

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



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Joshua Greene, Music Director

Saturday Evening, February 18, 1989, at 8:00 Sunday Afternoon, February 19, 1989, at 3:00 Power Center for the Performing Arts Ann Arbor, Michigan

La Traviata

Music by Giuseppe Verdi Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave (after the novel La Dame aux Camélias by Alexandre Dumas)

Conducted by

JOSHUA GREENE (Sat.) and WILLIAM ROBERTSON (Sun.)

Directed by LINDA BROVSKY

Scenery designed by PETER DEAN BECK

Costumes by Malabar, Limited

Lighting designed by CURT OSTERMANN

English supertitles by SONYA FRIEDMAN

The touching melodrama of Alexandre Dumas *fils* — "The Lady of the Camellias" (also the inspiration for the famous film "Camille," starring Greta Garbo) — has moved audiences for generations, but perhaps never so profoundly as in Verdi's operatic masterpiece *La Traviata*. His poignant portrayal of Violetta Valery, the consumptive courtesan who sacrifices all for love, takes its audience to the heights of bliss and the depths of despair, as it unfolds the bitter irony of a woman shupped by polite society, overcome by her own inner virtue.

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The lovely, but fragile, Violetta Valery, stands on the brink of happiness when she at last finds true love in the arms of the handsome and ardent Alfredo Germont. Her disreputable past pursues her, however, in the form of Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, who informs Violetta that her connection with the family has jeopardized the marriage prospects of Alfredo's sister. Knowing that Alfredo will not willingly end their relationship, Violetta makes the supreme sacrifice — renouncing and abandoning the only man she has ever loved. Her valiant effort to resume her former life brings on a recurrence of her fatal illness, and ultimately she finds herself alone, penniless, and hovering near death. In her final moments of life, she is reunited with Alfredo, and their passionate embrace brings the bittersweet romance to a heartrending conclusion.

In Violetta, Verdi created the ultimate musical and dramatic tour-de-force for the soprano. The other principal characters are also deftly drawn: Alfredo, a romantic, impetuous youth whose sincere devotion touches the heart of the worldly Violetta; and Giorgio Germont, the

wise patriarch whose strict sense of honor is tempered with deep compassion.

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) was Italy's supreme operatic composer, whose dramatic, lyric, and tragic stage music has made him a perennial favorite of opera enthusiasts. During his renowned 'middle period,' he produced three of his most successful operas: Rigoletto (1851), a strikingly moving drama and his first undisputed masterpiece; two years later, Il Trovatore (The Troubadour), which hearkened back to the straightforward accompaniments and visceral dramatics of such works as Nabucco; and La Traviata (The Fallen Woman). It may come as a surprise that La Traviata scandalized audiences at its première in 1853; however, the initial furor over the depiction of a woman of dubious virtue as a sympathetic character soon died down, and the opera is now recognized as one of the supreme achievements of the genre.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of vocal appearance)

Violetta Valery	
Flora Bervoix	Donna Stephenson
Marchese D'Obigny	Mark Moliterno
Baron Douphol	James Wood
Doctor Grenvil	Stephan Kirchgraber
	Mark Calkins
Alfredo Germont	Paul Hartfield (Sat.)
	Robert Brubaker (Sun.)
Annina	Barbara Rearick
Giuseppe	Mark Tobias
Messenger	Eric McCluskey
	Carol Andrews, Laura Beyer, Kimberly Cornell, Diane Fox, Cynthia Madison, Eric McCluskey, Michael Mendelsohn, Jack Scott Montgomery, Carolyn Paulus, Kathleen Sullivan, Mark Tobias

Time: 1850 Place: Paris and vicinity

Act I: A salon in Violetta's house, Paris

Intermission

Act II: Violetta's country house, three months later

Intermission

Act III: Flora's house, later that same day

Intermission

Act IV: Violetta's bedroom, months later

Act I: A salon in Violetta's house, Paris

The courtesan, Violetta Valery, attended by her current patron, Baron Douphol, entertains her friends at a party celebrating her recovery from an illness. Gastone enters with Alfredo Germont, one of Violetta's ardent admirers, who was very concerned about her while she was ill. She invites Alfredo to entertain the company, and he sings the famous 'brindisi' (drinking song), *Libiamo ne' lieti calici* (Drink from the joyful glasses). Violetta then directs everyone into the ballroom, but overcome by weakness, remains behind. Her reverie, however, is broken by Alfredo; worried about her health, he expresses his concern in his aria, *Un di*, *felice*, *eterea* (One happy, heavenly day). Although she jokes about it, Violetta is deeply affected by his sincerity, and gives him a camelia, telling him to return with it when it begins to wither.

