







#### **DEAR FRIENDS:**

Welcome to our **2021-22 Viva Verdi!** season. We are excited to celebrate an opera great, Giuseppe Verdi, from his beloved classics, *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto*, to one of his lesser known works, the raucous comedy *King for a Day*. After a season of pivoting, shifting, and rolling with the punches, we are ecstatic to be back at **Dr. Phillips Center** presenting full in-person productions. In addition to celebrating the operatic genius that is Verdi, we are especially honored to present the world premiere of our first commissioned work, *The Secret River*, based on the book by the same name by Florida author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. This heartfelt and compelling story will be shared with schools in Lake, Alachua, Osceola, and Orange Counties. Wrapping up our season, the Opera continues its alignment with the Orlando International Fringe Festival presenting the Florida premiere of *Lizbeth*, based on the Lizzie Borden story, at Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre. If you've ever considered bringing an axe to an opera, this would be the year to do so.

We are excited to be joined once again by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra for our MainStage productions at Dr. Phillips Center, and we welcome dancers from the Orlando Ballet for two of those productions. We certainly have a full calendar of opera events to enjoy, including our Annual Gala, Opera Salon Series, Youth Company events, Community Outreach events, and Ambassador events. Don't miss a single moment of what is sure to be our biggest and best season yet.

See YOU at the Opera!

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Gabriel Preisser, general director Opera Orlando



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# la Trallala

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#### **OPERA ON THE MAINSTAGE**

music by Giuseppe Verdi libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

graciously sponsored by

Friday | October 29 at 7:30 p.m. Sunday | October 31 at 2 p.m.

Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts WALT DISNEY THEATER

Stephanie Rhodes Russell, conductor Grant Preisser, stage director

featuring the Opera Orlando Chorus

the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and dancers from the Orlando Ballet

Orchestral edition by Bryan Higgins by arrangement with Motet Music Publishing Company

#### A NOTE ON THE COMPOSITION

edited from **La Traviata** program notes by Neil Kurtzman (medicine-opera.com)

La Traviata was Giuseppe Verdi's nineteenth opera. Though the composer was dissatisfied with its initial run, the opera rapidly established itself as his most popular work.

On May 4, 1852, Verdi signed a contract with Venice's Teatro La Fenice to write a new opera for Carnival season in 1853. This contract specified neither the opera's librettist nor its subject. By August, Verdi had picked Francesco Maria Piave to write the libretto. Piave had already written six librettos for Verdi, including Ernani, Macbeth, and Rigoletto.

Though Verdi had a librettist, his subject was still undecided. In February of the previous year, Verdi and his companion Giuseppina Strepponi were in Paris. They almost certainly saw a performance of La Dame aux camélias (The Lady of the Camellias) by Alexandre Dumas, fils. Written in 1849, it was an adaptation of Dumas's novel of the same name published the previous year. It was not staged until 1852. The play, like the novel, was an enormous success.

By the end of October, Verdi had decided to make Dumas's play into an opera. The libretto and the music to what finally was named La Traviata were written in just a few months -November 1852 to February 1853. Remarkably, this interval overlapped the composition and staging of Il Trovatore. These

two operas couldn't be more different. The simultaneous composition of two such dissimilar masterpieces is without parallel in opera.

> Dumas based his heroine, Marguerite Gautier, on the Parisian courtesan Marie Duplessis, with whom he had a passionate love affair. In Verdi's setting she becomes Violetta Valery, or "La Traviata," a word that has no exact English equivalent. It means the woman who has been led astray. Violetta uses it to refer to herself in her great aria in the last scene - "Addio del passato": "Ah, della traviata soridi al desio..." ("Ah, smile on the woman who has strayed.")

A diminished "moral" status was very important at the time of the opera. Treating a "fallen woman" with such sympathy and sensitivity was new to the theater - operatic STX Films or spoken. And she wasn't just portrayed sympathetically, in Verdi's version she is noble and heroic.

Verdi was very unhappy with the cast that La Fenice had hired for the premiere of *La Traviata*. He was particularly dissatisfied

with the prima donna, Fanny Salvini-Donatelli. He called the first performance a "fiasco" before it occurred. After the first performance he wrote: "La Traviata was a fiasco; my fault or the singers? Time alone will tell." The press accounts of the first performance were actually pretty good, and Salvini-Donatelli got the best notices. But Verdi remained dissatisfied.

