social standing. The play went all over Europe and became popular in America under the title *Camille*. Sarah Bernhardt would become one of the title role's greatest interpreters, and Greta Garbo would immortalize Marie Duplessis on the silver screen. To honor Bernhardt's accomplishments on the French stage, Dumas gave her the famous farewell letter, which he had managed to eventually procure at another auction. Reinterpreted in the novel it reads:

My dear Marguerite: I hope that your indisposition yesterday was not serious. I came, at eleven at night, to ask after you, and was told that you had not come in. M. de G. was more fortunate, for he presented himself shortly afterward, and at four in the morning he had not left.

Forgive me for the few tedious hours that I have given you, and be assured that I shall never forget the happy moments which I owe to you.

I should have called today to ask after you, but I intend on going back to my father's.

Goodbye, my dear Marguerite. I am not rich enough to love you as I would nor poor enough to love you as you would. Let us then forget, you a name which must be indifferent enough to you, I a happiness which has become impossible.

I send back your key, which I have never used, and which might be useful to you, if you are often ill as you were yesterday.

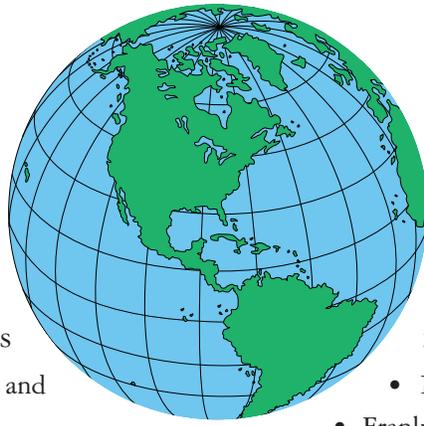


WORLD EVENTS IN 1848

(year of the writing of the novel
La dame aux camélias)

HISTORY AND POLITICS

- King Christian VIII of Denmark dies and is succeeded by Frederick III.
- Hungary proclaims its independence from Austria.
- Revolutions in Venice, Berlin, Milan and Parma.
- Second Sikh War begins in India.
- Nasr-ed-Din becomes Shah of Persia.
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends Mexican-U.S. war. The U.S. gets Texas, New Mexico, California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and parts of Colorado and Wyoming from Mexico in return for large indemnity of \$15 million dollars.
- Revolt in Paris; Louis Philippe abdicates. Louis Napoleon is elected President of the new Second Republic of France.
- Revolution in Vienna; the chancellor, Prince Metternich resigns. Emperor Ferdinand I flees to Innsbruck and eventually abdicates in favor of his nephew who becomes Emperor Francis Joseph I.
- Sardinia declares war on Austria. From the conflict emerges the future (and first) king of unified Italy, Victor Emmanuel II.
- Pan-Slav congress in Prague leads to Czech revolts which are suppressed by Austrian troops under Windischgratz.
- Switzerland, by its new constitution, becomes a federal union.
- Revolt in Rome. Count Rossi, the papal premier, is assassinated. Pope Pius IX flees to Gaeta.
- Wisconsin becomes a state of the United States.
- At the first U.S. Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mot, and others draw up the first declaration of the rights of women in the U.S. proposing that women be allowed to vote.
- Algeria, invaded by the French in 1830 but not completely conquered until 1847, is declared part of France and organized into the French departments of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine.



WORLD EVENTS IN 1853

(year of *La traviata's* premiere)

HISTORY AND POLITICS

- Napoleon III marries Eugénie de Montijo.
- Franklin Pierce inaugurated as 14th President of the United States.
- Peace between Britain and Burma.
- Maria II of Portugal dies; succeeded by her son Pedro V (to 1861).
- India's first railway, linking Bombay to Thana, opens.
- The island of New Caledonia, off eastern Australia is annexed by the French.
- Britain gives its Gold Coast (Ghana) colony a legislative council.
- Explorations in the Arctic led to John Le Mesurier McClure's discovery of the Northwest Passage. (c. 1853).
- The Gadsden Purchase, land that is now part of southern Arizona and New Mexico, was acquired by the U.S. from Mexico, completing the present boundary of the continental U.S. The purchase also allowed the U.S. to avoid paying damages to Mexico for the ravages of the border Indians whom the U.S. had agreed to control.
- The Coinage Act of 1853 decreased the amount of silver used in minting all U.S. silver coins except the dollar.
- The Eighth Kaffir War ends. The war was fought in southeastern Cape of Good Hope Colony [Cape Province] in present South Africa, by the Xhosa, a Bantu tribe, and the British. The Xhosa, whose pastoral way of life was disturbed by British and Boer settlements and by continual (from 1776) warfare with British forces, eventually committed (in 1857) a kind of mass suicide, destroying their corn and cattle.
- Russia proposes to Britain that the two countries share out what remains of the Ottoman empire. Attempts at resolving religious matters with the Ottoman empire fail, leading to the Crimean War. Turkey declares war on Russia; Crimean War continues to 1856.

- British forces occupy Greytown (San Juan del Norte) at the mouth of the San Jual river on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast to forestall the tentative U.S. plan to construct a transisthmian canal at this point.
- A treaty with New Grenada (now Columbia), which allowed travel rights across the isthmus of Panama (then part of New Grenada) in exchange for a guarantee that the area's neutrality would be upheld, was approved by the U.S. Senate.
- The Peace of Malmö concluded a war between Germany and Denmark. Fighting had broken out in April over the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein which Denmark wanted to annex. The Prussians drove out the Danes, who tried again in 1849, upon which the Germans abandoned the area to them.
- Prussia suppress uprising in Warsaw.
- Zachary Taylor, the former commander who distinguished himself in the war against Mexico, is elected president.
- Zwangendaba, the Ngoni chief who led his people on a 2,000-mile migration from Natal to the Fipa plateau in western Tanzania, dies. After his death, his people begin to break up into five smaller chiefdoms.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

- Hans Delbrück, German historian, is born.
- Jakob Grimm writes *History of the German Language*.
- Thomas Babington Macaulay writes *History of England*.
- *Communist Manifesto* is issued by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
- J. S. Mill writes the *Principles of Political Economy*.

LITERATURE

- Emile Augier writes the play *L'Avenurière*.
- François René Chateaubriand writes *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*.
- Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, German poet, dies.
- Elizabeth Gaskell writes *Mary Barton*.
- J. R. Lowell writes *The Bigelow Papers*.
- Frederick Marryat, English Novelist, dies.
- Henri Murger writes *Scenes de la vie de bohème*, the basis for Giacomo Puccini's opera *La bohème*.

- Taiping rebel forces capture the large of city of Nanjing on the lower Yangzi river in China. They eventually capture the Qing capital of Beijing.
- A U.S. Squadron under Commodore Matthew Perry arrives off Edo (Tokyo) and demands that Japan open up for trade with the outside world.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

- Johann Herzog begins writing *Encyclopedia of Protestant Theology* (published 1868).
- Mommsen begins writing **History of Rome** (published 1856).
- Joseph Gobineau writes an *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, in which he develops his theory of the superiority of the Germanic race, on the basis of physical criteria.

LITERATURE

- Matthew Arnold writes *The Scholar-Gipsy*.
- Charlotte Brontë writes *Villette*.
- Hall Caine, English novelist born (died 1931).
- Elizabeth Gaskell publishes *Ruth and Cranford*.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne writes *Tanglewood Tales*.
- Charles Kingsley writes *Hypatia*.
- Ludwig Tieck, **German poet, died** (born 1773).
- Charlotte M. Yonge writes *The Heir of Redclyffe*.
- Pon Nya [U ponna], a Burmese **writer**, is named poet to the court of Kanaung, the crown prince of Burma [Myanmar]. Pon Nya excelled in writing Myit-ta-za, a form of classical verse with four syllables to the line.

VISUAL ART

- Paul Gauguin, French painter, is born.
- John Everett Millais paints Ophelia.
- Jean François Millet paints The Winnower.
- Fritz von Uhde, painter, is born.
- Thomas Cole, a romantic landscape painter and founder of the Hudson River School in the U.S., dies.
- William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti found the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The motto of the Brotherhood was “True to Nature,” and their chief aim was to reproduce nature as observed for the first time, a reaction against what they considered to be a “derivative” element in art and poetry since Raphael, an early 16th-century Italian painter.

MUSIC

- Geatano Donizetti dies.
- Sir Hubert Parry, English composer, is born.
- Thyagaraj, an ascetic and religious mystic in India, dies. He composed over 2,000 religious songs, which have preserved much folksong material. He also wrote three operas in the Telugu language, a Dravidian language of southern India.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, GROWTH

- Jöns Jakob Berzelius, Swedish chemist, dies. He was noted especially for the development (in 1813) of the symbols used in chemical notation. His calculation of atomic weights and proportions were published in a table in 1818.
- Böttger invents the first safety matches.
- First appendectomy is performed by Hancock.
- Xu Jiyu’s geography of the world, Yinghuan Zhilue, is completed.

VISUAL ART

- Rebuilding of Balmoral Castle, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, begun under direction of P.C. Albert (to 1855)
- Georges Eugène Haussmann begins reconstruction of Paris. His system of wide, straight boulevards and circumferential avenues gave Paris its beauty and practicality, copied in Washington, D.C. and other cities.
- Carl Larsson, Swedish painter, is born (died 1919).
- Vincent van Gogh, Dutch painter, is born (died 1890).
- The election of John Millais as an associate of the Royal Academy breaks up the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of controversial young artists which included Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman.

MUSIC

- Henry Steinway (Heinrich E. Steinweg, 1797–1871) and his three sons begin the New York firm of piano manufacturers.
- Giuseppe Verdi premieres *Il Trovatore* in Rome (and *La traviata* in Venice).
- Richard Wagner completes the text of his tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.
- Franz Liszt, who has settled in Weimar, composes his *Sonata in B minor*.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, GROWTH

- Samuel Colt revolutionizes the manufacture of small arms.
- Melbourne University is founded.
- Alexander Wood uses hypodermic syringe for subcutaneous injections.
- A yellow fever epidemic breaks out in New Orleans, Louisiana, killing more than 5,000 persons during the next two years. A sixth of the population of nearby Vicksburg also succumbs.
- Dominique François Jean Arago (b. 1786), a French physicist, dies. Arago investigated electromagnetism and the wave theory of light. He discovered the principle of creating magnetism by rotation and was one of those who proved (1820) that iron could be



DAILY LIFE

- Serfdom is abolished in Austria.
- First Public Health Act in Britain.
- First settlers arrive in New Zealand (Dunedin).
- W. G. Grace, English cricketer, is born.
- *New York News Agency* founded by Hale and Burnett became the first news wire service (from 1856 known as the *Associated Press*).
- Sebastian Kneipp introduced cold-water cures at Worrishofen, Germany.
- Otto Lilienthal, German aviation pioneer, is born.
- Belle Starr, American outlaw, is born.
- Gold discoveries in California lead to the first gold rush.
- France ended slavery in all of its possessions.
- William Haldane opened the first U.S. furniture factory at Grand Rapids, Michigan, called the “Furniture capital of the world.” Designers from the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland helped to establish the reputation of the factory.
- The introduction of the longer-driving gutta-percha golf ball ended the feather-ball era in golf. This ball was made solid of a single lump of gutta-percha and hand-molded by rolling the material on a flat board.

magnetized by an electrical current. In 1806 he was joined by Jean-Baptiste Biot, a French physicist and geodesist for whom the mica biotite was named, in measuring an arc of the meridian in Spain. Biot summarized the values of **magnetic** force engendered by direct current in a law which **carried** his name.

- George Cayley, called by Englishmen “father of the aeroplane,” designs a man-carrying glider that carried his coachman over one-quarter of a mile in a valley near his estate in Brompton, Yorkshire. Cayley’s exploit was the first recorded glider flight.

DAILY LIFE

- First International Statistical Congress is held in Brussels.
- First railroad through **the Alps** (Vienna–Trieste) is completed.
- Queen Victoria allows chloroform **to be** administered to her during the birth of her **seventh** child, thus ensuring its place as an anesthetic **in Britain**.
- Telegraph system is established in India.
- Vaccination against smallpox is made compulsory in Britain.
- Wellingtonia Gigantea, the largest tree in the world, is discovered in California.
- The Irish national **sport of hurling** (a game resembling field hockey) **made its first** appearance in the U.S. in an organized **way** when a club was formed in San Francisco California.
- Levi Strauss, a Bavarian tailor, **saw the** miners’ need for strong durable trousers **and created** what have become known as “jeans” – **from the** French genes – made from durable twilled cotton with ample pockets for the miners’ tools. The original jeans were brown in color, but Strauss was experimenting at the time with a blue indigo-based dye, a cheaper coloring.



In the beginning ...

