

# *La Traviata*

## A Guide for Educators



The Met  
ropolitan  
Opera

Vincent Peters/Metropolitan Opera

# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM *LA TRAVIATA*

FROM THE FIRST, ACHING CHORDS OF ITS PRELUDE, *LA TRAVIATA* DRAWS THE AUDIENCE into the private world of its heroine: Violetta, the “fallen woman” of the opera’s title, knows that the tuberculosis she suffers from will take her life. Whether amid the feverish gaiety of Parisian high society or the shadowy gloom of her deathbed, Violetta and her fate form the emotional core of Verdi’s opera. And her fate is shattering: As she spins out the last waning moments of her life, she gives herself so wholly to love that she is willing to sacrifice everything for it—even herself.

With *La Traviata*, Verdi and his librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, created an intimate meditation on what was then quite radical for the operatic stage: prostitution and the urban spread of disease. Like its plot source, a novel by Alexandre Dumas fils, *La Traviata* omits the sort of ending that would have been expected for such subjects—an affirmation of morality and familial responsibility. Instead, the opera’s fallen heroine displays a nobility and innate dignity worthy of the most exalted of operatic heroines. As Michael Mayer, the director of this new Metropolitan Opera production observes, “Violetta has consumption from the time we meet her, and yet she’s full of life. And she’s full of love. And she wants so much to be able to give and receive love from someone.” Mayer’s production highlights the tragedy of Violetta’s short life with a luxuriously ornamented set by Christine Jones that depicts the passing of the seasons.

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate the poignancy and inventiveness of one of the most beloved operas in the repertoire. With background information on Verdi’s life and work, an overview of the literary sources from which he drew the story, and synopses designed for young readers, it is intended to help your students explore this fascinating work by engaging their own experiences and creativity. A listening activity will bring the opera’s music into the classroom, while follow-up questions will help direct a post-performance discussion. Students should come away feeling like *La Traviata* experts, eager to offer their own opinions about this Final Dress performance at the Met.

Access Opera: Open Rehearsals for Students  
is made possible by a generous gift from Robert and Jane Toll

Major sponsorship is provided by

**Bank of America** 

## THE WORK:

**LA TRAVIATA**  
An opera in three acts, sung in Italian  
Music by Giuseppe Verdi  
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave  
Based on the play *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas, fils  
First performed March 6, 1853  
at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Italy

## PRODUCTION

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Conductor  
Michael Mayer, Production  
Christine Jones, Set Designer  
Susan Hilferty, Costume Designer  
Kevin Adams, Lighting Designer  
Lorin Latarro, Choreographer

## STARRING

Diana Damrau  
VIOLETTA VALÉRY (soprano)

Juan Diego Flórez  
ALFREDO GERMONT (tenor)

Quinn Kelsey  
GIORGIO GERMONT (baritone)

Production a gift of Eva-Marie and Ray  
Berry / The Paiko Foundation

Major additional funding from  
Mercedes T. Bass, Mr. and Mrs. Paul M.  
Montrone, and Rolex

## ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE



Photo: Johnathan Tichler/  
Metropolitan Opera

The Metropolitan Opera is a vibrant home for the most creative and talented singers, conductors, composers, musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers from around the world.

The Metropolitan Opera was founded in 1883, with its first opera house built on Broadway and 39th Street by a group of wealthy businessmen who wanted their own theater. In the company's early years, the management changed course several times, first performing everything in Italian (even *Carmen* and *Lohengrin*), then everything in German (even *Aida* and *Faust*), before finally settling into a policy of performing most works in their original language.

Almost from the beginning, it was clear that the opera house on 39th Street did not have adequate stage facilities. But it was not until the Met joined with other New York institutions in forming Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts that a new home became possible. The new Metropolitan Opera House, which opened at Lincoln Center in September of 1966, was equipped with the finest technical facilities of the day.

Each season the Met stages more than 200 opera performances in New York. More than 800,000 people attend the performances in the opera house during the season, and millions more experience the Met through new media distribution initiatives and state-of-the-art technology.

This guide includes several sections with a variety of background material on *La Traviata*.

- **The Source, The Story, and Who's Who in *La Traviata***
- **A Timeline:** The historical context of the opera's story and composition
- **A Closer Look:** A brief article highlighting an important aspect of Verdi's *La Traviata*
- **Guided Listening:** A series of musical excerpts with questions and a roadmap to possible student responses
- **Student Critique:** A performance activity, highlighting specific aspects of this production; and topics for wrap-up discussion following students' attendance
- **Further Resources:** Recommendations for additional study, both online and in print
- **Glossary:** Common musical terms found in this guide and in the concert hall

The materials in this guide will focus on several aspects of *La Traviata*:

- The real-life conditions and experiences that informed Verdi's choice of plot
- The characteristics of Verdi's musical style
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *La Traviata*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes materials for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.



## SUMMARY

Violetta Valéry is a well-known high-class escort in Paris, but she also suffers from a serious illness. She lives on the money given to her by her male patrons. But when she meets Alfredo Germont, they fall in love and move to the country. Alfredo's father disapproves of their relationship and comes to tell Violetta that their relationship is ruining his family. Out of her love for Alfredo, Violetta agrees to leave him and returns to Paris. Thinking she has betrayed him, Alfredo is heartbroken. He follows her to a party and publicly insults her. A few months later, Violetta is close to death. Alfredo, who has learned why Violetta left him, and returns to her. Alfredo is shocked by her weakness as she strains to get to her feet. They vow to be together forever, but soon she breathes her last.



