



Opera in Williamsburg presents:

La Traviata

April 23rd, 2013

Kimball Theatre

Williamsburg, Virginia



Opera in Williamsburg

Founder: Naama Zahavi-Ely



Opera in Williamsburg is dedicated to bringing to Williamsburg, Virginia intimate fully-staged opera with world-class cast. Funded by ticket sales and the support of members of the community, Opera in Williamsburg is committed to the highest artistic standards and maintains a relationship with the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI), which is run by co-founders Paul Nadler and Joan Dornemann of the Metropolitan Opera.

Opera in Williamsburg's objectives are as follows:

- ◆ Bring excellent live mainstream opera performances to Williamsburg, Virginia
- ◆ Help outstanding artists earn a living by practicing their art for fair compensation
- ◆ Give highly qualified professional singers opportunities to debut mainstream roles professionally
- ◆ Create attractive and mobile mainstream opera productions with minimal investment in sets, props, and costumes
- ◆ Attract new audiences to mainstream live opera, and provide opera lovers with more opportunities to see it locally

A part of the vision of Opera in Williamsburg is working with outstanding professional artists and paying them fairly, even though financial constraints force it into the lowest level of what would be considered "fair." It is also crucially important to keep ticket prices within reach of the community, and within reach of students in particular. As of November 2012, Opera in Williamsburg is fiscally sponsored by Fractured Atlas, a national non-profit tax-exempt art service organization. Fractured Atlas can accept tax-exempt donations to the extent permitted by law and can administer grants earmarked for the use of Opera in Williamsburg. Raising money is crucial for the continuing activity of Opera in Williamsburg; otherwise, for all its artistic success, it would have to stop for lack of funds. Our budget is minuscule by opera standards, but it cannot be covered by ticket sales alone, even if every seat at the Kimball is sold.

A group of loyal friends has been providing advice, assistance, hospitality, and contributions to Opera in Williamsburg. Opera in Williamsburg is still at an early stage. Advice, volunteers, and assistance would be very welcome indeed.

Please contact Naama Zahavi-Ely at:
nxzaha@wm.edu or info@operainwilliamsburg.org

La Traviata

by Giuseppe Verdi

Librettist: Francesco Maria Piave

Conductor Paul Nadler



Violetta Valéry Emily Duncan-Brown, Soprano
Alfredo Germont Won Whi Choi, Tenor
Giorgio Germont..... Jose Sacin, Baritone
Flora Bervoix..... Fiorella Velez, Mezzo-soprano
Gastone..... Jesús Santiago, Tenor
Barone Douphol Jonathan Estabrooks, Baritone
Marchese d'Obigny Cesar Torruella, Bass-baritone
Dottore Grenvil..... Spencer Dorn, Bass-baritone
Annina Amanda Bollag, Soprano
Dancers Ailsa Firstenberg, Symone Holliday, Meghan Morinec



Production Naama Zahavi-Ely
Artistic Director Carlos Conde
Stage Director Mathieu Guertin
Lighting Design..... Mathieu Guertin
Dramaturgue Carlos Conde
Visual Design..... Mathieu Guertin & Naama Zahavi-Ely
Choreographer Christie Delaney
Stage manager Elizabeth Tait



Musical Preparation Joan Dornemann
Music Advisor Jorge Parodi
Assistant Conductor..... David Stech
Pianist..... Jamison Livsey
Violin Simon Lapointe
Cello Sibora Miloradovic
Clarinet..... Deborah Levine

La Traviata -- A Synopsis

Act I: The melancholy introductory music changes to celebration. It is Violetta's luxurious apartment, late at night; Violetta, her assistant Annina, and Dr. Grenvil are present. A group of friends comes in, including the Marchese D'Obigny, Barone Douphol, Gastone, and Flora. The group is welcomed by Violetta. Gastone introduces to her his friend, Alfredo Germont. It turns out that while she was ill, Alfredo came to her house every day to inquire after her health. The guests ask Alfredo to propose a toast. He celebrates true love, and Violetta responds that she does not know such. She invites the guests to dance, but suddenly feels faint. The guests withdraw. Alfredo remains behind and declares his love. Violetta suggests that he should love another: all she can give him is friendship. She also gives him a flower, inviting him to bring it back to her when it fades – the next day. Alone, Violetta muses on the possibility of deep love, but then exclaims that such thoughts are folly – she will remain free forever, going from pleasure to pleasure till the end. Alfredo is heard singing of love.

Act II: Alfredo and Violetta are in the country. Alfredo is happy, but then he finds out that Violetta has been selling her property to finance the place; he is stricken with shame and rushes to the city to get money. Violetta receives from Flora an invitation to a party that she no longer cares for. Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, shows up to confront Violetta. He is surprised by her manners, and even more when she shows him that she is the one paying for the place. Even so, he begs her to separate from his son: if they stay together, his daughter's fiancé will cancel their marriage. He appeals to Violetta's generosity of spirit and explains that her life with Alfredo has no future – their union is not sanctified, and Alfredo would eventually leave her. Better leave now and be a saving angel for his family. Violetta finally agrees with great sorrow. She charges Germont to tell his son the truth after her death, so that he would not curse her memory. They part. Violetta sends Annina to hand-deliver a note, and writes a letter to Alfredo. As he reads the letter, his father comes and tries to persuade him to return to his old life at home. But Alfredo finds Flora's invitation and goes to her party to seek Violetta.

