Giuseppe Verdi’s

La Traviata

Saturday, April 22, 2023
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La Traviata

Composed by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto in Italian by Francesco Maria Piave
Based upon the 1852 play by Alexandre Dumas fils
(La Dame aux camélias)

Directed by Robert Neu
Conducted by Joe Illick

CAST
Bridget Cappel
Dylan Davis
Sara Kennedy
Megan Koch
Erik Earl Larson
Andrew Payne
Spencer Reichman
Nathan Schafer
Steve Valenzuela

Orchestral reduction by Bryan Higgins, by arrangement with Motet Publishing Company.
Costumes by Glenn Avery Breed and provided by Wardrobe Witchery.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
SYNOPSIS - ACT I

Violetta Valéry knows that she will die soon, exhausted by her restless life as a courtesan. At a party she is introduced to Alfredo Germont, who has been fascinated by her for a long time. Rumor has it that he has been enquiring after her health every day. The guests are amused by this seemingly naïve and emotional attitude, and they ask Alfredo to propose a toast. He celebrates true love, and Violetta responds in praise of free love. She is touched by his candid manner and honesty. Suddenly she feels faint, and the guests withdraw. Only Alfredo remains behind and declares his love. There is no place for such feelings in her life, Violetta replies. But she gives him a camellia, asking him to return when the flower has faded. He realizes this means he will see her again the following day. Alone, Violetta is torn by conflicting emotions—she doesn’t want to give up her way of life, but at the same time she feels that Alfredo has awakened her desire to be truly loved.

SCENE CHANGE

Violetta has chosen a life with Alfredo, and they enjoy their love in the country, far from society. When Alfredo discovers that this is only possible because Violetta has been selling her property, he immediately leaves for Paris to procure money. Violetta has received an invitation to a masked ball, but she no longer cares for such distractions. In Alfredo’s absence, his father, Giorgio Germont, pays her a visit. He demands that she separate from his son, as their relationship threatens his daughter’s impending marriage. But over the course of their conversation, Germont comes to realize that Violetta is not after his son’s money—she is a woman who loves unselfishly. He appeals to Violetta’s generosity of spirit and explains that, from a bourgeois point of view, her liaison with Alfredo has no future. Violetta’s resistance dwindles and she finally agrees to leave Alfredo forever. Only after her death shall he learn the truth about why she returned to her old life. She accepts the invitation to the ball and writes a goodbye letter to her lover. Alfredo returns, and while he is reading the letter, his father appears 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.

- INTERMISSION -
SYNOPSIS - ACT II

At Flora’s masked ball, news has spread of Violetta and Alfredo’s separation. There are party-goers 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 his 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.

SCENE CHANGE

Some time has passed, and Violetta has become quite ill with tuberculosis, also known as consumption. There is no doubt that she is dying. Her last remaining friend, Doctor Grenvil, knows that she has only a few more hours to live. Alfredo’s father has written to Violetta, informing her that his son was not injured in the duel. Full of remorse, Germont has told his son about Violetta’s sacrifice. Alfredo wants to rejoin her as soon as possible. Violetta is afraid that he might be too late. The sounds of rampant celebrations are heard outside while Violetta is in mortal agony. But Alfredo does arrive and the reunion fills her with a final euphoria. Her energy and exuberant joy of life return. All sorrow and suffering seem to have left her—a final illusion, before death claims her.

*Courtesy of The Metropolitan Opera*
CAST

Megan Koch ................................................................. Violetta Valéry
Nathan Schafer ....................................................... Alfredo Germont
Spencer Reichman .................................................... Giorgio Germont
Bridget Cappel ................................................................ Flora Bervoix
Andrew Payne ............................................................ Barone Douphol
Dylan Davis .................................................................. Gastone de Letorières
Erik Earl Larson .......................................................... Dottore Grenvil
Steve Valenzuela ......................................................... Marchese d’Obigny
Sara Kennedy ................................................................ Annina

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Artist
Biographies
Known for his “distinctive staging style” and for being “the most inventive opera director in town” (St Paul Pioneer Press), ROBERT NEU is challenging the norms by becoming a pioneer in the field of semi-staged operas with symphony orchestras. Sought after for his highly theatrical and musically sensitive work, Neu has directed more than ninety productions of opera, musical theater, and plays throughout the country.