JACOPO PERI 1561–1633

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI 1567–1643

Although often considered an Italian innovation, OPERA had its debut in Ancient Greece, where drama frequently incorporated singing, declamation and dance to tell a narrative tale. Ecclesiastical music dramas of the Middle Ages were also important precursors. But the operatic art form familiar to us today has its roots in Florence, between 1580 and 1589, where a group of musicians, poets and scholars explored the possibility of reviving tragic drama of the ancients.

The circle was known as the CAMERATA and consisted of writers, theorists and composers, including GIULIO CACCINI, OTTAVIO RINUCCINI and VINCENZO GALILEI (father of the famed astronomer). Their efforts exacted musical compositions that took special care to accentuate the dramatic inflection of their chosen text, to evoke its precise emotional shading and to find the ideal marriage between words and music. JACOPO PERI, a rival of Caccini and a collaborator with Rinuccini, produced the first known (but no longer existing) opera, *Dafne*, in 1597.

The Camerata met at the home of the nobleman GIOVANNI DE' BARDI. Thus, no sooner had opera had made its first appearance than it became a court activity, which fit the social and political conditions of the day. As a result of Bardi's influence, these composers were hired by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand I, who gave them their first wide exposure. When his daughter, Marie de' Medici, married Henry IV of France, Peri's *Euridice* was produced at the ceremony, and Italian opera gained its first international premiere. Even though *Euridice* was a simply staged production accompanied by a small group of strings and flute, in 1600 this type of musical drama was considered revolutionary.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S *Orfeo* (1607) is the most significant opera of this period, more so than those works of the Florentines. The boldness of his harmonies and the richness of his orchestration dramatically developed the art form, and this work, along with *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642) are still popular pieces performed today.

Opera in Venice

FRANCESCO CAVALLI 1602–1676

ANTONIO CESTI 1623–1669

The new art form quickly spread to other Italian cities. By 1636, the first public opera house was opened in Venice and opera became quite popular among the people. *Le nozze di Teti e di Pele*, the first of FRANCESCO CAVALLI'S thirty-plus operas for the Venetian stage, premiered two years later. Competing with Monteverdi and ANTONIO CESTI (who took a post in Innsbruck after producing only two works for Venice), Cavalli quickly rose to the top.

At the same time, Italian stage designers were fast improving their techniques and were able to produce stupendous special effects, a happy coincidence for the new operatic art form. The use of the proscenium arch allowed the spectator to view the stage from a narrower angle, thus producing a better illusion of perspective. The proscenium also hid elaborate flying apparatus, and allowed for quick and seamless scene changes with drops from the top and flaps from the side wings. Spectacular stage effects became a speciality of French opera, and with the inclusion of ballet, became the part of established style of France by the 18th century.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1971 production of Monteverdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea

North of Italy, Hamburg composer REINHARD KEISER (1694 – 1739) became the director of one of the first public opera houses in Germany. He often set libretti by Venetian librettists.

Baroque Opera in France, England and Germany

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY 1632–1687
 HENRY PURCELL 1658/59–1695
 GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685–1759
 CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK 1714–1787



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
 2008 production of Keiser's *The Fortunes of King Croesus*

In 1646, Giovanni Battista Lully arrived in France from Florence and tried to establish Italian opera in the French Court. He was unsuccessful because the reigning monarch, Louis XIV, preferred dance. Nonetheless, JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY, as he became known, rose in royal favor by composing ballets for the king and eventually gained control of the Académie Royale de Musique, the official musical institution of France. Through Lully's influence in this important position, and by way of his own compositions, a distinctive French operatic form began to emerge and thrive on its own.

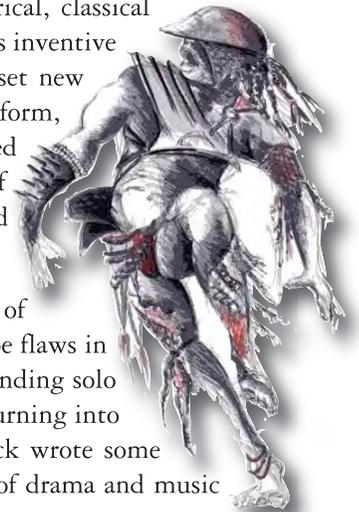
The Italian and French forms of opera were slow to catch on among the English, who preferred spoken theater. A compromise was reached in a form referred to as SEMI-OPERA, featuring spoken dialogue alternated with musical MASQUES (which often included dance). HENRY PURCELL'S *The Fairy Queen* (1692) is one popular example from this period.



A scene from The Minnesota Opera's
 1994 production of Handel's *Julius Caesar*

Purcell's first opera, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), is his only opera in the Italian style and continues to be occasionally revived in modern times.

A major player in the early part of the 18th century was GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL, who began his career in Hamburg. As early as 1711, Handel enjoyed success in England and would remain there for the next forty years. During that time, he wrote 35 operas (many in the Italian style), most of which focused on historical, classical or romantic subjects. His inventive musical style began to set new standards for the art form, and his works redefined the dramatic potential of opera as a vital and vivid experience.



Another German, CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK, arrived in England on the heels of Handel's last London operas, and later moving to Vienna, he began to see what he found to be flaws in the conventional Italian opera of the day. Singers had taken control of the productions, demanding solo arias and sometimes adding their own pieces to show off their vocal technique. Operas were turning into a collection of individual showpieces at the sacrifice of dramatic integrity. Although Gluck wrote some operas which shared these flaws, one work, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), reasserted the primacy of drama and music



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2009 production of Argento's *Casanova's Homcoming* (which included a scene from Metastasio's opera seria *Demofonte* (1733))

by removing the *DA CAPO* (repeated and embellished) part of the aria, by using chorus and instrumental solos only to reinforce the dramatic action, and by not allowing the singers to insert their own music. Gluck completed his career in Paris, where he became a master of French opera's serious form, the *TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE*.

During the 18th century, opera began to fall into two distinct categories: *OPERA SERIA* and *OPERA BUFFA*. Opera seria (serious opera) focused on historical, religious or Greco-Roman subjects. The glorification of saints, kings and gods went hand-in-hand with the grandiose baroque style and the spectacular stage effects of court opera. Librettist Pietro Metastasio provided 28 libretti that continued to serve composers again and again well into the 19th century. Opera buffa (comic opera) had its roots with the popular audience, each country specializing in its own distinct form. In France, CHARLES-SIMON FAVART's operas of the 1740s parodied the serious *tragédie lyriques* of Lully (the *Opéra-Comique*, the Paris theater for comic opera, would later be named after him). In Naples, Italy, the *INTERMEZZI* (short comic works inserted in between acts of a serious opera), of GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI paved the way to the development of opera buffa in the latter half of the 18th century. His masterpiece, *La serva padrona* (1733), is considered a milestone in the development of comic opera.

Opera during the Classical Period

GIUSEPPE SARTI 1729–1802
 FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN 1732–1809
 GIOVANNI PAISIELLO 1740–1816
 DOMENICO CIMAROSA 1749–1801
 ANTONIO SALIERI 1750–1825
 VICENTE MARTIN Y SOLER 1754–1806
 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756–1791

Two composers are invariably linked to the Classical Period – FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN and WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. Of the former, few of his operas are produced today even though he wrote over 25, most of which were created and performed for his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy. Mozart's operas, however, remain in repertory as some of the most frequently produced works. Of the five most favorite – *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782), *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), *Così fan tutte* (1790), *The Magic Flute* (1791) – two are *SINGSPIELS* (a popular German form, replacing sung recitative with spoken dialogue), two opera buffas and one opera "semi-seria." Two opera serias (the form Mozart preferred, incidently) frame his adult career – *Idomeneo* (1781) was his first mature opera and *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) was his last commission.

Lesser composers of this period include ANTONIO SALIERI (born in Legnago, settling later in Vienna), who served the court of Emperor Joseph II. Through the emperor's influence with his sister, Marie Antoinette, Salieri made headway in Paris as well, establishing himself as a worthy successor of Gluck in the serious vein of his *tragédie lyriques*. Returning to Vienna in 1784, Salieri found himself in strict



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*



Artist rendering of Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

competition with other leading composers of the day, GIOVANNI PAISIELLO and VINCENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER. These two composers were known partly from their brief service to Catherine the Great of Russia, along with several other advanced Italian composers including GIUSEPPE SARTI and DOMENICO CIMAROSA.

After the Revolution – French Grand Opera

LUIGI CHERUBINI 1760–1842

FERDINANDO PAER 1771–1839

GASPARE SPONTINI 1774–1851

DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER 1782–1871

GIACOMO MEYERBEER 1791–1864

In the decades following the French revolution, FRENCH GRAND OPERA developed extensively, moving from a private entertainment for royalty to an art form eagerly consumed by the upwardly mobile bourgeoisie. Opera in France at the turn of the 19th century was dominated by expatriate Italian composers. First and most notable was LUIGI CHERUBINI, who established residence in Paris in 1785. Eventually rising to the position of director of the national conservatory, he virtually ceased composing operas in 1813. The most lasting work in his oeuvre is *Médée* of 1797.

FERDINANDO PAER came to prominence during the first empire of Napoleon I – he was engaged as the Emperor's *maître de chapelle* in 1807 and later became the director of the Opéra-Comique. Just before Napoleon's abdication, Paer assumed directorship of the Théâtre Italien, a post he held until it was yielded to Rossini in 1824. None of his many operas survive in the modern repertory, although the libretto he wrote for one, *Leonora* (1804), served to inspire Ludwig van Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio* (1805). GASPARE SPONTINI was another Italian who moved to Paris and eventually

ran the Théâtre Italien, a theater devoted to producing Italian works in their native language. Most popular among his repertoire were *La Vestale* (1807) and *Fernand Cortez* (1809).

French grand opera came into its own through the efforts of two composers: DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER and GIACOMO MEYERBEER. Collaborating with Eugène Scribe (whose plays would later serve as inspiration for a number of Verdi operas), Auber produced *La muette de Portici* (1828), the first definite *grand opéra* of this period, which proved extremely popular with French audiences. Characteristic of the genre was a five-act framework that incorporated spectacular stage effects, large crowd scenes and a ballet. A specific, mannered formula for the drama's unfolding was also inherent in the art form.

Meyerbeer brought grand opera to fruition first with *Robert le diable* (1831), then with *Les Huguenots* (1836), and with these works, also established a close relationship with Scribe. Two later works of note include *La prophète* (1849) and *L'Africaine* (1865), also cast in the grand opera schema.



Paris Opéra – Palais Garnier (completed in 1875; still in use)
The old Opéra on the Salle de la Petelière, birthplace of
French Grand Opera, burned down in 1873



Today's Opéra National de Paris
at the Place de la Bastille (completed in 1989)

Early 19th-century Italy – The Bel Canto composers

GIOACHINO ROSSINI 1792–1868

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797–1848

VINCENZO BELLINI 1801–1835

Back in Italy, opera saw the development of a distinctive style known as BEL CANTO. Bel canto (literally “beautiful singing”) was characterized by the smooth emission of tone, beauty of timbre and elegance of phrasing. Music associated with this genre contained many TRILLS, ROULADES and other embellishments that showed off the particular singer’s technique.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Rossini's *Semiramide*

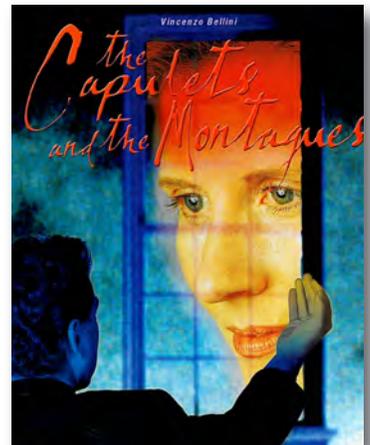
Opera, several of which show tendencies of the French grand opera style. *William Tell* was his last opera – Rossini retired at age 37 with 39 more years to live.

GAETANO DONIZETTI and VINCENZO BELLINI were two other Italian Bel Canto composers who premiered operas in both Paris and Italy. A tendency that began with Rossini and continued into their works was the practice of accompanied recitatives. Opera to this point had been organized in a very specific manner with more elongated “numbers” (arias, duets, ensembles) alternated with recitative (essentially dialogue set to music, intended to move the action along). In Mozart’s day, these recitative would be played by a harpsichord or fortepiano (sometimes doubled with cellos and basses) and was known as RECITATIVO SECCO. As Rossini’s style progressed, the orchestra took over playing the recitatives which became known as RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO. The practice continued into Verdi’s day.