**Jonathan Tichler/  
Metropolitan Opera**

## THE SOURCE: *LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS* BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS, FILS

The story of Verdi's *La Traviata* can ultimately be traced to the life of a historical figure, the courtesan Marie Duplessis, who died in 1847 from consumption. Not long before her death, Duplessis had a brief affair with Alexandre Dumas, fils, who then transformed this personal history into a semi-autobiographical novel, *La Dame aux Camélias* ("The Lady of the Camellias"), in 1848. Dumas later adapted his work as a play, and this stage version premiered at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris on February 2, 1852.

Giuseppe Verdi often turned to the French theater for inspiration—his *Ernani* and *Rigoletto* were both based on plays by Victor Hugo—and within a few months of the premiere of *La Dame aux Camélias*, he had chosen it as the subject of the new opera he was contracted to write for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice. Together with his librettist Francesco Maria Piave, he created one of his most realistic dramas, not shying away from the moral and medical tensions of his source material, calling it "a subject of the times."

# SYNOPSIS

## **Act I: At the home of Violetta Valéry in Paris**

Violetta Valéry, a high-class courtesan in Paris, is giving a party following her recent recovery from a protracted illness. Her salon fills with guests, and a few of them wonder whether she is up to drinking the champagne she offers. When Violetta is introduced to the young Alfredo Germont, she is surprised to learn that he visited her house daily during her convalescence—a kindness that even her patron, Baron Douphol, failed to show. Prompted by Violetta, Alfredo leads the assembled crowd in a drinking song. Violetta invites her guests into the ballroom but finds herself too weak to follow. Alfredo stays behind and inquires after her health, and then declares his love. She tries to laugh it off, but Alfredo is undeterred, and replies that if she will not talk of love, he must leave. Intrigued, Violetta hands him a camellia. When it withers, she tells him, he is to return it to her. Alfredo, overjoyed, departs.

Alone now, Violetta considers the possibility of finding the kind of true love that Alfredo spoke of. She hears him singing outside her window of the passion he feels, but she concludes that it is madness: She must forget him and continue to live, day to day, for pleasure alone.

## **Act II, Scene 1: A country house outside Paris, three months later**

Alfredo and Violetta have been living together in the country for three months. Alfredo learns from Annina, Violetta's maid, that Violetta has been selling her property in Paris to cover the household expenses. Upset and ashamed that his beloved has been secretly supporting him, he rushes off to the city to settle matters and to cover the expenses himself.

While he is gone, Violetta receives an unexpected visit from Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father. Disapproving of her lifestyle and her relationship with his son, Germont demands that Violetta leave Alfredo in order to protect their family name and enable his daughter, Alfredo's sister, to marry well. Violetta is shocked and dismayed, but out of love for Alfredo eventually agrees to the sacrifice.

Just as Violetta is writing a farewell note to Alfredo, he returns. She effusively affirms her love for him, then rushes out. A messenger appears with her note. The moment Alfredo opens it, his father arrives to console him. But all the memories of home and a happy family can't prevent the furious and jealous Alfredo from seeking revenge for Violetta's apparent betrayal. Germont tries to comfort his son, but Alfredo is inconsolable. When he finds an invitation for a ball that Violetta had received from her friend Flora, he departs, swearing vengeance.

## Scene 2: A party at Flora's home in Paris

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

## Act III: Violetta's apartment in Paris

Months later, Violetta is at death's door. Dr. Grenvil appears and tells Violetta's maid that her mistress has only a few hours to live. Violetta rereads a letter from Alfredo's father in which he recounts that he has told his son the truth about Violetta's sacrifice, and Alfredo is on his way to see her and ask her forgiveness. Violetta is certain that it is too late and she will die before he arrives.

The sounds of carnival are heard. Alfredo arrives and begs Violetta's forgiveness. Forgetting Violetta's hopeless situation, they reaffirm their love and dream of leaving Paris for a new life. Germont arrives, remorseful about his earlier treatment of Violetta. He asks for her mercy and declares that she is like a daughter to him. Violetta gives Alfredo her portrait and asks him to pass it along to his future wife, whoever she may be. Having made her peace with the world, she suddenly feels her strength returning, but then falls, dead.

### VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

#### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

#### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian "mezzo"=middle, medium)

#### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

#### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

#### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

#### BASS

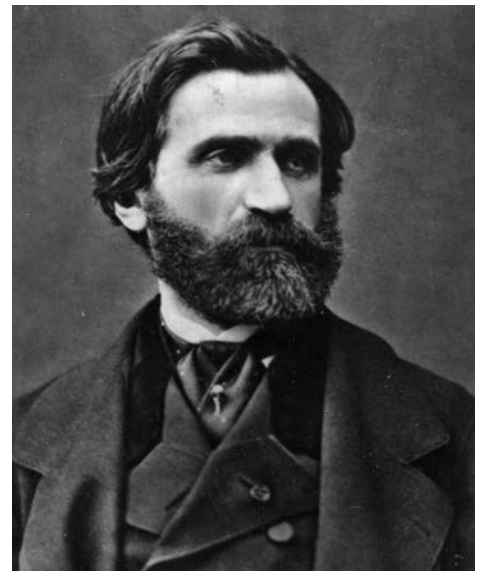
the lowest male voice



# WHO'S WHO IN *LA TRAVIATA*

Character		Pronunciation Guide	Voice Type	The Lowdown
<b>Violetta</b>	<b>A courtesan in 19th-century Paris</b>	<b>vee-oh-LET-tah</b>	<b>soprano</b>	<b>Even before the curtain rises, Violetta knows she will fall victim to a fatal illness</b>
<b>Alfredo</b>	<b>A young man of good family but small financial resources</b>	<b>al-FRAY-doe</b>	<b>tenor</b>	<b>Alfredo has fallen in love with Violetta from afar, unknown to her, well before the opera begins.</b>
<b>Germont</b>	<b>Alfredo's father</b>	<b>djare-MONT</b>	<b>baritone</b>	<b>Germont's parental and social anxieties cause him to reject Violetta's involvement with his son.</b>
<b>Baron Douphol</b>	<b>A protector of Violetta's</b>	<b>doo-FOLE</b>	<b>baritone</b>	<b>Violetta was involved with the Baron before meeting Alfredo.</b>
<b>Flora</b>	<b>Violetta's friend, another "kept woman"</b>	<b>FLOH-rah</b>	<b>mezzo-soprano</b>	<b>Flora hosts lavish parties at her Paris home.</b>
<b>Dr. Grenvil</b>	<b>Violetta's physician</b>	<b>grahn-VEEL</b>	<b>bass</b>	<b>In this production, beyond being Violetta's doctor, he symbolizes her mortality.</b>

- **18th-19thc** Tuberculosis, an infectious disease of the lungs (known historically as consumption or phthisis), becomes endemic across the world, causing at its height a quarter of all deaths in Europe. There is evidence of the disease as early as the Neolithic Age, and it was common in ancient Egypt, China, and Greece.
  
- **1813** Giuseppe Verdi is born in Le Roncole, a small village in northern Italy.
  
- **1820** The explosive growth of European urban centers at the close of the Industrial Revolution results in cramped, unsanitary living conditions and an environment primed for the rapid spread of tuberculosis and other diseases.
  
- **1836** Verdi's first opera to be completed and produced, *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, opens at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.
  
- **1842** *Nabucco* premieres at La Scala, its success establishing Verdi as Italy's foremost composer. He enters a period of remarkable productivity, writing 14 operas over the following ten years.
  
- **1843** Verdi is contracted to work on a new opera for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, with the unknown poet Francesco Maria Piave as librettist. Their collaboration results in *Ernani*, the first of ten operas they would eventually work on together, including *La Traviata*.



**Giuseppe Verdi**

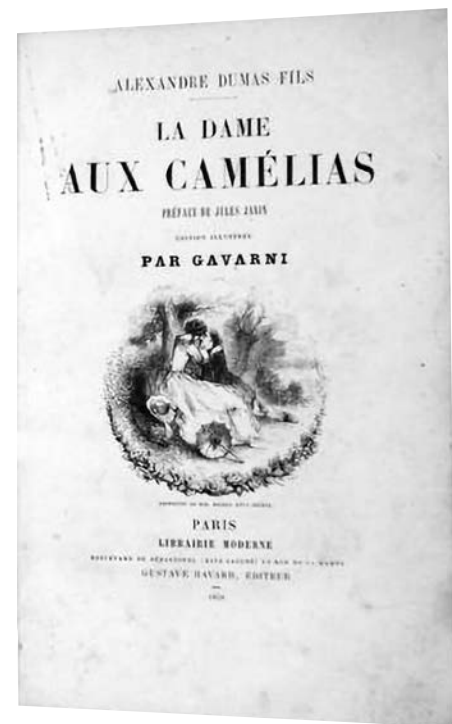
- **1847** The beautiful Parisian courtesan Marie Duplessis dies of tuberculosis at age 23.  
  
Verdi and Giuseppina Strepponi, an Italian soprano, begin a romantic relationship. They remain devoted to each other for the rest of their lives and eventually marry in 1857.
- **1848** French author Alexander Dumas, fils publishes his novel *La Dame aux Camélias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*), based on his real-life relationship with Marie Duplessis.
- **1852** Dumas's stage adaptation of *La Dame aux Camélias* premieres at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris on February 2.  
  
In April, Verdi is commissioned by the Teatro La Fenice to write an opera for early the following year, but by October he still has not decided on a subject. He eventually settles on Dumas's story, and composition proceeds in record time.
- **1853** The premiere of *La Traviata* on March 6 turns into one of the most notorious fiascos in operatic history. The audience's negative reaction likely is due to poor casting more than any artistic fault on the part of Verdi or Piave. After the premiere, Verdi writes to a friend, "*La Traviata* last night a failure. Was the fault mine or the singers'? Time will tell."
- **1854** Verdi makes a few changes to the score, most notably to the Act II duet between Violetta and Germont. With a new cast, *La Traviata* is an unequivocal success when performed at Venice's Teatro San Benedetto on May 6.
- **1882** After slow advances in the study of tuberculosis over the past century, the Prussian doctor Robert Koch identifies the bacillus *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* as the cause of the disease.
- **1901** Verdi suffers a stroke on January 21 and dies on January 27. His funeral procession in Milan draws tens of thousands of mourners.

## IN THE LAP OF LUXURY: THE LIVING COSTS OF A COURTESAN IN PARIS

In Dumas’s novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, Marguerite’s lavish lifestyle is said to cost “more than a hundred thousand francs a year.” This was an enormous amount of money for the time. To put it into perspective:

- In mid-19th-century Paris, female laborers earned about 2 francs (frs.) per day. Marguerite’s trademark camellias cost 3 frs. each.
- One of Marguerite’s hats would have cost around 1,800 frs., six times the annual salary of a school teacher.
- A private box at the Théâtre-Italien (where Marguerite first meets her lover Armand) was rented for 5,475 frs. for a six-month period—more than a cabinet minister in the French government made in the same amount of time.
- An “Indian” (i.e., cashmere) shawl of the kind Marguerite regularly wears could have cost as much as 25,000 frs., only slightly less than the annual salary of a French senator.

(Figures adapted from “A Note on Money,” in Alexandre Dumas fils’s *La Dame aux Camélias*, translated and with an introduction by David Coward, Oxford World’s Classics [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], 203–4.)