This season, Robert will return to Opera Idaho to direct Il barbiere di Siviglia and Shreveport Opera for La traviata. Last season, Neu directed The Merry Widow for Opera Idaho, both Amahl and the Night Visitors and Eugene Onegin for Skylark Opera, and Otello for Pacific Symphony. In Spring of 2021 he returned to Pacific Symphony to direct a filmed version of La Traviata.
JOE ILLICK served as the Artistic Director of Fort Worth Opera from 2017 to 2022, having served for fifteen seasons as Music Director and Principal Conductor. He has also served as Artistic Director of the Lake George Opera Festival, as Interim Artistic Director of Greater Miami Opera (now Florida Grand Opera), Music Director of the Pittsburgh Opera Theater, Artistic Director of Shreveport Opera and Principal Guest Conductor of the Teatro Lirico d’Europa. He has also conducted for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Opera Carolina, San Francisco Opera (Merola), Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Augusta Opera, Opera Omaha, Skylight Opera Theater, Eugene Opera, Nevada Opera Theater, Minnesota Opera National Tour, Pittsburgh Opera Theater, Stadttheater Aachen, Vienna Chamber Opera and the Covent Garden Ensemble.

His operas include *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World*, *Stone Soup*, *Bernadette’s Cozy Book Nook*, *Ricky*, *Feel the Tango*, *UnShakeable*, and *Stand Up*. 
MEGAN KOCH is based in DFW where she is a sought-after performer and teacher. Megan made her debut at Shreveport Opera as Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and she recently recorded a brand new opera *Meow and Forever*, in which she played a cat named Nala, with Opera Arlington and Really Spicy Opera. Formerly a Fort Worth Opera Lesley Resident Artist, she performed Annina and covered Violetta in *La Traviata*, covered Ana Maria in *Zorro* (world premier), covered Musetta in *La bohème*, and performed on Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra’s televised concert, America Strong during COVID. She has also appeared with Lewisville Lake Symphony Chamber Recital Series, University of North Texas Opera, and FWO’s Frontiers where she “shimmered with nuance” - *The Column Online*. Megan won 1st place in the Classical Singer Voice Competition and was a finalist in the Lewisville Lake Symphony International Voice Competition in 2022.
NATHAN SCHAFER, Alfredo Germont

Sponsored by Dale Bauman & Paula Leonard; Mark & Shirlee Owen; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James

Praised for his “stunning voice” Dallas-based tenor NATHAN SCHAFER “sings with clarity and warmth” (KDHX) Mr. Schafer recently made his mainstage debut at Winter Opera of St. Louis as leading tenor Ruggero Lastouc in La rondine. In April 2023 he will sing Alfredo in La traviata in his company debut with Shreveport Opera where he is a current resident artist. Mr. Schafer was recently a Bonfils-Stanton Apprentice Artist at Central City Opera where he performed Alfred in Die Fledermaus. Earlier he was a guest artist covering the role of Hooker in Emmeline at Tulsa Opera. Nathan currently studies voice with Clifton Forbis at Southern Methodist University. Mr. Schafer completed his vocal training at The University of North Texas where he performed the roles of Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly, Alfredo in La Traviata, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni and Pirelli in Sweeney Todd.
SPENCER REICHMAN, Giorgio Germont

Sponsored by Dr. Jack & Anita Berg; Geoff & Martha Mangin; Stephen Roberts; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James

Baritone SPENCER REICHMAN, a native of Austin Texas has recently performed Schaunard in La Boheme with Nashville Opera and the New Orleans Opera Association, Monterone in Rigoletto with Shreveport Opera, Sprecher in Magic Flute with Pensacola Opera, and Sharpless in Madama Butterfly with Shreveport Opera and Central City Opera. Equally at home with operetta, Mr. Reichman has been invited to Harrogate, England to perform at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival.