Set model for Minnesota Opera's 2010 production of Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*

Promotional material for Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Bellini's *The Capulets and the Montagues*



Traditionally, a bel canto aria begins with a slow, song-like CANTABILE section followed by an intermediate MEZZO section with a slightly quicker tempo. It ends with a dazzling CABALETTA, the fastest section, where the singer shows off his or her talents. Often these were improvised upon, or replaced with “suitcase” arias of the singers’ own choosing, much to the consternation of the composer.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI was the first and perhaps best known of the three composers associated with this style. In his early years, between 1813 and 1820, Rossini composed rapidly, producing two or three operas a year. The pace slowed after he moved to France in 1824 – there he produced five works for the Paris



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*

Three Masters of Opera

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813–1901

RICHARD WAGNER 1813–1883

GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858–1924

GIUSEPPE VERDI's roots began in bel canto but the composer transformed the Italian style into a more fluid, less structured form. With a legacy of 26 operas, Verdi is never out of the repertory and four of these (*Rigoletto*, 1851; *Il trovatore*, 1853; *La traviata*, 1853; *Aida*, 1871) are some of the most familiar of the art form.

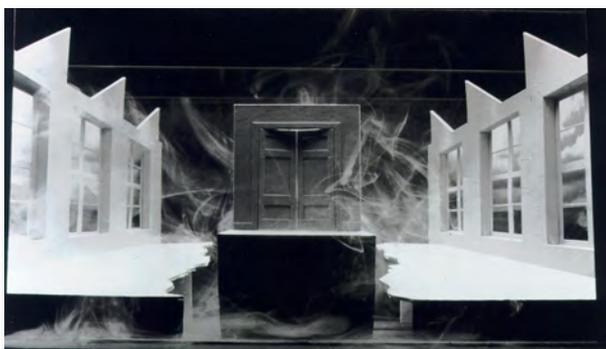
Verdi's contemporary, RICHARD WAGNER, is also considered one of the greats. Taking the idea of "fluidity" one step further, Wagner developed his operas into freely flowing MUSIC-DRAMAS united by melodic motifs that become associated with persons, places and things. Taking the grandeur of French opera one step further, he crafted his own libretti out of Nordic legends and created spectacular operatic moments. Wagner also greatly expanded the orchestra and developed his own particular brass instruments for greater impact. A Wagnerian singer

is one with great stamina – they must sing over a large orchestra in an opera that can be up to four hours long.

Italian opera's successor to Verdi turned out to be GIACOMO PUCCINI. With a gift of popular melody and musical economy, his operas *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904) remain at the top of the standard repertory.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1998 production of Verdi's *Aida*



Set model for Minnesota Opera's 1992 production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*



Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's 1994 production of Verdi's *Il trovatore*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2002 production of Verdi's *Don Carlos*

Minnesota
OPERA

Later French Opera

HECTOR BERLIOZ 1803–1869
CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD 1818–1893
JACQUES OFFENBACH 1819–1880
EDOUARD LALO 1823–1892
CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS 1835–1921
LÉO DELIBES 1836–1891
GEORGES BIZET 1838–1875
JULES MASSENET 1842–1912
GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER 1860–1956

The grand opera schema continued into the latter half of the 19th century in such works as HECTOR BERLIOZ's *Les Troyens* (composed 1856–58), and CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD's *Faust* (1859) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). An element of realism began to slip into the French repertoire, seen in works by GEORGES BIZET (*Carmen*, 1875) and GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER (*Louise*, 1897). JACQUES OFFENBACH revolutionized the art of comic operetta in such works as *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), *La belle Hélène* (1864) and *La Périochole* (1868). Other composers of this period include CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (*Samson et Dalila*, 1877), EDOUARD LALO (*Le Roi d'Ys*, 1875) and JULES MASSENET (*Manon*, 1884; *Werther*, 1892; *Cendrillon*, 1899).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2009 production of Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2009 production of Gounod's *Faust*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2008 production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*

Verismo in Late 19th-century Italy

RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO 1857–1919
PIETRO MASCAGNI 1863–1945
UMBERTO GIORDANO 1867–1948

A realist vein began to penetrate Italian opera toward the end of the 19th century, influenced in part by naturalism in French literature of the period and by the writings of an Italian literary circle, the *SCAPIGLIATURA*. Translated as the “dishevelled ones,” the Scapiigliatura displayed their distaste for bourgeois society in works of gritty realism, often bordering on the morbid and the macabre. Nearly all the members of the group (lead by GIOVANNI VERGA) led tragic lives ending in early death by alcoholism and suicide.

Operas to come out of the resulting VERISMO school include PIETRO MASCAGNI's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890), RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO's *Pagliacci* (1892) and UMBERTO GIORDANO's *Mala vita* (1892). Other works are attributed to this movement by nature of their rapid action with passionate tension and violence quickly alternating with moments of great sentimentality.

Opera in Russia

MIKHAIL IVANOVICH GLINKA 1804–1857
 PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893
 NIKOLAY ANDREYEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV 1844–1908
 MODEST PETROVICH MUSORGSKY 1839–1881
 SERGEI PROKOFIEV 1891–1953
 DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH 1906–1975



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*

Opera was introduced in Russia during the succession of powerful czarinas that culminated in the reign of Catherine the Great (ruled 1762 – 1796). She employed a number of important Italian composers (see above) and established St. Petersburg as a major city for the production of new opera, later to be elevated to the same par as London, Paris and



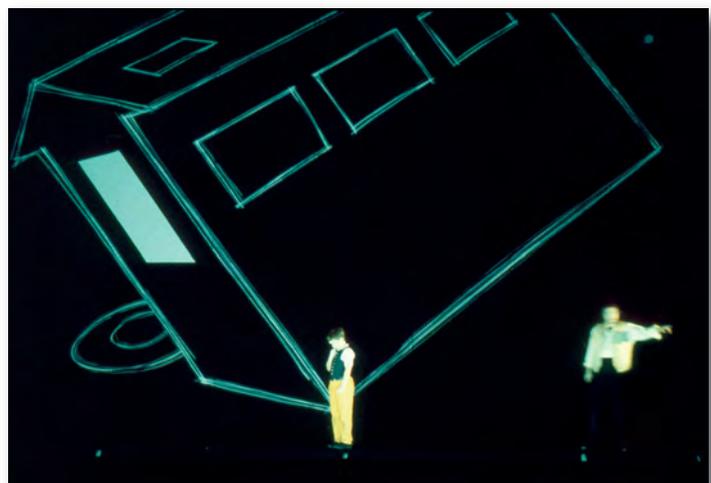
A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1978 production of Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*

Vienna by her descendent, Nicholas I (ruled 1825 – 1855). Of native Russian composers, the first to come to prominence was MIKHAIL GLINKA with *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), and later, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842). PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY, now known more for his ballets and symphonies, was a prolific composer of opera. His best works include *Eugene Onegin* (1879), *Mazepa* (1884) and *The Queen of Spades* (1890). Other Russian composers of the latter 19th century include NIKOLAY RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (*The Snow Maiden*, 1882; *The Tsar's Bride*, 1899; *The Golden Cockerel*, 1909) and MODEST MUSORGSKY (*Boris Godunov*, 1874).

Russian opera continued into the 20th century with works by SERGEI PROKOFIEV composed *The Love for Three Oranges* (1921) and *The Gambler* (1929), among others. His crowning achievement, written toward the end of his life, was *War and Peace* (1948), based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy. DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH's most notable work is *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934). Both artists suffered censure from the Soviet government.

Into the 20th Century

CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862–1918
 RICHARD STRAUSS 1864–1949
 PAUL DUKAS 1865–1935
 ARNOLD SCHOENBERG 1874–1951
 IGOR STRAVINSKY 1882–1971
 ALBAN BERG 1885–1935
 DARIUS MILHAUD 1892–1974
 PAUL HINDEMITH 1895–1963
 KURT WEILL 1900–1950
 BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913–1976



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2010 production of Strauss' *Salome*

all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. This “row” can be played in transposition, in reverse, upside-down, or in any combination of the three. Schoenberg also evolved a particular style of singing, *SPRECHSTIMME*, an intoned speech halfway between singing and speaking.

Sprechstimme was well suited to the expressionist nature of operas being produced at this time. Schoenberg's student, ALBAN BERG, employed it in *Wozzeck* (1925) and used the serialized twelve-tone method in his opera *Lulu* (1937). Another avant-garde composer, PAUL HINDEMITH, created a series of expressionist one-act operas that shocked audiences of the day: *Murder, Hope of Women* (1921), *Das Nusch-Nuschi* (1921) and *Sancta Susanna* (1922). Two later operas include one based on a short story by E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Cardillac*, 1926) and a satire on modern social behavior (*News of the Day*, 1929). At about the same KURT WEILL was causing an uproar with his new works: *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930) and *Der Silbersee* (1933). The up-and-coming Nazi party did not favor his works, and he was forced to leave the country, eventually to settle in America.

In Paris, Russian IGOR STRAVINSKY was shocking audiences and causing riots with his ballet music. His early operas include *The Nightingale* (1914) and *Mavra* (1922). *Oedipus Rex* (1927) is representative of his first neoclassical works, using forms from the 18th century with modern tonality and orchestration. His later (and longest) opera, *The Rake's Progress* (1951), is a culmination of this neoclassical style. French composer DARIUS MILHAUD was extremely prolific in all genres of music. In opera, he produced the one-act *Le pauvre matelot* (1927) and a large-scale work in the tradition of grand opera, *Christophe Columbe* (1930). Later in his life he composed *La mère coupable* (1966), based on the Beaumarchais Figaro trilogy (which includes *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*).

In England, BENJAMIN BRITTEN emerged as one of Britain's foremost composers of opera since Henry Purcell. Out of his 16 original works for the stage the most popular include *Peter Grimes* (1945), *Billy Budd* (1951), *Gloriana* (1953) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954).

CLAUDE DEBUSSY's impressionist score for *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) paved the way for the radical changes in 20th-century opera. Also based on a Symbolist text by Maurice Maeterlinck was PAUL DUKAS' *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1907), an opera about the notorious Bluebeard and his six wives. But causing the most sensation was RICHARD STRAUSS' *Salome* (1905), which pushed both tonality and the demands on the singers to the limits. He followed that opera with an even more progressive work, *Elektra* (1909), drawn from the Greek tragedy by Sophocles.

Important innovations were taking place in Vienna. ARNOLD SCHOENBERG made a complete break with tonality in his staged MONODRAMA *Erwartung* (1909), giving all twelve tones of the chromatic scale equal importance. He codified this approach in his TWELVE-TONE SYSTEM where a theme is created with a row of notes using



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1999 production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*

20th- and 21st-century American Composers of Opera

VIRGIL THOMSON 1896–1989
GEORGE ANTHEIL 1900–1959
SAMUEL BARBER 1910–1981
GIAN CARLO MENOTTI 1911–2007
CARLISLE FLOYD 1926–
DOMINICK ARGENTO 1927–
CONRAD SUSA 1935–
PHILIP GLASS 1937–
JOHN CORIGLIANO 1938–
JOHN ADAMS 1947–

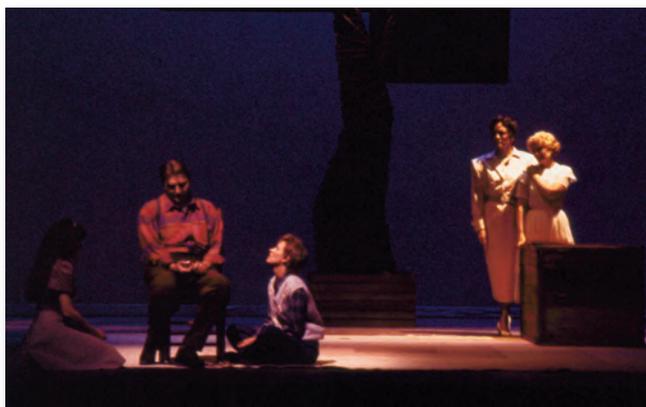
Paris in the 20s served to inspire the next generation of composers, several of which were expatriates from America. GEORGE ANTHEIL was the first American composer to have an opera premiered in Europe – his work, *Transatlantic*, was written in France but premiered in Frankfurt in 1930. Compatriot VIRGIL THOMSON studied with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger and later produced *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) and *The Mother of Us All* (1947), both to texts by Gertrude Stein. SAMUEL BARBER stayed on American soil, studying at the newly founded Curtis Institute in 1935. He went on to compose *Vanessa* (1958), and to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center, *Antony and Cleopatra* (1966).

On *Vanessa*, Barber collaborated with another composer, GIAN CARLO MENOTTI, who wrote the libretto. Also the author of 25 libretti for his own operas, Menotti is best known for *The Medium* (1946), *The Consul* (1950), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951) and *The Saint of Bleeker Street* (1954). Another American composing at about the same time was CARLISLE



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1998 American premiere of Antheil's *Transatlantic*

FLOYD, who favored American themes and literature. His most important works include *Susannah* (1955), *Wuthering Heights* (1958), *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* (1962) and *Of Mice and Men* (1970).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
1989 production of Glass' *The Juniper Tree*

During the sixties and seventies, THE MINNESOTA OPERA was the site of many world premieres of lasting significance: CONRAD SUSA's *Transformations* (1973) and *Black River* (1975), and DOMINICK ARGENTO's *The Masque of Angels* (1964), *Postcard from Morocco* (1971), *The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe* (1976), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981) and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1985; revived in 2009). Other Argento works of merit include *Miss Havisham's Fire* (1979) and *The Aspern Papers* (1988).