Following the Venice run, he withdrew the opera, made revisions, and assembled a new and better cast for a mounting of the work in May 1854. The city was still Venice, but the location was the Teatro San Benedetto. This staging was an unqualified success. By the end of 1858 there had been 143 separate productions in Italy alone and an additional 57

Over the succeeding century and a half, Verdi's noble sinner has been performed virtually every day in some part of the world. La Traviata is that rare thing, an undying masterpiece that everyone loves. When Verdi was asked what his best opera was, he said, as a musician, he'd pick Rigoletto, but from the viewpoint of the audience, it was *La Traviata*. The audience has yet to disagree with his verdict.

## **WORTH A WATCH**

See the inspiration behind **Opera Orlando**'s La Traviata



Released: 201

Molly's Game is a 2017 American biographical crime drama film written and directed by Aaron Sorkin, based on the 2014 memoir of the same name by Molly Bloom.

#### **SYNOPSIS**

#### **ACT I**

Violetta Valéry runs the most exclusive poker game in the world, and she is dying of cancer. Wrapping up one of her games in the penthouse of a New York hotel, she is introduced to Alfredo Germont, a playboy and man-about-town, who has been wanting to join her game for a while. The after-party has begun, and the guests call for a toast, which Alfredo obliges. He celebrates true love. Violetta responds in praise of free love. Suddenly she feels faint, and the guests give her space as they get more food and drink in the next room. Alfredo remains behind and declares his love for Violetta. Yearning for something more than the game in her life, she gives him a flower, asking him to return when the flower has faded. Excited with the chance to see her again, Alfredo exits. Alone, Violetta is conflicted - she doesn't want to give up her game, but at the same time, Alfredo **ACT IV** has awakened her desire to be truly loved.

#### ACT II

Time has passed, and Violetta has retired from poker for a life with Alfredo at her home in the Hamptons. When Alfredo discovers that their life is possible only because Violetta has been liquidating her assets, he vows to make things better for the two of them. While Alfredo leaves to figure out how best to help, his father, Giorgio Germont, arrives to meet and confront Violetta. He demands that she separate from his son, as their relationship threatens his daughter's impending marriage and besmirches the family name. However, over the course of their conversation. Germont comes to realize that Violetta is not after the family money — she is a woman who loves unselfishly. He appeals to Violetta's generosity of spirit and explains that her relationship with Alfredo has no future. Violetta's resistance dwindles, and she finally agrees to leave Alfredo forever. Only after her death will he learn the truth about why she returned to her old life. She accepts an invitation she received earlier to go back to her game in New York, now run by Flora. Alfredo returns to find a note from Violetta saying good-bye. As he reads it, his father appears to console him, which proves useless. All the memories of home and a happy family can't prevent the furious and jealous Alfredo from seeking revenge for Violetta's perceived betrayal.

#### INTERMISSION

#### **ACT III**

Back at the penthouse, Flora's poker game is well under way, as is the talk of Violetta and Alfredo's separation. Finally, Violetta arrives with Baron, her previous lover, followed quickly by Alfredo. A heated game commences between Alfredo and Baron, with Alfredo winning a fortune. Bored with the game, the guests move to dinner, leaving Alfredo and Violetta alone. Violetta continues to hold Alfredo off, claiming to now be in love with Baron. In his rage Alfredo calls the guests as witnesses, declares he doesn't owe Violetta anything, and signals the FBI to raid the party and arrest Violetta for racketeering and money laundering. Giorgio Germont, who has also joined the party, rebukes his son for his behavior, and Baron threatens Alfredo for his callousness.

Violetta, now clear of the federal charges, has lost everything and is in the hospital, dying. Her last remaining friend, Doctor Granville, knows that she has little time left. Alfredo's father has written to Violetta. informing her that, full of remorse, Germont has told Alfredo about Violetta's sacrifice. Alfredo wants to rejoin her as soon as possible. Violetta is afraid that he might be too late, but Alfredo does arrive, and the reunion fills Violetta with a final euphoria. Her energy and exuberant joy of life return. All sorrow and suffering seem to have left her, but it is a final illusion before her cancer claims her

#### **WORTH A LISTEN**

Studio Recording with Decca Records | 1963 Sir John Pritchard, conductor Joan Sutherland, Carlo Bergonzi, Robert Merrill



Live Recording at La Scala | 1955 Carlo Maria Guilini, conductor Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, Ettore Bastianini





# CAST VIOLETTA + Cecilia Violetta López ALFREDO ^ Victor Ryan Robertson **GIORGIO GERMONT \*** Thomas Cannon Laura Zahn **FLORA**