Mr. Reichman has completed apprenticeships with the Florentine Opera, Nashville Opera, Central City Opera, Shreveport Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, the Crested Butte Music Festival, Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music Opera Bootcamp, and Opera in the Ozarks. He was thrice named a regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and placing 3rd in the Southeast Region in 2022. Mr. Reichman holds degrees in voice from Loyola University New Orleans and Texas State University San Marcos.
BRIDGET CAPPEL, Flora Bervoix

Sponsored by Dale Bauman & Paula Leonard; Dr. Jack & Anita Berg; Laurie Lyons & Henry Walker; Stafford Lyons; Mark & Shirlee Owen; Sybil Patten; Carl Rhoads; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James

Mezzo-Soprano, BRIDGET CAPPEL, has been celebrated for her “beauty of tone and honesty of feeling…a real mezzo-soprano.” This season Bridget joins Shreveport Opera as Rosina in Il barbiere di Siviglia and as Flora Bervoix in La Traviata. Bridget created the role of Toypurina with “clear and assured passages” (Opera News) in Fort Worth Opera's World Premiere of Zorro, made her debut with The Dallas Bach Society as La Poesie in Les Arts Florissants, and returned to Opera Mississippi and The Natchez Festival of Music as a soloist in The Magic of Opera in 2022. She is a prize winner of Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year Competition (2023), the John Alexander National Vocal Competition, and a Regional Finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (2019). Bridget has performed with Kentucky Opera (Mercedes/Carmen cv., Carmen), Des Moines Metro Opera (Paquette cv., Candide), and Fort Worth Opera (Hansel, Hansel & Gretel, Maria cv., Maria de Buenos Aires). Other highlights include Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro), Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte), Hermia (A Midsummer Night’s Dream), and Eliza (My Fair Lady).
ANDREW PAYNE, Barone Douphol

Sponsored by Will Blanchard; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James; Sons of Italy Heritage Club

Baritone ANDREW PAYNE hails from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and is a student of Jennifer Rowley. Andrew has recently finished up with Central City Opera as an apprentice artist for the 2022 season. Past operatic roles have been Tour guide (The Light in the Piazza), Marchese d’Obigny (La traviata), Howard (Dog Days), Sam (Trouble in Tahiti), Guglielmo (Cosi Fan Tutte), Benoît/Alcindoro (La bohème), Johann and Albert understudy (Werther), Nick Shadow (The Rake’s Progress), Frank (Die Fledermaus), Claudio (Béatrice et Bénédict) and the Gendarme (Les Mamelles de Tirésias). Mr. Payne has also been the baritone soloist in Stacey Garrop’s oratorio, Terra Nostra. Mr. Payne has won first place in Opera Idol hosted by Sherrill Milnes. He has performed in masterclasses with Sherrill Milnes, Jennifer Rowley, Warren Jones, Anthony Michaels-Moore, and Brenton Ryan. Andrew is honored to be with Shreveport Opera as a resident artist for the 2022-2023 season.
DYLAN DAVIS, Gastone de Letorières

Sponsored by Dale Bauman & Paula Leonard; Marcia & Robert Moffatt; Stephen Roberts; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James

A 2022 Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera, tenor DYLAN DAVIS performed Shepherd in Tristan und Isolde and chorus in Carmen, The Barber of Seville, and M. Butterfly 蝴蝶君. He was a Studio Artist with Central City Opera in 2019, winning the company’s Studio Artist Award, and he returned in 2021 as an Apprentice Artist to cover the Duke in Rigoletto. He spent the 2021/22 season as a Resident Artist of Shreveport Opera, where he was seen as the Duke (Rigoletto), Don José (The Tragedy of Carmen), and Basilio (Le nozze di Figaro). Returning to Shreveport Opera this season, Dylan will make his role debut as Count Almaviva (The Barber of Seville) and cover Alfredo (La traviata). In December, he moved to New York to join the Metropolitan Opera Chorus for Wagner’s Lohengrin. He returns to his home state to debut with Mid-Ohio Civic Opera as Jaquinto (Fidelio) this summer.
ERIK EARL LARSON, Dottore Grenvil