At Flora's party, guests are surprised to hear that Violetta and Alfredo have separated. Dancers entertain the crowd. Violetta arrives with Barone Douphol. Alfredo wins a fortune against the Barone at the gaming table: lucky at cards, unlucky in love. When Alfredo and Violetta are alone, she claims to love the Barone. Alfredo calls the guests as witnesses; he declares that he doesn't owe Violetta anything, and throws his winnings at her. Giorgio Germont rebukes his son for offending a lady. Violetta prays secretly that Alfredo will not be overwhelmed by remorse when he finds out the truth. The barone challenges Alfredo to a duel.

Act III: Doctor Grenvil tells Annina that Violetta, who is ill, will die in a few hours. Violetta reads again a letter from Alfredo's father, telling her that he has told his son about Violetta's sacrifice. Alfredo wants to rejoin her as soon as possible to ask for her forgiveness. Violetta is afraid that he might be too late. Alfredo arrives and they plan rapturously their life together, away from the city. But Violetta is too weak. She realizes that she is dying, and tells Alfredo that she will watch from heaven over him and the pure girl who will some day give him her heart. The pain leaves her and her exuberant joy of life seems to return, as she falls dead.



PAUL NADLER: CONDUCTOR

Maestro Paul Nadler has distinguished himself as an exciting and highly respected operatic and symphonic conductor. Since his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1989 he has led the company in more than 60 performances.

Maestro Nadler recently conducted Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met as well as symphony concerts with the Bucharest Philharmonic, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Dialogues des Carmélites* with the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv. In August 2012

he conducted *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* with Canadian Vocal Arts, Montréal. He opened the 2011/2012 season of Opéra de Montréal with Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and conducted Gala concerts with *I Sing Beijing* at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in 2011 and 2012, and in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in February 2013. Last December Maestro Nadler conducted *Tosca* with the Opera Naples in their first staged collaboration with the Naples Philharmonic. This season he has been at the Met for productions of *Don Carlo* and *Otello*, and will return next season for productions of *Rusalka*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. In May 2014 he returns to Opéra de Montréal for performances of *Turandot*.

Performances at the Metropolitan Opera have featured stars such as Plácido Domingo, Renée Fleming, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Anna Netrebko, Luciano Pavarotti, and Bryn Terfel. His repertoire at the Met includes *Die Zauberflöte*, *Fidelio*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Don Carlo*, *La Traviata*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tannhäuser*, *Andrea Chenier*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Carmen*, *Eugene Onegin*, and Stravinsky's triple bill *Le Sacre du Printemps/Le Rossignol/Oedipus Rex*. Other operatic credits include performances with the opera companies of Indianapolis, Minnesota, Utah, Syracuse, Orlando, and the Florentine and Glimmerglass Operas. Internationally, Maestro Nadler has conducted opera in Hong Kong, Calgary and Victoria (Canada). In December 2002 he conducted at the Kennedy Center Awards ceremony in honor of his colleague James Levine.

Some recent symphonic highlights were appearances with the orchestras of Jerusalem, Navarra (Spain), Augsburg, Calgary, and Victoria, as well as the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Florida Philharmonic, and the Romanian National Radio Orchestra. In addition Paul Nadler has conducted the Grant Park Orchestra, the New World Symphony and the Chautauqua Symphony, among others. He has collaborated with renowned soloists such as Emanuel Ax, Jorja Fleezanis, Jan DeGaetani, Misha Dichter, Glenn Dicterow, Garrick Ohlsson, and Elmar Olivera.

Paul Nadler is Principal Guest Conductor of the Filarmonica de Stat Iasi (Romania) and Conductor Emeritus of the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra. Co-Founder and Music Director of the International Vocal Arts Institute, he returns each summer to this prestigious professional workshop. Early in his career he won the Jerusalem Symphony Competition. In 1974 Maestro Nadler founded the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, where he remained as Music Director and Conductor through 1983.



Music Advisor: Jorge Parodi

Reviewed as having “the most expressive conducting hands since Stokowski’s,” (New York Daily News) Argentinean conductor Jorge Parodi has worked at several prestigious companies, including the Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires), The Banff Centre (Canada), Opera Company of Philadelphia, Connecticut Grand Opera, SIVAM (Mexico), Lake George Opera Festival Opera Tampa, and the Castleton Festival, where he was assistant conductor to Maestro

Lorin Maazel. Maestro Parodi has been recently appointed Artistic Director of Opera Hispánica. This season marked the company inaugural Opera Hispánica Festival in which he performed with such artists as Eglise Gutiérrez and Isabel Leonard, and he conducted OH’s production of Piazzola’s *María de Buenos Aires* at (le) Poisson Rouge. Jorge Parodi is also the Music Director of the Senior Opera Theater at Manhattan School of Music, where he has conducted all its productions to critical acclaim, including the United States premiere of Paisiello’s *Nina*. Mr. Parodi is also a faculty member at The Juilliard School, MSM Summer Voice Festival, NYU and V.O.I.C.Experience, a vocal workshop under the direction of Sherrill Milnes. He has been a faculty member of the International Vocal Arts Institute. With IVAI he taught in Tel Aviv (Israel), at Nagano Opera Master Class (Japan) and at the Inaugural Opera Master Class in conjunction with the China National Opera (Beijing).



