Rigoletto

Minnesota
OPERA

Opera Box

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620 North First Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Kevin Ramach, President and General Director
Dale Johnson, Artistic Director

Dear Educator,

Thank you for using a Minnesota Opera Opera Box. This collection of material has been designed to help any educator to teach students about the beauty of opera. This collection of material includes audio and video recordings, scores, reference books and a Teacher's Guide.

The Teacher's Guide includes Lesson Plans that have been designed around the materials found in the box and other easily obtained items. In addition, Lesson Plans have been aligned with State and National Standards. See the Unit Overview for a detailed explanation.

Before returning the box, please fill out the Evaluation Form at the end of the Teacher's Guide. As this project is new, your feedback is imperative. Comments and ideas from you – the educators who actually use it – will help shape the content for future boxes. In addition, you are encouraged to include any original lesson plans. The Teacher's Guide is intended to be a living reference book that will provide inspiration for other teachers. If you feel comfortable, include a name and number for future contact from teachers who might have questions regarding your lessons and to give credit for your original ideas. You may leave lesson plans in the Opera Box or mail them in separately.

Before returning, please double check that everything has been assembled. The deposit money will be held until I personally check that everything has been returned (i.e. CDs having been put back in the cases). Payment may be made to the Minnesota Opera Education Department. All forms of payment are accepted.

Since opera is first and foremost a theatrical experience, it is strongly encouraged that attendance at a performance of an opera be included. The Minnesota Opera offers Student Matinees and discounted group rate tickets to regular performances. It is hoped that the Opera Box will be the first step into exploring opera, and attending will be the next.

I hope you enjoy these materials and find them helpful. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to call or e-mail me any time.

Sincerely,

Jamie Andrews
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Lesson Plan Title Page with Related Academic Standards

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3 – That was a great performance and I know why!	Music 9.1.3.3.1 Music 9.1.3.3.2 Theater 9.1.3.4.1 Theater 9.1.3.4.2 Music 9.4.1.3.1 Music 9.4.1.3.2 Theater 9.4.1.4.1 Theater 9.4.1.4.2	7, 8, 9
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LESSON TITLE	MINNESOTA ACADEMIC HIGH STANDARDS	NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION
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Opera Box Lesson Plans with Related Standards

The lessons in this Teacher Guide are aligned with the current Minnesota Academic Standards, Arts K–12, and the National Standards for Music Education. It is not the intention of these lessons to completely satisfy the standards. This list only suggests how the standards and lesson objectives relate to each other.

Minnesota Academic Standards, Arts K–12

The Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts set the expectations for achievement in the arts for K–12 students in Minnesota. The standards are organized by grade band (K–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–12) into four strands that foster the development of students' artistic literacy.

The strands are as follows:

1. Artistic Foundations
2. Artistic Process: Create or Make
3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present, and
4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique.

Each strand has one or more standards that can be implemented in the arts areas of dance, media arts, music, theater and/or visual arts. The benchmarks for the standards in each arts area are designated by a five-digit code. In reading the coding, please note that for code 0.3.1.5.2, the 0 refers to refers to the 0–3 (K–3) grade band, the 3 refers to the Artistic Process: Perform or Present strand, the 1 refers to the first (and only) standard for that strand, the 5 refers to the fifth arts area (visual arts), and the 2 refers to the second benchmark for that standard.

See the Minnesota Department of Education website for more information: education.state.mn.us/mde

Grades 9–12

STRAND: Artistic Foundations

STANDARD 1: Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the elements of music and related concepts such as repetition, pattern, balance and emphasis are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

9.1.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the characteristics of a variety of genres and styles contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of theater, including plot, theme, character, language, sound and spectacle are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how forms such as musical theater, opera or melodrama, and structures such as chronological or nonlinear are used in the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

9.1.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the characteristics of Western and non-Western styles, such as Kabuki, Noh, Theater of the Absurd or classical contribute to the creation of, performance of, or response to theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.1.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the elements of visual arts such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

9.1.1.5.2

BENCHMARK: Evaluate how the principles of visual art such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual artworks.

STANDARD 2: Demonstrate knowledge of and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.2.3.1

BENCHMARK: Read and notate music using standard notation system such as complex meters, extended ranges and expressive symbols, with and without the use of notation software in a variety of styles and contexts.

9.1.2.3.2

BENCHMARK: Sing alone and in small and large groups (multi-part), or play an instrument alone in and in small or large groups, a variety of music using characteristic tone, technique and expression.

9.1.2.3.3

BENCHMARK: Use electronic musical tools to record, mix, play back, accompany, arrange or compose music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.2.4.1

BENCHMARK: Act by developing, communicating and sustaining character; or design by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations; or direct by interpretations dramatic text and organizing and rehearsing for informal or formal productions.

9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Use technology for purposes of research, feedback, documentation or production.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.2.5.1

BENCHMARK: Integrate the characteristics of the tools, materials and techniques of a selected media in original artworks to support artistic purposes

STANDARD 3: Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts that influence the arts areas.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.1.3.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.3.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of music.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.1.3.4.2

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of theater.

ARTS AREA: Visual Arts

CODE: 9.1.3.5.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze how the personal, social, cultural and historical contexts influence the creation, interpretation or performance of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.

9.1.3.5.2

BENCHMARK: Synthesize and express an individual view of the meanings and functions of visual arts.

STRAND 2: Artistic Process: Create or Make

STANDARD 1: Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts areas using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.2.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Improvise, compose or arrange new musical compositions in a variety of styles and contexts using available technology to preserve the creations.

9.2.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a musical composition or arrangement based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.3.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

ARTS AREA: Theater

CODE: 9.2.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Create a single, complex work or multiple works in theater such as a script, character or design.

9.2.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Revise a creation based on artistic intent and using multiple sources of critique and feedback.

9.2.1.4.3

BENCHMARK: Justify an artistic statement, including how audience and occasion influence creative choices.

STRAND 4: Artistic Process: Respond or Critique

STANDARD 1: Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations.

ARTS AREA: Music

CODE: 9.4.1.3.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of musical works of performances by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.3.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

ARTS AREA: Theater

ARTS AREA: Theater

9.4.1.4.1

BENCHMARK: Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of works in theater by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form.

9.4.1.4.2

BENCHMARK: Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

1 Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

2 Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

3 Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

4 Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.

5 Reading and notating music.

6 Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
- A analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices
- B demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music
- C identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity, variety, tension and release in a musical work and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques
- D demonstrate the ability to perceive and remember music events by describing in detail significant events occurring in a given aural example
- E compare ways in which musical materials are used in a given example relative to ways in which they are used in other works of the same genre or style
- F analyze and describe uses of the elements of music in a given work that make it unique, interesting, and expressive

7 Evaluating music and music performances.
- A evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and the effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music
- B evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models
- C evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain it to similar or exemplary models

8 Understanding relationships between music, the others arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
- A explain how elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts and cite examples
- B compare characteristics of two or more arts within a particular historical period or style and cite examples from various cultures
- C explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music
- D compare the uses of characteristic elements, artistic processes, and organizational principles among the arts in different historical periods and different cultures
- E explain how the roles of creators, performers, and others involved in the production and presentation of the arts are similar to and different from one another in the various arts

9 Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Opera Box Content List

Rigoletto

There is one (1) of each of the following items:

_____*Rigoletto* FULL SCORE (Ricordi)

_____*Rigoletto* VOCAL SCORE (G. Schirmer)

_____*Rigoletto* LIBRETTO (G. Schirmer)

_____CD *Rigoletto* (EMI, Muti, conductor, Zancanro, Dessì)

_____CD *Rigoletto* (BMG, Gavazzeni, conductor, Scotto, Kraus)

_____DVD *Rigoletto* (Hardy Classic, Egaddi, conductor, Kraus, Nucci, Serra)

_____DVD *Rigoletto* (Decca, Chailly, conductor, Pavarotti, Wixell, Gruberova)

_____BOOK *Verdi* by Julian Budden

_____BOOK *The Complete Operas of Verdi* by Charles Osbourne

_____BOOK *Opera Guide No. 15: Rigoletto* by the English National Opera

_____BOOK *Opera Composers Works Performers* by András Batta

_____Teacher's Guide

The entire deposit will be withheld until all items are returned. Any damaged items will be charged to the renter for the amount of replacement. Thank you for using the Minnesota Opera Box and teaching opera in your school!

Rigoletto

This chart coordinates each track/chapter number for each CD/DVD in the Opera Box. The chart shows where each excerpt is in relation to the other recordings and where to find them in the scores.

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	EMI CD (MUTI)	BMG CD (SCOTTO)	DVD (KRAUS)	MOVIE DVD (PAVAROTTI)
PAGE 1	PAGE 1	CD/TRACK 1/1	CD/TRACK 1/1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 1
PAGE 6	PAGE 2	TRACK 1/2			CHAPTER 2
PAGE 10	PAGE 5	TRACK 1/3			CHAPTER 3
PAGE 17	PAGE 9	TRACK 1/4			
PAGE 20	PAGE 11 (MIDDLE)	TRACK 1/5			CHAPTER 4
PAGE 22	PAGE 13 (MIDDLE)	TRACK 1/6			CHAPTER 5
PAGE 43	PAGE 34	TRACK 1/7			CHAPTER 6
PAGE 55	PAGE 40	TRACK 1/8			
PAGE 70	PAGE 51	TRACK 1/9	TRACK 1/2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 7
PAGE 83	PAGE 56	TRACK 1/10	TRACK 1/3		CHAPTER 8
PAGE 90	PAGE 59	TRACK 1/11		CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 9
PAGE 109	PAGE 71				CHAPTER 10
PAGE 111	PAGE 72	TRACK 1/12			
PAGE 124	PAGE 79	TRACK 1/13	TRACK 1/4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 11
PAGE 133	PAGE 88	TRACK 1/14			CHAPTER 13
PAGE 143	PAGE 90	TRACK 1/15			
PAGE 155	PAGE 94	TRACK 1/16	TRACK 1/5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 14
PAGE 165	PAGE 100	TRACK 1/17	TRACK 1/6		CHAPTER 15
PAGE 172	PAGE 103	TRACK 1/18	CD/TRACK 2/1		CHAPTER 16
PAGE 186	PAGE 112	TRACK 1/19			
PAGE 192	PAGE 114	CD/TRACK 2/1		CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 17

FULL SCORE	VOCAL SCORE	EMI CD (MUTI)	BMG CD (SCOTTO)	DVD (KRAUS)	MOVIE DVD (PAVAROTTI)
PAGE 196	PAGE 116	TRACK 2/2			
PAGE 200	PAGE 119 (MIDDLE)	TRACK 2/3			CHAPTER 18
PAGE 218	PAGE 130				CHAPTER 19
PAGE 220	PAGE 133	TRACK 2/4			
PAGE 240	PAGE 138	TRACK 2/5	TRACK 2/2		CHAPTER 20
PAGE 255	PAGE 146 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 2/6			CHAPTER 21
PAGE 269	PAGE 153	TRACK 2/7	TRACK 2/3		CHAPTER 22
PAGE 276	PAGE 156	TRACK 2/8		CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 23
PAGE 290 (MIDDLE)	PAGE 164	TRACK 2/9			CHAPTER 24
PAGE 295	PAGE 166	TRACK 2/10			
PAGE 309	PAGE 172	TRACK 2/11	TRACK 2/4	CHAPTER (9)10	CHAPTER 25
PAGE 313	PAGE 173	TRACK 2/12		CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 26
PAGE 325	PAGE 177	TRACK 2/13	TRACK 2/5		CHAPTER 27
PAGE 337	PAGE 181	TRACK 2/14		CHAPTER 12	CHAPTER 28
PAGE 355	PAGE 195 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 2/15	TRACK 2/6		CHAPTER 29
PAGE 362	PAGE 200 (BOTTOM)	TRACK 2/16			
PAGE 364	PAGE 201				CHAPTER 30
PAGE 404	PAGE 219	TRACK 2/17	TRACK 2/7		CHAPTER 31
PAGE 406	PAGE 220			CHAPTER 13	
PAGE 412 (BOTTOM)	PAGE 224	TRACK 2/18			CHAPTER 32

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 1: The Life and Times of Verdi

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand the life, times and culture of Verdi.

MATERIAL(S)

- Reference books about Verdi
- **Research Checklist** *(see following page)*
- General reference books about 19th-century Europe (specifically Italy) *{not in Opera Box}*
- Poster board or PowerPoint for student presentation *{not in Opera Box}*
- Poster board (for timeline on wall) *{not in Opera Box}*

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) Divide class into groups and assign topics related to Verdi. Direct the class to research their chosen topics and to prepare a presentation on that topic. The nature and scope of the presentation is left to the discretion of the teacher.

Possible topics (all topics should be focused in the 19th century):

– Political culture of Italy (and the world)
– Scientific and medical achievements
– Social life and class divisions
– Artistic and musical life in Italy and Europe
– Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy

(2) Upon completion of the research, student groups are to create a presentation with the entire group participating. Give groups **Research Checklist** *(see following page).*

(3) Each group is to create pieces (at least five points of interest) of a timeline based on their research. (It is recommended that the format for the timeline should be predetermined. For example, post a timeline on a wall between the years 1800 to 1900 with the beginning of each decade marked as well. Leave space for students to include their points of interest.)

(4) As each group gives its presentation, the other class members are to serve as audience and to provide feedback.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Assign value to class participation, quality of presentations and group cooperation. Also, each piece of the timeline must have a certain number of relevant points presented in a clean and clear manner.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

To help guide the students in the research, creating a checklist is recommended. Each item may be assigned value. For example:

RESEARCH CHECKLIST

Topic: _____

Group members: _____

Research checklist:

_____ Provide twenty facts of the topic and how they relate to Verdi

_____Organize all facts into chronological order

_____Provide three sentences describing each fact to be put on the timeline

_____Proofread all sentences prior to putting them on the timeline

_____Complete putting each fact on timeline

Class presentation checklist:

_____Prepare an outline describing research for class presentation

_____Assign speaking parts for each group member

_____Practice speech (with other class members observing)

_____Give presentation

_____Put your groups section of the timeline on the wall

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 2: Title: How effective are text and lyrics?

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn the effectiveness of text by comparing an aria to a popular song.

MATERIAL(S)

- "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (*Rigoletto* CD, Act II, No. 12)
- LIBRETTO of *Rigoletto* (p. 11)
- Popular song lyrics and recording *{not in Opera Box}*
- **"How effective are text and lyrics?" Rubric** *(see following pages)*

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) As a class, **read** the lyrics of a popular song(s) that the students have determined to be very powerful and meaningful. Students are to create a list the emotions that are conveyed in the text.

(2) Have class **read** the text of Rigoletto's Act II aria, "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (No. 12). Have students list the emotions Rigoletto sings about.

(3) Have students **listen** first to a performance of the popular song, then the "Cortigiani vil razza dannata." Ask students to rank the effectiveness of each piece in conveying emotion through music. Discuss if the music adds or takes away from the text and emotion. Which piece is more powerful, more meaningful, and why?

(4) Create a rubric (as a class or individually) that can chart the differences the class discussed in #3. See "How effective are text and lyrics?" Rubric. In other words, there must be a way to chart the difference between the effectiveness of the two pieces.

(5) Assign the class to listen to three other songs/arias. Students are to chart their opinions about the effectiveness of each piece in conveying emotion. Suggested excerpts from *Rigoletto* are Gilda's Act I aria or "Caro nome," and the Duke's Act III aria, "La donna è mobile."