The Guided Listening Activities are designed to introduce students to a selection of memorable moments from the opera. They include information on what is happening dramatically, a description of the musical style, and a roadmap of musical features to listen for. Guided Listening Activities can be used by students and teachers of varying levels of musical experience.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, teachers will need access to a recording of *La Traviata* and the libretto.

## "LIBIAMO NEI LEITI CALICI "

Violetta throws a party in her lavish Parisian apartment; Alfredo is among the guests. Having admired Violetta from afar for over a year, Alfredo is desperately shy in Violetta's presence. Nevertheless, when Violetta asks Alfredo to lead the assembled guests in a toast he happily complies. The result - a joyous celebration of love, life, and happiness - is one of the most famous tunes ever written for opera.

What to listen for:

- How Verdi uses two repeating melodies to structure the entire scene
- The three-beat "waltz" rhythm, a musical pattern closely associated with lively dances and folk songs

- (00:00) The "toast" begins with a lengthy orchestral introduction. Listen carefully for the three-beat rhythm in the orchestra: one "heavy" pulse followed by two "lighter" pulses. (It should be easy to count "one-two-three" as you listen.) Ask your students to describe this music: is it lively, happy, somber, sad? Why?
- (00:19) Alfredo's solo begins. He sings the same melody the orchestra just played. Since this melody will appear repeatedly in this scene, let's label it "Melody A." It may be helpful to play the opening of the aria two or three times for your students before moving on, so that your students can easily recognize (and even sing along with) Melody A.
- (00:38) Alfredo sings a new melody; let's call it "Melody B." Again, it may be helpful to play this melody several times for your students.
- (00:54) Melody A returns. Thus, we can say that Alfredo's solo follows an "A-B-A" pattern.
- (01:02) The assembled guests join in the toast, repeating the last few words of Alfredo's solo. Repetition is very common in folk songs, drinking songs, and other works of music that are meant to be sung as a group. Ask your students: why might a song like this rely on repetition? Do the recurring melodies make it easier to sing along?
- (01:11) Violetta responds to Alfredo's toast. As your students listen to Violetta's solo, ask them to notice where they hear Melodies A and B. Is Violetta's solo structured like Alfredo's?
- (01:57) The ensemble sings Melody A.
- (02:14) Melody B returns, now split between Violetta and Alfredo: She sings one line, he sings the next, etc.
- (02:31) Melody A returns, once again completing the A-B-A pattern.
- (02:47) Perhaps surprisingly, the "toast" does not end with either Melody A or Melody B. Instead, Verdi writes a new melody to round off the scene and bring it to a close. A short concluding melody like this is called a "coda," from the Italian word for "tail."

## "UN DÌ FELICE, ETEREA"

As the party continues, Violetta, feeling short of breath, retreats to a small salon to be alone. Alfredo follows her. He ardently tells Violetta that he has loved her for a year, but Violetta rebuffs his declaration of love. It is foolish to fall in love with her, she tells Alfredo, since she is incapable of loving him in return.

What to listen for:

- The introduction of a theme that will signify Violetta and Alfredo's love throughout the opera
- How Violetta and Alfredo's individual melodies interact, and how this interaction foreshadows the development of the plot

(00:00) Unlike the toast "Libiamo, libiamo ne' lieti calici" (above), this scene has no orchestral introduction. Instead, Alfredo begins singing right away, as though he can't wait to tell Violetta how he feels.

(00:38) Listen carefully as Alfredo describes his love for Violetta. The melody he sings here will appear throughout the opera, whenever Verdi wants to remind the audience of Violetta and Alfredo's love.

(01:08) Alfredo describes his love as a combination of "joy and pain." Why might he feel that love is bittersweet?

(01:23) Violetta replies that she can offer Alfredo "only friendship." In contrast to Alfredo's smooth melodies, Violetta's melody is restless and jumpy, a musical embodiment of the way she jumps from one lover to the next without ever settling down.

(01:49) Alfredo and Violetta are singing at the same time - but does it sound like they are singing together? Or does it instead sound like they are expressing their own thoughts while paying little attention to what the other person is saying?

(02:36) Soon, however, Alfredo and Violetta's individual melodies line up perfectly: They breathe together, speed up together, slow down together. Based on this musical development, do you think Violetta and Alfredo will end up falling in love? Why or why not?



## "È STRANO! ... AH, FORS'È LUI CHE L'ANIMA - FOLLIE! FOLLIE! – SEMPRE LIBERA"

That evening, after the party has died down, Violetta thinks about Alfredo. Although Violetta is widely admired, no one has ever truly loved her, and she wonders if a simple life with Alfredo may be the key to true happiness. Yet the idea of leaving behind the glamor, wealth, and freedom of her Parisian life terrifies Violetta, and she soon decides that a life of frivolous, superficial happiness is all she wants or deserves.

What to listen for:

- The "double aria" format (explained below) and the dramatic structure of the scene as a whole
- The return of the love theme from "Un di felice, eterea"
- Violetta's very flashy style of singing, known as "coloratura"

(00:00) As one might expect from the name, a "double aria" scene features two distinct solo arias. Yet the two arias are typically embedded in a larger dramatic structure. First, a character (or group of characters) observes a problem that will be solved over the course of the opera. Next, one of the characters sings an aria expressing how they feel when confronted with this problem. Third, the character(s) decide(s) upon a course of action that will solve the problem. And finally, the main character sings a second (usually highly virtuosic) aria to bring the scene to a close.

This scene begins with Violetta reflecting on the young man she met at the party (i.e., Alfredo) and the feelings he awakened in her. As your students listen to the first minute of this excerpt, ask them: What is the "problem" that this scene introduces? How do you think Violetta feels? Why?