Sponsored by Dr. Jack & Anita Berg; Laurie Lyons & Henry Walker; Stafford Lyons; Mark & Shirlee Owen; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James

Madison, WI native, ERIK EARL LARSON, is thrilled to make his Shreveport Opera debut as Doctor Grenvil in La Traviata. The dynamic, young baritone returns to The Dallas Opera this coming season to cover Jean-Dominique Bauby in the world premiere of The Diving Bell and the Butterfly; and to sing Count Paris in Romeo et Juliette. Erik makes his Painted Sky Opera debut in summer of 2023 as Marcello in La bohème.

In 2022, Erik made debuts with The Dallas Opera as Marullo in Rigoletto, Virginia Opera as Figaro in Le nozze di Figaro, and Carnegie Hall as a soloist in Mark Hayes’ Gloria. He also recently joined the Atlanta Opera, covering Escamillo in Carmen and returned to Carnegie Hall as the baritone soloist in the world premiere of Michael Glasgow’s Gloria.

Erik has received training at Boston University Opera institute and Des Moines Metro Opera as a young artist.
Baritone STEVE VALENZUELA, a Connecticut native, received his Master of Music degree from Louisiana State University and was awarded the James Sommers Opera Scholarship Award from Western Connecticut State University.

During his time at LSU he performed the role of Howard in David T. Little’s *Dog Days*, which received first place recognition by NOA.

Additional opera credits include Figaro in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, Nick Shadow in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*, Don Giovanni (Don Giovanni), Count (Le nozze di Figaro), Marcello (La Bohéme), Danilo (The Merry Widow), Sam (Trouble in Tahiti) and Ceprano in Shreveport Opera’s production of *Rigoletto*. An avid recitalist, his favored selections from this repertoire include: Beethoven’s *An die ferne Geliebte*, Mahler’s *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, and Ibert’s *Chasons de Don Quichotte*. 

Sponsored by Dr. Jack & Anita Berg; Roxanne Bosserman; Mary N. Smith & Bobby James
SARA KENNEDY is a soprano from Austin, TX who specializes in both classical and musical theatre repertoire. Sara is known for her lush, colorful sound, commanding stage presence, and powerful interpretations of Mozart’s heroines. As well as making her company debuts with Opera Arlington (Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*) and Shreveport Opera (Annina in *La traviata*) this spring, Sara will make two more company debuts with Camerata Bardi Vocal Academy (June) and Painted Sky Opera (July) performing Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. For the 2023-2024 season, Sara will join Florida Grand Opera’s prestigious Studio Artist Program where she will perform in their mainstage season. Last summer, she attended Sewanee Summer Music Festival as an Opera Fellow where she was named a winner of the Jacqueline Avent Concerto Competition. Earlier in 2022, Sara joined Sarasota Opera as an Apprentice Artist for their 2022 Winter Season. Other recent opera credits include Ruth Baldwin (*Later the Same Evening*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), and Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*). Sara completed her Graduate Artist Certificate in Opera from the University of North Texas in 2021 where she also completed a BM in Music Education and an MM in Vocal Performance. Sara currently studies with Soprano Jennifer Rowley.
Pianist **AH YOUNG KIM**, a native of South Korea, maintains a diverse range of musical experiences. As a collaborative pianist, she played for studios, including that of cellist János Starker, at Indiana University, where she received a master’s degree. Ms. Kim has also played for singers at masterclasses led by Alan L. Smith, Donna Racik, Dwayne Croft, Twyla Robinson, and the late Nico Castel. As an operatic pianist and coach, her previous credits include Aspen Music Festival Opera Coach Fellow (CO), Charlottesville Opera (Ash Lawn Opera, VA), Fort Worth Opera (TX), Musiktheater Bavaria (Germany), Opera North (Lebanon, NH), and UNT Opera (Denton, TX). Ms. Kim began her musical training in South Korea and received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas. Her teachers include Pamela Mia Paul, Shigeo Neriki, Stephen Dubberly, and Elvia Puccinelli. She made a presentation at the MTNA National Conference (Baltimore, MD) and Louisiana Tech University (Ruston, LA). She also participated in the Mozarteum Summer Academy (Salzburg, Austria) and the International Keyboard Institute & Festival (IKIF, New York, NY).
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In memory of Katherine Bicknell
  Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III
  Erin & Yannis Tassoulas