ASSESSMENT(S)

Value will be given for class participation and creation of a detailed rubric.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

The popular song(s) should be something that the students are currently listening to. Using a rap song might lend itself to additional conversation about the use of melody and its musical merits. It is highly recommended to ask a student to bring in a recording from their own personal collection. Most popular CDs have lyrics included. If not, a quick search on the Internet under "popular song lyrics" should provide the necessary information.

How effective are text and lyrics?
Example layout and answers for rubric

Lesson 2

Ranking Key for LOVE (romantic):

1 = No references about love. The piece is not about this emotion.
2 = Contains some words of passion. Describes a relationship.
3 = Contains words of passion and love. Describes a significant relationship.
4 = Contains intense and powerful words about love. Describes an intense, passionate relationship.

Ranking Key for SADNESS:

1 = No reference about sadness. This piece is not about this emotion.
2 = Contains some words about sadness. Describes some feeling of loss.
3 = Contains words about deep sadness. Describes significant loss and despair.
4 = Contains intense and powerful words and phrases about sadness. Describes complete loss and overwhelming sorrow.

Ranking Key for REMORSEFULNESS:

1 = No references about remorsefulness. This piece is not about this emotion.
2 = Contains some words about remorsefulness. Describes some feeling of change.
3 = Contains words about remorsefulness. Describes significant change of feelings.
4 = Contains intense and powerful words and phrase about remorsefulness. Describes complete change of feelings and sadness.

Aria: "Cortigianni, vil razza" (Rigoletto from *Rigoletto*) A = aria

LOVE		SADNESS		REMORESFULLNESS		_____ OTHER	
text alone	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*
1		1		1		1	
2		2		2 A		2	
3 A		3 A		3		3	
4	A	4	A	4	A	4	

"How effective are text and lyrics?" Rubric

Unit A, Lesson 2

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

The lyrics/text of a song/aria commonly focuses on emotions. The piece may tell a story or describe an event, but commonly the emotions of the singer are included. The lasting success of a song or aria is based on the effectiveness in conveying these emotions to the listener. You are to create a rubric to chart emotions present in a song/aria. Choose up to four emotions that are similar between the two pieces. Then compare and contrast the differences in their effectiveness in conveying emotions. Record your responses on the following page.

"How effective are text and lyrics?" Rubric DEFINITIONS:

A _____ (emotion)

1	
2	
3	
4	

B _____ (emotion)

1	
2	
3	
4	

C _____ (emotion)

1	
2	
3	
4	

D _____ (emotion)

1	
2	
3	
4	

"How effective are text and lyrics?" Rubric

Unit A, Lesson 2

NAME _____

1 **Aria/Song:** _____ **Artist:** _____

_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)	
text alone	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*
1		1		1		1	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	

2 **Aria/Song:** _____ **Artist:** _____

_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)		_____ (emotion)	
text alone	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*	*text alone*	*with music*
1		1		1		1	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 3: "That was a great performance and I know why!"

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn about applying objective and subjective statements toward a musical performance. Students will apply this knowledge of criticism by writing a critique of a performance. *Ideally this lesson should be used in conjunction with attending a live performance.*

MATERIAL(S)

- CD or DVD recordings of *Rigoletto*
- **"Objective/Subjective" Chart** *(see following page)*
- Various reviews from newspapers and magazines of opera, concerts, musical, theater, movies, and other media. *{not in Opera Box}*

* *Depending on your particular subject area, you may choose to focus on different aspects of reviewing. For example, a music class might choose to limit themselves and only look at musical reviews.*

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) Play an excerpt from *Rigoletto*. A suggested excerpt would be any complete act. If time does not allow this, start from the beginning of Act I, the second scene of Act I, or the finale from No. 17, "Ah più non ragiono."

(2) Ask students to make objective and factual statements about the performance. Chart and categorize the comments as a class into two categories, objective and subjective. Discussion points:
   – Differences between objective and subjective statements
   – Which is easier to make, subjective or objective statements?
   – Which type of statements provides more information about a performance for a potential listener?

(3) Explain that the role of any critic (and all musicians!) is to balance the differences between the two. A possible extension for this lesson could be to have students conduct research on the professional critic.

(4) Assign students to find and read three reviews from a newspaper or magazine. Students are then to analyze the reviews, identifying the subjective and objective attributes. They will put their answers on the "Objective/Subjective" Chart.

(5) Students are to share findings with the class. Question students about their findings.

(6) In class, have students write a review about a common, singular topic. For example, have everyone write about passing in the halls between periods. Discuss the subjective and objective elements involved.

(7) Assign students to write a review outside of class. This review could be the performance the class will attend.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Evaluation shall include the successful completion of the reviews found, analyzed and written. Class participation should also be included.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

Encourage students to write a review about a live performance of another ensemble within the school or a professional group. A group of students could also review a new movie. Also, if possible, inquire if some of these reviews could be included in a school or local newspaper.

Applying Value to Musical Performance Worksheet
Objective/Subjective Chart

NAME _____

Lesson 3

DIRECTIONS

After listening to a piece of music, create a list of five (5) objective statements regarding the performance itself, the piece performed, and the performers. Then make a list of five (5) subjective statements regarding the same criteria.

The overall performance		The quality of the work(s) performed		The performers	
OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
1		1		1	
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4		4		4	
5		5		5	

title of lesson

Lesson 4: Acting scenes from *Rigoletto*

objective(s)

Students will act out scenes from *Rigoletto* to demonstrate the importance of acting and how it relates to the libretto and the drama.

material(s)

- libretto of *Rigoletto*
- **"Acting Evaluation" Worksheet** *(see following page)*

procedure(s)

(1) Students are to read all or a portion of the Rigoletto libretto. Some suggested excerpts for this activity could be the Act III quartet, "Un dì, se ben rammentomi" (No. 16) page 14 (in libretto), the final duet of the opera, "V'ho ingannato" (No. 20) page 18, or the duet of the Duke and Gilda, "Signor nè principe io lo vorrei" (No. 8) page 7, in Act I.

(2) In small groups, students will act out one of these selections of the opera. Encourage students to pay close attention to the physical gesture that can be added to the text. Exact reading of text must also be included (no ad lib will be acceptable). Students should carefully read each line and attempt to apply physical gestures where ever possible. Allowances may be made for students to use note cards and "props."

(3) Each group will perform their selected scene for the rest of the class serving as an audience. The class should take notes on the effectiveness of each performance. Students should be able to make specific comments regarding physical movement and vocal articulation. Discuss the rubric prior to performances. Remarks should be written on the "Acting Evaluation" worksheet *(see the following page).*

(4) After all performances are completed, have a class discussion as to the effectiveness of each one.

assessment(s)

Value should be given to quality of the reviews of peers, class participation in discussion and acting performance.

additional comment(s)

This lesson can be taught following various activities that may involve the study of drama and history of acting. This lesson can be maximized when used as reinforcement of prior activities.

Videotaping the performances and presenting them on a public access or school channel may provide valuable public relations.

Acting Evaluation

Lesson 4

NAME OF OBSERVER _____

NAMES OF PERFORMERS _____

_____

_____

DIRECTIONS

Closely observe your peers as they perform scenes from *Rigoletto.* Look for the following elements in their performance. Be consistent and fair with each group.

- What was the single most effective gesture used by the group?

- Did the group "follow" each line of the text? Did they physically reinforce everything they were saying?

- Did the actors make eye contact with each other and/or the audience?

- Was the voice of the actors used to create variety and emotion in the scene?

- Give one suggestion to the group to improve their performance.

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 5: Translating "Caro nome" into other genres

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand the characteristics of an aria and experiment translating those characteristics into other genres.

MATERIAL(S)

- CD recording of "Caro nome" (*Rigoletto,* Act I, No. 9)
- Text of "Caro nome" (libretto P. 8)

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) The class will listen and follow along with a recorded excerpt of "Caro nome."

(2) Discuss the following points:
  – Does the music relate to the text?
  – How (or how not) does it relate?
  – Does the content of the text have meaning in today's society?
  – Is there a popular song that deals with the same emotions?

(3) Students are to take the text of "Caro nome" and put it into another genre. For example, students may turn the text into a rap song, or country-western song.

(4) Students are to perform their work with the others in the class serving as the audience.

(5) Discuss as a class which performances were successful and why or why not. Include discussion of the effectiveness of the text separate from the music.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Final class performance should be evaluated on completeness of text and its understandability. The audience can provide feedback by determining the most creative and the most effective. Value should be placed on class participation.

LESSON PLAN

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 6: Communicating multiple ideas through music

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will understand how music, through the use of counterpoint, can be used to convey text and emotions from multiple characters simultaneously on stage.

MATERIAL(S)

- CD of Act III quartet (No. 16)
- LIBRETTO of *Rigoletto* P. 14
- "**Communicating multiple ideas through music**" **Worksheet** (see following page)
- Various materials to use as instruments (instruments can range from everyday objects found in the classroom, to homemade instruments that students make, to actual instruments that the students normally play) *{not in Opera Box}*

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) Students are to read the libretto to the Act III quartet (No. 16) from *Rigoletto* aloud. Assign one student for each character. First read each character individually then simultaneously. For example, for the first reading, one person will follow another, similar to a stage play. The second reading will be together, similar to how Verdi composed the quartet, but without being sung. Encourage the student readers to add some inflection to their characters.

(2) Discuss with the class if they can understand the text and follow the meaning when spoken simultaneously.

(3) Play the Act III quartet (No. 16) excerpt for the class. Discuss with the students if they notice a difference in the clarity of the ideas being conveyed when spoken versus when being sung. Suggest to the students that, even though four separate characters are conveying four separate ideas, the music is one complete unified piece. The musical term for this is counterpoint. (This technique was not unique to Verdi and had been used for hundreds of years prior to Verdi throughout Europe. It is still an important technique for today's composers. This is an exceptional example of Verdi using a traditional technique for great dramatic effect.)

(4) Divide students into groups of four. Each member of the group is to represent one character from the quartet. As a group, the students are to create four individual lines of accompaniment, one for each character. The group will need to consider each line of accompaniment as it will need to fit with the other lines to create one unified piece. In other words, the counterpoint of their composition will need to be presented in such a manner that all four parts can be performed simultaneously with the audience being able to understand each line.

* *The students' compositions need not be entirely melodic. The lines could be spoken in a rhythmic manner, along with some rhythmic accompaniment, that allows each line to be heard. The compositions should encompass what the students can create in the time allotted. Exposure and experience with composition and improvisation will greatly affect the students work.*

(5) Discuss layout of rubric with students prior to performances. Each group will perform its composition with the rest of the class serving as an audience. Every audience member will fill out the "**Creating multiple ideas through music**" **Rubric** ranking each performance. *(see following page).*

ASSESSMENT(S)

Students will perform their original quartet in front of the class. Audience is to determine the strengths of each performance in various categories, such as most understandable, most creative, etc. Successful completion of this lesson will be a performance of the quartet and an evaluation for each group that performs. Value should also be given to class participation.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

Do not be discouraged by the difficulty of this lesson. Students' struggling to obtain the objective is part of the lesson. After spending time trying to create an acceptable performance (regardless if they achieve one or not), students should gain an appreciation of Verdi's compositional skills.

A variation of this lesson could be for the groups to create text for their own quartet or to have a quartet of students provide instrumental accompaniment for a quartet of singers/performers.

"Creating multiple ideas through music" Rubric

Lesson 6 NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

Observe each performing group, paying close attention to the overall effect of the composition. Be fair and consistent when evaluating each performance.

NAMES OF PERFORMERS _____

A Creativity of accompaniment

_____ 4 Highly unique accompaniment is used in an exceptional manner, which enhances the text and does not distract the listener.

_____ 3 Very unique accompaniment used effectively, which allows the text to be heard and does not distract the listener.

_____ 2 Unique accompaniment used, allowing some of the text to be heard, some distraction to the listener.

_____ 1 Not unique accompaniment, was distracting, which caused most of the text not to be heard and much distraction to the listener.

B Clarity of text/identification of characters

_____ 4 Text is exceptionally clear with each character being clearly identified.

_____ 3 Text is very clear, each character is identified.

_____ 2 Text is clear, characters are vaguely identified.

_____ 1 Text is not clear, characters are not identified.

C Effectiveness of the drama and performance

_____ 4 Drama connects with audience in a powerful and meaningful manner, performance has much energy and "life."

_____ 3 Drama connects with audience in a meaningful manner, performance has energy.

_____ 2 Drama connects with audience, performance is acceptable.

_____ 1 Drama does not connect with audience, lack of meaning and "lifeless."

TITLE OF LESSON

Lesson 7: Interpretations of "Caro nome" and "La donna è mobile"

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students will learn to compare and contrast musical elements from two recordings of "Caro nome" and "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto.*

MATERIAL(S)

- Both CD recordings of *Rigoletto*
- **Interpretations of "Caro nome" and "La donna è mobile" Worksheet** *(see following page)*
- Text of "Caro nome" (p. 8 in libretto)
- Music of "Caro nome" (vocal score p. 94, full score p. 155)

PROCEDURE(S)

(1) Play the Daniela Dessì, EMI CD recording of "Caro nome" (disc 1, track 16) for the class. (* See Additional Comments below.) Students are to write down five facts and five opinions of the performance on the "Interpretations of 'Caro nome' " worksheet *(see following page).* You may need to prepare your students for this lesson by defining fact and opinion especially when analyzing music. Ask students if they think there will be a noticeable difference between this recording and the next.

(2) Play the Renata Scotto, BMG Classics CD recording of "Caro nome" (disc 1, track 5) for the class. Again, students are to write down five facts and five opinions of this performance.

(3) As a class discuss the similarities and differences between the two recordings. Suggested topics for discussion:

- Determine the artistic merits of the two performances
- Personal preferences between the two
- Why there are differences (the singers are performing the same written music)
- Which recording is more dramatic, musical, authentic, etc.

ASSESSMENT(S)

Play both performances of "La donna è mobile" from Act III (EMI recording, disc 2, track 12 and BMG recording, disc 2, track 4, libretto p. 15, vocal score No. 15, p. 172, and full score p. 313). Students are to create a list of five facts and five opinions for each performance. Students are then to write a persuasive essay describing the merits of one performance over the other. Their two lists of facts and opinions should be used in the essay.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

* Depending on the musical level (and musical memory) of your students, a variation of this lesson could be to include a copy of the text from the libretto, vocal score, or full score. This may help students focus on the music and notice the subtle details between the performances.

"Interpretations of 'Caro nome' and 'La donna è mobile' " Worksheet

Lesson 7

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

Write down five facts and five opinions after you listen to the first performance of "Caro nome." Follow the same procedure after listening to the second performance. Remember that facts are objective. For example, a fact is, "one plus one equals two." However, opinions are subjective, such as "I liked the first performance because it went fast."

first performance		second performance	
FACT	OPINION	FACT	OPINION
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5

"Interpretations of 'Caro nome' and 'La donna è mobile' " Worksheet

Lesson 7

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

Write down five facts and five opinions after you listen to the first performance of "La donna è mobile." Follow the same procedure after listening to the second performance. Remember that facts are objective. For example, a fact is, "one plus one equals two." However, opinions are subjective, such as "I liked the first performance because it went fast."

first performance		second performance	
FACT	OPINION	FACT	OPINION
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5

title of lesson

Lesson 8: Verdi's musical choices

objective(s)

Students will develop skills to identify the musical characteristics Verdi uses during the finale of Act III of *Rigoletto.*

material(s)

- CD (or DVD) of Act III of *Rigoletto*
- FULL or VOCAL SCORE of Act III (No. 15 to end)
- **"Verdi's musical choices" Teacher Key and Worksheet** *(see following pages)*

procedure(s)

(1) Give **"Verdi's Musical Choices" Worksheet** to class. While listening (or watching) to Act III, students will write down short phrases describing each element of each section. Make sure all students can define every term on worksheet. Example responses are given in the **Teacher Key**.