(00:13) The orchestra plays a series of short, dramatic outbursts. How do these orchestral outbursts reflect what Violetta is saying?

(01:12) The first aria begins. The orchestra plays a smooth, steady accompaniment (in contrast to the sharp outbursts of the preceding section). Arias are traditionally used to express emotions; ask your students to think about what Violetta is feeling. How does the music reflect her thoughts?

(02:36) Do you recognize the words and music Violetta is singing? They are exactly the same as Alfredo's declaration of love in "Un di felice, eterea"!

(03:48) Listen carefully and you will notice that Violetta is singing a long string of notes without any new syllables of text. This is called a "melisma," and is one of the ways that singers display their incredible skill and virtuosity. Ask your students to listen carefully for melismas throughout the remainder of this scene - learning to identify this operatic building block will help them feel like opera experts!

(04:17) The first aria comes to an end and the next segment of the scene begins: planning for the future. Violetta realizes it is "madness" to leave her fancy Parisian life, so she decides to forget Alfredo.

(04:27) Yet even Violetta is aware that her life in Paris isn't exactly happy. As she imagines being alone and abandoned in the "crowded desert called Paris," listen to the very fast repeated notes in the orchestra. This is a compositional technique called "tremolo," because it sounds like the strings are trembling!

(04:46) Violetta finally makes a decision: She must "enjoy life," which means staying in Paris with the Baron Duophol and her many wealthy admirers, rather than embracing a simpler life with Alfredo. How does Verdi express the decisiveness of this moment?

(05:17) The second aria, called a cabaletta, begins. Since cabalettas are typically very virtuosic, they are a great place for the singer to show off. Yet Verdi's virtuosity is always in the service of the character. As you listen to the cabaletta, ask your students: How does this very flashy music reflect Violetta's life and character?

(06:10) Listen to Violetta's giant melisma!

(06:17) Outside Violetta's window, Alfredo can be heard singing the love theme. Why might Verdi have brought this music back here? Listen also to how Violetta "responds" to Alfredo's song, breathlessly uttering the word "amore" ("love") over and over again.

(06:55) Again, Violetta sings a series of enormous melismas; this time, they are on the words "follie" ("madness") and "gioir" ("to enjoy life"). Why would Verdi choose to highlight these words?

(07:21) Violetta returns to the opening music of the cabaletta.

(08:08) Alfredo's voice is heard again. Does Violetta respond like she did at (06:17), or is her music different this time? What does this signify about Violetta's changing perspective on her situation?

(08:47) As the aria draws to a close, Violetta sings an astonishing high note. Pro tip: Not all sopranos can hit this note - when you see the Final Dress performance, listen carefully to see if the soprano sings it or if she needs to sing a different, lower note that is within her range!

## "PRENDI, QUEST'È L'IMMAGINE"

When Alfredo learns the truth about why Violetta left him, he rushes to be with her. Alas, it is already too late: Violetta is dying. She gives Alfredo a small portrait of herself so that he will always remember her. Then, as Giorgio Germont and the maid Annina look on, Violetta dies in Alfredo's arms. .

What to listen for:

- The contrast between Violetta's solos and ensemble sections featuring Alfredo, his father, and Annina
- The return of the love theme from "Un dì felice, eterea"
- How Verdi indicates the moment of Violetta's death

- (00:00) As Violetta begins singing, draw your students attention to a repeating rhythmic pattern in the orchestra: three short bursts of music, then a pause. What does this pattern sound like? An anxious heartbeat? Footsteps? Something else?
- Next, ask your students: How virtuosic is Violetta's melody? Why doesn't it have any of the high-flying melismas of "Sempre libera"? (Hint: Violetta is dying of tuberculosis, a disease that makes it very hard to breathe.)
- (00:34) Alfredo and Giorgio both begin singing. Based on their respective lyrics, do you think they are speaking to each other? To Violetta? To themselves? How do you know?
- (00:55) The orchestra plays a gentle, rocking accompaniment as Violetta wishes Alfredo a life filled with love. Occasionally, however, the somber rhythmic pattern from the beginning of the scene returns - a grim reminder that nothing can save Violetta now.
- (01:56) On the word "angeli" ("angels") Violetta's melody rises to a soaring high note, a musical representation of her ascension to heaven.
- (02:10) Alfredo, Giorgio, and Annina respond to what Violetta is saying. Again, ask your students if the three characters seem to be speaking to each other, to themselves, or to Violetta. Why?
- (03:03) A single, solitary violin plays the love theme from "Un dì felice, eterea." Violetta, suddenly free from pain, sits up in her bed one last time....
- (04:00) Only to fall back, dead. A terrifying crash in the orchestra marks this fateful moment as the curtain falls.

## IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *My Highs & Lows* reproducible handout found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND LA TRAVIATA

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1**  
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d**  
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## ENCOURAGING STUDENT RESPONSE IN ATTENDING THE FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

The Student Critique activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the final dress rehearsal and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activity directs attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The *My Highs & Lows* handout can be found at the back of this guide.

## FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Start the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did students like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' My Highs and Lows sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *La Traviata* experts.

As students now understand, *La Traviata* tells the story of Violetta Valéry, a fictional character who makes her living as a courtesan—an escort to wealthy and powerful men. This “fallen woman”—as a rough translation of the opera's title might read—is based on a real person, Marie Duplessis, who rose from humble beginnings in northern France to become one of the most sophisticated and celebrated courtesans of early-19th-century Paris. Duplessis was the favored partner of writers, composers, and even noblemen, and, like Verdi's protagonist, suffered from consumption and met a tragic early death.