Assistant Conductor: David Štech

David Štech is associate conductor of New York Lyric Opera, assistant conductor at Amore Opera, and resident conductor of the Astoria Symphony Orchestra. He is choirmaster and organist at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Passaic, NJ, and staff accompanist/vocal coach at the Manhattan and Mannes Schools of Music. He recently moved to New York City from Chicago where he was music director

of the Sherwood Symphony Orchestra, the North Shore Chamber Orchestra, Chicago Choral Artists, and the American Opera Group where he conducted dozens of performances of *I Barbieri di Siviglia*, *La Bohème*, *La Tragédie de Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*; the latter three from the harpsichord. Štech has also served on the coaching staff of Roosevelt University, Opera in the Ozarks, IVAI in Virginia, and the Opera Theatre of Lucca, Italy. David studied at Northwestern University, Tanglewood, the Pierre Monteux School, and the Manhattan School of Music. Major teachers include Kurt Mazur, Gustav Meier, Larry Rachleff, Michael Morgan, Victor Yampolsky, and Ken Merrill.





Artistic Director & Dramaturgue: Carlos Conde

Some of the stages where Carlos Conde has performed include the New Israeli Opera, Teatro Arriaga de Bilbao, Opera der Stadt Bonn, Teatro Comunale di Brescia, Lincoln Center Avery Fisher Hall New York Philharmonic, The New York City Opera, and Carnegie Hall. Since 2004, he has stage-directed in Italy, Tel Aviv, New York, Houston, Miami, and Virginia. Some of his acclaimed productions are

Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Giovanni*; Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*; Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*; Puccini's *La Bohème* and *La Rondine*; and Verdi's *La Traviata* and *Falstaff*. Dr. Conde received a doctor of music arts degree from the State University of New York. As an Opera Performing and Vocal Pedagogy Scholar, Dr. Conde has presented Master Classes and Conferences for Opera Companies throughout the United States, Canada, Switzerland, as well as in his homeland Puerto Rico. Since 2008 he has been a faculty member of the Juilliard School pre-college division, and in 2012 he was appointed as voice professor at the Brooklyn Conservatory, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.



Stage Director & Lighting Design: Mathieu Guertin

Since Mathieu Guertin graduated from Central School of Speech and Drama (UK), he has worked in Canada, United States, England and Israel as a director, assistant director and apprentice stage director in both opera and theatre. Most recently he directed *Elisir d'Amore* (Opera Williamsburg) and *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Montreal's music conservatory). He has also been an apprentice and audit stage director on *Faust*, *Il Torvatore* and *Rigoletto* at Opéra de Montréal. Career includes assistance on *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Veuve joyeuse*, *Tales of Hofmann*, *il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Le dialogue des Carmélites*, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*. He is currently enrolled in a postgraduate degree in Arts management at HEC business school in Montreal.



Musical Preparation: Joan Dornemann

Ms. Dornemann, Metropolitan Opera Assistant Conductor, is one of the most highly respected opera coaches in the world today. She has worked with such singers as Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Sherrill Milnes, Kiri Te Kanawa, Montserrat Caballe, Deborah Voigt, Renée Fleming, Leo Nucci and others. She has been associated with the Gran Liceo in Barcelona, the Spoleto Festival, the New York City Opera, Opera National de Paris and the Kirov Opera. Ms. Dornemann has received an Emmy Award for her contribution to the highly acclaimed first Live From the Met first telecast of *La Bohème*. She is the author of *Complete Preparation: A Guide to Auditioning for the Opera*.



Violetta Valéry: Emily Duncan-Brown

Soprano Emily Duncan-Brown is thrilling audiences with her “warm, rich middle, a shimmering, flexible top, excellent control... and her exquisitely beautiful delivery”(Opera News Online). In 2012-13 Emily joined the Junges Ensemble of Dresden Semperoper, while also returning to the US as Juliette with Lyric Opera Virginia, Violetta with Opera in Williamsburg and Smetana’s *The Kiss* for her debut with Opera Theatre of St. Louis. In the 2013-14 season, she returns to the Semperoper to sing Fiordiligi in Mozart’s *Così fan Tutte* and Violetta in *La Traviata*, as well as several exciting premieres. Recently she performed the role of Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Tanglewood Music Center, under the baton of Maestro Christoph von Dohnanyi and won First Prize in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in New England.



Alfredo Germont: Won Whi Choi

Tenor Won Whi Choi has performed various leading roles including Alfredo in *La Traviata* and Chevalier in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* with the Mannes Opera, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with the Martina Arroyo Foundation and the Korean National University of Arts Opera Theater. He has understudied the role of Don Jose in *Carmen* for the Crested Butte Music festival as a member of their Marcello Giordani Young Artist Program. Mr. Choi was invited to Hawaii Performing Arts Festival as a professional fellow where he performed the role of Don Jose in *The Tragedy of Carmen* and the role of Le théière in *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges*. This summer, he will be singing the role of Hoffmann in *Les Contes D’Hoffmann* with the Martina Arroyo Foundation. He holds a Professional Studies Diploma and a Master’s Degree from Mannes College of Music and has a bachelor of music degree from the Korean National University of the Arts.