After her guests depart, Violetta muses on Alfredo's passionate devotion; touched and confused by a love for which she had given up hope, she sings *Ah*, *fors'è lui* (Perhaps it is he). Disquieted, she tries to put Alfredo out of her mind in the well-known *Sempre libera* (Forever free), defiantly confirming that hers is a life devoted to pleasure. The sound of Alfredo's voice

sernading her from outside, however, breaks down her resistance.

Act II: Violetta's country house, three months later

Violetta has left the Baron and is living with Alfredo in a country house outside of Paris. In his aria, *De' miei bollenti spiriti* (O my ardent spirits), Alfredo expresses his happiness. The maid, Annina, enters explaining that she was in Paris selling off Violetta's valuables. Alfredo, shocked to discover their dire financial situation, promises to go immediately to buy back the possessions and pay off their debts. After his departure, Violetta enters, and Annina tells her that Alfredo has left for Paris. Another servant, Giuseppe, gives his mistress a letter. Violetta tells them that she expects a visitor on business, opens the invitation to Flora's party, and tosses it aside.

Giuseppe returns to announce a visitor; expecting her business appointment, Violetta is surprised to meet Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, who accuses her of leading his son to financial ruin. He is touched, however, by her dignity when she explains that her money has paid for the months in the country and shows him a receipt for possessions that she sold. In an extended duet, *Pura siccome un angelo* (Pure as an angel), Germont asks her to end the affair with his son, since the liaison has jeopardized the marriage prospects of his daughter. Revealing that she is dangerously ill, Violetta begs him to reconsider, but Germont, certain that she could find another lover, theorizes that her feelings for Alfredo cannot last, and begs her to forswear the relationship for the sake of his family's reputation. Choked with anguish, Violetta agrees, hoping that such a sacrifice will atone for her sinful life. When she instructs Germont to inform his daughter of this noble gesture in *Dite alla giovine* (Tell the girl), he realizes the depth of her feelings, but nonetheless, insists that she give up Alfredo. Knowing her lover will not willingly end the relationship, Violetta decides to abandon him, but begs his father to make certain that, after her death, Alfredo knows the truth. Overcome with emotion, Germont tacitly assents and then departs.

Violetta calls Annina to take a note to the Baron, saying she is returing to him, and then she sits down to compose a letter to Alfredo, only to be interrupted by his arrival. He knows that his father is in the area and is anxious for him to meet her. Breaking into tears, Violetta passionately implores *Amami*, *Alfredo* (Love me, Alfredo), then rushes from the house, much to Alfredo's amazement. Giuseppe comes in to report that Violetta has just driven away to Paris, as Alfredo receives a letter from a messenger. As he opens it and reads Violetta's parting words, his father enters to comfort him. In his aria, *Di Provenza il mar* (The sea of Provence), the elder Germont urges Alfredo to return to his native city and family, but Alfredo is determined to find Violetta.

Noticing the invitation to Flora's party, he rushes back to Paris.

Act III: Flora's house, later that same day

Flora's party is in full swing. Her paramour, the Marchese D'Obigny, surprises the guests with the news that Alfredo and Violetta have ended their affair; she will be attending the party with Baron Douphol. Alfredo, entering nonchalantly, joins in the gambling, professing to know nothing of Violetta, who, shortly thereafter, arrives with the Baron. Both are surprised and upset to see Alfredo, who gambles boisterously, announcing that he will use his winnings to live in the country with the woman who has recently deserted him. The Baron angrily asks to join the card game as Violetta looks on, horrified. Alfredo continues to win, but the game is interrupted by a servant who announces dinner.