Encourage students to imagine how Violetta might have become such a famous courtesan. You might prompt them with the following questions.

- What could Violetta's backstory be? What kind of family might she have come from?
- What types of employment might have been available to her?
- Does Violetta seem to have anyone else looking out for her well-being? Does she have anyone to rely on besides herself?

Have students remember that in a crucial scene in the opera, Alfredo's father, Germont, confronts Violetta and asks her to leave Alfredo for the good of his family. Remind students that Violetta has been selling her property to support her life together with Alfredo; by doing this, she no longer has to accept money from other men. Ask students to consider:

- What would it have meant for Violetta to leave the man she deeply loves and return to her former life?
- What are the other ramifications of her decision to leave Alfredo? Is Violetta truly independent?
- What else would Violetta be giving up besides love?

In conclusion, ask students to reflect on the opera's plot and characters. What do they view as the true tragedy of the opera? Is it the mere fact of Violetta's death? Is it her sacrifice? Or something else? There is no correct answer to this question; it merely aims to encourage students to consider the full range of events and societal contexts that lead to Violetta's tragic end.

### IN PRINT

Berger, William. *Verdi with a Vengeance: An Energetic Guide to the Life and Complete Works of the King of Opera*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.

*An excellent and accessible introduction to Verdi, with a good overview of Verdi's life and times and insightful commentary on each of Verdi's operas.*

Taruskin, Richard. "Verdi: Artist, Politician, Farmer (Class of 1813, II)." *In The Oxford History of Western Music, vol 3: The Nineteenth Century*, 563-615. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

*Taruskin's chapter on Verdi, from his six-volume history of Western music, is a detailed, insightful, and very well written introduction to the great composer's work.*

### ONLINE

The Metropolitan Opera. "La Traviata: Michael Mayer, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and Diana Damrau."

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBE-wC\\_dJDA&t=144s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBE-wC_dJDA&t=144s)

*Watch a preview of Tony Award-winning director Michael Mayer's new production of Verdi's "La Traviata," starring Diana Damrau and conducted by Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin.*

The Metropolitan Opera. "Sonya Yoncheva on La Traviata."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JYLg9BffGU>

*During intermission of the Met's February 25 Live in HD broadcast of "Rusalka," host Matthew Polenzani discussed La Traviata with soprano Sonya Yoncheva.*

The Metropolitan Opera. "La Traviata: "Sempre libera" (Marina Rebeka)."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPdRyO2liNg>

*Marina Rebeka sings Violetta's aria from Act I of Verdi's "La Traviata." Production: Willy Decker. Conductor: Marco Armiliato. From the 2014-15 season.*

### act/scene

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

### adagio

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

### allegro

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” Allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

### aria

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. In opera, arias mostly appear during a pause in dramatic action when a character is reflecting musically on his or her emotions. Most arias are lyrical, with a tune that can be hummed, and many arias include musical repetition. For example, the earliest arias in opera consist of music sung with different stanzas of text (strophic arias). Another type of aria, da capo arias, became common by the eighteenth century and feature the return of the opening music and text after a contrasting middle section. Nineteenth-century Italian arias often feature a two-part form that showcases an intensification of emotion from the first section (the cantabile) to the second section (the cabaletta).

### articulation

The smoothness or hardness with which a note is begun and ended. Articulation is a way of indicating the degree to which each note connects to the next, and can be seen while watching the bow of a stringed instrument player. A note can be attacked sharply and made short, or it can flow smoothly into the next note.

### baritone

Literally “deep sounding,” a baritone is what a typical male voice sounds like—the term refers to a male singer with a low but not extremely low vocal range. A baritone will sing notes that are higher than those sung by a bass and lower than those sung by a tenor. Uncommon until the nineteenth century, baritone roles have grown in popularity in opera since the works of Verdi, who often reserved the voice type for villains.

### baroque

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1600 to 1750. The beginning of the Baroque period coincides with the invention of opera as a genre, and its end coincides with the death of the composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The Baroque period saw the rise of modern tonality, an expansion of performing forces, and increased ornamentation. The term “baroque” means bizarre or exaggerated, and was used by critics in the Eighteenth century critics who preferred a simpler and less-ornamented style.



## bass

The lowest sounding line in music. Bass also refers to the lowest singing range for the male voice. Opera composers often choose a bass voice to sing one of two opposite types of roles: comic characters or dramatic and serious characters. For example, Mozart and Rossini wrote comic parts for bass voice, using musical repetition and low register for comic effect. Wagner and Mozart wrote serious parts for bass voice, focusing on the gravity that a low register can contribute to the overall musical texture.

## bel canto

Referring to the Italian vocal style of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bel canto singing emphasizes lyricism and ornamentation in order to showcase the beauty of the singer's voice. Its focus on lyrical embellishment directly contrasts with a contemporary Germanic focus on a weighty, dramatic style. Bel canto singing is most closely associated with the music of Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti.

## cadenza

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity. Cadenzas are typically improvised—that is, created by a performer on the spot—though they can also be written out in advance. They most frequently occur near the end of a piece, at a point of harmonic tension when the piece is about to conclude.

## chorus

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. Most choruses include at least four different vocal lines, in registers from low to high, with multiple singers per part. The singers are typically from a particular group of people who play a certain role on stage—soldiers, peasants, prisoners, and so on. Choruses may offer a moral or commentary on the plot, or participate in the dramatic action.

## Classical

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1750 to 1830, bordered by the earlier Baroque period and the later Romantic period. Contrasting with the ornamentation common to the preceding Baroque period, Classical music is characterized by simple and elegant melodies, regular harmonic accompaniment, and contrasts between melodic themes. The composers most closely associated with the Classical period include Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven.