Other composers currently at the fore include PHILIP GLASS, JOHN CORIGLIANO and JOHN ADAMS. The Minimalist music of Philip Glass has won popular acclaim among even non-opera-going audiences – his oeuvre includes *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *Abknaten* (1984), and most recently, *The Voyage* (1992), commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. The Met also commissioned *The Ghosts of Versailles* from JOHN CORIGLIANO in 1991 – like Milhaud's opera of 1966, its text involves Beaumarchais' third part of the Figaro trilogy with the playwright himself appearing as the lover of 18th-century Queen of France Marie-



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2005 production of Adams' *Nixon in China*

AS POUL RUDERS' *The Handmaid's Tale* (Royal Danish Opera; 2000), BRIGHT SHENG'S *Madame Mao* (Santa Fe Opera; 2003), DANIEL CATÁN'S *Salsipuedes* (Houston Grand Opera; 2004), RICHARD DANIELPOUR'S *Margaret Garner* (Michigan Opera Theatre; 2005), RICKY IAN GORDON'S *The Grapes of Wrath* (Minnesota Opera; 2007), JONATHAN DOVE'S *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North, Leeds; 2008), HOWARD SHORE'S *The Fly* (Los Angeles Opera; 2009), JAKE HEGGIE'S *Moby Dick* (Dallas Opera; 2010), KEVIN PUTS' *Silent Night* (Minnesota Opera; 2011) and DOUGLAS J. CUOMO and JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY'S *Doubt* (Minnesota Opera; 2013).



A scene from Minnesota Opera's Pulitzer Prize-winning
2011 world premiere of Puts' *Silent Night*

Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's
2009 American premiere of Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*

Minnesota
OPERA

Antoinette. JOHN ADAMS' focus on contemporary events lead him to compose *Nixon in China* (1987) and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991).

Opera continues to be a living and vital art form in the revival of many of these works as well as the commissioning of new pieces. Among world premieres in the last two decades include TOBIAS PICKER'S *Emmeline* (1996) by Santa Fe Opera, DANIEL CATÁN'S *Florencia en el Amazonas* (1996) by Houston Grand Opera, MYRON FINK'S *The Conquistador* (1997) presented by San Diego Opera, ANTHONY DAVIS' *Amistad* (1997) presented by Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Central Park* (1999) by Glimmerglass Opera, a trilogy of short operas set by three composers. Recent seasons included

such
new
works



A scene from Minnesota Opera's
2003 American premiere of Ruders'
The Handmaid's Tale



Minnesota Opera combines a culture of creativity and fiscal responsibility to produce opera and opera education programs that expand the art form, nurture artists, enrich audiences and contribute to the vitality of the community.

Minnesota Opera's roots were planted in 1963 when the Walker Art Center commissioned Dominick Argento to compose an opera (*The Masque of Angels*) for its performing arts program, Center Opera. Center Opera focused on the composition and performance of new works by American composers, and, under the influence of the Walker Art Center, emphasized visual design. The company grew steadily, and in 1969 became an independent entity, changing its name in 1971 to The Minnesota Opera.

Throughout the first 12 years of its history, The Minnesota Opera was known as a progressive, "alternative" opera production company, a complement to the traditional orientation of the annual Metropolitan Opera tour and the productions of the St. Paul Opera. In 1976, The Minnesota Opera merged with the St. Paul Opera, adding a focus on traditional repertory to its program of contemporary opera.



Set design for Minnesota Opera's
1971 production of Dominick Argento's
Postcard from Morocco

In January 1985, The Minnesota Opera entered a new era with the opening of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, one of the nation's most respected performance halls. Today, the company presents its entire season at the Ordway.

In September 1990, the company moved its scenic and costume shops, rehearsal facilities and administrative offices to the 51,000 square-foot Minnesota Opera Center, which comprises three renovated warehouses on the Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis. Winner of a 1990 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Award, the Minnesota Opera Center is one of the finest opera production facilities in the nation and has served to strengthen the company both artistically and institutionally.

Throughout the 1990s, the company gained a national reputation for its high-quality, innovative productions of standard repertoire operas like *Aida*, *Carmen* and *Turandot*, which were seen on stages across the nation, and firmly established Minnesota Opera's reputation as a lead coproducer in the industry. In that decade, Minnesota Opera also grew institutionally, launching an artistic development campaign to establish a foundation for the expansion of its season and increased artistic quality.

In 1997, the company launched its Resident Artist Program to bridge the gap between an artist's academic training and their professional life on the world stage. The RAP is acclaimed for its exceptional, intense and individualized training as well as the elite group of young artists it produces. Alumni have earned engagements at prestigious houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival and Covent Garden.

In 2000, Artistic Director Dale Johnson articulated a new artistic vision for the company inspired by bel canto ("beautiful singing"), the ideal upon which Italian opera is based. Bel canto values, which emphasize intense emotional expression supported by exquisite technique, inform every aspect of the company's programs, from repertoire selection, casting and visual design to education and artist training. As one manifestation of its philosophy, Minnesota Opera is committed to producing one work from the early 19th-century Bel Canto period each season, attracting luminary singers like Bruce Ford, Vivica Genaux, Brenda Harris and Sumi Jo to its stage.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1984 production of
Peter Schickele's *The Abduction of Figaro*



THE CENTER OPERA COMPANY
of walker art center
Fifth Season in the Guthrie Theatre:
1967-68
Verdi/Goldoni
THE MAN IN THE MOON
Opens January 26, 1968
Six Performances Only
and
Britten/Shakespeare
A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM
Opens March 7, 1968
Four Performances Only
Tickets available at the
Guthrie Box Office,
Dayton's
and Field Schick.
THE ABDUCTION
FROM THE SERAGLIO
1966

Minnesota Opera is also recognized for its progressive and far-reaching educational programs. Residencies in schools, opera education classes and pre-performance discussions are building an audience for tomorrow and enhancing the enjoyment of audiences today.

Throughout its history, Minnesota Opera has attracted international attention for its performances of new operas and innovative productions of masterworks. Among its most renowned world and American premieres are: Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*, *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* and *Casanova's Homecoming*, William Mayer's *A Death in the Family*, Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein*, *The Modern Prometheus*, Oliver Knussen and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and *Black River*, PDQ Bach's *The Abduction of Figaro*, Robert Moran's *From the Towers of the Moon*, Gioachino Rossini's *Armida*, Evan Chen's *Bok Choy Variations*, George Antheil's *Transatlantic*, Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*, Laurent Petitgirard's *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man*, Saverio Mercadante's *Orazi e Curiazi*, Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Reinhard Keiser's *The Fortunes of King Croesus*, Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Kevin Puts' Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* and Douglas J. Cuomo's *Doubt*.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Gioachino Rossini's *Semiramide*

Building on the legacy of its commitment to new work and following the overwhelming success of its commission of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 2007, Minnesota Opera launched the New Works Initiative, a landmark program designed to invigorate the operatic repertoire through the production and dissemination of new commissions and revivals of contemporary American works. The seven-year, \$7 million program includes an international coproduction (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, 2009), three revivals (*Casanova's Homecoming* in 2010; *Wuthering Heights* in 2011 and *The Dream of Valentino* in 2013) and three commissions (*Silent Night* in 2011; *Doubt* in 2013 and *The Manchurian Candidate* in 2015).

On the Minnesota Opera stage, talented national and internationally known artists are brought together to create productions of the highest artistic integrity, emphasizing the balance and total integration of theatrical and musical values. Throughout the past five decades, the company has presented such artists as Tim Albery, Isabel Bayrakdarian, John Lee Beatty, Harry Bicket, Richard Bonyng, William Burden, John Conklin, Roxana Constantinescu, David Daniels, Bruce Ford, Elizabeth Futral, Vivica Genaux, Colin Graham, Denyce Graves, Greer Grimsley, Nancy Gustafson, Brenda Harris, Jason Howard, Judith Howarth, Robert Indiana, Robert Israel, Sumi Jo, Kelly Kaduce, Antony McDonald, Catherine Malfitano, Daniel Massey, Johanna Meier, Suzanne Mentzer, Erie Mills, Sherrill Milnes, Julia Migenes, Fernando de la Mora, James Morris, Suzanne Murphy, Maureen O'Flynn, Susanna Phillips, Ashley Putnam, Patricia Racette, James Robinson, Neil Rosenshein, William Shimell, James Valenti, David Walker and Keith Warner.



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Carl Orff's *Carmina burana*

Minnesota Opera, now the 13th largest opera company in the nation with an annual budget of \$10.2 million (Fiscal Year 2012), is guided by President and General Director Kevin Ramch and Artistic Director Dale Johnson.

Today Minnesota Opera is enjoying unprecedented stability and unity of mission, working toward its vision to create a new, dynamic opera company model based upon innovation, world-class artistic quality and strong community service.

MINNESOTA OPERA REPERTOIRE – 1963–2014

- 2013–2014**
Manon Lescaut (Puccini)
Arabella (Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
The Dream of Valentino (Argento)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
- 2012–2013**
50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
Nabucco (Verdi)
Anna Bolena (Donizetti)
 § † *Doubt* (Cuomo)
Hamlet (Thomas)
Turandot (Puccini)
- 2011–2012**
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 § † *Silent Night* (Puts)
Werther (Massenet)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
Madame Butterfly (Puccini)
- 2010–2011**
Orfeo ed Euridice (Gluck)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
Maria Stuarda (Donizetti)
La traviata (Verdi)
Wuthering Heights (Herrmann)
- 2009–2010**
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Casanova's Homecoming (Argento)
Roberto Devereux (Donizetti)
La bobème (Puccini)
Salome (R. Strauss)
- 2008–2009**
Il trovatore (Verdi)
Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Mozart)
Faust (Gounod)
 * *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Dove)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
- 2007–2008**
Un ballo in maschera (Verdi)
L'italiana in Algeri (Rossini)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
 * *Croesus* (Keiser)
Rusalka (Dvořák)
- 2006–2007**
La donna del lago (Rossini)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
 § † *The Grapes of Wrath* (Gordon)
Lakmé (Delibes)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
- 2005–2006**
Tosca (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
 * *Orazi e Curiazi* (Mercadante)
 * *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man* (Petitgirard)
- 2004–2005**
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
Maria Padilla (Donizetti)
Carmen (Bizet)
Nixon in China (Adams)
- 2003–2004**
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Lucrezia Borgia (Donizetti)
Passion (Sondheim)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
- 2002–2003**
Die lustige Witwe (Lehár)
Norma (Bellini)
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
La traviata (Verdi)
 * *The Handmaid's Tale* (Ruders)
- 2001–2002**
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
La clemenza di Tito (Mozart)
La bobème (Puccini)
Little Women (Adamo)
Don Carlos (Verdi)
- 2000–2001**
Turandot (Puccini)
I Capuleti ed i Montecchi (Bellini)
Street Scene (Weill)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Pagliacci/Carmina burana (Leoncavallo/Orff)
 ♣ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
- 1999–2000**
Der Rosenkavalier (R. Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
Semiramide (Rossini)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
 ♣ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
- 1998–1999**
Otello (Verdi)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Turn of the Screw (Britten)
Faust (Gounod)
 ♣ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)
- 1997–1998**
Aida (Verdi)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
 * *Transatlantic* (Antheil)
Tosca (Puccini)
 ♣ *Cinderella* (Rossini, Massenet)
- 1996–1997**
La traviata (Verdi)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
The Rake's Progress (Stravinsky)
Carmen (Bizet)
 ♣ *Carmen* (Bizet)
- 1995–1996**
La bobème (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Pelléas et Mélisande (Debussy)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
 ♣ *The Bobemians* (Puccini)
- 1994–1995**
Turandot (Puccini)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
 § † *Bok Choy Variations* (Chen and Simonson)
 ♣ *Figaro's Revenge* (Rossini, Paisiello)

- § World Premiere
 * American Premiere
 † Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera
 or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
 ▲ Tour production
 ♣ Outreach/Education tour
 • New Music-Theater Ensemble production

1993–1994
Julius Caesar (Handel)
 * *Diary of an African American* (Peterson)
Il trovatore (Verdi)
 § *The Merry Widow and The Hollywood Tycoon* (Lehár)
 ▲ *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

1992–1993
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
 * *Armida* (Rossini)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)

1991–1992
Tosca (Puccini)
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
 § † *From the Towers of the Moon* (Moran & La Chiusa)
 ▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
Carousel (Rodgers & Hammerstein)