Remaining behind, Violetta warns Alfredo to leave before the Baron challenges him to a duel. Angrily, Alfredo demands that Violetta return to the country with him, but she swears that she has left him forever. She confirms that she loves the Baron, and furious, Alfredo calls the guests together to reveal that Violetta spent all her money so that they could live together. Hurling his winnings at the courtesan's feet, he asks everyone to witness that he is paying her back. As Violetta faints into the arms of Flora, the appalled company orders Alfredo to leave.

Giorgio Germont enters and condemns his son's shameful behavior, and the young man is filled with remorse. Violetta revives, and, while the others try to console her, declares her love for Alfredo, who prepares to leave the party. Before he can do so, however, the Baron challenges him to a duel.

Act IV: Violetta's bedroom, months later

In her nearly bare bedroom, the dying Violetta lies asleep; nearby, Annina also dozes. Doctor Grenvil arrives, and Violetta tells him that since a priest has heard her confession, she feels more comfortable. Although the doctor assures the woman of her recovery, he whispers to Annina that Violetta's consumption will kill her by evening. Annina tells her mistress that the noises outside are revelers of Carnival time, and Violetta instructs her to give half of their remaining money to the poor. She sends Annina out for the mail, and, alone, takes a tattered letter from her dressing gown.

The letter, from Giorgio Germont, explains that he has told Alfredo about her sacrifice, and his son is hurrying back to beg forgiveness. Alfredo, who had to leave Paris after he wounded Baron Douphol in their duel, is able to return now that the Baron has recovered. Violetta despairs that it is too late to recapture their former happiness, since she is dying. She sings a painfully sad aria, *Addio del passato bei sogni ridenti* (Farewell, sweet happy dreams of the past), and begs God for absolution.

Annina returns with news of Alfredo's arrival, just as he bursts in. Cradling the sickly Violetta in his arms, he begins a short duet promising a new life for them, *Parigi*, o cara (Paris, oh darling). Deliriously happy, Violetta attempts to rise, but is too weak. As Alfredo sends Annina for the doctor, Violetta rails against fate that will let her die so close to happiness. The maid returns with the doctor and the elder Germont, who is overwhelmed with remorse when he

realizes the severity of Violetta's illness.

With her last bit of strength, Violetta picks up a locket with her portrait; giving it to Alfredo, she urges him to marry one day. He breaks down, unable to bear the thought of life without Violetta. Suddenly, however, the invalid feels strength flowing back into her body; she rises as if fully recovered, but a minute later, falls lifeless to the floor as the others look on in horror.

About the Artists

The New York City Opera National Company is now on its ninth and most extensive tour. Founded by Beverly Sills in 1979 as the touring arm of the New York City Opera, the National Company continues to provide talented young American artists with valuable performing experience, with director Sills supervising each step in the artistic process. A National Company tour is also the ideal environment for veteran singers who wish to develop a new role, thus providing audiences the opportunity to see and hear a combination of seasoned performers and the brightest of the up-and-coming young stars.

This season's eight-week tour covers twenty-two states stretching from Maine to Florida and as far west as Kansas, with the company's brand-new production of *La Traviata*. As in previous years, the company uses its much-praised English supertitles while the singers preserve the integrity of the

original-language libretto.

In Ann Arbor, the National Company has performed Rigoletto (1985), Madama Butterfly (1987), and The Barber of Seville (1988).

Saturday Evening Soloists

Donna Zapola (Violetta) joins the New York City Opera National Company for the first time in this production of *La Traviata*. In 1986, the native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, portrayed the Contessa di Folleville in the acclaimed production of *Il Viaggio a Reims* at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and returned to St. Louis for performances as Clorinda in *La Cenerentola*. She has also appeared as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for Western Opera Theater and as Constanze in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* with the Bronx Opera. Last season she made her Avery Fisher Hall debut in Janăćek's *Danube* with the St. Louis Symphony.