(2) Listen (or watch) all of Act III. Give verbal announcements defining each section for the class.

(3) Break down each section by listening again to Act III, but stop for discussion after each section. The focus should remain on the fundamentals of music. Students should be encouraged to use correct terminology. * *For more advanced students, the full or vocal score could be used for a deeper discussion of Verdi's techniques.*

(4) Collect worksheet from each student.

assessment(s)

Value will be given for class participation and acceptable and legible answers on worksheet.

additional comment(s)

This lesson can be applied to other sections of the opera or other works of music.

Lesson 8

NAME _____

TEACHER KEY

DIRECTIONS

As you listen to (or view) Act III of *Rigoletto,* identify the musical elements used in each section. Use the chart below to describe how the various elements are used to create drama and momentum. Your teacher will verbally describe each section for you. Page numbers refer to the vocal score. * *Keep in mind that the answers in the articulation row can be interpreted in various ways. Use your best judgment when accepting responses.*

SCENE	NO. 15–P. 172	P. 173–BOTTOM	NO. 16–P. 177	NO. 17–P. 195
CHARACTER	Rigoletto, Gilda, Sparafucile	Duke	Duke, Gilda, Maddalena, Rigoletto	Rigoletto, Gilda, Maddalena, Sparafucile
VOCAL RANGE	Baritone, Soprano, Bass	Tenor	Tenor, Soprano, Contralto, Baritone	Baritone, Soprano, Contralto, Bass
TEMPO	*Adagio*	*Allegretto*	*Allegro*	*Allegro*
METER	Common time	In 3 (3/8)	Common time	Common time
DYNAMICS	*piano*	*pp* to *ff*	*piano*	*piano (estremamente)*
ARTICULATION	*Legato*	*Con brio, marcato, leggero*	*legato* – Duke; detacted – Maddalena; lyrical – Gilda; stately and quiet – Rigoletto	Soft and long sustained tones, quick upper woodwind interjections
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES	Recitative			

SCENE	NO. 18–P. 201	NO. 19–P. 219	NO. 20–P. 224	P. 225–TOP
CHARACTER	Gilda, Maddalena, Sparafucile	Rigoletto, Sparafucile, Duke	Rigoletto	Rigoletto, Gilda
VOCAL RANGE	Soprano, Contralto, Bass	Baritone, Bass, Tenor	Baritone	Baritone, Soprano
TEMPO	*Allegro*	*Allegro, Allegretto (Duke)*	*Moderato*	*Poco più mosso, Andante*
METER	4/4	4/4; In 3 – Duke	4/4	4/4
DYNAMICS	*piano*	*piano*	*piano* to *fortissimo*	*piano* to *fortissimo*
ARTICULATION	Long sustained tone, rising and falling, loud, crashing, violent	Long sustained tones	Short, quick rhythmic bursts	*Legato,* lyrical lines over a quarter/eighth note accompaniment
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES	Articulations are describing a storm.	Clock striking twelve		Extreme dynamics are used to emphasize the extremes in emotion.

Verdi's Musical Choices for Drama

Lesson 8

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS

As you listen (or view) to Act III or *Rigoletto,* identify the musical elements used in each section. Use the chart below to describe how the various elements are used to create drama and momentum. Your teacher will verbally describe each section for you. Page numbers refer to the vocal score. .

SCENE	NO. 15–P. 172	P. 173–BOTTOM	NO. 16–P. 177	NO. 17–P. 195
CHARACTER	Rigoletto, Gilda, Sparafucile			
VOCAL RANGE	Baritone, Soprano, Bass			
TEMPO	*Adagio*	*Allegretto*	*Allegro*	*Allegro*
METER	4/4			
DYNAMICS	*piano*			
ARTICULATION				
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES	Recitative			

SCENE	NO. 18–P. 201	NO. 19–P. 219	NO. 20–P. 224	P. 225–TOP
CHARACTER				
VOCAL RANGE				
TEMPO	*Allegro*	*Allegro, Allegretto (Duke)*	*Moderato*	*Poco più mosso, Andante*
METER				
DYNAMICS				
ARTICULATION				
OTHER MUSICAL FEATURES				

Create your own Opera Box Lesson Plan and send it to us.

Opera Box Lesson Plan

NAME(S)	SCHOOL
	PHONE/EMAIL
TITLE OF LESSON	CLASS AND GRADE LEVEL

OBJECTIVE(S)

MATERIAL(S)

PROCEDURE(S)

ASSESSMENT(S)

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

PLEASE INCLUDE ANY ORIGINAL MATERIALS, IF POSSIBLE.

Minnesota OPERA

Rigoletto

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
after *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo (1832)

World premiere at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice
March 11, 1851

Sung in Italian

Cast of Characters

Rigoletto, *court jester to the Duke*.....baritone
Duke of Mantua.....tenor
Gilda, *Rigoletto's daughter*.....soprano
Sparafucile, *a hired assassin*.....bass
Maddalena, *his sister*.....mezzo-soprano
Borsa, *a courtier*.....tenor
Marullo, *a nobleman*.....baritone
Count Monterone.....bass
Count Ceprano.....bass
Countess Ceprano.....soprano
Giovanna, *Gilda's duenna*.....mezzo-soprano
Page.....soprano
Court Usher.....baritone

Noblemen, ladies, guards

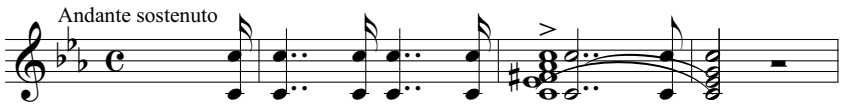
Setting: In and around Mantua during the 16th century

Synopsis and Musical Excerpts

PRELUDE

The opening bars establish a "curse" motif that recurs throughout the opera.

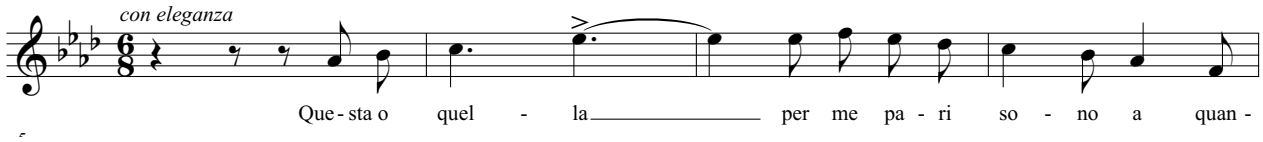
(1) "curse" theme (orchestra)

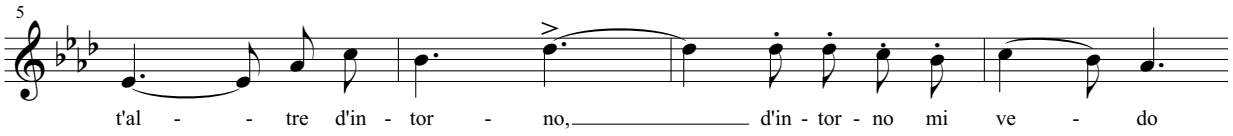


ACT I

Scene one A party is in progress at the ducal palace. The Duke privately discloses to Borsa his infatuation with a young girl he observed at a local church. In the same breath he professes his desire for the Countess Ceprano, and Borsa gently chides him for his wayward manner toward women. The Duke hardly denies the charge – he simply can't help himself when surrounded by so many pretty faces.

(2) questa o quella (duca)



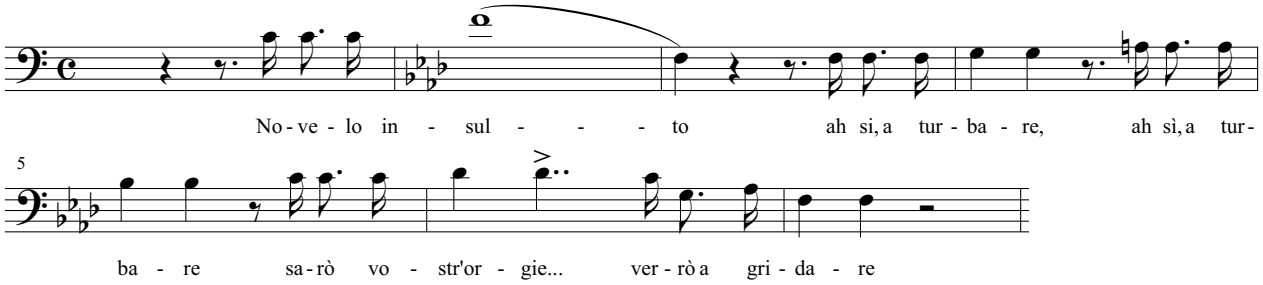


TRANSLATION: IF A WOMAN SHOULD HAPPEN TO CATCH MY EYE, IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO LOVE HER.

From across the room, the court jester, Rigoletto, mocks Count Ceprano as the Duke makes an advance on his wife. Tired of Rigoletto's acid tongue, the courtiers decide to teach him a lesson. Marullo has discovered the jester is keeping a mistress whom they decide to abduct and present to the Duke.

Count Monterone storms in and accuses the Duke of seducing his young daughter. Again, Rigoletto mocks the grieving father; in return he receives a curse – a curse the jester takes very seriously.

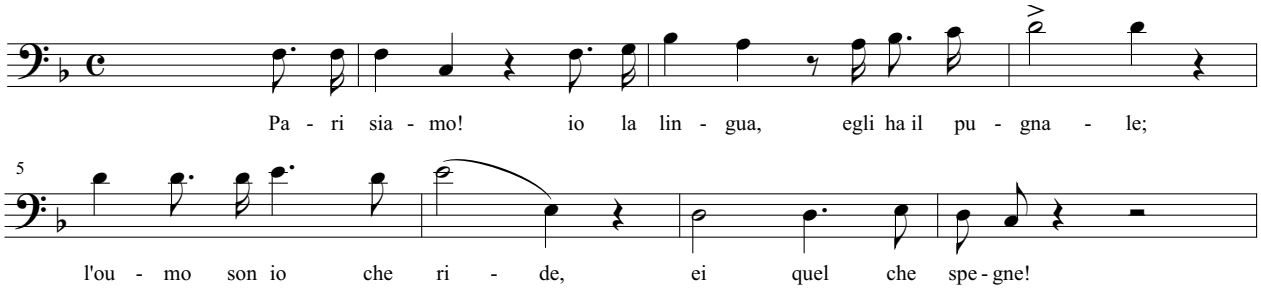
(3) NOVELO INSULTO (MONTERONE)



TRANSLATION: YOU DARE INSULT ME! I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE TO PLAGUE YOUR BANQUETS. I'LL COME AND SHOUT HERE, I WILL TORMENT YOU…

Scene two On his way home, Rigoletto encounters Sparafucile, a Burgundian whom he soon learns is also a hired assassin. He offers his services, and though Rigoletto declines for the moment, he begins to consider revenge against the courtiers, who treat him cruelly.

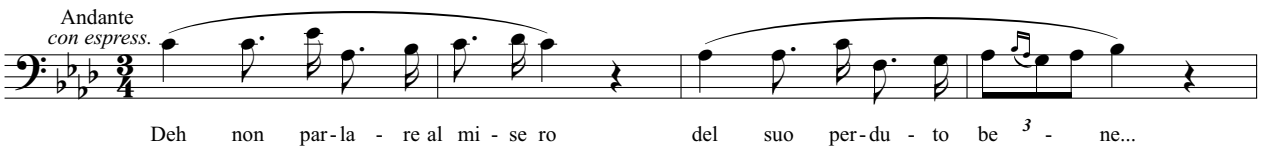
(4) PARI SIAMO (RIGOLETTO)

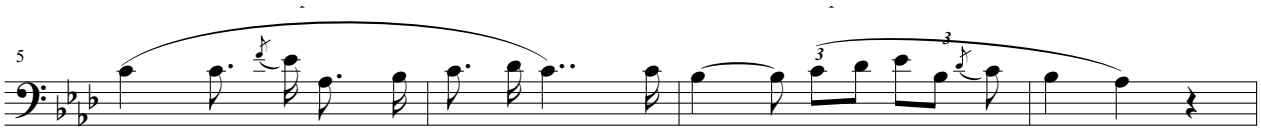


TRANSLATION: WE ARE EQUALS. I HAVE LANGUAGE, HE HAS A DAGGER, I AM THE MAN WHO MOCKS MEN, HE'S THE ONE WHO KILLS THEM…

Once at home, Rigoletto revels in his one secret joy, his daughter Gilda. To protect her from evil, he demands she remain at home, only to go out for church. Gilda asks about her dead mother, but Rigoletto discloses very few details.

(5) DUET: DEH NON PARLARE AL MISERO (RIGOLETTO, THEN GILDA)

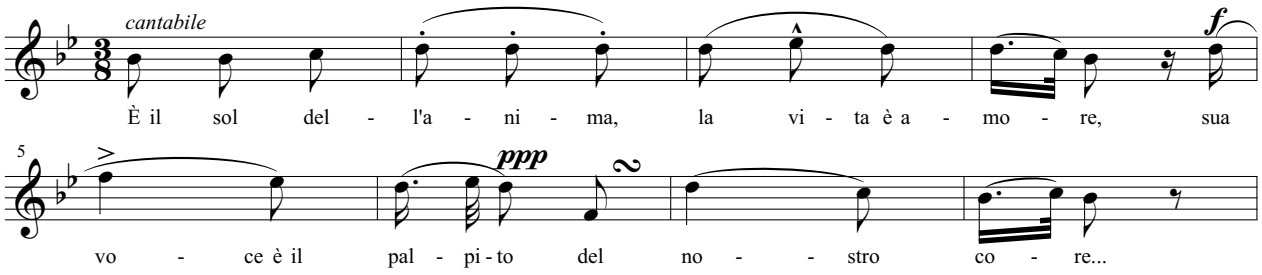




TRANSLATION: AH, DO NOT DEMAND OF ONE SO SAD, WHAT WAS HIS FORMER HAPPINESS. SHE HAD AN ANGEL'S PITY, A PITY FOR MY SUFFERING.

Though very dutiful, Gilda does not disclose she has recently met a handsome young man and as soon as Rigoletto leaves, she encounters her paramour (really the Duke disguised as a poor student) in the garden. They profess their love.

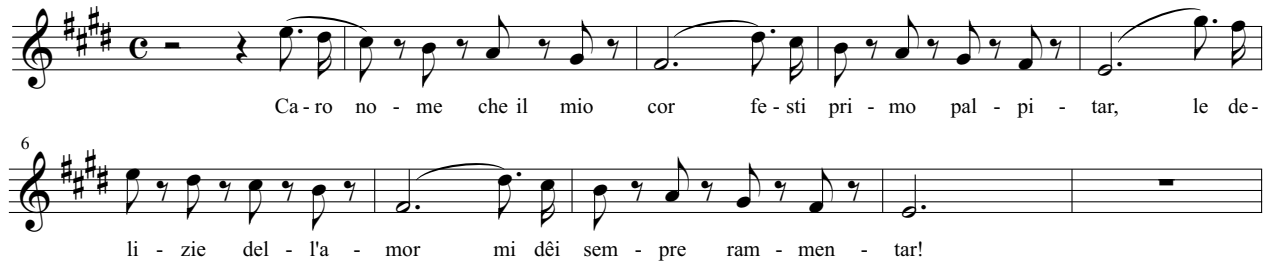
(6) È IL SOL DEL'ANIMA (DUCA, THEN GILDA)



TRANSLATION: LOVE IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE, LOVE IS OUR SUNLIGHT. HIS VOICE IS HEARD WHEN THE HEART IS BEATING.