## coloratura

A rapid and elaborate ornamentation by a solo singer, particularly common in operas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Requiring vocal agility and a wide and high range, coloratura showcases the virtuosity of a singer by featuring repeating melodic figures, rapid scales, trills, and other embellishments.

## conductor

The person who directs the orchestra, setting the tempo, giving interpretive directions to the musicians, and generally holding all the musical elements of a performance together. In orchestra performance, the conductor typically stands on a podium in front of the players and uses a baton to communicate the meter and tempo, and his or her non-baton hand to indicate dynamics, phrasing, and articulation to the musicians. The gestures of a conductor can be likened to a non-verbal language that the musicians understand.

## contralto

A deep female voice, with a vocal range that extends lower than that of a mezzo-soprano. Contraltos are known for having a very wide range and for the power and depth of sound with which they can sing. As is the case for roles for basses, many of the earliest roles in opera for contraltos are comic roles, though nineteenth-century composers also wrote dramatic roles for female singers with a lower range.

## crescendo

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder. One of the most famous types of crescendos in opera, the Rossini crescendo, includes an increase in volume together with repeating melodic and rhythmic phrases, higher instrumental registers, and the gradual addition of instruments in order to create a particularly dramatic effect.

## diminuendo

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

## dynamics

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. During the eighteenth century, composers began indicating their desired intensity of volume in music by writing words such as piano (soft) and forte (loud) into the musical score. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from pianissimo (very soft) to piano (soft) to mezzo piano (moderately soft), all the way up to fortissimo (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a crescendo or diminuendo.

## ensemble

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include duets (for two soloists), trios (for three soloists), and quartets (for four soloists). Sometimes singers will respond directly to one another during an ensemble. At other times, singers will each sing to themselves as if the other singers were not on stage. In ensembles, multiple characters may simultaneously express very different emotions from one another.

## finale

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters. When it occurs at the end of an early act in the opera, a finale may create a messy situation—and the resolution of this situation will only happen in subsequent acts. One type of finale common in comic operas, a chain finale, features characters entering or exiting from the stage to create unexpected combinations of characters, in turn increasing the opera's dramatic tension.

## forte

Meaning "loud" or "strong" in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix "-issimo" to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means "loud," fortissimo means "very loud."

## harmony

The simultaneous sounding of pitches to produce chords, and the relationship between different chords as they succeed one another. Throughout much of Western music, systems of rules govern these progressions to help create our sense of musical tension, expectation, and conclusion. Tonal harmony is based on progressions of chords in relationship to a tonic (or home) key. In the 19th century, as composers sought novel sounds to reflect the originality of their invention, they began to employ chords and progressions of greater dissonance and greater distance from the home key. As such dissonances moved beyond mere sound effects into the musical structure itself, the traditional theory of tonal harmony began to become insufficient as a way to understand and describe musical structure.

## intermission

A break between acts of an opera. At the beginning of an intermission, the curtain will fall (that is, close) on stage, and the lights in the auditorium, called the house lights, will become brighter. Intermissions provide audiences with a chance to walk around, talk with one another, and reflect on what they have seen and what could happen next. The break in the performance may also correspond with a change of time or scene in the story of the opera—the next act may take place hours or months later, or be set in a different location. Usually lights will dim and a bell may sound to indicate that the intermission is drawing to a close and the opera is about to resume.

## legato

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. A legato passage does not include any pauses between notes or any accents at the beginnings of notes, as the notes blend into one another without a break. In contrast, a passage that is played staccato features notes played in a separated manner.

## Leitmotif

From the German for “leading motive,” a leitmotif is a recurring musical idea, or motive, that represents a particular person, object, idea, emotion, or place. This musical idea is usually a few seconds in length and can occur in the music’s melody, harmony, rhythm, or a combination of the three. Leitmotifs are most closely associated with the operas of Richard Wagner, where they are used repeatedly throughout the opera to provide unity; they also less frequently appear in operas of other composers, including Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Strauss.

## libretto

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers. Until the early eighteenth century, a composer would frequently set music to a pre-existing libretto, and any given libretto could thus be set to music multiple times by different composers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, collaboration between the author of the libretto, known as the librettist, and the composer became more frequent. Some opera composers, most notably Richard Wagner, are known for writing their own text.

## maestro

A title of respect used to address a conductor. The term is often applied to conductors with several decades of experience. However, performers often use this honorific when addressing the conductor.

## melody

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing. During arias, the singer will usually sing the main melody, though other instruments may play parts of the melody. Sometimes, such as during ensembles, multiple melodies can occur simultaneously.

## mezzo-soprano

A female voice with a range between that of a contralto and soprano. A mezzo-soprano's voice is slightly deeper than that of a soprano, so mezzo-sopranos are often cast in supporting roles as older women, including nurses, confidantes, or maids.

## opera buffa

A term applied to Italian comic operas from the mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. The plot of an opera buffa often features scenes and characters from everyday life and addresses a light or sentimental subject, concluding with a happy ending.

## opera seria

An eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Italian opera employing a noble and serious style. The plot of an opera seria often upholds morality by presenting conflicting emotions such as love versus duty, or by modeling enlightened rulers.

## operetta

Featuring spoken dialogue, songs, and dances, an operetta is a short theatrical piece. Shorter in duration than operas, operettas typically feature a light subject matter, incorporate melodies composed in a popular style, and feature spoken dialogue. Most popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the genre is the precursor of the American musical.

## ornamentation

An embellishment to the melody, rhythm, or harmony of music, intended to make a melody more expressive or ornate. Ornamentation can be either indicated through symbols written into the music or improvised by the performer.