Paul Hartfield (Alfredo) returns to the National Company after appearing as Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly. The texas-born tenor made his New York City Opera debut in the 1988 season as Rodolfo in La Bohème and portrayed the Duke of Mantua in Rigoletto. His credits also include Leicester in Maria Stuarda with the Hong Kong Opera, the title role of Faust with the Tulsa Opera, and Alfred in Die Fledermaus with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Most recently he made his European debut as Almaviva in The Barber of Seville in Düsseldorf. Future engagements include appearances with the Houston Grand Opera, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Opera Omaha, and his debut with the San Diego Opera.

Indiana native Ron Peo (Germont) made his debut with the National Company as Sharpless in Madama Butterfly and was re-engaged for Figaro in last year's tour of The Barber of Seville. He made his New York City Opera debut in 1988 as Germont and also appeared as Ezio in Attila and Alfio in Cavalleria Rusticana. Other roles include Smirnov in Walton's The Bear and des Grieux in Massenet's Portrait of Manon, both with the Banff Festival of Arts in Canada, Marcello in Western Opera Theater's La Bohème, and as the four villains in The Tales of Hoffmann with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. He has also portrayed Escamillo in Carmen, Melchior in Amahl and the Night Visitors, and the title role in Don Giovanni.

Born in New York City, **Joshua Greene** (Conductor, Music Director) conducts for the first time with the New York City Opera National Company in this new production of *La Traviata*. Sarasota Opera audiences have heard his interpretations of *Don Pasquale*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La Traviata*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Madama Butterfly*. In addition, he has led *Rigoletto* for the Augusta Opera as well as *Cosi fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni* for the Mozart Opera Project in New York City. In the concert hall, he was music director of the Adelphi Chamber Orchestra for three years and has appeared as guest conductor with the Jackson Symphony and the Pro Arte Chorale.

Sunday Afternoon Soloists

Brenda Harris (Violetta) joins the New York City Opera National Company for the first time in this production of *La Traviata* and has performed the same role for the Oswego Opera Theatre and the Bronx Opera. Her credits include the Countess in Strauss's *Capriccio*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Maria Stuarda*, Glauce in *Medea*, all three heroines in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* for the Light Opera of Michigan. The Illinois native made her Carnegie Hall debut in *Carmina Burana* with the Oratorio Society of New York and later returned to sing Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Upcoming roles include Marguerite in *Faust* for the Fort Worth Opera and Donna Anna for the Connecticut Grand Opera.

A ten-year veteran of the New York City Opera, **Robert Brubaker** (Alfredo) makes his role debut as Alfredo in this season's tour. In addition to his roles in the National Company's past productions of *Carmen* and *La Bohème*, he has performed in City Opera's "Live from Lincoln Center" telecasts of *Carmen*, *La Rondine*, *Candide*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Rigoletto*. A baritone-turned-tenor, he has gone from such traditional baritone roles as Schaunard in *La Bohème* to his new repertory as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, and Beppe in *I Pagliacci*. The native of Mannheim, Pennsylvania, is a frequent guest on New York's classical radio and has appeared in numerous in-school programs in the New York metropolitan area.

Michigan native **Edward Huls** (Germont) makes his National Company debut in *La Traviata*, after first appearing on the New York City Opera roster last fall. A former member of Chicago's Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, he has performed roles ranging from Rigoletto with the Michigan Opera to Mammon in the première of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The baritone has portrayed Germont with the Augusta Opera and Pittsburgh Opera Theatre, as well as Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers* and *Don Pasquale's* title role with the Chicago Opera Theatre. His recent role debuts as Valentine in *Faust* and Silvio in *I Pagliacci* will soon be followed by Escamillo in *Carmen* for Opera Delaware.

University of Michigan graduate **William Robertson** (Conductor) appeared in Ann Arbor a year ago on his initial tour with the New York City Opera National Company. In 1986, he received New York City Opera Company's Julius Rudel Award for young conductors and in the spring of 1987 made his NYCO conducting debut in *South Pacific*. While a student at Yale University, the New York City native conducted Menotti's *The Medium* and Britten's *The Prodigal Son*. Later, at the U-M he was conductor of the University Symphony Orchestra on tour in the United States and Europe and served for two years as assistant conductor of the Musical Society's University Choral Union. Last fall, the maestro served as music director and conductor for *La Fille du Regiment* at Prince George's Opera in Baltimore, and most recently he was selected as a finalist with the Affiliate Artists Conductors Program.