Giorgio Germont: Jose Sacin

Peruvian baritone Jose Sacin has a sturdy, commanding voice with the versatility and musicality that make him perfectly suited for the roles of Verdi and Verismo. In 2013, Mr. Sacin will return to Opera Camerata of Washington for Tonio in *Pagliacci* and he will cover the title role in Verdi’s *Macbeth* at Opera Delaware, perform Roque in *Marina* at Teatro Lirico of DC, and Payador in *Maria de Buenos Aires* with Connecticut Lyric. In 2012, he was Opera Delaware’s Tonio in *Pagliacci* and Alfio in *Cavalleria*. Last season he performed Lescaut in *Manon* at NY Lyric Opera, Eisenstein in *Fledermaus* with Opera Camerata, David in Barber’s *Hand of Bridge*, and Don Juan in *El Barberillo de Lavapies* with In Series (DC). He has worked with WNO, Opera de Lima, Opera Delaware, IVAI (Tel Aviv), Baltimore Opera, Opera Camerata of Washington, Caramoor Festival and Opera North. He performed in a internationally televised event for Pope Benedict XVI alongside Placido Domingo at Nationals Stadium in DC.



Flora Bervoix: Fiorella Velez

Puerto Rican Mezzo-Soprano Fiorella Vélez will have her debut as Flora in *La Traviata* with Opera in Williamsburg. Next May she will return to Carnegie Hall as a soloist in Mozart's *Requiem Mass* with the New England Symphony Ensemble. She is a Young Artist of the 2013 Greek Opera Festival where she will perform Tibes in *La Cenerentola*. In 2012 she debuted at Carnegie Hall as a soloist in Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* with the New England Symphony Ensemble. She sang the roles of La Zelatrice and Abadessa in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with the New York Lyric Opera Theatre at Symphony Space Hall, and was part of Opera in Williamsburg's production of *L'elisir D'amore*. In 2010 she was an award recipient at the Puerto Rico District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. For the last two summers she has been a Young Artist at the Sherrill Milnes and Friends V.O.I.C. Experience Program in Tampa and Orlando, Florida. She has also been part of the International Vocal Arts Institute and Rising Star Singers Program. During her studies she has been fortunate to participate in Master Classes with artists such as Mignon Dunn, Sherrill Milnes and Justino Díaz. Among her performances, Fiorella has portrayed The Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra at the Centro de Bellas Artes Luis A. Ferré, and The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. She recently completed her Masters Degree in Vocal Performance at the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music. She lives in New York and is part of the private Voice Studio of Mezzo-Soprano Patricia McCaffrey.



Annina: Amanda Bollag

Swiss soprano Amanda Bollag has performed as a soloist throughout Europe and parts of the Middle East. She has trained at opera workshops, in Chiari, Italy as well as in the IVAI program in Tel-Aviv, Israel performing such roles as: Liu, Musetta, Susanna, and Nedda. Having already completed her Bachelors of Music, Ms. Bollag is currently doing her Masters Degree at Manhattan School of Music, where she studies privately under Mignon Dunn. Prior to moving to New York, she studied at the Conservatory of Zürich as well as the Royal Conservatory of Toronto. Ms. Bollag's diverse and international background inspired her to become fluent in German, Swedish, English, and Hebrew, and reflects this heritage in her performances. In addition to her budding career, Ms. Bollag has taught children-at-risk the fundamentals of music and has created a music department where children can cultivate their musical skills. Before turning to music, Ms. Bollag worked in the financial world in her hometown Zürich as a private client advisor for the UBS bank in Switzerland .



Gastone: Jesús Santiago

Mr. Santiago received his Bachelors of Music degree from the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico in 2012, where he studied with Maestro Justino Díaz and Professor William Woodruff. While at CMPR, he performed Monostatos in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Ramiro in Ravel's *L'heure Spagnole*. In Puerto Rico he had the opportunity to sing small roles professionally for local opera, zarzuela and operetta companies in the island. Santiago was invited in 2007 as a guest singer at the Festival of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Americas. In 2011 he participated in the International Institute of the Vocal Arts. He is currently pursuing his Masters degree at the Conservatory of Music of Brooklyn College under the tutelage of Dr. Carlos Conde where he will sing *Le Pêcheur* in a production of Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* next month.



Barone Douphol: Jonathan Estabrooks

Hailed by the New York Times as a 'robust baritone', Canadian baritone Jonathan Estabrooks began the 2012/13 Season with his Toronto Symphony Orchestra debut in *Some Enchanted Evening: The Music of Rodgers and Hammerstein* with Aaron Lazar and Ashley Brown, conducted by Steven Reineke. He made his Stern Auditorium-Carnegie Hall debut on March 5th singing Paul Moravec's *Blizzard Voices* (New York Oratorio Society). Upcoming engagements include the fall release of his motion picture debut as Schaunard in *The Bohemians* (Bravo Lozano Productions), creating the role of Alan Turing in *The Turing Project* (American Lyric Theatre), in a recital of Schubert lied (Schubert & Co.), the Kona Coffee Cantata (Musicians of Ma'alwyk) and Ben in *The Telephone* (Eglise Historique Festival) in New Brunswick, Canada. Mr. Estabrooks has performed for two Canadian Prime Ministers, President Clinton and UN delegates and has appeared with New York Festival of Song, The Kennett Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra under maestro Pinchas Zuckerman and the Israeli Chamber Orchestra under Paul Nadler. He is currently shooting and editing a YouTube series, *A Singer's Life*.