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GIORGIO GERMONT \*
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DOCTOR GRANVILLE
MARC D'OBIGNY
BARON
GASTON

Cecilia Violetta López
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Torlef Borsting
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Logan Webber

+ cover Rachel Querreveld

\* cover Geoffrey Peterson ^ cover Logan Webber

#### **PRODUCTION TEAM**

**Stephanie Rhodes Russell** Conductor **Grant Preisser** Stage Director & Scenic Designer Asssitant Conductor & Chorus Master Chelsea Gallo Ramsey Reyes Rehearsal Pianist **Hope Griffin** Stage Manager **Ann Louise Piano** Costume Designer Jason Estrada Hair & Makeup Designer **Nate Wheatley** Lighting Designer Sound Designer **Billy Williamson** 

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Opera Orlando's appearance at the Walt Disney Theater is graciously underwritten by Jonathan & Krista Ledden.

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#### THE ARTISTS



**CECILIA VIOLETTA LÓPEZ | Violetta** HOMETOWN: Albuguerque, NM

**OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS** Mimi. *La Bohème*. 2017

#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

Hanna, *The Merry Widow* - Opera Idaho Violetta, *La Traviata* - Pacific Symphony (CA) Nedda, *I pagliacci* - Opera Colorado

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Beatrice, *Three Decembers* - Virginia Opera Cio-Cio San, *Madama Butterfly* - Zomeropera (Belgium)

sponsored by Sherry Bremer & Kathy Cressey



VICTOR RYAN ROBERTSON\* | Alfredo HOMETOWN: Atlanta, GA

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Benny "Kid" Paret, Champion

Washington National Opera Raoul, *The Merry Widow* - The Metropolitan Opera Rodolfo, *La Bohème* - Royal Albert Hall

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Elijah Muhammad, Malcom X -

Michigan Opera Theatre, Boston Symphony, and Opera Omaha Nestor, *Castor and Patience* - Cincinnati Opera Ray, *Central Park Five* - Portland Opera

sponsored by Ruth Ann & Steven Heller



THOMAS CANNON\* | Giorgio Germont HOMETOWN: Hahnvlle, LA

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Sharpless, *Madama Butterfly* - Indianapolis Opera Senator Potter/General Arlie, *Fellow Travelers* -Arizona Opera

Porgy, *Porgy and Bess* - Fort Worth Opera

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Porgy, *Porgy and Bess* - Greensboro Opera (NC) Soloist, *Beethoven's 9th Symphony* -Colorado Symphony

sponsored by Kathy & Steve Miller



**LAURA ZAHN\* | Flora** HOMETOWN: Philadelphia, PA

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Amneris, *Aida* - New York Dramatic Voices (NY) Dorabella, *Così fan tutte* - Light Opera of New Jersey La Frugola, *Il tabarro* - Angels Vocal Arts (CA)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Giulietta, *King for a Day* - Opera Orlando Maddalena, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando Eboli (cover), *Don Carlo* - Festival of the Aegean (Greece)

sponsored by Jane & Charlie Gibbons



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#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

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College Light Opera Company (MA) Enid, *The Interaction Effect* -American Opera Project (NY)

Rapunzel, *OPERApunzel* - Discover Opera! (NY)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Bella, *King For A Day* - Opera Orlando Countess Ceprano, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando Lizzie, *Lizbeth* - Opera Orlando

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TORLEF BORSTING | Marc D'Obigny HOMETOWN: Hilo, HI

#### **OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS**

Count Almaviva, *Le nozze di Figaro*, 2019 Sonora, *The Girl of the Golden West*, 2020 Father. **Hansel & Gretel**, 2021

#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

Leporello, *Don Giovanni* - Indianapolis Opera Germont, *La Traviata* - Opera San Jose (CA) Horace Tabor, *The Ballad of Baby Doe* -Berkeley Opera (CA)

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#### **TODD DONOVAN | Doctor Granville** HOMETOWN: Treasure Island, FL

## OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

## Leporello, *Don Giovanni*, 2017

#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

Scarpia, *Tosca* - St. Petersburg Opera (FL) Figaro, *Le nozze di Figaro* -

Winter Opera St. Louis (MO) Olin Blitch, *Susannah*, St. Petersburg Opera (FL)

sponsored by Joan & Harry Travis



## GEOFFREY PETERSON\* | Baron HOMETOWN: Ithaca, NY

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Doctor, Highway 1 USA -

Opera Theatre of St. Louis (MO)
Pastor/Promoter/Walter White, *Marian's Song* -

Houston Grand Opera (TX) King Melchior, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* -