## overture

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. After the conductor enters the orchestra pit and takes a bow, the music for the overture begins. Most overtures are a few minutes in duration, and set the mood for the opera—even featuring musical themes that will occur later in the opera.

## piano

Abbreviated *p* in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level. Musicians may achieve a piano sound by using less bow, less air, or less force. In opera, soft music will often correspond with emotions of sadness or moments in the plot when a character is reflecting on a course of action or emotional state. Pianissimo is “very soft,” and can be so quiet that an audience may need to listen carefully in order to discern its melody and harmony.

## pitch

The quality of a musical sound corresponding to its perceived highness or lowness. Scientifically, pitch can be measured as the number of vibrations (or repetitions) of a sound wave per second, which is called its frequency. A sound with a low frequency, like a bass drum, will sound low and have a low pitch, while a sound with a high frequency, like a siren, will sound high.

## prima donna

Meaning “first lady” in Italian, the prima donna is the leading female role in an opera. The term may apply to the role or to the singer herself, who usually sings in the soprano register and is the star of the show. Since the nineteenth century, the term has also been applied to a singer of any gender with a self-centered and demanding personality.

## recitative

A type of vocal writing between speech and song that imitates the accents and inflections of natural speech. Composers often employ recitative for passages of text that involve quick dialogue and the advancement of plot, since the style allows singers to move rapidly through a large amount of text. Recitative may be accompanied either by keyboard or by the whole orchestra.

## rhythm

Rhythm refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music. Rhythm is perceived in relation to an underlying beat and within the context of a meter. Western musical notation indicates to the performer the exact duration of each note or rest.

## Romantic

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1830 to 1900. Beginning in literature and later adopted by composers, romanticism reflected a newfound focus on individuality, nature, and emotional extremes. Music from the Romantic period often explores music’s redemptive power, focusing on the sublimity of nature, love, and the mysterious. Composers began to experiment with shortening and lengthening the standard forms and durations of musical works, and also added more expressive harmonies to convey the originality of their musical vision.

## score

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition. In an opera orchestra, the conductor follows the score during rehearsals and performances, while each performer follows his or her individual part.

## Singspiel

Literally “sung play,” a Singspiel is an opera with spoken dialogue. Singspiels are typically in German and are from the Classical or early Romantic eras. The plot of a Singspiel is usually comic in nature, and its music may include songs, choruses, and instrumental numbers that are separated by spoken dialogue.

## solo

A piece, musical passage, or line for a lone singer or other performer, with or without instrumental accompaniment. The most common type of solo in opera is the aria, which is composed for a single voice with orchestral accompaniment.

## soprano

The highest singing range for the female voice. Roles composed for soprano singers are typically among the leading roles in the opera and require soprano singers to show off their virtuosic flexibility and range.

## tempo

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music. Tempo is indicated in a score by a variety of conventional (often Italian) words—such as *allegro*, *adagio*, *vivace*, *moderato*, *grave*, and many more—that not only provide direction on the composer’s desired rate of speed, but also carry associations of gesture and character. For instance, *vivace* indicates not only a brisk speed but also a lively spirit. Additional tempo markings may indicate when a composer asks for a section of music to be sped up (such as “*accelerando*”) or slowed down (such as “*rallentando*”).

## tenor

The highest natural male vocal range. By the nineteenth century, the tenor had become the most common vocal range for male leading roles in operas. Tenor roles often feature high-pitched notes for male voice in order to showcase the singer’s range and power. A related voice type is the countertenor, with a range above that of a tenor and similar to that of a contralto.

## theme/motive

Themes are the melodic ideas that are musical building blocks for a piece. A theme is often recognizable as a distinct tune and may reappear in its original form or in altered form throughout the piece. A motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a musical work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas.

## timbre

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. Just as we can recognize each other by the differences in our speaking voices, operatic singing voices are distinguishable by their unique timbres. Listeners can also identify orchestral instruments by their timbre without being able to see them. The creative combination of different instrumental timbres is one of the artistic aspects of orchestration.

## trill

A rapid alternation between two pitches that are adjacent to one another. Trills are a type of ornamentation, serving to embellish the melodic line, and appear regularly within *coloratura* passages. Trills also may appear near the end of a piece in order to prolong the musical tension before the music concludes.

## verismo

A movement in Italian theater and opera in the late 19th century that embraced realism and explored areas of society previously ignored on the stage: the poor, the lower-class, and the criminal. Its characters are driven by passion to defy reason, morality, and the law. In order to reflect these emotional extremes, composers of verismo opera developed a musical style that communicates raw and unfiltered passions. Musically, verismo operas react against the forced ornamentation of the *bel canto* style and instead emphasize a more natural setting of the text to music. Before its exploration on the operatic stage, the verismo aesthetic first developed within the realm of literature.



# MEFISTOFELE: MY HIGHS & LOWS

November 30, 2018

Conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

## THE STARS:

## STAR POWER

## MY COMMENTS

Diana Damrau as Violetta

\*\*\*\*\*

Juan Diego Flórez as Alfredo

\*\*\*\*\*

Quinn Kelsey as Germont

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE

## ACTION

## MUSIC

## SET DESIGN/STAGING

The opening: Violetta at home

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

The guests arrive

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

Alfredo's drinking song

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

Alfredo and Violetta alone at the party

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

Violetta, alone, thinks about her life

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

Alfredo finds out why Annina went to Paris

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

Germont visits Violetta

My opinion of this scene:

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

1-2-3-4-5

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Violetta's decision			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The party at Flora's			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Alfredo gambles			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Alfredo confronts Violetta			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The doctor's visit			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Violetta reads Germont's letter			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Alfredo arrives			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Violetta's last moments			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5