1990–1991
Norma (Bellini)
The Aspern Papers (Argento)
Carmen (Bizet)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 ▲ *Così fan tutte* (Mozart)
 ▲ *Swing on a Star* (Winkler)

1989–1990
La bohème (Puccini)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
 § † *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* (Larsen)
My Fair Lady (Lerner & Loewe)
 • § *Snow Leopard* (Harper & Nieboer)
 ▲ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)
Where the Wild Things Are (Sendak/Knussen)

1988–1989
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Salome (R. Strauss)
The Mikado (Gilbert & Sullivan)
The Juniper Tree (Glass & Moran)
Show Boat (Kern & Hammerstein)
 § † • *Without Colors* (Wellman & Shiflett)
 § † • *Red Tide* (Selig & Sherman)
 § † • *Newest Little Opera in the World*
 (ensemble)
 ▲ *Cinderella* (Rossini)
 ▲ *Tintypes* (Kyte, Marvin, Pearle)

1987–1988
Die Fledermaus (J. Strauss)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Rusalka (Dvorak)
 • *Cowboy Lips* (Greene & Madsen)
 § † • *Fly Away All* (Hutchinson & Shank)
 • *Book of Days* (Monk)
Oklahoma! (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 ▲ *Carmen* (Bizet)
 ▲ *Jargonauts, Aboy!* (McKeel)

1986–1987
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
The Postman Always Rings Twice (Paulus)
Ariadne auf Naxos (R. Strauss)
South Pacific (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 ▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
 § † ▲ *Jargonauts, Aboy!* (McKeel)

1985–1986
 * *Where the Wild Things Are/Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (Knussen/Sendak)
La traviata (Verdi)
L'elisir d'amore (Donizetti)
The King and I (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
 § † *Opera Tomorrow*
 ▲ *The Fantasticks* (Schmidt)
 ▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
 § † ▲ *The Music Shop* (Wargo)

1984–1985
 * *Animalen* (Werle)
 § † *Casanova's Homecoming* (Argento)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
 ▲ *La bohème* (Puccini)
 ▲ *Meanwhile, back at Cinderella's* (Arlan)

1983–1984
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
 § *The Abduction of Figaro* (PDQ Bach)
 ▲ *The Boor* (Argento)
 ▲ *Chanticleer* (Barab)
 ▲ *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti)

1982–1983
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
 § *A Death in the Family* (Mayer)
Kiss Me, Kate (Porter)
 ▲ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
 ▲ *The Frog Who Became a Prince* (Barnes)
 ▲ *Zetabet* (Barnes)

1981–1982
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
The Village Singer (Paulus)
Gianni Schicchi (Puccini)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
 § *Feathertop* (Barnes)
 § *The Mask of Evil* (Mollicone)
 ▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
 § *Rosina* (Titus)

1980–1981
The Merry Widow (Lehar)
Black River (Susa)
Carmen (Bizet)
A Water Bird Talk (Argento)
 § *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (Argento)
 ▲ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
 ▲ *The Threepenny Opera* (Weill)

1979–1980
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)
La bohème (Puccini)
 § † *Rosina* (Titus)
 ▲ *A Christmas Carol* (Sandow)

1978–1979
The Love for Three Oranges (Prokofiev)
 § *The Jealous Cellist* (Stokes)
The Passion According to St. Matthew
 (J.S. Bach)
La traviata (Verdi)
The Consul (Menotti)
 ▲ *Viva la Mamma* (Donizetti)

1977–1978
 * *Christopher Columbus* (Offenbach)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)
 § *Claudia Legare* (Ward)

1976–1977
The Bartered Bride (Smetana)
The Passion According to St. Matthew
 (J.S. Bach)
Candide (Bernstein)
Mahagonny (Weill)

1975–1976
 § † *Black River* (Susa)
El Capitan (Sousa)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 § † *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (Argento)

1974–1975
 § † *Gallimaufry* (Minnesota Opera)
 § *Gulliver* (Blackwood, Kaplan, Lewin)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
Albert Herring (Britten)

1973–1974
El Capitan (Sousa)
Transformations (Susa)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
 § † *The Newest Opera in the World*
 (Minnesota Opera)

1972–1973
The Threepenny Opera (Weill)
Postcard from Morocco (Argento)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
 § † *Transformations* (Susa)

1971–1972
 § † *Postcard from Morocco* (Argento)
 § † *The Business of Good Government*
 (Marshall)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)

1970–1971
 § † *Christmas Mummeries & Good Government*
 (Marshall)
 § † *Faust Counter Faust* (Gessner)
The Coronation of Poppea (Monteverdi)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)

1969–1970
 § † *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (Marshall)
 * *Punch and Judy* (Birtwistle)
 * *17 Days and 4 Minutes* (Egk)
 § † *The Wanderer* (Paul and Martha Boesing)

1968–1969
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
 § † *Horspjal* (Stokes)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1967–1968
The Man in the Moon (Haydn)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)

1966–1967
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Sorrows of Orpheus (Milhaud)
 * *The Harpies* (Blitzstein)
Socraties (Satie)
Three Minute Operas (Milhaud)

1965–1966
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)

1964–1965
The Rape of Lucretia (Britten)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1963–1964
 § † *The Masque of Angels* (Argento)
The Masque of Venus and Adonis (Blow)
Albert Herring (Britten)

§	World Premiere
*	American Premiere
†	Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
▲	Tour production
•	Outreach/Education tour
•	New Music-Theater Ensemble production

THE STANDARD REPERTORY

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756–1791
The Abduction from the Seraglio 1782
The Marriage of Figaro 1786
Don Giovanni 1787
Così fan tutte 1790
The Magic Flute 1791

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827
Fidelio 1805

Gioachino Rossini 1792–1868
The Barber of Seville 1816
La Cenerentola 1817

Gaetano Donizetti 1797–1848
The Elixir of Love 1832
Lucia di Lammermoor 1835
Don Pasquale 1843

Vincenzo Bellini 1801–1835
Norma 1831

Richard Wagner 1813–1883
The Flying Dutchman 1843
Tannhäuser 1845
Lobengrin 1850
Tristan und Isolde 1865
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg 1868
The Ring Cycle 1876
—*Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung*
Parsifal 1882

Giuseppe Verdi 1813–1901
Rigoletto 1851
Il trovatore 1853
La traviata 1853
La forza del destino 1862
Don Carlos 1867
Aida 1871
Otello 1887
Falstaff 1893

Charles-François Gounod 1818–1893
Faust 1859
Roméo et Juliette 1867

NINETEENTH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

Jacques Offenbach 1819–1880
Les contes d'Hoffmann 1881

Georges Bizet 1838–1875
Carmen 1875

Modest Musorgsky 1839–1881
Boris Godunov 1874

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840–1893
Eugene Onegin 1879

Engelbert Humperdinck 1854–1921
Hänsel und Gretel 1893

Ruggero Leoncavallo 1857–1919
Pagliacci 1892

Pietro Mascagni 1863–1945
Cavalleria rusticana 1890

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Giacomo Puccini 1858–1924
Manon Lescaut 1893
La bohème 1896
Tosca 1900
Madama Butterfly 1904
Turandot 1926

Claude Debussy 1862–1918
Pelléas et Mélisande 1902

Richard Strauss 1864–1949
Salome 1905
Elektra 1909
Der Rosenkavalier 1911
Ariadne auf Naxos 1912

Alban Berg 1885–1935
Wozzeck 1925
Lulu 1937

Benjamin Britten 1913–1976
Peter Grimes 1945
Albert Herring 1947
Billy Budd 1951
The Turn of the Screw 1954

THE ELEMENTS OF OPERA

Often called “all the arts in one” opera includes the Aristotelian elements of drama: theme, spectacle, plot, diction, movement and music. A production is truly successful only when these components work together. Many individuals are engaged to accomplish this purpose.

IN THE BEGINNING

A subject is selected by a **COMPOSER**. It may be mythical, biblical, historical, literary or based on current events. A **LIBRETTIST** is employed to adapt the story into poetic verse and the composer then writes the music (or **SCORE**).

THE OPERA COMPANY

An opera company’s **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** agrees to stage the work. In many cases, an opera has already been written and staged many times.

ADMINISTRATION

The company’s **MARKETING** department sells tickets and the **DEVELOPMENT** department raises funds through donations to cover the costs of the production. The **FINANCE** department controls costs and balances the production’s budget. The **EDUCATION** department prepares the audience for what they are going to see on stage.

CASTING

The opera company’s **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** selects performers from auditions. These performers are divided into **PRINCIPALS**, **COMPRI-MARIOS** (singers in secondary roles), **CHORISTERS**, and players for the **ORCHESTRA**. Often in a production, **SUPERNUMERARIES** are employed (people who act but do not sing). Sometimes the opera has a **BALLET** which requires dancers, or a **BANDA** which requires orchestra members to play on stage.

SETS AND COSTUMES

A design team is assembled consisting of a **STAGE DIRECTOR**, **SET DESIGNER** and **COSTUME DESIGNER**. They agree on a visual concept for the opera and sets and costumes are created.

REHEARSAL

The production goes into **REHEARSAL**. Principals, choristers and the orchestra often rehearse separately until the director begins staging. The **CONDUCTOR** of the orchestra attends staging rehearsals which are accompanied by a **RÉPÉTITEUR**, or rehearsal pianist. The orchestra joins the singers for the first time at the **SITZPROBE**. During **TECH WEEK**, sets and lighting are put into place at the theater. Several **DRESS REHEARSALS** (with the performers in costume and the orchestra in the pit) occur before the first performance of the opera. Sometimes these rehearsals are attended by a select audience.

THE PREMIERE

The first presentation of the opera to the general public is known as the PREMIERE. Long before the curtain goes up, preparations are being made.

6:00 PM **Continuity**

STAGEHANDS (1) set the scenery for the first act of the production.

6:15 PM **Makeup calls**

PRINCIPALS and COMPRIMARIOS (2) begin to arrive at the theater to be put into costume by DRESSERS, then are wigged by the WIGMASTER (1A) and made up with theatrical makeup.

6:30 PM **House opens**

Opera patrons are admitted to the AUDITORIUM (4) and seated by USHERS (5). The HOUSE MANAGER (6) oversees the activities in the front of the house, including the ushers and concession sales. The BOX OFFICE MANAGER (7) takes care of any last minute ticket purchases. Patrons may remain in the LOBBY (8) to attend an informational session of *Opera Insights*, led by the Opera's music staff.

6:45 PM **Notes**

The STAGE DIRECTOR may give last minute instructions to the cast before the performance begins.

7:00 PM **Warm-ups**

PRINCIPALS and COMPRIMARIOS (2) warm-up in their dressing rooms.

7:15 PM **Chorus and orchestra warm-ups**

The CHORUS (10), who have already put on their costumes, warms up with the CHORUSMASTER. The ORCHESTRA warms up in the ORCHESTRA PIT (11).

7:25 PM **Places**

The PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER (12) calls places. Two other STAGE MANAGERS (13) are posted stage left and stage right to cue the entrances of the singers and choristers.

7:28 PM **Orchestra tune**

The principal oboe gives a concert "A" to which the ORCHESTRA tunes. The SURTITLE PROMPTER (15) cues the preshow titles. The CONDUCTOR shakes the CONCERTMASTER's hand and mounts the podium.

7:30 PM **Curtain**

The house lights goes out, and the FLYMAN (1A) raises the CURTAIN (16). The show begins.

8:25 PM **Intermission**

The audience returns to the LOBBY (8) for refreshments while the STAGEHANDS (1) reset the STAGE (14) for the next act.

10:15 PM **Curtain calls**

The performance ends, and the STAGE DIRECTOR, DESIGNERS, CONDUCTOR and SINGERS get to take a bow for all their hard work.