After "Gualtier" departs, Gilda revels in the memory of his name.

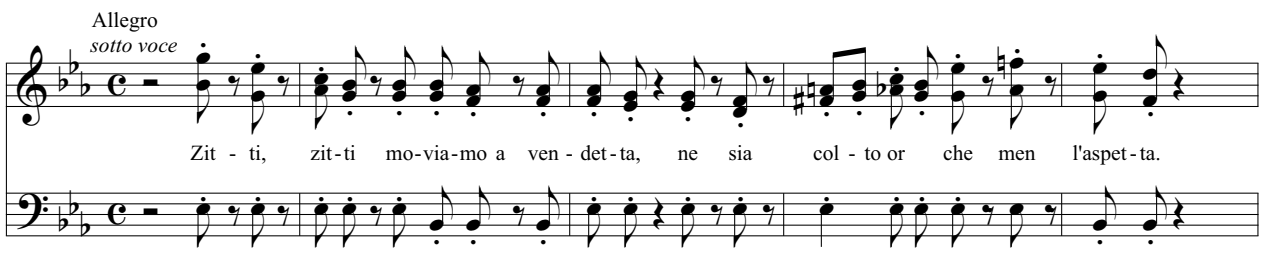
(7) CARO NOME (GILDA)



TRANSLATION: DEAREST NAME OF MY FIRST LOVE, I'LL REMEMBER TILL I DIE. ALL THE PLEASURE THAT YOU GAVE, ALL THE LONGINGS AND THE SIGHS.

Fearing something is amiss, Rigoletto returns, only to find Marullo in the street. The courtier quickly covers his tracks – a plan is underfoot to abduct the Countess Ceprano, who lives nearby, and present her to the Duke. Rigoletto is only too happy to partake in a joke on the hated Count and agrees to steady the ladder. Marullo not only masks the jester to match the other bandits, but covers his eyes and ears so that he is unable to discover they are really at the window of his own home. Rigoletto realizes he has been duped only after the courtiers have managed to spirit his daughter away.

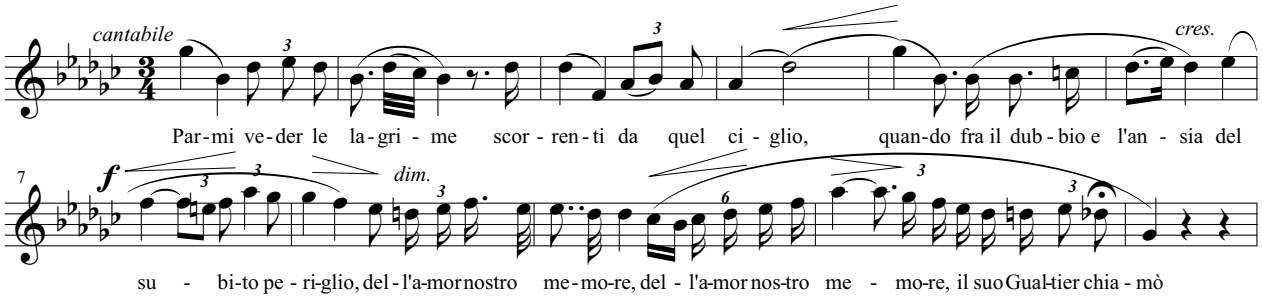
(8) ZITTI, ZITTI (MARULLO, BORSA, CEPRANO, CORO)



TRANSLATION: SOFTLY, SOFTLY WE MOVE IN TO GET HER. NOW'S THE MOMENT FOR OUR VENDETTA.

Back at the palace, the Duke is distressed, for he witnessed the abduction of his lover and promises vengeance.

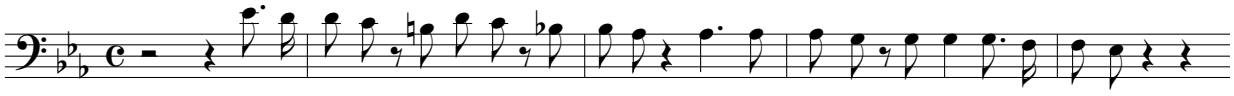
(9) PARMI VEDER E LAGRIME (DUCA)



TRANSLATION: SOMEWHERE I SEE YOU CRYING, AND CALLING IN DESPERATION. WEEPING IN DOUBT AND TERROR, YOU FACE AN UNKNOWN DANGER. MAYBE MY NAME OCCURS TO YOU, YOU CALL ON YOUR GUALTIER.

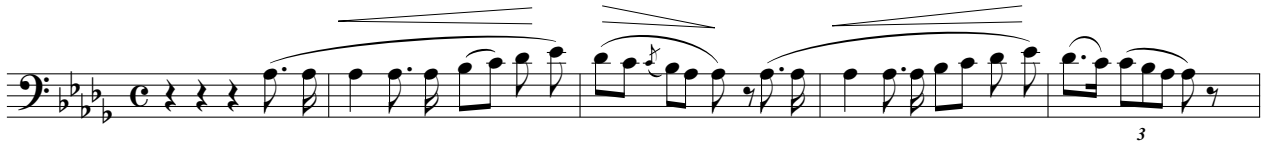
He is only too delighted when his courtiers return with Gilda, whom he quickly ushers into his private apartments. Rigoletto arrives presently, feigning to take the joke in good stride while fervently looking for Gilda. The noblemen are surprised to learn she is his daughter, but still refuse to help. In desperation, Rigoletto unleashes his anger, then tries to elicit their sympathy, but to no avail.

(10A) CORTIGIANI, VIL RAZZA DANNATA (RIGOLETTO)



TRANSLATION: HEARTLESS BASTARDS, YOU LIARS, YOU COWARDS. HOW MUCH MONEY DID MY DAUGHTER BRING YOU?

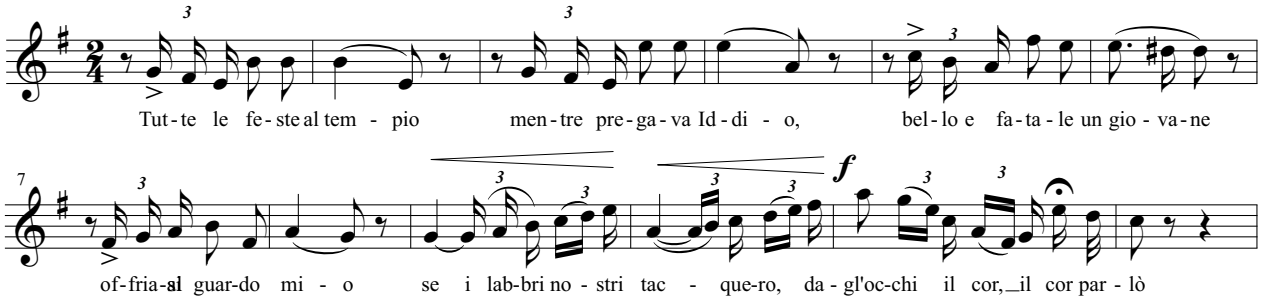
(10B) MIEI SIGNORI PERDONO (RIGOLETTO)



TRANSLATION: O MY FRIENDS, I AM SORRY, FORGIVE ME. I'M AN OLD MAN, I NEED MY DAUGHTER.

Gilda soon emerges from the room disheveled, and runs to her father's arms.

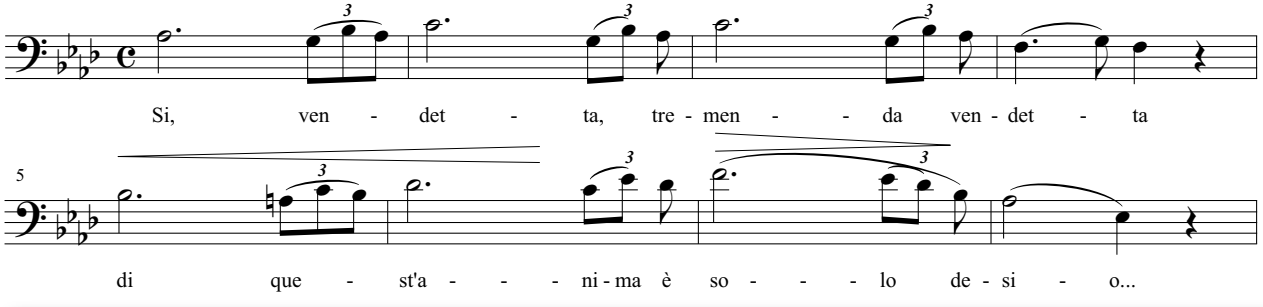
(11) TUTTE LE FESTE AL TEMPIO (GILDA, THEN RIGOLETTO)



TRANSLATION: I WAS IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY, AS IS MY SACRED DUTY. HE TURNED AROUND AND GAZED AT ME. HE HAD A FATAL BEAUTY. SILENTLY AS OUR EYES WOULD MEET, OUR HEARTS WERE JOINED IN ONE.

As Rigoletto consoles his daughter, Monterone is led to his execution, and the jester promises to avenge both of their daughters' disgrace.

(12) SI, VENDETTA (RIGOLETTO, THEN GILDA)

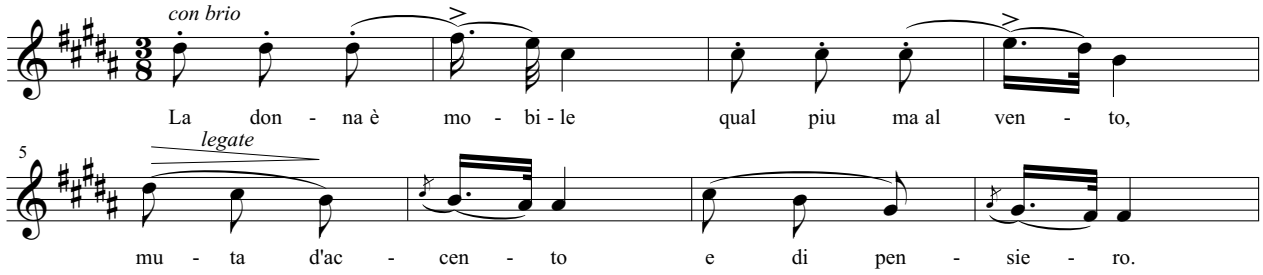


TRANSLATION: YES, REVENGE, REVENGE IS COMING. GIVE ME A CHANCE, I'LL MAKE THINGS EVEN.

ACT III

On the edge of town, Rigoletto and Gilda lie in wait. Gilda still professes her love for the Duke, so Rigoletto plans to show her exactly what kind of man he really is. They observe the Duke entering Sparafucile's tavern.

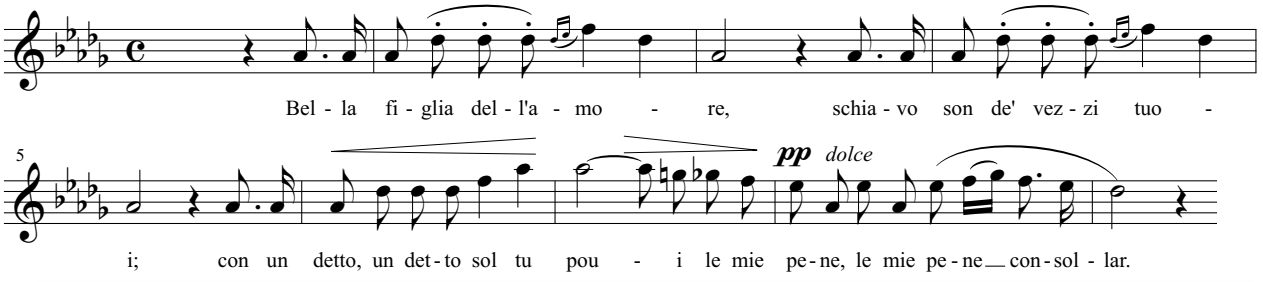
(13) LA DONNA È MOBILE (DUCA)



TRANSLATION: WOMEN ABANDON US. WHY SHOULD IT HURT THEM IF WE DESERT THEM WHEN IT'S ALL OVER?

As the Duke makes an amorous advance on the assassin's seductive sister, Maddalena, Gilda's heart is broken.

(14) QUARTET: UN DÌ, SE BEN RAMMENTOMI…BELLA FIGLIA DELL'AMORE (DUCA, THEN MADDALENA, RIGOLETTO, GILDA)

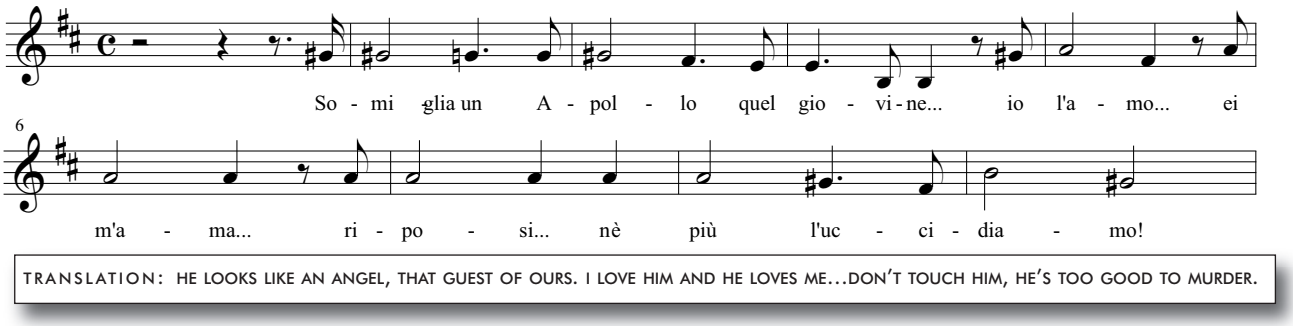


TRANSLATION: IF YOU WANT A FAITHFUL LOVER, HE IS WAITING TO EMBRACE YOU. YOU CAN DRIVE HIS BITTER CARES AWAY, AND HE PROMISES TO BE TRUE.

Rigoletto instructs his daughter to go to Verona (disguised as a man for safety), where he will join her the next day. He then makes the final arrangements with Sparafucile for the Duke's murder.

Maddalena has grown fond of her charge and strikes a deal with her brother – the next person who knocks on their door will be killed and his body substituted for the Duke's. Gilda, who has returned, overhears the plan.

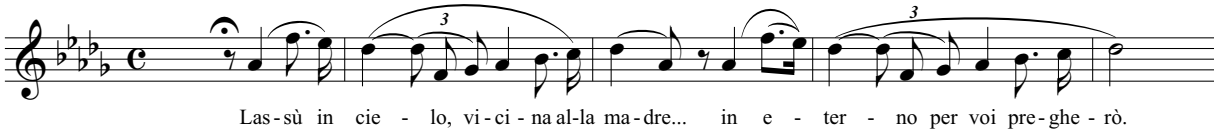
(15) TRIO: SOMIGLIA UN APOLLO (MADDALENA, SPARAFUCILE, GILDA, CORO)



TRANSLATION: HE LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL, THAT GUEST OF OURS. I LOVE HIM AND HE LOVES ME...DON'T TOUCH HIM, HE'S TOO GOOD TO MURDER.