Twitter: @estarp Website: www.jonathanestabrooks.com



Producer: Naama Zahavi-Ely

Israeli-born, long-time resident of Williamsburg Naama Zahavi-Ely is a music-lover who, in 2012, took on the challenge of bringing to Williamsburg excellent live opera productions; founder of Opera in Williamsburg, LLC. Naama holds a PhD in Biblical Studies and has taught Biblical Hebrew and other classes at the Classical Studies department at the College of William and Mary from 1996 till January 2013, when she retired in order to return to Israel, her home country.

La Traviata

A history of interpretation

Verdi's LA TRAVIATA is a perennial favorite; in 2012 it topped the list of the most-performed operas worldwide. It is so familiar that we tend to forget how extremely unusual it is.

Most operas set their plots long ago and far away. Verdi's Traviata is based on a woman of his own time and social circle. Alphonsine Duplessis, who died in 1847 at the age of 23, inspired Dumas Fils to write his semi-autobiographical novel *La dame aux Camélias* in 1848, and adapt it into a play in 1852. Verdi's opera premiered in 1853 - only six years after Alphonsine's death. At the time, people would have remembered her salon where she gathered the leading intellectuals and musicians of the day. She read voraciously, even though she learned to read only late in her short life. If she had not died so young, perhaps she would have become as influential as Coco Chanel was in the 20th Century -- another brilliant woman of humble background who was mentored by rich male friends.

Yet the opera is not a mere docudrama. Verdi and his librettist, Piave, highlight some elements of Dumas' story and add to them, while bypassing others. In Dumas fils' book, there is more nitty-gritty information on how Marguerite (his equivalent of Violetta) supports herself and her lifestyle. Verdi makes no mention of it.

In the movie *Camille*, Armand - the parallel of Alfredo - takes Violetta to a humble shepherds' cottage to regain her health under his nurturing eye; clearly, he is resourceful enough to arrange it. But Verdi's Alfredo does not even realize that somebody must be paying for their country haven. Throughout, Alfredo is the naïve idealist. Violetta is the one who is aware of realities, who makes decisions and takes actions. She is neither a victim trapped by circumstances like Rigoletto's Gilda or Otello's Desdemona, nor a manipulating temptress like Lady Macbeth or Bizet's Carmen. She is a figure of great integrity, though she is not a prude and most certainly not a virgin. Verdi's music clearly sympathizes with her. Even the most jaded have tears in their eyes at the finale.

The censors of Verdi's time did not let the drama be portrayed in the present. They forced productions to take on trappings of the early 1700s, some 150 years earlier - about the same temporal distance as La Traviata's time of composition is

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from the previous page)

from ours. Thus, rather than being a depiction of "us," the opera became as it were a window into the curious conventions and surprising personalities of a bygone era. By the time, decades later, that productions of *Traviata* were first set in the time of the opera's composition in the 1850s, the beautiful wide crinolines and bare shoulders of that era already seemed a distant past.

Other productions of *Traviata* go for modern costumes, and portray Violetta as a top-of-the-line call girl. They present her city life as a dreary catering to men's whims, and the men as careless, rapacious johns. Who, in such a situation, would not jump at the opportunity to extricate herself from such a life? And is there any wonder when the hope turns out to be an illusion? They overlook the fact that Violetta can choose her lovers, rather than go for the highest bidder; and that her real-life catalyst, Alphonsine Duplessis, could have affairs with a young impecunious would-be writer like Dumas fils or a flamboyant artist like Liszt, not limit herself to the equivalent of Wall Street billionaires or Hugh Hefner. In fact, it was her company in society, rather than her sexual services, that was the prize her admirers competed over and gave expensive presents to procure.

Productions of *Traviata* consistently try to distance the figure of the strong, savvy, free and generous woman at its center. They present her as distant in time, or they present her as distant in her social status, misguided, and manipulated. But in the libretto, she is the one who controls the plot. It is her choices which determine her fate - sometimes in response to the pleadings of others, but as considered actions rather than knee-jerk reactions. And such independent, strong, positive female characters both terrify and attract.

We choose to set the opera in our own time and in a location we know, as did Verdi. In our story, as in his, a group of cosmopolitan friends socialize and enjoy life in the here-and-now. Some are artists, some are arts lovers, some arts patrons and mentors. When Violetta sings of going from pleasure to pleasure, the pleasures are real. Yes, big city life has an element of alienation to it, and may seem like a desert compared to an isolated love-nest. But it is also attractive and vibrant. When she chooses to forego city pleasures and devote herself to Alfredo, Violetta is giving up something worth having for something she values even more. And when she gives him up to return to her old world, only Germont pere can know it as a sacrifice. From the cosmopolitan Paris of Verdi's time to the rich multicultural life of present-day New York, we are happy to present to you *La Traviata*.