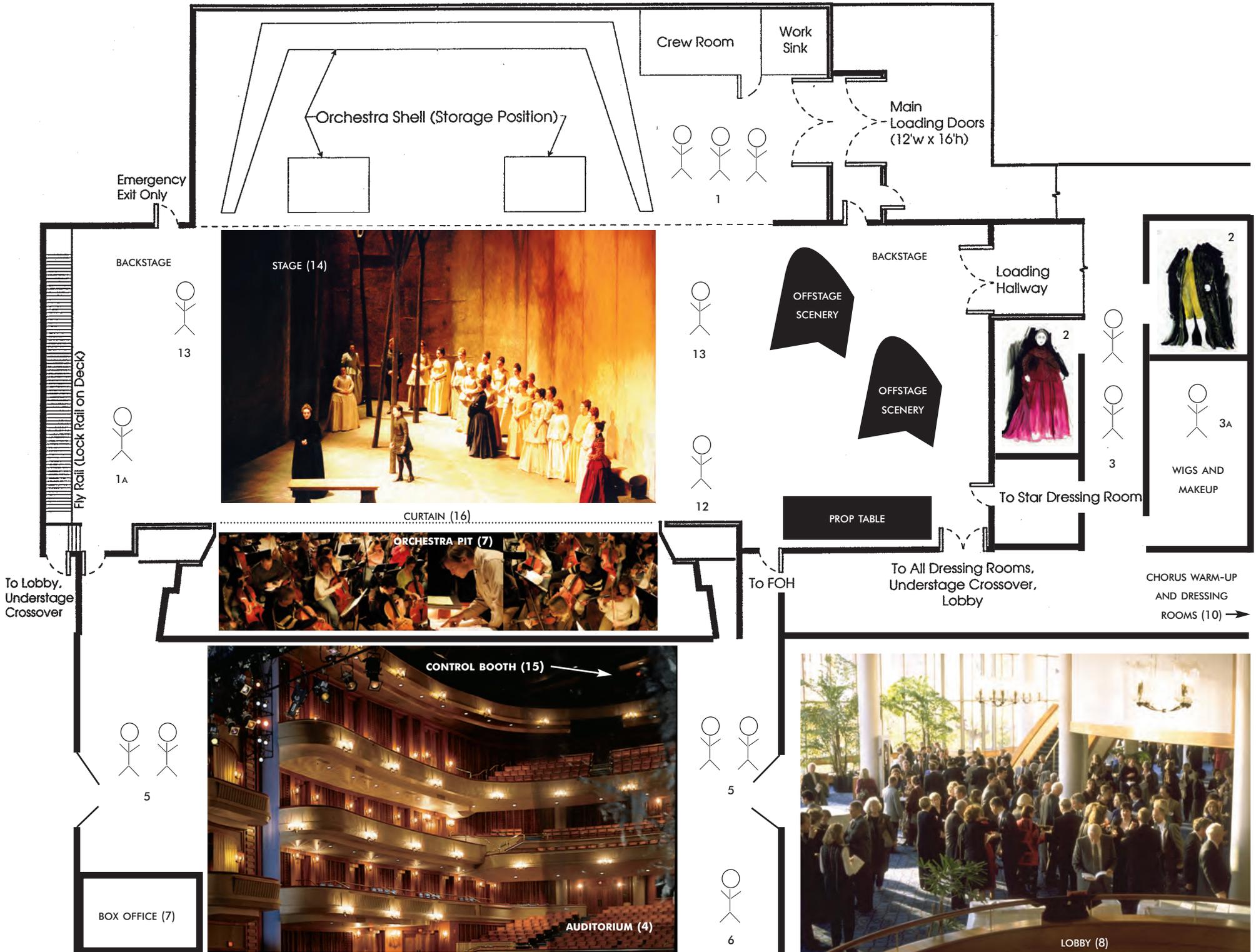
STAGEHANDS move scenery and props and handle lighting. DRESSERS help the cast into their often elaborate costumes.

PRINCIPALS sing the major roles. COMPRIMARIOS sing minor named roles. CHORISTERS make up the rest of the singing cast and are prepared by the CHORUSMASTER.

The CONDUCTOR leads the orchestra. The STAGE DIRECTOR instructs the cast where to move onstage. He or she generally stays only for the PREMIERE.

The ORCHESTRA rehearses several times independently from the singers. The first rehearsal during which singers and orchestra perform together is called a SITZPROBE. The CONCERTMASTER is the first violin and is responsible for "bowing" the string parts so the performers all move their bows together.

The PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER "calls" the show, announcing entrance and lighting cues. Two other STAGE MANAGERS assist in getting the cast and chorus on and off the stage. The SURTITLE PROMPTER cues the English translations projected above the stage from the control booth.



The most important part of the opera is the singers. They are categorized into six different voice types.

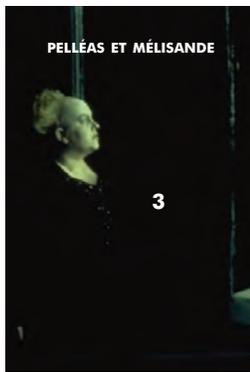
THE SOPRANO

High-voiced woman. Voted “Most Likely to Die Before the Curtain Goes Down.” Putty in the hands of the TENOR, BARITONE and occasionally even the MEZZO (especially if she is in pants).



THE MEZZO-SOPRANO

Middle- to lower-voiced woman. Nobody’s pawn. May hook up with the BARITONE, unless she’s playing a young man, in which case she usually gets the SOPRANO.



THE CONTRALTO

Lowest-voiced woman. Usually the mother, maid or duenna (an older woman charged with monitoring the virtue of the impressionable SOPRANO). Generally the CONTRALTO calls herself a MEZZO in order to get more work.

THE TENOR
High-voiced man. Whether comic or tragic, most often the misunderstood romantic role. Often kill themselves; almost always get the girl.



THE BASS AND BARITONE

Middle- to lowest-voiced man. Usually the bad guy, the father or guardian, or the hero’s best friend. If he hooks up with another singer, it’s usually a MEZZO.



THE FAT LADY
There is no fat lady in helmet and horns—that is a myth. It ain’t over till the curtain goes down for the last time and everyone around you is clapping.



CLOCKWISE, LEFT TO RIGHT: ÉLISABETH; EBOLI; GIULIETTA, ROMEO; MIMI, RODOLFO; EDGARDO, ENRICO; LUCIA; HANNA; PHILIPPE, GRAND INQUISITOR; GENEVIÈVE; SERVILIA, ANNIO

1 - SOPRANO; 2 - MEZZO; 3 - CONTRALTO; 4 - TENOR; 5 - BARITONE; 6 - BASS

GLOSSARY OF OPERA TERMS

ACOUSTICS	The science of sound; qualities which determine hearing facilities in an auditorium, concert hall, opera house, theater, etc.
ACT	A section of the opera, play, etc. usually followed by an intermission.
AREA LIGHTS	Provide general illumination.
ARIA	(<i>air</i> , <i>English and French</i> ; <i>ariette</i> , <i>French</i>). A formal song sung by a single vocalist. It may be in two parts (binary form), or in three parts (see <i>da capo</i>) with the third part almost a repetition of the first. A short aria is an <i>arietta</i> in Italian, <i>ariette</i> or <i>petit air</i> in French.
ARIOSO	Adjectival description of a passage less formal and complete than a fully written aria, but sounding like one. Much recitative has <i>arioso</i> , or <i>songlike</i> , passages.
AZIONE TEATRALE	(<i>It.</i> : ' <i>theatrical action</i> ', ' <i>theatrical plot</i> '). A species of <i>Serenata</i> that, unlike many works in this genre, contained a definite plot and envisioned some form of staging.
ATONALITY	Lack of a definite tonal focus, all sharps and flats being applied in the score when necessary. With no key and therefore no sense of finality, such music sounds odd to the conservative ear, but with practice the listener can find pleasure in it.
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	The person responsible for the artistic concept of the opera – the overall look and “feel” of the production.
BACKDROP	A large, painted surface at the rear of the stage, associated with old-fashioned stage settings, two-dimensional, but often striving with painted shadows and perspective to suggest a third dimension.
BACKSTAGE	The area of the stage not visible to the audience, usually where the dressing rooms are located.
BALLAD OPERA	A play with many songs; the number has ranged from fifteen to seventy-five. In the early eighteenth century its music was drawn from popular folk song or quite sophisticated songs appropriated from successful operas.
BANDA	A group of musicians who perform onstage or slightly offstage.
BARITONE	The male singing voice which is higher than a bass but lower than a tenor.
BAROQUE	A style of art and music characteristic in particular of the Louis XIV period in France and the Charles II period and after in England. Baroque pictorial art is associated with theatrical energy and much decoration but nevertheless respects classical principles. The music theater of the Baroque, highly pictorial, developed the <i>opera seria</i> , with comic <i>intermezzi</i> between the acts.
BASS	The lowest male singing voice.
BEL CANTO	Although meaning simply “beautiful song,” the term is usually applied to the school of singing prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Baroque and Romantic) which gave much attention to vocal purity, control, and dexterity in ornamentation.
BRAVO (A) (I)	An acknowledgement of a good performance shouted during moments of applause (the ending is determined by the gender and the number of performers).
BRAVURA	Implying brilliance and dexterity (<i>bravura</i> singing, a <i>bravura</i> aria, etc.). Intended for display and the technical execution of difficult passages.

CABALETTA	A fast, contrasting short aria sung at the close of or shortly following a slower aria (called a <i>cantabile</i> , often for vocal effect only but sometimes dramatically motivated).
CADENCE	A resting place or close of a passage of music, clearly establishing tonality.
CADENZA	An elaborate passage near the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.
CAMERATA	A group of musicians, poets and scholars who met in Florence in 1600 and created opera.
CANTILENA	Originally a little song, but now generally referring to smooth cantabile (<i>It: 'singable,' or 'singing'</i>) passages.
CAVATINA	Originally an aria without a repeated section. Later used casually in place of aria.
CHORUS	A group of singers (called choristers) who portray townspeople, guests or other unnamed characters; also refers to the music written for these people.
CHORUS MASTER	Person who prepares the chorus musically (which includes rehearsing and directing them).
CLAQUE	A group attending performances in the larger opera houses and paid by leading singers to encourage and direct applause (a member of which is a <i>claqueur</i>).
COLORATURA	A voice that can sing music with many rapid notes, or the music written for such a voice.
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE	Masked comedy or improvised Italian comedy of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. A popular theatrical form with a sketched-out plot and stock characters, a pair of lovers without masks surrounded by comedians—Arlecchino, Brighella, Pantalone, Dottore, etc. Some of Mozart's and Rossini's operas retain the vestiges of these characters. Strauss, Busoni, and other recent composers have deliberately used them.
COMPRIMARIO	A small singing role, often a servant or other minor character.
CONDUCTOR	The person who supervises all musical detail, rehearsals and leads the orchestra and advises the artistic director about the hiring of singers and musical staff (also called the music director).
CONTRALTO	The lowest female singing voice.
COUNTERTENOR	The highest natural male voice, not a castrato. True male altos may be heard in choirs. The term <i>falsettist</i> is sometimes used but disputed.
CYCLORAMA	A curved curtain or wall enclosing the playing area of the stage and hiding the work areas behind it.
DA CAPO	(<i>It: 'from the top, or back to the beginning'</i>). A familiar direction in music. A da capo aria of the Baroque period repeats the first part of the aria, with different embellishments, after the singing of a contrasting second part.
DESIGNER	The person who creates the lighting, costumes or sets.
DIAPHRAGM	The muscle which separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. It is used by singers for breath control and it allows them to "project" their voices to the back of the auditorium.
DIRECTOR	The person who instructs the singer/actors in their movements on stage and in the interpretation of their roles.
DOWNSTAGE	The front of the stage nearest the audience.
DRAME LYRIQUE	(<i>It: dramma lirico</i>). Modern term for opera, not necessarily of a lyrical character. The English term "lyrical drama" is used in the same way.

DRAMMA PER MUSICA	A term that refers to text expressly written to be set by a composer and by extension also to the composition. The term was the one most commonly used for serious Italian opera in the eighteenth century (as opposed to the modern term <i>opera seria</i> , with which it is in effect interchangeable).
DUET	Music written for two people to play or sing together.
EMBELLISHMENT	Decoration or ornament. A grace-note addition to the vocal line (also instrumental) of any kind, a four-note turn, or a trill.
ENSEMBLE	Three or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.
FALSETTO	The falsetto voice is of high pitch and produced by the vibrations of only one part of the vocal folds. The normal male voice sounds strained and effeminate in falsetto, but a natural alto or high tenor can produce effective vocal sound by this method. It is a singing mannerism to produce high tenor notes in falsetto.
FESTA TEATRALE	(<i>It.: 'theatrical celebration'</i>). A title applied to a dramatic work. Feste teatrali fall into two quite distinct classes: opera and serenatas.
FINALE	The last musical number of an opera, or of an act of an opera.
FIORITURA	(<i>It.: 'flowering', 'flourish'; plural fioritura</i>). When a composition for the voice contains decorative writing such as scales, arpeggios, trills and gruppetti (the groups of notes sometimes known in English as 'turns'), it is described as 'florid' and the decorations themselves will be described collectively as 'fioritura'. It is a more accurate term than 'coloratura', which is frequently used as an alternative.
FLATS	Stretched canvas and wood panels on which scenery is painted.
FLIES	The space above a stage where scenery is "flown" when not in use. A counterweight system simplifies raising and lowering flats, larger set pieces, and back drops.
FULL DRESS REHEARSAL	The final rehearsal before opening night with all singers present in full costume.
GRAND OPERA	Traditionally, a serious epic or historical work in four or five acts which makes extensive use of the chorus and also includes a ballet. Also contains magnificent special effects.
GRID	Gridiron. Framework from which lines are hung and battens attached for the "flying" of scenery. The grid is situated high in the flies just beneath the ceiling of the fly loft.
HANDLUNG FÜR MUSIK	(<i>Ger.: 'action in music'</i>). Term used by Wagner to describe the libretto for <i>Lobengrin</i> and <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> ; it has occasionally been used since.
INTERLUDE	A short piece of instrumental music played between scenes or acts to fill in delays brought about by scenery changes.
INTERMEZZO	An instrumental interlude played between acts, or short two-act comic opera played between the acts of an opera seria.
LEITMOTIV	A recurring musical figure used to identify a person, event or idea.
LEGATO	A smooth, flowing line. In vocal music it demands steadiness of emission and a sensitivity to phrasing.
LIBRETTO	The words of an opera.