Overwrought with grief, Gilda knocks on the door and is stabbed. Sparafucile stuffs her body into a sack and gives it to Rigoletto upon his return at the appointed hour. As Rigoletto drags the bag to the river for disposal, he learns the Duke has not died, and to his horror, discovers he has been carrying his mortally wounded daughter.

(16) V'HO INGANNATO...LASSÙ IN CIELO (GILDA)



TRANSLATION: AH, SOON, IN HEAVEN, WHEN I'M NEAR TO MY MOTHER, IN ETERNITY I'LL PRAY FOR YOU.

KEY AND DETAILS

Scene
The identifying term is the first words of each scene and the relating number. The page numbers given are related to the Schirmer vocal score. (VS)

Musical Description
The terms used here are the tempo markings along with the metronome markings in parentheses. The KEY given is decided by the tonality at the beginning of the scene. Verdi occasionally shifts tonality and changes key. Significant changes here are noted. Verdi also put emphasis on certain keys with the drama leading the charge. Time signatures are also given.

Orchestration
Comments given here are general in nature and are intended to give the listener some insight into the use of the orchestra. This is another element Verdi uses to tell the story. Descriptions are not from the score, but suggest what we know about the use of the orchestra at that time.

Theme
Identified here are significant melodies used and sometimes reused by various characters. Names given are general in nature.

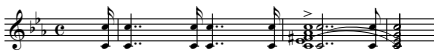
Drama
This is the basic story line. Main characters names are used in shorthand, i.e. Rigoletto = R, Gilda = G, the Duke = D.

Related Information
These comments included are interesting facts about Verdi and *Rigoletto* in a larger context, beyond the work itself.

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

PRELUDE AND ACT I, SCENE ONE

Scene	Prelude (NO. 1) → Vocal score P. 1	Introduzione VS PP. 2-3	Ballata (NO. 2) VS PP. 5-8
Musical Description	*Andante sostenuto* (♩=66) KEY: C minor	*Allegro con brio* (𝅗𝅥=112) KEY: A♭ major	*Allegretto* (♩=80) KEY: A♭ major
Orchestration	Some critics have said this opera is poorly orchestrated. However, Verdi creates a sinister atmosphere with R and Sparafucile and grief with R and G.	*Banda* (offstage band) Verdi's use of *banda* in this instance is of clear dramatic intension. This was a new development for Verdi.	Strings with simple woodwind interludes. This is reflective of D's shallow philosophy of love.
Themes	Opening is the brass playing the "curse" theme. R will sing this later in the act. 	The music here is more to create an atmosphere instead of conveying a specific emotion.	
Drama	This is not a full blown overture that Verdi had composed for his previous operas. This reflects the compactness of the drama.	D states his interest in the yet unnamed G.	D sings about his love for pretty girls.
Related Information	Early 19th-century opera was constructed around the expanded moment. The story was propelled by recitative with the characters singing arias (and stopping the action) to comment on the story. With *Rigoletto,* Verdi keeps the story moving throughout (with one small exception). This was uniquely modern among other Verdi works.		

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

Act I, Scene One

Scene	"Partite?… Crudele!…" (NO. 3) VS PP. 9–13	"Tutto è festa, tutto è gioia…" (NO. 4) VS PP. 13–33	"Oh tu che la festa audace hai turbato." (NO. 5); VS P.. 34–35 *Continuation of Stretts and Introduction*
Musical Description	*Tempo di Minuetto* (♩=88) KEY: A♭ major to C minor to Perigordino: C major	*Allegro con brio* (𝅗𝅥=112) KEY: A♭ major	*Moderato* (♩=80) KEY: A♭ to C major
Orchestration			*banda,* orchestra, chorus
Themes	The music used comes from the music from the party. A minuet and perigordino are dances that would be common at that time.	Return of *banda* music; orchestra expands this music melodically, harmonically, and dynamically.	This scene is a *recitative.* There is no formal melody. Monterone sings a variation of the "curse" theme.
Drama	D is making advances on Countess Ceprano.	Discovery of R's mistress, coutiers want to take revenge on R, but continue to dance.	Monterone is received by R with grotesque parody of regal ceremony.
Related Information	This is similar to what Mozart did in the final scene of *Don Giovanni.* This was a score that Verdi knew very well.		

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

ACT I, SCENES ONE AND TWO

Scene	NO. 3 *continued* → VS PP. 36–39	VS PP. 40–50	SCENE TWO "Quel vecchio maledivami!" (NO. 6) VS P. 51– *(Sometimes erroneously labeled as Act II.)*
Musical Description	*Andante sostenuto* (𝅗𝅥=80) KEY: F minor 4/4 time	*Vivace* (𝅗𝅥=80) KEY: D♭ minor 3/4 time	*Andante mosso* ♩=66) KEY: F major (with much modulating)
Orchestration	Full orchestra with continuous sixteenth notes	high strings: tremolo low strings: unison voices	Muted cello and double bass is considered a tense orchestral color. There is irony with the carefree melody they play.
Themes	Continuous pattern of sixteenth notes, moving chromatically give a feeling of rising tension. "Curse" motive on P. 38		R sings "curse" theme (subdued).
Drama	Monterone curses R. Coutiers tell R to stop. *climax of scene*	Coutiers continue to tell R to stop or face the consequences.	R meets Sparafucile and learns that he is a hired assassin.
Related Information		This is the first and only time in the opera the action stops.	This is a wonderful manipulation of two forms: *recitative* and *aria.*

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

ACT I, SCENE TWO

Scene	"Deh non parlare al misero" (NO. 7) → vs pp. 56–58	vs p. 59	vs p. 63
Musical Description	*Adagio* *recitative*	*Allegro vivo* (♩=132) KEY: C major	*Andante* (♩=58) KEY: A♭ major 3/4 time, triplets
Orchestration	strings, chromatic movement	Full orchestra, brilliant, cheery, reflective of the happiness for R to see G.	Strings with woodwind chords
Themes	R sings "curse" theme	Verdi uses diminusion as a compositional technique. The four-measure phrase is cut to two measures.	Triplet, waltz feeling give sense of remembering the past.
Drama	R compares Sparfucile and himself as similar murderers. Then R laments about his life.	R comes home to G.	G has asked R about her mother.
Related Information		Verdi is famous for his father/daughter duets. This is a great example.	

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

ACT I , SCENE TWO

Scene	NO. 7 *continued* VS P. 70	VS P. 72	VS PP. 74–78	"Signor nè principe io lo vorrei" (NO. 8); VS PP. 74–78
Musical Description	KEY: A major	*Allegro moderato assai* (♩=96) KEY: E♭ major	*Più mosso* (♩=138) *recitative* with B♭ (V chord) pedal	*Allegro assai moderato* (♩=88) KEY: starts in E♭, modulates to G major and B♭ major
Orchestration				
Themes		Verdi, again, uses diminution. At the *Tempo I* (VS P. 75), the phrase is doubled from the phrase at *Allegro moderato assai* (VS P. 72).		
Drama	G says she is lonely, Giovanna enters.	R urges Giovanna to protect G.	R hears someone outside, (it's D). G doesn't understand his suspicion.	G tells Giovanna that she is afraid to tell R about D. D comes and asks G to tell him that she loves him.
Related Information				

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

ACT I , SCENE TWO

Scene	NO. 8 *continued* → VS P. 84	VS PP. 90–93	"Caro nome" (NO. 9) VS PP. 94–99	Finale "Zitti, zitti moviamo a vendetta" (NO. 10); V.S. PP. 100–113
Musical Description	*Andantino* (♩=92) KEY: B♭ major 3/8 time	*Vivacissimo* (𝅗𝅥=132) KEY: D♭ major cut time	*Allegro assasi moderato* (♩=88) KEY: starts in D♭, E major common time	*Andante assai mosso* (♩=66) KEY: A♭ major common time
Orchestration			Delicate flutes with sustained woodwinds is reflective of G's mood.	
Themes				R sings "curse" theme
Drama	"Finally, our dreams have been realized."		G sings about "Gualtier Maldè," her first love. The chorus of courtiers think that G is R's mistress.	R is fooled by the coutiers and is blindfolded. They abduct G. R eventually discovers this.
Related Information			This is a very popular soprano aria.	

End of Act I

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

ACT II

Scene	"Parmi vender le largrime" (NO. 11); VS PP. 114–118	VS PP. 119–129	VS PP. 130–137	"Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (NO. 12); VS PP. 138–146
Musical Description	*Agitato assai* (𝅗𝅥=100) KEY: G♭ major recit. in 4/4; aria in 3/4	*Allegro vivo* (𝅗𝅥=96) KEY: F♯ minor.: courtiers cut time	*Allegro* (♩=120) KEY: D major: Duke 4/4 time; triplet accomp.	*Allegro assai moderato* (♩=76) KEY: E minor 4/4 time
Orchestration	Oboe sustained at "Ned ei potea" – gives a melancholy feel to the D's feelings.			
Themes				"La rà, la rà" by R is ironic; melody is in minor key yet R is trying to show the courtiers he doesn't know what has happened.
Drama	D knows of G's abduction and is distressed.	Courtiers interrupt D saying they have G.	D says he would throw his crown away for G; the courtiers are surprised to hear that from him.	R is looking for G while the courtiers taunt him.
Related Information			The second part of this aria or *cabaletta* is sometimes cut in performance. It is unfortunate, since this, the second of D's three arias, is the only moment when he appears to show any emotional depth	

Scene	NO. 12 *continued* VS PP. 146–152 R's aria is divided into three sections	"Mio padre!" (NO. 13) VS PP. 153–154	"Tutte le feste al tempio" (NO. 14); VS PP. 155–163 This duet is in three parts: R and G each alone, then together.	VS PP. 164–171
Musical Description	*Andante mosso agitato* (♩=80) KEYS: first: C minor second: F minor third: D♭ major	*Allegro assai vivo ed agitato* (♩=144) KEYS: D♭ major changing to A minor	*Andantino* (♩=80) KEYS: first: E minor to C major second: A♭ major third: D♭ major	Recitative KEY: F minor *Aria* KEY: A♭ major
Orchestration	First part of aria has quickly articulated strings. The third part has melody doubled at the sixth, which Verdi intended to have a warm, heartrending feeling.		first key: solo oboe: "lonely," "isolated" color third key: clarinets double; melody in thirds. R and G are together.	
Themes		R sings variation on "curse" theme		
Drama	R is first furious, then sad and remorseful that G is with D.	R and G see each other again.	First, G tells how she met D and was taken. Second, R laments over the situation. Third, they forgive each other.	Monterone is led to his death. R says he will be avenged.
Related Information				*End of Act II*

Rigoletto

FLOW CHART

ACT III

Scene	"La donna è mobile" (NO. 15) VS PP. 172–177 *Prelude, recitative, and canzone*	"Un dì, se ben rammentomi" (NO. 16) VS PP. 177–194 *Quartet*	"M'odi!…ritorna a casa." (NO. 17) VS PP. 195–200
Musical Description	*Adagio* (♩=66) KEY: B major (aria)	*Allegro* (♩=120) KEY: E major to D♭ major	From here to the end of the opera is in recitative. This is a new development in opera at this time.
Orchestration			Flute/oboe arpeggio with violin *tremolo* create sound of "lightening." Offstage male chorus creates "wind" sound.
Themes			D's melody from No. 16 D will sing part of No. 15
Drama	R shows G that the D is not faithful. D flirts with Maddalena, sister of Sparafucile.	D tries to make up with G. G doesn't believe D. R will avenge the D. Maddalena accuses the D of lying	R tells G to get ready to leave town. R talks to Sparafucile. Sparafucile and Maddalena "set" D.
Related Information	This melody is probably the most famous tune of the operatic genre. It is said that Verdi would not allow his first Duke to see the music until opening night.	This famous quartet displays Verdi as a master composer. Each character sings lines of contrasting text and maintains their musical identities for the duration of the quartet. Each line is understood by the audience because of the use of quartet regretted that this effect was beyond the power of poetry.counterpoint. When Victor Hugo, author of the play upon which *Rigoletto* is based, heard this quartet, he regretted that the effect was beyond the power of poetry.	

Rigoletto

Flow Chart

Act III

Scene	"Somiglia un Apollo" (no. 18) vs pp. 201–208	"Della vendetta alfin giunge l'stante!" (no. 19); vs pp. 219–223	"V'ho ingannato…colpevole fui. " (no. 20); vs pp. 224–232
Musical Description	*Allegro* (𝅗𝅥=84) Rectivtive	Recitative	*Moderato* (♩=100) Key: D♭ major
Orchestration			
Themes	Continued "lightening" and "wind" sounds.	"La donna è mobile" by D.	
Drama	Maddalena tries to convince Sparafucile not to kill D. G observes this, then knocks on the door.	R takes the body and hears D singing.	R discovers G is the victim. Before dying, G promises to pray for him in heaven with her mother.
Related Information			

End of opera

b Roncole, October 9/10, 1813; *d* Milan, January 27, 1901

Giuseppe Verdi was born in Le Roncole, a small village in the Duchy of Parma. Contrary to the composer's claim that he was of illiterate peasants, Carlo and Luigia Verdi both came from families of landowners and traders – together they ran a tavern and grocery store. As a youth Verdi's natural fascination with music was enhanced by his father's purchase of an old spinet piano. By the age of nine he was substituting as organist at the town church, a position he would later assume and hold for a number of years. Carlo Verdi's contact with Antonio Barezzi, a wealthy merchant and music enthusiast from nearby Busseto, led to Giuseppe's move to the larger town and to a more formalized music education. Lodging in his benefactor's home, Verdi gave singing and piano lessons to Barezzi's daughter, Margherita, who later became the composer's first wife.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2002 production of Don Carlos

Encouraged by his benefactor, Verdi applied to the Milan Conservatory, his tuition to be funded in part by a scholarship for poor children and the balance to be paid by Barezzi. The Conservatory rejected his application because of his age and uneven piano technique, but Verdi remained in Milan under the tutorship of Vincenzo Livigna, a *maestro concertatore* at La Scala. After making a few useful contacts in Milan, writing a number of small compositions and some last-minute conducting substitutions, Verdi was offered a contract by La Scala for an opera, *Rocester*. It was never performed, nor does the score appear to exist. It is commonly believed that much of the music was incorporated into his first staged opera, *Oberto*. The score also may have been destroyed with the composer's other juvenilia as Verdi had requested in his will.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Macbeth

Oberto achieved modest success and Verdi was offered another commission from La Scala for a comedy. Unfortunately, by this time the composer had suffered great personal loss – in the space of two years his wife and two small children had all died. Verdi asked to be released from his contract, but La Scala's impresario, Bartolomeo Merelli (probably with good intentions) insisted that he complete the score. Written under a dark cloud, *Il regno di giorno* failed in the theater, and Verdi withdrew from any further engagements. It was due to a chance

meeting with Merelli (with a new libretto in tow) that led to his return to the stage. *Nabucco* was a huge success and catapulted Verdi's career forward.