Opera in the Heights (TX)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Augustus, *The Secret River* - Opera Orlando La Rocca, *King for a Day* - Opera Orlando Marullo, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando

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\* company debut

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#### THE PRODUCTION TEAM



**LOGAN WEBBER\* | Gaston** HOMETOWN: Colorado Springs, CO

#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

Tito, *La clemenza di Tito* - A.J. Fletcher Opera (NC) Daniel Buchanan, *Street Scene* -

Virginia Opera Dallas, *Service Provider* - Hawaii Opera Theater

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Eduardo, *King for a Day* - Opera Orlando Borsa, **Rigoletto** - Opera Orlando

sponsored by Leila Trismen



**STEPHANIE RHODES RUSSELL\* | conductor** HOMETOWN: Dallas, TX

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Conductor, *Opera in the Park* - Madison Opera (WI) Conductor, *Eugene Onegin* - Wolf Trap Opera (VA) Conducting Fellow - Fort Worth Symphony

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GRANT PREISSER | stage director & scenic designer

HOMETOWN: Chicago, IL

#### **OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS**

Stage Director, *Death of Ivan Ilych*, 2021 Stage Director, *Hansel & Gretel*, 2021 Stage Director, *Die Fledermaus*, 2020

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Stage Director, *Death of Ivan Ilych* Thompson Street Opera Company (IL)
Stage Director, *Frida* - Opera Steamboat (CO)
Stage Director, *Alcina* - University of Michigan

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Stage Director, *Hansel & Gretel* Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (NY)
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CHELSEA GALLO\* | Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master

HOMETOWN: Detroit, MI

#### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Masters Diploma - Vienna Conservatory (Austria) Doctorate of Musical Arts - University of Michigan Conducting Fellow - Dallas Opera, TX - current

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Staff Conductor -

Detroit Symphony Orchestra - current Assistant Conductor -

Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra - current Director of Orchestras - Loyola University (LA)



**ANN LOUISE PIANO\* | Costume Designer** HOMETOWN: Thornton, CO

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Costume Designer, Barber of Seville -

Opera Steamboat (CO)

Costume Designer, Agrippina -

Eklund Opera University of Colorado- Boulder Costume Designer, *Tosca* - Bravo!Vail (CO)

#### UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Costume Coordinator, *The Shining* - Opera Colorado Costume Designer, *Guys & Dolls* -

Eklund Opera Úniversity of Colorado - Boulder Costume Designer, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando



NATE WHEATLEY | Ligting Designer HOMETOWN: Kansas City, MO

#### **OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS**

Lighting Designer, Hansel & Gretel, 2021 Lighting Designer, Die Fledermaus, 2020 Lighting Designer, All is Calm, 2019

#### **PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS**

Lighting Designer, *Platée* -

Des Moines Metro Opera (IA)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Lighting Designer, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando



MILA MAKAROVA | Choreographer HOMETOWN: Maitland, FL

#### **OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS**

Ilina (Phantasmagoria) *Pagliacci/Pulcinella*, 2019 Super, *The Girl of the Golden West*, 2020 Choreographer, *Die Fledermaus*, 2020

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Ilina & Choreographer, Phantasmagoria - 2010-present (FL)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Choreographer, *Rigoletto* - Opera Orlando



# JASON ESTRADA\* | Hair & Makeup Designer HOMETOWN: Atlanta, GA

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Wig & Makeup Designer, Suor Angelica -

Piedmont Opera (NC)

Wig & Makeup Designer, Gianni Schicchi -

Piedmont Opera (NC)

Wig and Makeup Designer, Barber of Seville -

Opera Steamboat (CO)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Wig & Makeup Designer, Matilda

Syracuse Stage (NY)



#### **HOPE GRIFFIN | Stage Manager** HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

#### **OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS**

Asst. Stage Manager, *Carmen*, 2021

Asst. Stage Manager,

Amahl and the Night Visitors, 2019 Wardrobe Assistant, Pagliacci/Pulcinella, 2019

#### PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Production Stage Manager, Barber of Seville -

Opera Steamboat (CO)

Stage Manager, Aida - Osceola Arts (FL)

Asst. Stage Manager, *Once* - Theater West End (FL)

#### **UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS**

Asst. Stage Manager, 2022 Season -

Palm Beach Opera (FL)

#### \* company debut

# la Trallata

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