New York City Opera National Company Orchestra

Violins Elizabeth Lim, Concertmaster Susan Lorentsen, Assistant Concertmaster Rick Dolan, Principal Second

Alice Bodnar
Dale Chao
Marya Columbia
Nancy Ditto
Henry Kao
Joyce Kim
Wende Namkung
Mary Stephenson

Violas

Emily Onderdonk, Principal

Allegra Askew

Cellos

Daniel McIntosh, Principal

Luisa Bustamante Barbara Hosler

Basses

Matthew Zory, Principal

Joseph Russo

Flute Peter Ader

Oboe Linda Kaplan

Clarinets

Barbara Koostra, Principal

Janet Greene

Bassoon

Stephen Wisner

French Horns

Donna Dolson, Principal

Louise Crowley

Trumpets

Kenneth De Carlo, Principal

John Sheppard

Trombone Kenn Finn

Timpani

Daniel Haskins

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Joshua Greene, Music Director; Nancy Kelly, Administrative Director; Karen Cerreta, Assistant to the Administrative Director; Colman Rupp, Production Manager; Patricia M. Shiplett, Tour Facilitator; James Festa, Company Manager; Dominick Ruggiero, Production Stage Manager; William Robertson, Associate Conductor; Michael Holmes, Master Carpenter; Stephen Snyder, Master Electrician; Peter Stern, Master of Properties; Jenny-King Turko, Principal Makeup/Wigmaster; Carol Newcomb, Assistant Makeup/Wigmaster; Amy Arnold, Wardrobe Mistress; Bill Fabris, Assistant Stage Manager; Monica Sweet, Assistant Electrician; Karen Cerreta, Supertitle Coordinator; Lenore Doxsee, Assistant to the Lighting Designer; John Beeson, Rehearsal Accompanist

Support for the National Company's activities was provided by The Rose M. Badgeley Charitable Trust, CITICORP/CITIBANK, Clairbir Corporation, GTE Foundation, IBM Corporation, and the National Endow-

Coming Concerts

RICHARD STOLTZMAN AND FRIENDS Thurs. Feb. 2	3
"New York Counterpoint" (Please note new date.)	
FOLGER CONSORT & WESTERN WIND	
Paul Taylor Dance Company Tues., Wed. Mar. 7,	8
ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC / ZUBIN MEHTA	4
FACULTY ARTISTS CONCERT (free admission)	9
The Chieftains Wed. Mar. 2	2
EMERSON STRING QUARTET	.9
ALICIA DE LARROCHA, pianist	0
STUTTGART WIND QUINTET Wed. Apr.	5
Dennis Russell Davies, <i>pianist</i> Thuille: Sextet, Op. 6; Ligeti: "Six Bagatelles"; Bolcom: "FiveFoldFive" (1985); Poulenc: Sextet	
MUNICH PHILHARMONIC / SERGIU CELIBIDACHE	3
St. Louis Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin Thurs. Apr. 2 Steven Stucky: Dreamwaltzes; Haydn: Symphony No. 85; Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10	20

96th Annual May Festival — April 26-29, 1989 Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, 8:00 p.m.

Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig Kurt Masur, *Music Director and Conductor* The Festival Chorus, Donald Bryant, *Director*

Annerose Schmidt, Pianist Anne-Sophie Mutter, Violinist Gail Dubinbaum, Mezzo-soprano Vinson Cole, Tenor Hermann Baumann, Horn Jessye Norman, Soprano Stephen Bryant, Bass-baritone J. Patrick Raftery, Baritone

Wednesday — Mendelssohn: "Ruy Blas" Overture; Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4; Schubert: Symphony No. 9 ("The Great")

Thursday — Beethoven: "Leonore" Overture No. 3; Strauss: Horn Concerto No. 1; Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4 in F minor

Friday — Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major; Mendelssohn: "Die erste Walpurgisnacht" (Festival Chorus, Dubinbaum, Cole, Raftery, Bryant)

Saturday — Strauss: "Four Last Songs" (Norman); Bruckner: Symphony No. 7

Series tickets now on sale; single tickets available March 1.

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