Italian theaters at this time were in constant need of new works. As a result, competent composers were in demand and expected to compose at an astonishing rate. Both Rossini and Donizetti had set the standard and Verdi was required to adapt to their pace. These became his "anni di galera" (years as a "galley slave") – between 1842 and 1853 he composed eleven new operas, often while experiencing regular bouts of ill-health. His style progressed from treating grandiose historical subjects (as was the custom of the day) to those involving more intimate, personal relationships. This transition is crowned by three of his most popular works: *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Il trovatore
(photo: Michal Daniel)

Toward the end of the 1840s Verdi considered an early retirement, as his predecessor Rossini had done. He purchased land near Busseto once belonging to his ancestors and soon began to convert the farmhouse into a villa (Sant'Agata) for himself and his new companion, Giuseppina Strepponi, a retired soprano who had championed his early works (including *Nabucco*, for which she had sung the leading female role). Verdi had renewed their friendship a few years before; when Verdi and Strepponi were in Paris they openly lived together as a couple. After their return to Italy, however, this arrangement scandalized the denizens of Busseto, necessitating a move to the country.

As Verdi became more interested in farming and less involved in the frustrating politics of the theater, his pace slowed – only six new works were composed over the next 18 years. His style began to change as well, from the traditional "numbers opera" to a more free-flowing, dramatically truthful style. Some of his greatest pieces belong to this era (*Simon Boccanegra, Un ballo in maschera, La forza del destino, Don Carlos*), which concluded with what most thought was his swan song, the spectacular grand opera *Aida*.

Following *Aida,* Verdi firmly stated he had retired for good. He was now devoted to Sant'Agata, and to revising and remounting several earlier works, pausing briefly to write a powerful *Requiem* (1874) to commemorate the passing of Italian poet and patriot Alessandro Manzoni. Coaxed out of his retreat by a lifelong love of Shakespeare, the septuagenarian composer produced *Otello* and *Falstaff* to great acclaim.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2007 production of Un ballo in maschera
(photo: Michal Daniel)

Verdi's final years were focused on two philanthropic projects, a hospital in the neighboring town of Villanova, and a rest home for aged and indigent musicians in Milan, the Casa di Riposo. Giuseppina (who Verdi had legally married in 1859) died in 1897, and Verdi's own passing several years later was an occasion of national mourning. One month after a small private funeral at the municipal cemetery, his remains were transferred to Milan and interred at the Casa di Riposo. Two hundred thousand people lined the streets as the "Va, pensiero" chorus from *Nabucco* was sung by an eight-hundred-person choir led by conductor Arturo Toscanini.

Giuseppe Verdi – Catalogue of Operas

TITLE	PREMIERE
Oberto, conte di San Bonifacio (Oberto, Count of San Bonifacio)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, November 17, 1839 *dramma;* libretto by Temistocle Solera, from Antonio Piazza's libretto *Rocester*
Un giorno di regno (King for a Day)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, September 5, 1840 *melodramma;* libretto by Felice Romani, after Alexandre Vincent Pineu-Duval's *Le faux Stanislas*
Nabucco	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, March 9, 1842 *dramma lirico;* libretto by Temistocle Solera, after Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu's *Nabuchodonosor* and Antonio Cortesi's *Nabuchodonosor*
I Lombardi alla prima crociata (The Lombards)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 11, 1843 *dramma lirico;* libretto by Temistocle Solera, after Tommaso Grossi
Ernani	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 9, 1844 *dramma lirico;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Victor Hugo's *Hernani*
I due Foscari (The Two Foscari)	Rome, Teatro Argentina, November 3, 1844 *tragedia lirica;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Byron's *The Two Foscari*
Giovanna d'Arco (Joan of Arc)	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 15, 1845 *dramma lirico;* libretto by Temistocle Solera, in part after Friedrich von Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*
Alzira	Naples, Teatro di San Carlo, August 12, 1845 *tragedia lirica;* libretto by Salvadore Cammarano, after Voltaire's *Alzire, ou Les Américains*
Attila	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 17, 1846 *dramma lirico;* libretto by Temistocle Solera [and Francesco Maria Piave], after Zacharias Werner's *Attila, König der Hunnen*
Macbeth	Florence, Teatro della Pergola, March 14, 1847 *opera;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave and Andrea Maffei, after William Shakespeare
I masnadieri *(The Thieves)*	London, Her Majesty's Theatre, July 22, 1847 *melodramma;* libretto by Andrea Maffei, after Friedrich von Schiller's *Die Räuber*
Jérusalem	Paris, Opéra, November 26, 1847 *opera;* libretto by Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz, from Temistocle Solera's 1843 libretto *I Lombardi alla prima crociata*
Il corsaro *(The Corsair)*	Trieste, Teatro Grande, October 25, 1848 *opera*; libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Byron's *The Corsair*

La battaglia di Legnano (The Battle of Legnano)	Rome, Teatro Argentina, January 27, 1849 *tragedia lirica;* libretto by Salvadore Cammarano, after Joseph Méry's *La bataille de Toulouse*
Luisa Miller	Naples, Teatro di San Carlo, December 8, 1849 *melodramma;* libretto by Salvadore Cammarano, after Friedrich von Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*
Stiffelio	Trieste, Teatro Grande, November 16, 1850 *opera;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Emile Souvestre and Eugène Bourgeois's *Le pasteur, ou L'évangile et le foyer*
Rigoletto	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 11, 1851 *melodramma;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Victor Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse*
Il trovatore (The Troubadour)	Rome, Teatro Apollo, January 19, 1853 *dramma;* Salvadore Cammarano, after Antonio García Gutiérrez's *El trovador*
La traviata (The Fallen Woman)	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 6, 1853 *opera;* Francesco Maria Piave, after Alexandre Dumas fils's *La dame aux camélias*
Les vêpres siciliennes (The Sicilian Vespers)	Paris, Opéra, June 13, 1855 *opera;* libretto by Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier, after their libretto *Le duc d'Albe*
Simon Boccanegra	Venice, Teatro La Fenice, March 12, 1857 *opera;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Antonio García Gutiérrez's *Simón Bocanegra*
Aroldo	Rimini, Teatro Nuovo, August 16, 1857 *opera;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, from his libretto for *Stiffelio*
Un ballo in maschera (A Masked Ball)	Rome, Teatro Apollo, February 17, 1859 *melodramma;* libretto by Antonio Somma, from Eugène Scribe's libretto for Daniel-François-Esprit Auber's *Gustave III, ou le bal masqué*
La forza del destino (The Force of Destiny)	St. Petersburg, Imperial Theatre, November 10, 1862 *opera;* libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after Angel de Saavedra's *Don Alvaro, o La fuerza del sino*
Don Carlos	Paris, Opéra, March 11, 1867 *opera;* libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle, after Friedrich von Schiller
Aïda	Cairo, Cairo Opera House, December 24, 1871 *opera*; libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni, from Auguste Mariette's scenario
Otello	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 5, 1887 *dramma lirico*; libretto by Arrigo Boito, after William Shakespeare's *Othello, or the Moor of Venice*
Falstaff	Milan, Teatro alla Scala, February 9, 1893 *commedia lirica*; libretto by Arrigo Boito, after William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry IV*

Censorship has always been a dicey issue, particularly during the first half of the 19th century. European governments had to be both vigilant and severe in their response to the ever-present subversive activity undermining the established royal powers. France had seen uprisings in 1830 and again in 1848, and the *Risorgimento* movement for a unified Italy, simmering during Verdi's "galley years" of the 1840s, had reached a boil the very same year, only to be quickly quashed by the Austrian overlords. France had been a little luckier (though only temporarily so) with the Second Republic until its ambitious president, Louis Napoleon (nephew of Napoleon I), seized absolute power in a *coup d'état* and established yet another empire. Italy would have to wait another decade to expel the Austrians and set up a constitutional monarchy under its new king, Victor Emmanuel II.

This was the climate in which Giuseppe Verdi and Victor Hugo wrote their respective works. Often the guidelines involving the state's approval of staged dramas were contradictory, immersing provocative authors into a sea of red tape. A case in point was Victor Hugo's play, *Le roi s'amuse,* first produced in 1832, which portrayed the carefree philandering of a historical French monarch, Francis [François] I. Although France's new citizen king, Louis-Philippe, had supposedly ended censorship upon his ascension in 1830, he had just recently escaped a spray of bullets three days before the premiere. As a result, Hugo's play was banned after a single performance, as the depiction of attempted regicide apparently was still very much taboo.

Verdi was more fortunate a decade later. Many of his operas from the 40s survived the red ink, even with their whiff of sedition. Another Hugo-based work, *Ernani,* had passed the censors virtually unscathed, even though the storyline features a rebellious bandit at odds with the aspiring Austrian emperor Charles V. No less provocative were stirring moments from *Nabucco, Macbeth, Attila* and *I Lombardi* that would become associated with the revolution and popular with the oppressed Italian people.

No one is certain exactly when Verdi became acquainted with *Le roi s'amuse* – he certainly hadn't seen it played in Paris (where it wouldn't be staged again until 1882), but a casual reading must have made quite an impact. We find the drama mentioned in his correspondence as early as 1849, as a possible subject for Naples – he even had asked house librettist Salvadore Cammarano to draft a scenario. But dissatisfied with the Teatro San Carlo's management of his opera, *Luisa Miller,* he sent Cammarano on another task – a libretto after Shakespeare's *King Lear,* Verdi's Holy Grail, a subject that consumed his life but would never be realized. The composer shifted his attention to the north, where he would soon sign a contract for an opera at Venice's Teatro La Fenice, to be presented during the Carnival season of 1850–51. Verdi had sent his veteran librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, several subjects to consider – Antonio Gil y Zarate's *Gusmano il buono,* Antonio García Guttiérez's *El trovador* (two other familial dramas, the latter to become *Il trovatore,*

with a libretto by Cammarano) and Alexandre Dumas *père*'s *Kean* – but soon sent an impassioned letter indicating his desire to produce *Le roi s'amuse.* "Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare," Verdi wrote of the humpbacked jester who would become the title character and the work's main focus. Realizing some of the drama's inherent immorality might raise an eyebrow or two, he instructed Piave to get guarantees from the censors early on so the content would be easily approved when the opera was officially submitted. Apparently lulled into complacency by his experience with *Ernani* (which also premiered in Venice), he felt confident his great conception would pass with little fuss.

Piave must have received some sort of verbal assurance that the subject would be accepted and set about the task of writing the libretto. Verdi had instructed him to stay as close to Hugo as possible, but above all to be concise (his usual dictate to the beleaguered poet who already had served him on six prior occasions). If the title must be changed, it could just as easily be *La maledizione di Saint-Vallier*, as the Count's curse is at the core of the drama. By August 1850, Carlo Marzari, the president of La Fenice began to express some doubt over the play, having heard of the unsuccessful premiere in France, and feared it would not be allowed. By October, when the libretto had been completed, he immediately asked for a copy and submitted it to the Direzione d'Ordine Pubblico for approval. His concerns proved justifiable – in late November the police order came, banning the opera due to its "abundant immorality." They would accept no further discussion on the topic.

Verdi was naturally incensed and threw the blame entirely on Piave's shoulders, whose job it had been to secure the required permission. It was already December by the time he received the news, and the opera was due to premiere at the end of January. He asked to withdraw from his contract, or accept *Stiffelio* in its stead – though the opera had just opened in Trieste, it still would be new for Venice. The composer might have taken his cue from *Stiffelio,* which centers on the infidelity of a parson's wife. Censors in that port city, also on the Adriatic, had found the powerful final scene, set in a church where Stiffelio reads of forgiveness from the pulpit, blasphemous, and they demanded it be rewritten only a few days before the premiere. Following the failed revolutions of 1848–49, censors had become especially prickly, not only of incendiary subjects, but those that touched on religion or depicted immorality. Verdi sullenly remarked that his new opera had been "castrated."

Piave quickly provided some damage control. He recast the libretto as *Il duca di Vendome* in accordance with the objectionable points enumerated by the censors. Francis became the ruler of a minor duchy, his debauchery was nearly eliminated, Ceprano's wife became his unmarried sister, St. Vallier's conflict is over the Duke's refusal to honor a marriage contract with his child, the jester was no longer a hunchback, the abduction was only intended to embarrass Rigoletto, the bedroom scene (in which Blanche – later Gilda – tries to escape Francis by unknowingly locking herself in the King's bedchamber) was deleted,

and the sack at the end (for whatever reason) was removed. Marzari was confident the changes would be acceptable to the censors, but when Verdi read the new version, he was further enraged, stating that all the life had been sucked out of the story: "In sum a powerful and original drama has been turned into something trivial and dead."

Not giving up, Marzari sent his secretary, Guglielmo Brenna, and Piave to Busseto to work something out. With Verdi they agreed on six important changes to be resubmitted to the censors. They included (1) moving the setting from the court of France to a minor duchy, either in France or Italy; (2) changing all the characters' names; (3) removing the bedroom scene; (4) having Triboulet be responsible for luring the Duke to Maguelonne (later Maddalena); (5) leaving the question of the sack to Verdi; and (6) postponing the premiere until March. All three parties signed the document.

Surprisingly, the censors accepted these conditions, giving testament to Verdi's increasing prestige as an artist of merit. In retrospect, nearly every significant aspect of Hugo's play remains intact. Triboulet (from an old French word, *tribouler,* to needle or pester) became the more benignly named Rigoletto (after the French word, *rigoler,* to laugh), though he's hardly so as the final product. This comic element had been essential to the composer's vision of the opera as having its roots in Shakespeare (in fact, the whole first scene up to Monterone's entrance is unveiled in the tradition of *opera buffa*). If it couldn't be *King Lear,* at least the opera would feature a buffoon as well as a complex father-daughter relationship, a common theme in Verdi's works since his very first (*Oberto* also involves a father in search of justice for his ravaged daughter).

Verdi's own family situation couldn't have been more complicated at this particular moment of his life. Aside from losing his wife and two small children at an earlier point in his career (thus the source of much psychological debate as to how paternity figures in his works), he was deep in the middle of a struggle with his overly devout father, his former benefactor and father-in-law and the citizens of his home town of Busseto, all of whom objected to him and his mistress, Giuseppina Strepponi, "living in sin" at Palazzo Cavalli. The outcome would be harsh, with Verdi and Strepponi moving to his farmhouse, Sant'Agata, and at the same time banishing his parents to smaller accommodations on the outskirts of town.

In spite of his personal battles, the composer put together one of his finest scores at a rapid pace – forty days, so the story goes, though much of it must have been sketched out earlier. The premiere was triumph, and *Rigoletto* was set on the path of immense popularity that it has never left. However, the censors hadn't quite stopped tampering with the libretto, and as the new opera traveled throughout Italy, it was subject to further modifications contrary to

Verdi's wishes. Bergamo, the very next city to perform *Rigoletto,* had to shut the production down after only one and a half performances, the second one having been interrupted at the beginning of Act II by a riotous crowd (and aborted in favor of a hasty replacement of *Luisa Miller*'s Act III), not unlike the reception of Hugo's original play. In other cities, the opera appeared in sanitized versions, retitled *Viscardello, Lionello* and even the Sir Walter Scott-esque *Clara di Perth,* during which, in many cases, the heroine is merely wounded and her abduction omitted, with Giovanna accompanying her to the ducal palace and even into the bedchamber. Likely they used the libretto of *Il duca di Vendome* (now lost) as a model, and Giovanni Ricordi, Verdi's publisher, even printed parts and libretti for *Viscardello* as an alternative rental, with a choice of happy or tragic endings. One imagines that the composer eventually threw up his arms and contently collected his royalty checks, purchasing more farmland for his growing estate. It is significant that, unlike so many of his other operas, he made no further changes to the score, obviously satisfied with every note. Years later he declared *Rigoletto* to be his finest creation.