In memory of Glenn Flournoy
  Melinda & Greg Barro
  Community Foundation of North Louisiana - Discretionary Grant Fund
  Garland & John Guth
  Judy & Mike McCarthy
  Sybil T. Patten
  W. Marshall Shaw
  Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild
  Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III
  Robert Stroud
  James L. and Martha Autry ZumBrunnen
Memorials, Continued

In memory of Alta Franks
Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild

In memory of Dorothy Gates
John Benjamin Gates

In memory of Judy Crow McColgan
Judy & Judd Chidlow, MD
The Crow Foundation
Dr. & Mrs. Dayne Hassell
Ginger & Glenn Flournoy
Dino & Katherine Frangos
Betty Henderson
Carole & Bill Lacefield
Cynthia A. Murray
Sybil T. Patten
Cathey & Steve Sholar
Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III

In memory of Linda Moore
Tracy Burch
JoAnna & Bob Robinson, DrPH
Cathey & Steve Sholar
Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III

In memory of Irene Wald
Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III

In memory of Brad Whitesides
Dr. & Mrs. F. Thomas Siskron III
Special Thanks

We express our grateful appreciation to the following individuals and businesses who provide in-kind, discounted or special services to Shreveport Opera throughout the year.

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First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport
The Hertz Corporation
The Hertz Investment Group (Regions Tower)
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Dr. Scott Mighell
Northwest Louisiana Food Bank
The Petroleum Club
Red River Radio
Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild
Lory Tubbs
YMCA of Northwest Louisiana

Housing

Cast and Creative Team Housing Provided By:

Janice & Steve Aiken
Jack & Anita Berg
Marletta Eddy
Mitzie Kilpatrick
Sybil T. Patten
Stephen Roberts

If you’re willing to host a cast member for 2-3 weeks prior to a production, please let us know and we’ll add you to our list.
Mary Jacobs Smith
Singer of the Year Competition
March 4-5, 2023

Thank You to our Awards Sponsors

The Mary Jacobs Smith Award (1st place) ........................................... Mary N. Smith
The Charles Maggio Award (2nd place) .............................................. Jodie Glorioso
The Robert J. Murray Memorial Award (3rd place) ............................ Cynthia Murray
The Lorena Bessey Mangin Memorial Award (4th place) ....... Martha & Geoff Mangin
The Jennifer White Memorial Award (5th place) ..... The Shellye & Doug White Family

Honorable Mention Awards

The Katherine S. Tyrrell Memorial Award ................................................ Sybil Patten
The Dr. & Mrs. Bob Robinson Award .............................................. JoAnna & Bob Robinson
The La Wanda & Ernest Blakeney Award .......................La Wanda & Ernest Blakeney
The Phyllis Linke-Lamb Memorial Award .................................Janice & Steve Aiken
The Dr. Melvin & Lea Johnson Memorial Award ................. Neil & Cindy Johnson
The Opera Guild Audience Choice Award ............The Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild
Mary Jacobs Smith
Singer of the Year Competition
March 4-5, 2023

Additional support for Singer of the Year was given by the following donors:

First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport
  Kathy & Dayne Hassell
  Judy & Mike McCarthy
  Annie Mills
  Andy Pope
  Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild

Thanks to our Singer of the Year Housers

We appreciate the patrons who opened their homes to host these talented artists for the competition weekend.

  Judy & Judd Chidlow
  Marletta Eddy
  Elizabeth Glassell
  Martha & Geoff Mangin
  Ginger & Marion Marks
  Annie Mills
  Sybil T. Patten
  Laurie Lyons & Henry Walker
  Joan Whitesides
  Sally Lyons Wood
Thank you for your support.

Enjoy the performance!