Marchese d'Obigny: Cesar Torruella

Most recently seen as Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Teatro Lirico D'Europa in New Hampshire. Other roles include Monsieur Javelinot and Thierry, in *Dialogue of the Carmelites* as well as Alcindoro and Benoit in *La Bohème*, both in IVAI Tel Aviv, Israel (2011 and 2012 respectively). He has also performed the page in *Amahl* and the *Night Visitors* for Teatro Lírico del Oeste (Puerto Rico) as well as King Melchior in the same opera for Ópera al Fresco and Bogdanovitch in *Die Lustige Witwe* for Teatro de la ópera de Puerto Rico. He covered Ping in *Turandot* and Baron Duphol in *La Traviata* for Ópera de Puerto Rico, as well as the bass soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* for the PR Conservatory of Music and Falstaff in the PR Conservatory's Opera Workshop. Future roles include Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore* for Ópera al Fresco and Belcore for Ópera de Puerto Rico, Marquese Obigny in *La Traviata* for Opera in Williamsburg (Virginia), Campechano in the world premiere of *Cofresí*, by Puerto Rican composer William Ortiz and Don Matías in *Doña Francisquita*, by Spanish composer Amadeo Vives.



Dottore Grenvil: Spencer Dorn

Bass-baritone Spencer Philip Dorn's recent performance of Figaro utilized a "powerful baritone voice" in Montana Lyric Opera's production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Recently he sang the role of Don Pédro with Opera Orchestra of New York in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine and Pistola* in Mannes Opera's production of *Falstaff*. He also performed the roles of Olin Blicht in *Susanna* by Carlisle Floyd and Reverend Hale in *The Crucible* in Mannes Opera's production of *Sinners and Saints* and sang the role of Don Alfonso in the International Vocal Arts Institute's production of *Così fan Tutte*. Master of Music, Manhattan School of Music; Bachelor of Music from the Lawrence Conservatory of Music.



Piano: Jamison Livsey

Jamison Livsey has served as répétiteur and assistant conductor at numerous opera companies, including the Minnesota Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Opera Cleveland, Sarasota Opera, Opera North, Anchorage Opera, Toledo Opera, Ohio Light Opera, Pine Mountain Music Festival, and the festival at Sugar Creek Symphony and Song, having prepared productions under such conductors as Harry Bicket and Anne Manson. He has also served as the music director for the young artist program at Opera Santa Barbara. Jamison is an active performer as well, having performed at venues across the United States, Europe, and Africa, collaborating with numerous vocalists and instrumentalists in recital including radio broadcast performances with Vivica Genaux and James Valenti. Other highlights include performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C. on the Conservatory Project Concert Series, the Schubert Club Courtroom Concert Series, and the Lakes Area Music Festival. He recently joined baritone Sidney Outlaw in a recital and education tour of Guinea as part of the U.S. Department of State's Arts Envoy Program.



Violin: Simon Lapointe

Simon Lapointe was born in Quebec, Canada. He started playing violin at age 4. He received his Bachelor's of Music from the Conservatoire de Trois---Rivières in 2000, studying with Helmut Lipsky and Joanne Pothier. He then went on to get his MM at the Peabody Conservatory of Music with Martin Beaver. Simon is Principal Second Violin of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra since 2005. He also serves as Assistant Principal Second Violin of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. He performed as Assistant Concertmaster of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra during the 2009---2010 season. He previously played with the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec and the West Virginia Symphony, as Assistant Principal Second Violin and Concertmaster, respectively. He was a prizewinner of many competitions in the US and Canada and regularly performs as soloist and recitalist.

Cello: Sibora Miloradovic

Cellist, Sibora Miloradovic, was born in Belgrade, Serbia. She holds an undergraduate and MM in cello performance from Longy School of music in Cambridge, MA and Artist diploma from Park University, MO, where she studied with George Seamen, Iseut Chuat and Martin Storey. She had master classes with Andres Dias, Eric Rosenblith, Aldo Parisot and Yoyo-Ma, among others. As a soloist, she has performed with the Kansas University Symphony Orchestra and The Santo Domingo National Symphony Orchestra. In 2002, she was invited to participate in the Schleswig Holstein music Festival in Germany. Sibora regularly performs as a member of the Santo Domingo Music Festival and the IMA chamber music festival. She currently lives in Williamsburg with her husband who is stationed at Fort Eustis and their two children.

Clarinet: Deborah Levine

A native of Goshen, NY; Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance, State University of New York College at Fredonia in 1992, Master of Music in Clarinet Performance, University of Southern Mississippi in 1995. From 1997 at various positions at the United States Army as a Clarinet Player and instructor. From 2012 stationed at Fort Eustis, VA with the Training and Doctrine Command Band. Performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Erie Philharmonic, Hattiesburg Civic Light Opera Orchestra, Tupelo Symphony and the Williamsburg Sinfonia and others.



Stage Manager: Elizabeth Tait

Elizabeth is a 2012 graduate of the College of William and Mary as a double major in Theatre and Russian Studies. She recently stepped in as Drama Director at Saint Gertrude High School in Richmond. This is her third production with Opera in Williamsburg.



Choreographer: Christie Delaney

Christie graduated with a BFA in dance from the University at Buffalo. At UB, she was a member of Zodiaque Dance Company, director of student run show Dancer's Workshop, tap teaching assistant, and student representative of the dance department. She has performed with Zodiaque Studio Dance Ensemble and Emerging Choreographers Showcase in addition to Zodiaque Dance Company and Dancer's Workshop. Christie is trained in Tap, Jazz, Ballet, Modern, Pas de Deux, Social Dance, Improvisation, Voice, and Acting at the University at Buffalo. She has danced professionally with Spirit Productions in *Le Grand Cirque* and *Masters of Magic* in Niagara Falls, Canada and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Christie has also been the Senior Area Supervisor of Dance, Swing performer, and dance captain at Busch Gardens Williamsburg in *American Jukebox*, *Kinetix*, *This is Oktoberfest*, *Mix It Up*, *Voila*, *Clocktoberfest* and *Maypole*, *Fiends*, *Monster Stomp*, *Dig It Up*, *Night Beats*, *Miracles*, and *Deck the Halls*. She has performed with Six Flags in *Bugs Bunny* and Friends *Going Hollywood* and *Dead Man's Party*. She has taught at local dance studios in Buffalo, NY including Mary Alice's Dance Studio and Dancentral and has also taught tap workshops and master classes in the Western New York area. Currently, Christie is performing at Busch Gardens and is on faculty teaching with SI Dance.