Rigoletto marks a crucial moment in Verdi's development as a composer. Already beginning to blur the lines between aria and recitative, the composer wrote his opera with very few traditional stops, folding one musical number into the next and making the scene the defining unit. This is most artfully displayed during the opening party in which he unveils five dances in quick succession. If the action loses much of the dialogue of Hugo's original play in which his jester Triboulet unceasingly riles the courtiers (setting up the drama's later action with seemingly disconnected events), the remarkably seamless transition in and out of the Duke's first aria "Questa o quella" easily fills the void. Also strikingly novel is Rigoletto's soliloquy "Pari siamo" in the scene that follows. With no fewer than six tempo changes, the composer spins Rigoletto's dark thoughts over arioso, a blend of action-moving recitative and reflective aria. In fact, there is only one traditional Bel Canto slow-fast double aria in the entire piece, the Duke's Act II "Parmi veder le lagrime … Possente amor mi chiama," though one could make a case for Rigoletto's later outburst, "Cortigiani … Miei signori, perdono," as a Bel Canto aria in reverse – a quick, dynamic section followed a slower-paced plea for mercy that is lyric and compassionate. And Gilda's feathery-light cadenza of her only aria, "Caro nome," defies the traditional power-driven cabaletta.

The opera is played out in a series of duets – for Rigoletto and Sparafucile, the Duke and Gilda, and with one per act, for father and daughter. But Verdi saves some of his best ensembles for Act III – a magnificent quartet for the Duke, Maddalena, Gilda and Rigoletto, and an extraordinary trio for Sparafucile, Maddalena and Gilda above a storm created by brilliant orchestral effects and an offstage humming chorus, virtually unclassifiable in terms of *primo ottocento*

opera. The composer's coup de grâce, however, is the poignant final duet for Rigoletto and Gilda that dispenses with Hugo's ponderous and crowded conclusion, during which passersby gather to gawk at the grieving father while a doctor diagnoses Blanche's fatal wound.

Rigoletto is an opera about characterizations, rather than show-stopping moments, and a persistent fatalism that causes every move to be a step in the wrong direction. Rigoletto goes one too far with the courtiers, which leads to his own emotional destruction and the ruin of his small family. Believing it to be the only safe place, he allows his daughter to go to church, but it is there she meets the worst person possible for her virtue – the Duke. Sparafucile observes the Duke following Gilda home, and also believing her to be Rigoletto's mistress, offers to eliminate the jester's rival, effectively bringing the assassin into the mix. Disobeying her oath to protect Gilda, Giovanna allows the Duke access and herself to be bribed (this is even more apparent in Hugo's play, as the Duke stealthily hands the duenna successive pieces of gold as she sings his praises). Rigoletto heartily agrees to partake in the abduction of his daughter only because he believes it to be Ceprano's wife. A frightened Gilda escapes the courtiers by rushing to the Duke for protection, only to be raped. And Rigoletto, believing he can end Gilda's loyalty to the Duke by showing her his debauchery (in Hugo's play Gilda and the Duke continue their relationship for an entire month after the abduction), ends up sealing her fate as Gilda's undying love becomes her sacrifice.

Ironically in Paris, where *Le roi s'amuse* had once been banned, the opera proved enormously popular after its French-language premiere in 1863 at the Théâtre Lyrique Impériale. Exiled from France (he returned only after the fall of the Second Empire), Hugo was peeved by the eclipse of his play, which still had not achieved its second performance. Yet, by the time he had heard the opera years later, he was clearly impressed, tartly noting, "If I could make four characters speak at the same time and have the audience understand the words and emotions, I could achieve the same effect."

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VARIOUS VERSIONS OF RIGOLETTO

LE ROI S'AMUSE	LA MALEDIZIONE	IL DUCA DI VENDOME	RIGOLETTO
François Premier	Il Re (Francesco)	Luigi, *prince of Condé*	Vincenzo I of Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua *(later just the Duke of Mantua)*
Triboulet	Triboletto	Rigoletto, *court jester*	Rigoletto, *court jester*
Blanche	Bianca	Gilda, *his daughter*	Gilda, *his daughter*
Saltabadil	Saltabadile	Strappamonile, *an assassin*	Sparafucile, *an assassin*
Maguelone	?	Maddalena, *his sister*	Maddalena, *his sister*
Dame Bérade	Berarda	Giovanna, *Gilda's duenna*	Giovanna, *Gilda's duenna*
M. de Saint-Vallier	Saint-Vallier	Count Saint-André	Count Castiglione *(later Count Monterone)*
Clément Marot *and* M. de Pienne	Marot	the sire of Nevers	Marullo, *a knight*
M. de Latour-Landry	?	Baron Quercy	Matteo Borsa, *courtier*
M. de Cossé	Signor di Cossé	Count Chalais	Count Cavriano *(later Count Ceprano)*
Madame de Cossé	?	the Countess, *his wife*	the Countess, *his wife*
M. de Montchénu	?	court usher	court usher
A gentleman of the Queen	the Queen's page	the Duchess's page	the Duchess's page
set in Paris, 1520s	set in Paris, 1520s	Paris, mid-16th century	Mantua, the 16th century

table adapted from the notes to the critical edition of Rigoletto published by the University of Chicago; Martin Chusid, editor

works by victor hugo

(dramatic works in bold)

La château du diable	*1812*
L'enfer sur terre	*1812*
Irtamène	*1816*
A.Q.C.H.E.B.	*1817*
Inez de Castro	*1819*
Les odes et poésies diverses	*1822*
Han d'Islande	*1823*
Bug-Jargal	*1826*
Cromwell	*1827*
Amy Robsart	*1828*
Odes et ballades	*1828*
Les Orientales	*1829*
Le dernier jour d'un condamné à mort	*1829*
Hernani	*1830*
Marion de Lorme	*1831*
Notre-Dame de Paris	*1831*
Les feuilles d'automne	*1831*
Le roi s'amuse	*1832*
Lucrèce Borgia	*1833*
Marie Tudor	*1833*
Littérature et philophie mélées	*1834*
Les chants du crœpuscule	*1834*
Angelo, tyran de Padoue	*1835*
Les voix intérieures	*1837*
Ruy Blas	*1838*
Les rayons et les ombres	*1840*
Le retour de l'empereur	*1840*
Les burgraves	*1843*
Napoléon-le-petit	*1852*
Oeuvres oratoires	*1853*
Les châtiments	*1854*
La forêt mouillée	*1854*
La légende des siècles (3 vols.)	*1859*
	1877
	1883
Les misérables	*1862*
La grande-mère	*1865*
Les chansons des rues et des bois	*1865*
Mille Francs de récompense	*1866*
L'intervention	*1866*
Mangeront-ils?	*1867*
Margarita	*1869*
L'épee; Esca	*1869*
Torquemada	*1869*
L'homme qui rit	*1869*
L'année terrible	*1872*
Sur la lisière d'un bois	*1873*
Quatre-vingt-treize	*1874*
Actes et paroles	*1876*
L'art d'être grand-père	*1877*
Histoire d'un crime	*1878*
Le Pape; L'âne	*1878*
Les quatre vents de l'esprit	*1881*

VICTOR HUGO

b Besançon, February 26, 1802; *d* Paris, May 22, 1885

Victor Hugo is among France's most esteemed authors, having achieved almost godlike status by the end of his life. Musical versions of his plays and novels abound, from Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Ernani* to Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia,* and from Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil's outrageously successful *Les Misérables* to Disney's motion picture *Esmeralda.* Other composers drawn to Hugo's works have included Saverio Mercadante *(Il giuramento)*, Giovanni Pacini *(Maria, regina d'Inghilterra)*, Vincenzo Bellini (*Hernani* – incomplete), Jules Massenet (*Notre-Dame de Paris* – sketched), Amilcare Ponchielli (*Marion de Lormé* and *La Gioconda*), Georges Bizet (*Notre-Dame de Paris* – projected) and Louise Bertin (*La Esmeralda,* to a libretto by Hugo himself), just to cite a sample of the nearly 100 operatic adaptations.

Hugo's life spanned every civil uprising France endured during the tumultuous 19th century, and his politics wavered as a result. Though he missed the French Revolution by a few years, he bathed in its aftermath as his father Léopold was an officer in the *Grande Armée,* earning the rank of general while serving in Spain under Napoleon I's brother Joseph. His mother Sophie was an ardent royalist, and the couple constantly bickered over political issues as well as domestic ones – Léopold was a consummate philanderer. Hugo's parents separated soon after his birth, though there were frequent reconnections as Sophie followed her husband across Napoleon's empire, demanding financial support for their three children.

After a short stint in the legal profession, Victor Hugo turned to writing, and though there were a few early novels, such as *Han d'Islande* and *Notre-Dame de Paris* (both featuring hunchbacked dwarves, a theme that would pervade works of this period), writing plays was a quicker and more satisfying way of getting noticed. It was also a bit riskier. He and Alexandre Dumas *père* (of *Les trois mousquetaires* and *Le comte de Monte Cristo* fame) became friendly rivals for the stages of the infamous Boulevard du Temple (nicknamed the "Boulevard du Crime" for its sensational dramas) as well as the more austere Comédie-Française. While Dumas enjoyed relatively uniform success, Hugo had a tougher go – the novelty of his early plays were lost on censors and audiences alike.

Hugo persisted, and in 1832 proposed a "bilogy" of two works, one for the Comédie and one for the Boulevard's Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin. He imagined they would play at almost exactly the same time and curry both the public favor and critical acceptance he desperately coveted. Though seemingly disconnected, the two dramas, which featured segments from the lives of two Renaissance figures, French King Francis I and papal daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, had distinct similarities in Hugo's mind. Francis's amorous pursuits served as a backdrop for the author's exploration of family relationships. In *Le roi s'amuse,* his focus is on parental affection – how a disfigured, jaded hunchbacked jester could actually be loving father.

Conversely, *Lucrèce Borgia* is portrayed as a ravishing beauty on the exterior, but internally as a wanton murderess who is ethically challenged by her maternal love for a son she was forced to give up at birth. As Hugo put it, one drama shows "paternity sanctifying physical deformity," and the other, "maternity purifying moral depravity."

Le roi s'amuse would only have one showing after the government, which had supposedly had eradicated censorship, shut it down. This gave Hugo a chance to air his differences in court, and when that failed, he wrote an extended introduction to the published version of his play, which served as a sequel to the preface of an earlier drama, *Cromwell* (1827). *Cromwell* was his manifesto to the new form of the Romantic Drama. Up to this point, French theater had been divided into two camps – the higher form of the Classical tragedy, set forth in the 17th and 18th centuries by Racine, Corneille and Voltaire, and the lower form of slash and dash melodrama, moralizing thrillers that peppered the Boulevard du Crime. Though his works have much in common with melodrama, Hugo professed a clear distinction between the two, by removing spectacular special effects and bourgeois principles, but retaining violent onstage murder, something not permitted in Classical theater. He also sought to conjoin comedy and tragedy, distinctly separate in those earlier works, by initiating his "theory of the grotesque."

> …The grotesque is one of the supreme beauties of the drama. It is not simply an appropriate element of it, but is oftentimes a necessity. Sometimes it appears in homogeneous masses, in entire characters, as Daudin, Prusias, Trissotin, Brid'oison, Juliet's nurse; sometimes impregnated with terror, as Richard III, Bégears, Tartuffe, Mephistopheles; sometimes, too, with a veil of grace and refinement, as Figaro, Osric, Mercutio, Don Juan. It finds its way in everywhere; for just as the most commonplace have their occasional moments of sublimity, so the most exalted frequently pay tribute to the trivial and ridiculous … t is always present on the stage, even when it says nothing … Sometimes it injects laughter, sometimes horror, into tragedy. It will bring Romeo face to face with the apothecary, Macbeth with the witches, Hamlet with the grave diggers. Sometimes it may without discord, as in the scene between King Lear and his jester, mingle its shrill voice with the most sublime, the most dismal, the dreamiest music of the soul.

In this light Hugo could feature both a comic, misshapen figure, such as the jester Triboulet beside the more classically refined, yet realistically portrayed character of Francis I. "In drama," Hugo stated, "all things are connected and follow one another as in real life."

> Unlike so many of the most favored dramas of the French school, *Le roi s'amuse* contains no attempt to gloss over or inculcate the doctrines of immorality; there is no insidious endeavor to seduce the imagination, or pervert the judgment by making sophistry eloquent or vice attractive…Tiboulet, the deformed, the hunchback, is a being of a different nature from Quasimodo [of Notre-Dame de Paris]; and his character is drawn with a singular mixture of power and inconsistency. He is a cynic, and not a jester – rude, but not witty…Triboulet is deformed, Triboulet is unhealthy, Triboulet is a court buffoon – a threefold misery which renders him evil. Triboulet hates the king because he is king, the nobles because they are nobles, and he hates ordinary men because they have not humps on their backs. His only pastime is to set the nobles unceasingly against the king, crushing the weaker by the stronger. He depraves the king, corrupts and stultifies him; he encourages him in tyranny, ignorance and vice.

Hugo's Romantic Drama signaled a revolt. It eliminated Classical theater's Aristotelian unity of place and time (generally a twenty-four hour period) and removed the typical tragedy's sequence of anguish purified by a happy end. The works of Shakespeare and Schiller were the new ideal, and history became malleable as a result – Hugo believed the Romantic artist should be allowed complete freedom to create his or her own unique vision of the universe.

That is what Shakespeare alone among all has succeeded in doing, in a fashion of his own, which it would be no less fruitless than impossible to imitate – Shakespeare, the god of the stage, in whom, as in a trinity, the three characteristic geniuses of our stage – Corneille, Molière – Beaumarchais, seem united.

The sheer length and scope of *Cromwell* insured that it would never be mounted, but Hugo would gain much notoriety with *Hernani* three years later, as rioters clashed with members of Hugo's circle, the Cénacle, a group of Romantic visionaries which he led. The author made just a few more attempts at theater before his life was to change dramatically. Having courted favor with the Bourbon and Orléans monarchies (as would have pleased his late mother), Hugo found himself in the republican camp during the revolution of 1848, actually commanding the barricades and the populace. He was none too happy when his efforts yielded the election of Napoleon I's nephew as president of the Second Republic and was openly critical of the new ruler. When Napoleon III became emperor in a bloody coup three years later, Hugo found himself exiled from France as a result. He first went to Belgium, but when the situation also became politically uncomfortable, he resettled with his wife, children (and mistress) to the obscure English Channel Islands, "on little bits of France that had fallen into the Atlantic," so he could still gaze upon France from afar.

The author spent the next nineteen years on the island of Guernsey, writing mostly poems and novels. With the exception of *Hernani,* which was revived in 1867, his plays were rarely staged in Paris, due to the imperial regime's censorship of his works. However, his latest novels, most notably *Les Misérables,* were illegally imported into France, and his reputation continued to garner great attention. He also managed to continually berate the Emperor in Hugo's own self-produced publication, *Napoléon-le-petit,* which also was smuggled across the Channel. When Napoleon III's rrule was toppled at the height of the Franco-Prussian war, the author returned in time for the Siege of Paris, and his diary leaves a fascinating account of the desperate circumstances the remaining population had to undergo during the 132-day confinement. Following yet another revolution and with the defeat of the Maxist Communards, Hugo became a write-in candidate as a leader of the Third Republic and achieved a substantial number of votes. He continued to write to the year of his death at the age of 83.