MASKING	A scenic frame or device to prevent the audience from seeing into the wings of the stage. Door and window openings are usually masked, often with realistic backings.
MASQUE	An entertainment popular in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth. A form of “total theater,” it combined music, scenic splendor, poetry, and some drama. Milton’s <i>Comus</i> , with music by Henry Lawes, is the most celebrated.
MELODRAMA	A basically serious play, frequently using comedy for relief, it only outwardly resembles tragedy. The conflicts and calamities are more interesting in themselves than are the characters, who tend to be stereotyped, good and bad. Passion, excitement, and action, often unmotivated, are emphasized. Intended for indiscriminating audiences, it uses much music to stimulate the emotions and much scenic effect to please the eye.
MÉLODRAME	In addition to being the French word for melodrama, this term refers to a technique, which became popular during the eighteenth century, of playing orchestral music under or between the phrases of spoken dialogue.
MELODRAMMA	Dramma per musica (drama for music) and Melodramma (sung drama) antedate by many years the term opera, now in general use for works of this kind.
MEZZA VOCE	Half-voice, with reference to a passage required to be sung softly throughout. A similar term, <i>messa di voce</i> , has the different meaning of beginning a tone softly, swelling it gradually, and then softening it again.
MEZZO-SOPRANO	The middle female singing voice, lower than soprano but higher than contralto.
MOTIVE	A short musical idea on which a melody is based.
MUSICAL PLAY	A convenient but inexact designation which has become popular in English-speaking countries to distinguish the more ambitious works in the popular field of lyric theater from (a) European operetta or imitations thereof, (b) musical comedy of the vaudevillian sort, and (c) opera, especially in New York where the form is supposed to belong to the Metropolitan and the New York City Opera Company and is somewhat provincially considered “poison at the box office.” David Ewen regards <i>Show Boat</i> , 1927, as the first work of the new genre, the musical play. By the 1930s, this term had become a catchall.
OPERA	A term now used to cover musical-dramatic pieces of all kinds except musical comedy and operetta, although comic opera comes very close to these forms. The seventeenth-century Italian term for opera was <i>Dramma per musica</i> or <i>Melodramma</i> .
OPERA BUFFA	A precise Italian definition, meaning Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Musical numbers are strung along a continuum of dry recitative.
OPÉRA COMIQUE	French light opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Strictly speaking, any theater piece written with spoken dialogue between the musical numbers (<i>Faust</i> , <i>Carmen</i> , and <i>Manon</i>) whether a comedy or not. The Paris Opéra Comique is also called the Salle Favart and was originally the home of all works using spoken dialogue, while the Opéra confined itself to through-composed works.
OPERA SERIA	Literally “serious opera.” An opera form of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which uses historical, biblical or mythological subjects with a focus on revenge, danger and death.

OPERETTA	A loosely used term, often used interchangeably with comic opera, opéra bouffe, and musical comedy. In Italian it originally meant “little opera,” a short, light musical work. It has come to mean a full-length piece on a light subject, with musical numbers and spoken dialogue, and characterized by ingratiating tunes, decorative dances, colorful settings, social irresponsibility, a slender dramatic line, and the requirement of at least two well-trained voices.
ORATORIO	A musical-dramatic work originating in the twelfth century, now generally performed, in contradistinction to opera, without action, costumes, and scenery. They are invariably associated with sacred subjects.
ORCHESTRA PIT	The sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.
OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to the opera, usually played before the acting begins.
PARLANDO	(<i>It: ‘in speaking style’</i>). An informal and realistic technique occasionally used in Italian opera, bringing singing close to speaking.
PORTAMENTO	An Italian singing term, asking the voice to glide from one note to another at some distance. An authentic and effective device, to be distinguished from the mannerism of scooping.
PRINCIPAL	A major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.
PROSCENIUM	The stage opening, resembling a three-sided picture frame. Immediately behind it and concealing the acting areas is the curtain. The proscenium arch was originally created in the 1700s to conceal the machinery used to create special stage effects.
QUARTET	Four singers, or the music written for that group.
RECITATIVE	Musical singing in the rhythm of speech.
RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO	A sung passage with orchestral accompaniment, lacking the formality of an aria, yet more declamatory and agitated than recitativo secco.
RECITATIVO SECCO	Dry recitative. A sung passage so close to everyday speech that although the pitches and time values are respected, a conversational quality prevails. A keyboard instrument generally supplies the sketchy accompaniment. Commonly used in Italian opera seria and opera buffa.
REPERTORY	A system of stage production in which a number of works are played, virtually in rotation, by a resident company throughout a season.
RÉPÉTITION	French term for “rehearsal.” A répétition générale is a dress rehearsal to which critics and guests are invited.
REVOLVE	Revolving stage. Turntable. A section of the stage floor (permanently established) or a circular construction on a central pivot which revolves, to change scenery or supply movement of objects as well as people.
RITORNELLO	A short instrumental piece, literally meaning repetition or refrain. In Monteverdi’s works it usually consists of a few bars played between the verses of a strophic song.
ROCOCO	In art, associated with the late Baroque period and the late eighteenth century. In contrast to the dignity, heaviness, and occasional pomposity of Baroque, Rococo art is playful, lighter in tone and color, and adorned with scrolls, acorns, and shells.
ROLE	The character that a singer portrays.

ROMANTICISM	The movement strongly associated with nineteenth-century Germany, but felt through all Europe and responsible for far-reaching changes in all forms of art. Rebels against the establishment (which was founded on a deep respect for the classics), the romanticists opposed authority and advocated freedom from formal regulations. They encouraged a subjective, strongly emotional approach as an antidote to classical decorum.
SCORE	The music of an opera or other musical work in which the parts for different performers appear vertically above one another.
SCRIM	A thin curtain, often painted. When lit from behind, one can see through it.
SERENATA	A dramatic cantata, normally celebratory or eulogistic in intent, for two or more singers with orchestral accompaniment. In dramaturgical respects the serenata most closely resembles the Baroque oratorio.
SINFONIA	A symphonic work the precedes an opera (English: overture); a shorter version is referred to as a <i>prelude</i> .
SINGSPIEL	A German form of comic opera with spoken dialogue.
SITZPROBE	A sit-down rehearsal where the performers sing with the orchestra for the first time.
SOPRANO	The highest female singing voice.
SPRECHSTIMME	A form of declamation halfway between speech and song. Instead of exactly notated pitch an approximation is given. The time, however, is given exactly and the singer is not allowed absolute license. Notations up and down are also meant to be respected. This style of singing is found in the works of Schoenberg and Berg.
STAGE LEFT	The left side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STAGE RIGHT	The right side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STRETTA	An accelerated passage at the end of an aria, scene, or act.
TENOR	The highest male singing voice.
TESSITURA	Literally "texture." The approximate range of a role or an aria.
THROUGH-COMPOSED	Through-composed opera is a continuous music drama uninterrupted by spoken dialogue or obviously recognizable recitative.
TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE	A French term associated mainly with Lully and Rameau. Tragédie lyrique comes somewhat closer to the spoken play in dramatic expressiveness than does the Italian opera seria of the same period, which may exceed it in vocal expressiveness.
TRILL	A musical ornament requiring the rapid alternation of two adjacent notes.
TROUSER ROLE	Also called "pants role." The part of a male character sung by a woman, usually a mezzo-soprano.
UNDERSTUDY	A replacement for a particular role in case of illness or emergency (also called a "cover").
VERISMO	A type of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italian opera that emphasized realistic subjects.
WANDELPROBE	Musical rehearsal which allows the conductor to hear what the singers sound like when they perform on the set.
WINGS	The sides of the stage where the performers wait before making their entrances.

Sources: *Opera: Dead or Alive*, by Ronald E. Mitchell. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970.
New Grove Dictionary of Opera, edited by Stanley Sadie. London: MacMillan Press Limited, 1992.
 New York City Opera Education Department, Edmonton Opera

GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

ADAGIO	Slowly and smoothly.	BAR	A vertical line across the staff that divides the music into units.
AD LIBITUM	As you please; freely.	BUFFO, BUFFA	Comic.
AFFECTUOSO	Expressively; tenderly; lovingly.	CADENZA	A flourish or brilliant part of an aria commonly inserted just before a finale.
AGITATO	Agitated.	CANTABILE	Songlike; singingly.
ALBERTI BASS	Stereotyped figures of accompaniment, consisting of broken chords.	CANTATA	A choral piece generally containing scriptural narrative texts.
		CON BRIO	With spirit.
ALLARGANDO	Slowing and broadening.	CONTINUO	A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of a succession of bass notes with figures that indicate the required chords. Also called figured bass, thoroughbass.
ALLEGRETTO	Fairly lively; not as fast as allegro.	COUNTERPOINT	Music consisting of two or more lines that sound simultaneously.
ALLEGRO	Lively; fast.	CRESCENDO	Gradually getting louder.
A MEZZO VOCE	With half the voice.		
ANDANTE	Going; moving; at a moderate rate.	DIATONIC	Relating to a major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.
ANDANTINO	Slightly faster than andante.	DIMINUENDO	Gradually getting softer.
ANIMATO	With spirit; animated.		
APPOGGIATURA	An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note or tone. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.	DIMINUTION	The presentation of a melody in halved values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become eighth notes.
ARPEGGIO	Producing the tones of a chord in succession but not simultaneously.	DISSONANCE	A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.
ASSAI	Very; very much.	DOLOROSAMENTE	Sadly; grievingly.
A TEMPO	At the preceding rate of speed.		
ATONAL	Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it uses the chromatic scale impartially, does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.		
AUGMENTATION	The presentation of a melody in doubled values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become half notes.		

DOMINANT	The fifth tone of the diatonic scale: in the key of C, the dominant is G.	MOSSO	Moved; agitated; lively.
FERMATATA 	Pause sign; prolonged time value of note so marked.	MOTO	Motion; movement.
FORTE <i>f</i>	Loud.	OBBLIGATO	An elaborate accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by a single instrument.
FORTISSIMO <i>ff</i>	Very loud.	OCTAVE	A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees: therefore, from C ¹ to C ² is an octave.
FURIOSO	Furious; violent.	ORNAMENTATION	Extra embellishing notes – appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas – that enhance a melodic line.
GIOCOSO	Playfully.	OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to an act or the whole opera. An overture can appear only at the beginning of an opera.
GIUSTO	Strict; exact.	OSSIA	Or; or else; an alternate reading.
GLISSANDO	A rapid sliding up or down the scale.	PENTATONIC	A five-note scale, like the black notes within an octave on the piano.
GRANDIOSO	With grandeur; majestically.	PIACERE	To please.
GRAVE	Slow; heavy; solemn.	PIANO <i>p</i>	Soft.
GRAZIOSO	Elegantly; gracefully.	PIANISSIMO <i>pp</i>	Very soft.
LAMENTOSO	Mournfully.	PITCH	The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.
LARGHETTO	Somewhat less slowly than largo.	PIÙ	More.
LARGO	Broadly and slowly.	PIZZICATO	For bowed stringed instruments, an indication that the string is to be plucked with a finger.
LEGATO	Smoothly and connectedly.	POCO	Little.
LEGGIERO	Light; airy; graceful.	POLYPHONY	Literally “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed in harmony; counterpoint.
LENTO	Slow.		
MAESTOSO	Majestic; stately; grand.		
MAESTRO	From the Italian “master”: a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.		
MARCATO	Marked.		
MEZZO	Half; middle; medium.		
MISTERIOSO	With mystery.		
MODERATO	Moderately; at a moderate rate.		
MOLTO	Much; very.		
MORENDO	Dying away.		