Dancer: Ailsa Firstenberg

Ailsa is a junior at Jamestown High School and has been dancing since she was four. She has appeared in numerous productions - ten seasons of *The Nutcracker*, musical reviews and shows, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Music Man*, *Annie*, *Roar of the Greasepaint*, *Smell of the Crowd*, and *Aladdin*. She is a member of SI Dance Company, participating in dance showcases and competitions. Ailsa plans to continue her dancing and choreography education at college.



Dancer: Symone Holliday

Symone is a junior at York High School. She has been dancing for 14 years. She is currently attending SI Dance Studio. After highschool, she wishes to enroll in Florida University or South Florida University.



Dancer: Meghan Morinec

Meghan Morinec has been dancing since she was 5 years old and has been with SI Dance since Fall of 2010. She is currently a senior at Tabb High School and will be attending James Madison University in the Fall majoring in Nursing.

Some real people behind the Traviata story....



Marie Duplessis

Marie Duplessis was born Alphonsine Rose Plessis in 1824 at Nonant-le-Pin, Normandy, France. At the age of 15, she moved to Paris and worked in a dress shop. By the time she was 16, she became a courtesan and had learned to read and write. Duplessis was the hostess of a salon, where politicians, writers, and artists gathered for stimulating conversation and socializing. She rode in the Bois de Boulogne and attended opera performances. Duplessis was the mistress of Alexandre Dumas fils from September 1844 to August 1845. Afterwards, she became the mistress of composer Franz Liszt. Throughout her short life, her reputation as a discreet, intelligent, and witty lover was well known. She remained in the good graces of many of her benefactors even after her relationships with them had ended. She was briefly married to two of her lovers: a French nobleman, Count Édouard de Perregaux and a Swede, Count Von Stakelberg. Marie Duplessis died of tuberculosis at the age of 23 on 3 February 1847. De Perregaux and Von Stakelberg were by her side. Her belongings were auctioned off. Her funeral in Montmartre cemetery was attended by hundreds of people.



Giuseppe Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 –1901), the foremost Italian composer of opera. Verdi was born in Busseto, Italy (near Piacenza), under French rule, and lived under both Austrian control and the Risorgimento (Italy's reunification). He married the daughter of his mentor in 1836, but she died in 1840, and both his children died in infancy. He almost gave up composing but was persuaded to write Nabucco, which in 1842 made him famous; the lead female role was sung by the celebrated soprano Giusseppe Strepioni. Other operas followed. He visited Paris regularly from 1846 and on, and his opera Jérusalem was produced by the Paris Opera in 1847. His Macbeth in 1847 was unusual and innovative. Verdi's best known masterpieces include Rigoletto (1851), Il Trovatore (1853) and La Traviata (1853), which is the most popular of all his operas. Verdi continued composing highly successful and innovative operas for the rest of his life, including Un ballo in maschera (1859), La forza del destino (1862), Don Carlos (1867), Aida,(1869), Otello, (1887), and Falstaff (1893).

The Economy and the Performing Arts

In times like these, when millions are out of a job or losing their homes, how can one ask fellow-citizens to donate to luxuries like art, rather than help people make a living? One could argue that the arts are not a luxury but a necessity. My point is far less lofty. I would argue that by supporting the performing arts, we are in fact creating and sustaining jobs - worthy and deserving jobs.

Performing artists, by and large, don't work for the sake of money. The hard labor and the long and costly training required by their professions rarely win adequate compensation in purely monetary terms. Artists choose their



Alexandre Dumas fils

Alexandre Dumas fils was born in 1824 in Paris, France, the illegitimate child of the later-famous novelist Alexandre Dumas and a dressmaker. In 1831, as his father's position solidified, he recognized him legally and put him in the best schools. Dumas' paternal great-grandparents were a French nobleman in the colony of Saint-Domingue — now Haiti — and Marie-Cesette Dumas, of mixed French and African ancestry. During 1844 Dumas fils lived with his father and met Marie Duplessis, with whom he had an affair 1844-5. After her death in 1847 he wrote his first work, the semi-autobiographical novel *The Lady of the Camellias* (*La Dame aux camélias*). In 1852 he adapted the novel into a play, which was highly successful and launched his career as a dramatist. He dominated the serious French stage for most of the second half of the 19th century. In 1864 Dumas fils married Nadjeschda von Knorring, daughter of Johan Reinhold von Knorring and widow of Alexander, Prince Naryschkine. The couple had two daughters.

professions for love: they love music and ballet and theater, and they want to share that love with you. They want to share with you their music, their acting, their dancing, their vision of a great masterpiece that cannot come fully to life without being performed. In order to do so, they need to make a living. And some of them manage to make their living by performing art.

Without an audience, there can be no performing arts. One can't put a production in a drawer, like a poem or a painting waiting to be discovered in better times, and one can't perform in a vacuum. So, if you love music - if you love theater - if you love opera - if you love ballet: please do your part. Please come: if you can't afford expensive tickets, buy the less expensive ones. Please support your local companies, and the national companies we all benefit from. Please enable the musicians to transport you with their music, the actors to perform their magic, the ballerinas to soar, the directors to create their alternate reality, one evening at a time. Please give an opportunity to those who work behind the stage -- the organizers, the builders of sets, the lighting directors, the costume-makers - to do their part. They are skilled in making wonders out of almost nothing; but they do need to be given the opportunity to work their wonders.

Every symphony orchestra or local opera company that folds is a major loss. Beginning performers must start somewhere, and so must choreographers, directors, and set designers. If there are no smaller companies for them to begin and develop in, we may find ourselves years from now starved at the top. Even with up-to-date broadcasting like the Metropolitan Opera in HD, which I love and urge you to attend, there is no substitute for a live performance.

So - please do your part. Come to concerts. Applaud your favorite opera diva or divo. Support young artists' programs. Donate if you can. Let Shakespeare go on living, and Euripides, and Sophocles. Let Don Giovanni keep up his catalog of ladies, and Musetta charm her admirers. Let them transport you to a world where there is no recession, and help them preserve the ephemeral thread of the performing arts, one evening at a time.



Giuseppina Strepponi

Giuseppina Strepponi (1815 –1897) was the daughter of the organist and opera composer Feliciano Strepponi. After her father's death she studied singing and piano at



the Milan Conservatory where she won first prize for singing in 1834. Giuseppina Strepponi soon became her family's major bread winner. She sang major roles in operas of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini; and she sang the leading roles in Verdi's first successes, including Abigail in Nabucco in 1842. She had affairs with fellow-singers and impresarios, and had four illegitimate children. She had a fanatically enthusiastic following throughout Italy during the late 1830s and early 1840s. Around 1844, at the age of 30, Strepponi began to experience significant vocal problems. Most of her last performances were in operas by Verdi. In October 1846 Strepponi moved to Paris and became a voice teacher. Verdi spent time in Paris in 1846 and 1847 as well. From 1847 they shared their lives, though they were not legally married until 1859. Their life together was happy and collaborative, and ended only with her death in 1897 at age 82.

In 1851 Verdi and Strepponi moved together to Bussato, Verdi's home town. In January 1852 Verdi wrote to his former father-in-law: "In my house there lives a lady, free and who, like me, prefers a solitary life and who has the means to satisfy her every need. Neither I, nor she, must account for our actions; and who knows what our relations are? What are our business affairs? What are the ties? What rights I have over her and she over me? Who knows whether or not she is my wife? And if she is, who knows what reasons or ideas there may be for not announcing it publicly? Who knows if it is good or bad? Could it not be a good thing? And even if it were a bad thing, who has the right to ostracize us? I will say this, however: in my house she is entitled to as much respect as myself -- more, even; and no one is allowed to forget that on any account."





Major benefactors (\$1000-\$4999)

Linda Collins Reilly

Steadfast Supporters (\$500-\$999)

Martha Jones and William Hutton

Clyde Haulman

Jeanne Sutherland and Rodney B Taylor

Sustaining Friends (\$200-\$499)

Cary Carson * Elizabeth and Ward Jones

Significant Donors (\$100-\$199)

Bertram Aaron * Howard Bierenbaum * Ronit Ganor * Sylvia Scholnick

Miriam Walfitz * Colleagues from the Department of Classical Studies

Helpers

Meredith Ann Alba * Gulay Berryman * Mary Blunt * Michael Bryant

Carlos Conde * Sheila Conrad * Julie Galambush * Mathieu Guertin

Georgia Irby * David Jacobs * Mark Lerman * Angela Leruth

Theodora Evadne Noll * Gul Ozyegin * Jorge Parodi * Katherine Preston

David Scherer * Barbette Spaeth * Patricia Volp * George Whitaker

Cynthia White * Robin Wilder

... and special thanks to:

- ◆ Sibilla Dengs and ArtCafe26 for hosting a reception for the cast and creative team of L'Elisir d'Amore, October 24, 2012
- ◆ George Greenia and Tom Wood, William Hutton and Martha Jones, Trish Volp, Carolyn Campbell, and Meredith and Peter Forney for hosting singers
- ◆ William Hutton and Martha Jones for hosting two parties for supporters
- ◆ Kathy Devanney for loaning us two vehicles
- ◆ Patricia Wesp and Mary Jo Damon for their help with costumes
- ◆ Jeanne Sutherland and Rodney Taylor for their indefatigable support
- ◆ Gulay Berryman and New Town Art Gallery for hosting two events for us
- ◆ Williamsburg Families (www.williamsburgfamilies.com) for helping us publicize Opera in Williamsburg
- ◆ Clyde Haulman for his support in hosting Maestro Paul Nadler
- ◆ Alice Kandell for hosting our Traviata team to a beautiful dinner at her penthouse and sharing her gorgeous Tibetan art with us
- ◆ Cecilia Firstenberg for creating the program
- ◆ the many who spread the word and who came to the production



An early production of Traviata, set in the 1700s