POLYTONAL	The use of several tonal schemes simultaneously.	SOSTENUTO	Sustained.
PORTAMENTO	A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another.	SOTTO	Under; beneath.
PRESTO	Very fast; lively; quick.	STACCATO	Detached; separated.
QUAVER	An eighth note.	STRINGENDO	Hurried; accelerated.
RALLENTANDO	Gradually slower.	STROPHE	Music repeated for each verse of an aria.
RITARDANDO	Gradually slower.	SYNCOPIATION	Shifting the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; it is a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.
RITENUTO	Held back; slower.	TACET	Silent.
RITORNELLO	A short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.	TEMPO	Rate of speed.
ROMANZA	A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is usually shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage and anger.	TONALITY	The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).
ROULADE	A florid vocal embellishment sung to one syllable.	TRISTE	Sad.
RUBATO	A way of playing or singing with regulated rhythmic freedom.	TWELVE-TONE	The 12 chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting with some permitted permutations and derivations the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note gets repeated.
SEMITONE	One half of a whole tone, the smallest distance between two notes in Western music. In the key of C, the notes are E and F, and B and C.	VELOCE	Rapid.
SEMPLICE	Simply.	VIBRATO	A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone for added warmth and expressiveness by slight and rapid variations in pitch.
SEMPRE	Always.	VIVACE	Brisk; lively.
SENZA	Without.		
SERIAL MUSIC	Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.		
SFORZANDO <i>sf</i>	With accent.		
SORDINO	Muted.		

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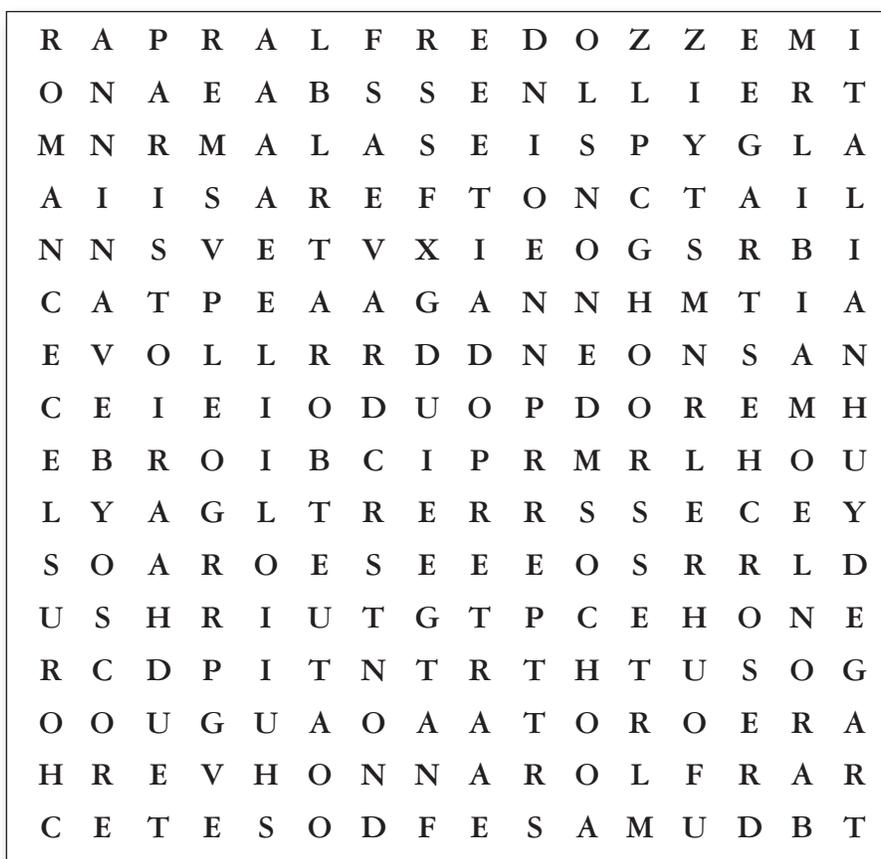
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Stratas, Domingo, McNeill
- ARTHAUS MUSIK
Gheorghiu, Vargas, Frontali

WORD SEARCH



- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Alexandre | gypsies |
| Alfredo | illness |
| Annina | Italian |
| aria | libiamo |
| baritone | libretto |
| baron | matadors |
| bas | mezzo |
| chorus | opera |
| conductor | orchestra |
| director | Paris |
| Douphol | romance |
| duet | score |
| Dumas | soprano |
| father | tenor |
| Flora | tragedy |
| Germont | Valery |
| Giorgio | Verdi |
| Giuseppe | Violetta |

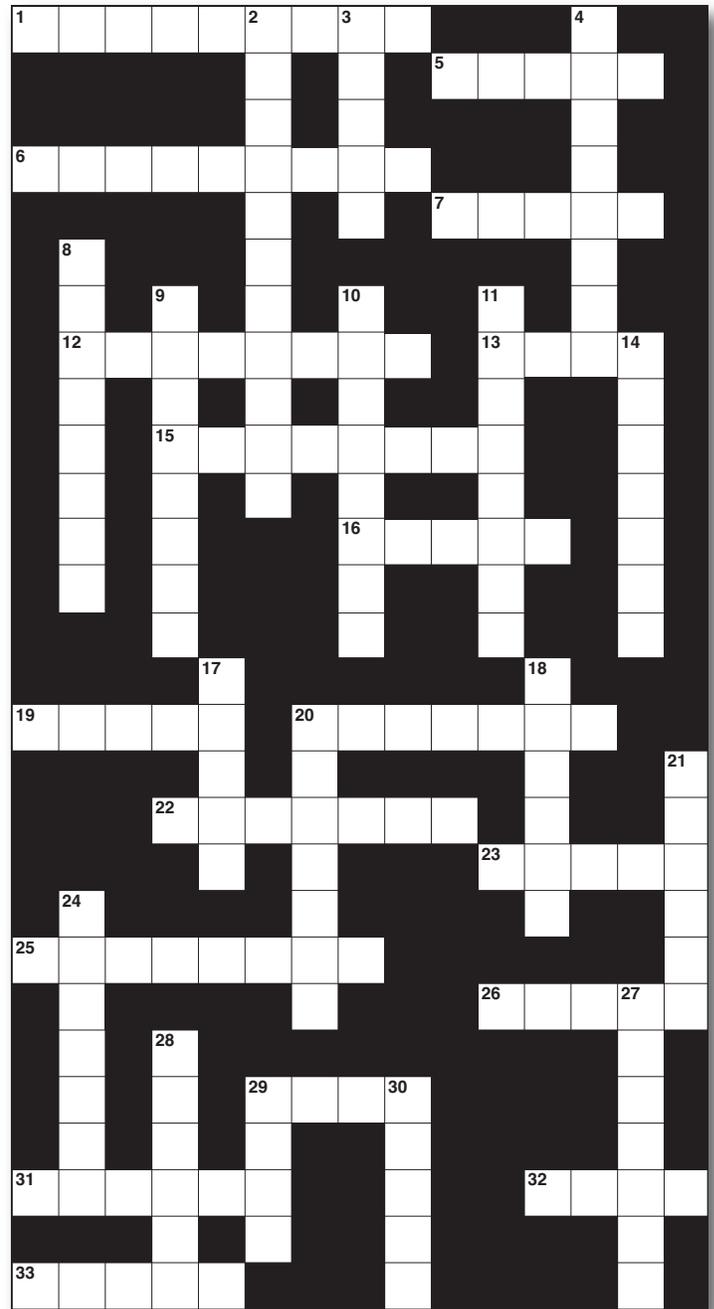
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

DOWN

2. Violetta dies of _____ at the end of the opera. ¹
3. A drama set to music is called a(n) _____. ²
4. In Act I everyone sings a(n) _____, an Italian drinking song. ¹
8. The _____ is the written text of an opera. ²
9. The title of the opera, *La _____*, means “a woman who has gone astray.” ¹
10. A group of people singing together is called a(n) _____. ²
11. In Act II, scene two, Gastone leads men dressed as _____ in a short dance. ¹
14. In Act II, scene two, _____ publicly insults Violetta. ¹
17. A(n) _____ is the highest male voice type. ²
18. In Act II, scene one, Violetta writes Alfredo a(n) _____, ending their affair. ¹
20. Alfredo’s father, Giorgio _____, visits Violetta in Act II. ¹
21. The _____ of *La traviata* is made up of party guests. ^{1, 2}
24. _____, Alfredo’s friend, introduces him to Violetta in Act I. ¹
27. *La traviata* is sung in this language. ¹
28. _____ is Violetta’s maid and confidante. ¹
29. A(n) _____ is a musical piece sung by two people. ²
30. Though Violetta _____ Alfredo, his father convinces her to return to her former life. ¹

ACROSS

1. The _____ leads the singers and orchestra. ²
5. _____ Bervoix is Violetta’s friend and fellow courtesan. ¹
6. In an opera, the _____ provides musical accompaniment. ²
7. Giuseppe _____ is the composer of *La traviata*. ¹
12. Germont is sung by a(n) _____, the second highest male voice type. ^{1, 2}
13. A(n) _____ is a musical piece sung by one person. ²
15. Having abandoned her city life, _____ has taken residence in the country by the beginning of Act II. ¹
16. The _____ escorts Violetta to Flora’s party in Act II. ¹
19. Francesco Maria _____ wrote the opera’s libretto. ¹
20. A female chorus of _____ entertain guests at Flora’s party. ¹
22. A(n) _____ is the highest female voice type. ²
23. A(n) _____ is the second highest female voice type. ²
25. In Act II, scene two, Alfredo is the constant winner at the _____ table. ¹



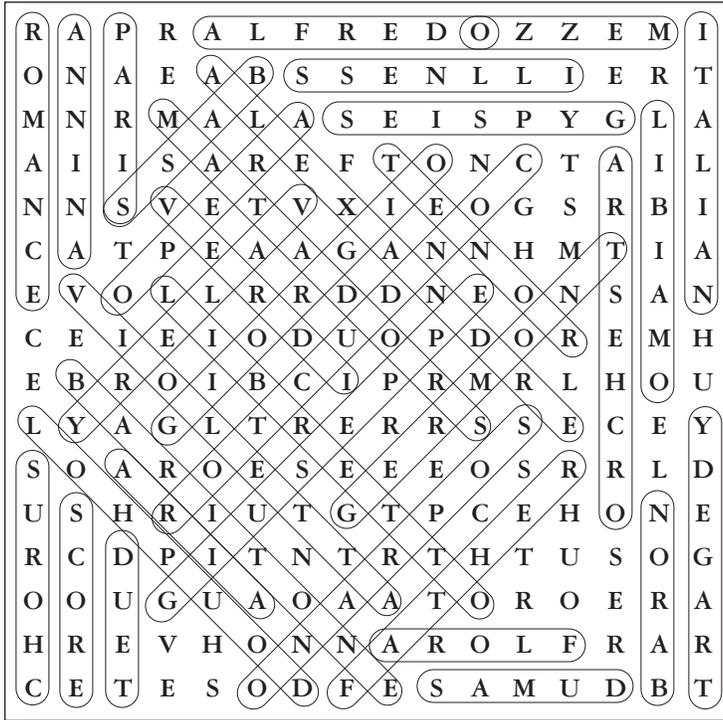
26. The opera takes place in and near this French city. ¹
29. At the end of Act II, scene two, the Baron challenges Alfredo to a _____. ¹
31. The opera had its premiere in this city. ¹
32. A(n) _____ is a musical piece for three singers. ²
33. Alexandre _____ *films* wrote the novel upon which *La traviata* was based. ¹

Answers can be found in the following articles:

¹ Synopsis

² Glossary of Opera Terms

ANSWERS



OPERA BOX TEACHER GUIDE EVALUATION

La traviata

- 1 I teach this subject and grade level(s): _____
- 2 I found the Opera Box useful:
 YES NO
- 3 These are the items I used: (check all that apply)
_____CD (Pavaratti/Sutherland/Bonygne)
_____CD (Sills/Gedda/Ceccato)
_____DVD (Zeffirelli film)
_____DVD (Gheorghiu/Lopardo/Solti)
_____FULL SCORE (Dover)
_____VOCAL SCORE (Schirmer)
_____LIBRETTO (Schirmer)
_____BOOK *Camille: The Lady of the Camellias* (Alexandre Dumas fils)
_____BOOK *Verdi* (Julian Budden)
_____BOOK *The Complete Operas of Verdi* (Charles Osborne)
_____Teacher's Guide
- 4 I wish I had the Opera Box for more time:
 YES NO
- 4A If you said YES, how much more time would you like to have? _____
- 5 Rental cost for the Opera Box was:
 LOW ACCEPTABLE HIGH
- 6 I used the material in this Opera Box to: (circle all that apply)
 Introduce my students to opera Continue my students' study of opera
 Prepare students prior to a performance Meet a Minnesota High Standard
- 7 Would you like to receive some training related to the content in the Opera Box?
 YES NO
- 8 Items I would like to see in future Opera Boxes: _____
- 9 I would attend a summer workshop about how to teach opera (with graduate credit available):
 YES NO
- 10 I used, or directed my students to, imagineopera.org website.
 YES NO
- 11 Please offer any further comments or suggestions on the back of this form.

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