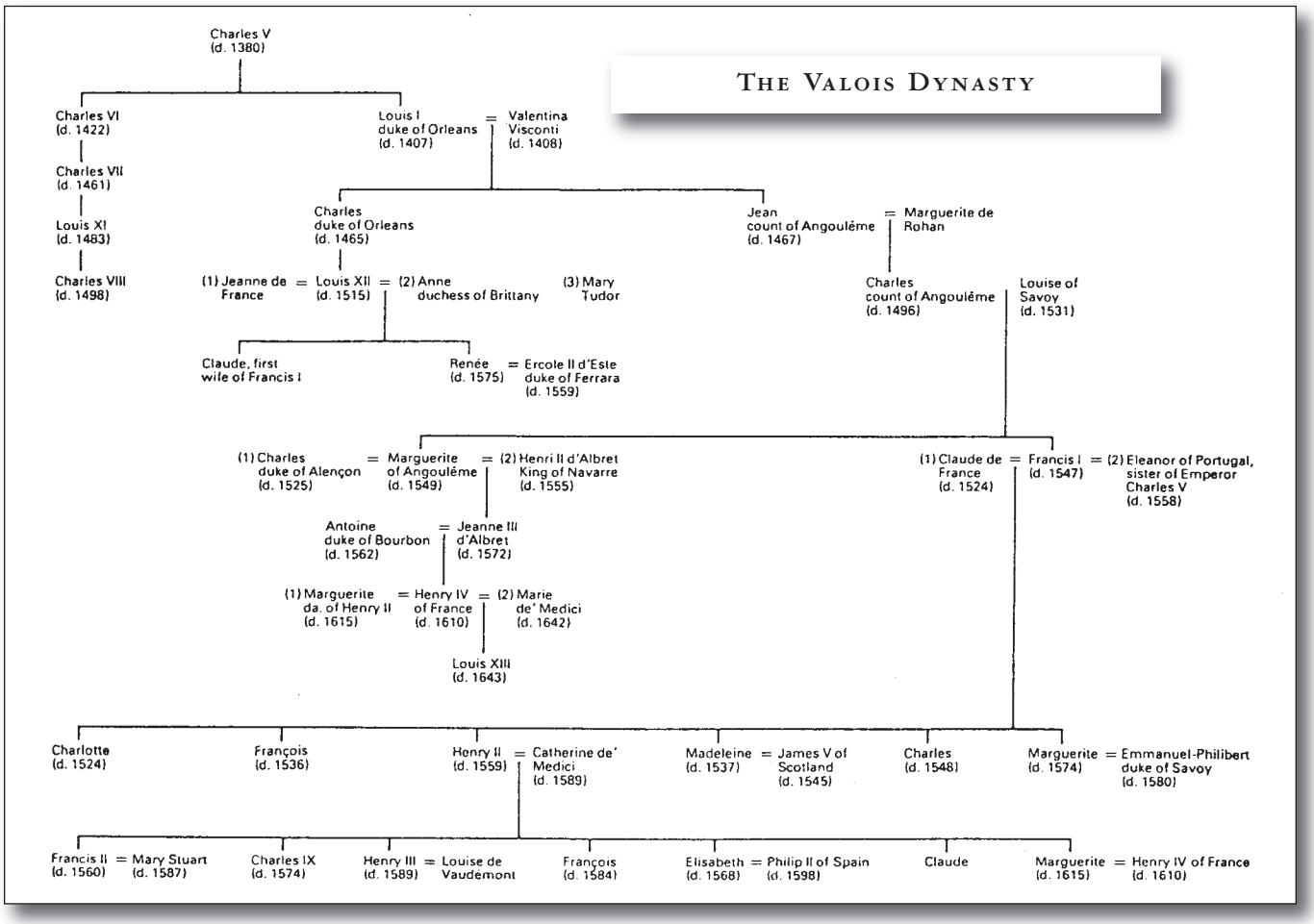
VICTOR HUGO AND KING FRANCIS I OF FRANCE

Although Hugo was drawn to the familial relationships that were fictionalized from Francis *le premier*'s court life, he just as easily could have found a kindred spirit in the king's legendary debauchery, for the author was just as active in his extramarital affairs. His first "official" mistress was long-time companion Juliette Drouet, whom he first met on the stage of the Porte-Saint-Martin – she was cast in the minor role of Princesse Negroni in *Lucrèce Borgia,* and her part grew considerably as their relationship flourished. Juliette was very much the typical *lorette* – a woman with limited means who worked in the theater but really subsided on the favors she gave to an overlapping succession of gentleman admirers

(Musetta of *La bohème* is the quintessential operatic example). Naturally Madame Hugo was bitterly aware of her rival's existence, yet the younger woman would still accompany the family into exile, living discreetly down the avenue. The two women would only meet in person many years later, in 1867. Oddly, Adèle Hugo took a liking to Victor's second mistress of importance, a certain Léonie Biard. The circumstances here are much more dramatic as the Biards were undergoing a messy divorce, and Monsieur Biard hired a private detective to spy on his wife. She and Hugo were caught in an indiscretion and arrested. Having been appointed a *pair de France* by King Louis-Philippe, Hugo was exempt from prosecution, but Madame Biard was not so lucky. As an adulterous wife, she was sent to the St. Lazare Prison for wayward women and later to a nunnery. Adèle took an interest in her plight and eventually secured her freedom. Unlike Juliette, Madame Biard would become a close friend and often joined the family at the dinner table.

Yet as absolute power mixed with unbridled lust makes for a destructive force, King Francis cut a far worse figure than Hugo with his frequent indiscretions, and his motto "Souvent femme varie … Bien fol qui s'y fie (Women are fickle … It's a real fool who trusts them) has become etched into operatic history as the Duke's Act III aria "La donna è mobile." First merely the apple of his mother's eye, Francis became so much more when the opportunist Louise of Savoy observed the gradual extinction of her son's Valois cousins, including kings Charles VIII and Louis XII. Not terribly fond of either Francis or his mother, at age 53 Louis XII made a final desperate attempt for a male heir by taking as his third wife the eighteen-year-old Mary Tudor (sister of English King Henry VIII), but he died two years later before any child could be conceived (unlike England, France's Salic Law prevented women ascending to the throne, which would create so many problems for the royal house of France).

Francis inherited an empty treasury and a kingdom exhausted by war. Both Charles and Louis had pursued inheritance claims in Italy (through their mutual grandmother, Valentina Visconti of Milan, and the 12th-century Angevin dukes' claim to Naples) with limited success – Italian states were then small provinces led by savage princes, and the houses



of Este, Gonzaga, Sforza, Medici and Aragon constantly butted heads with the Pope, changing alliances as suited their needs. Marriage ties between these families and France began to proliferate – Ercole II of Este with Louis XII's daughter Renée, Cesare Borgia with Charlotte d'Albret, princess of Navarre and cousin to the king, Catherine de' Medici with Francis's son Henri – as the balance of power in Europe began to shift. Charles of Spain and Flanders soon became Charles V, and as the Holy Roman Emperor, great suzerain over Italy. Francis agreed with the Italian ambitions begun by his forebearers, but after a few victories he suffered a humiliating defeat at Pavia and was captured.

At Charles's mercy, Francis was eventually returned to France one year later after an extremely harsh peace treaty was negotiated by his mother (who served as regent in his absence), which included the exchange of his two young sons as hostages. Even though he was to honor only part of the treaty, Francis and the remainder of his reign were shadowed by this dark cloud of failure. He died in 1547 of complications from syphilis.

The events that would inspire *Le roi s'amuse* occurred pre-capture, during happier, yet treasonous days at court. Francis had taken for his mistress the youthful Diane de Poitiers, who was already a married woman and though only eighteen, hardly the virginal waif that would inspire Monterone's daughter. Her father Jean, Seigneur de Saint-Vallier, objected to the affair but had to back off after the discovery of his own culpability in a coup masterminded by Duke Charles de Bourbon, another cousin in line for the throne and Constable of France. Also lacking an heir, Charles was out of royal favor for refusing to marry Louise of Savoy, who was by then well beyond childbearing years and really only after part of his enormous wealth as nearest blood relative of her cousin Suzanne, his recently departed wife. Charles escaped punishment, but St. Vallier wasn't so lucky – he was sentenced to death, which was commuted to life imprisonment at the last minute as his head lay ready on the chopping block. Both Diane and her husband worked their wiles on Francis who released her father a few years later. After her relationship with Francis cooled, Diane moved on to his son, the future Henri II.

Francis had a hunchbacked jester, Triboulet, who began his career as a street performer. He captured the attention of Louis XII after he had been assaulted by some court pages (nailed by the ear to the town gibbet, so the story goes) and was brought on the Italian campaigns for amusement. Triboulet was a bit more convivial than his dramatic and operatic counterparts, "always pleasant, none ever resented his speech" according to one courtier. He was also somewhat of a idiot savant – accompanying Francis to Italy, Triboulet sensed disaster at Pavia, his futile warning spun effortlessly into a telling riddle. There is no evidence Triboulet had a daughter, nor would have even been allowed to marry, as jesters were only slightly above the family pet in social rank and were subject to horrible indignities. It appears he was also quite

vain and wore tight clothing in order to accentuate his disfigurement. Besides satisfying Hugo's "theory of the grotesque," the author's interest in Triboulet shadowed a general 19th-century fascination in jesters and deformity, and it appears he learned of Triboulet from a book shelved in his father's library in Sologne, only a short distance from Triboulet's birthplace in Blois.

GIUSEPPE VERDI AND THE GONZAGAS OF MANTUA

When Verdi was first refused permission to produce his new opera (then *La maledizione de St. Vallier*), he agreed to change the locale from the highly visible kingdom of France to a minor duchy in Italy. He chose Mantua, as its reigning family in the 16th century was also famed for flagrant sexuality. It's no secret Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, had a fling with Lucrezia Borgia, then married to Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (whose sister, Isabella, was married to Francesco). In another hostage-for-ransom scenario, his son, Federigo, became an intimate friend of Francis, with whom he could be found womanizing at the French court during his captivity and later as a guest. And then there is Federigo's grandson Vincenzo – the Gonzaga most often cited to be the inspiration for Verdi's nameless Duke. Things appeared to have started slowly for Vincenzo – it was rumored he was impotent, and the family of his first wife, Margharita Farnese of Parma, sought to have their marriage annulled. As the Medici Archives reveal, the family of his second betrothed, Eleonora de Medici, demanded proof – a potency test in the presence of neutral princely peers with two virginal maidens. This was not uncommon for the day, as Lucrezia Borgia's first husband, Giovanni Sforza, was faced with a similar proposition. Unlike Sforza, who declined the indignation, Vincenzo went through with the ordeal and after the marriage was consummated, made up for lost time, siring five children by his wife and countless more by other women.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1971 production of Monteverdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea

In the beginning …

JACOPO PERI 1561–1633
CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI 1567–1643

Although often considered an Italian innovation, OPERA had its debut in Ancient Greece, where drama frequently incorporated singing, declamation and dance to tell a narrative tale. Ecclesiastical music dramas of the Middle Ages were also important precursors. But the operatic art form familiar to us today has its roots in Florence, between 1580 and 1589, where a group of musicians, poets and scholars explored the possibility of reviving tragic drama of the ancients.

The circle was known as the CAMERATA and consisted of writers, theorists and composers, including GIULIO CACCINI, OTTAVIO RINUCCINI and VINCENZO GALILEI (father of the famed astronomer). Their efforts exacted musical compositions that took special care to accentuate the dramatic inflection of their chosen text, to evoke its precise emotional shading and to find the ideal marriage between words and music. JACOPO PERI, a rival of Caccini and a collaborator with Rinuccini, produced the first known (but no longer existing) opera, *Dafne*, in 1597.

The Camerata met at the home of the nobleman GIOVANNI DE' BARDI. Thus, no sooner had opera had made its first appearance than it became a court activity, which fit the social and political conditions of the day. As a result of Bardi's influence, these composers were hired by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand I, who gave them their first wide exposure. When his daughter, Marie de' Medici, married Henry IV of France, Peri's *Euridice* was produced at the ceremony, and Italian opera gained its first international premiere. Even though *Euridice* was a simply staged production accompanied by a small group of strings and flute, in 1600 this type of musical drama was considered revolutionary.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S *Orfeo* (1607) is the most significant opera of this period, more so than those works of the Florentines. The boldness of his harmonies and the richness of his orchestration dramatically developed the art form, and this work, along with *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642) are still popular pieces performed today.

Opera in Venice

FRANCESCO CAVALLI 1602–1676
ANTONIO CESTI 1623–1669

The new art form quickly spread to other Italian cities. By 1636, the first public opera house was opened in Venice and opera became quite popular among the people. *Le nozze di Teti e di Pele*, the first of FRANCESCO CAVALLI'S thirty-plus operas for the Venetian stage, premiered two years later. Competing with Monteverdi and ANTONIO CESTI (who took a post in Innsbruck after producing only two works for Venice), Cavalli quickly rose to the top.

At the same time, Italian stage designers were fast improving their techniques and were able to produce stupendous special effects, a happy coincidence for the new operatic art form. The use of the proscenium arch allowed the spectator to view the stage from a narrower angle, thus producing a better illusion of perspective. The proscenium also hid elaborate flying apparatus, and allowed for quick and seamless scene changes with drops from the top and flaps from the side wings. Spectacular stage effects became a speciality of French opera, and with the inclusion of ballet, became the part of established style of France by the 18th century.

North of Italy, Hamburg composer REINHARD KEISER (1694 – 1739) became the director of one of the first public opera houses in Germany. He often set libretti by Venetian librettists.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Keiser's The Fortunes of King Croesus

Baroque Opera in France, England and Germany

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY 1632–1687
HENRY PURCELL 1658/59–1695
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685–1759
CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK 1714–1787

In 1646, Giovanni Battista Lulli arrived in France from Florence and tried to establish Italian opera in the French Court. He was unsuccessful because the reigning monarch, Louis XIV, preferred dance. Nonetheless, JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY, as he became known, rose in royal favor by composing ballets for the king and eventually gained control of the Académie Royale de Musique, the official musical institution of France. Through Lully's influence in this important position, and by way of his own compositions, a distinctive French operatic form began to emerge and thrive on its own.

The Italian and French forms of opera were slow to catch on among the English, who preferred spoken theater. A compromise was reached in a form referred to as SEMI-OPERA, featuring spoken dialogue alternated with musical MASQUES (which often included dance). HENRY PURCELL'S *The Fairy Queen* (1692) is one popular example from this period. Purcell's first opera, *Dido and Aeneas* (1689), is his only opera in the Italian style and continues to be occasionally revived in modern times.

A scene from The Minnesota Opera's 1994 production of Handel's Julius Caesar

A major player in the early part of the 18th century was GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL, who began his career in Hamburg. As early as 1711, Handel enjoyed success in England and would remain there for the next forty years. During that time, he wrote 35 operas (many in the Italian style), most of which focused on historical, classical or romantic subjects. His inventive musical style began to set new standards for the art form, and his works redefined the dramatic potential of opera as a vital and vivid experience.

Another German, CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK, arrived in England on the heels of Handel's last London operas, and later moving to Vienna, he began to see what he found to be flaws in the conventional Italian opera of the day. Singers had taken control of the productions, demanding solo arias and sometimes adding their own pieces to show off their vocal technique. Operas were turning into a collection of individual showpieces at the sacrifice of dramatic integrity. Although Gluck wrote some operas which shared these flaws, one work, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), reasserted the primacy of drama and music

Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's 2010 production of Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2009 production of Argento's Casanova's Homcoming *{which included a scene from Metastasio's opera seria* Demofoonte *(1733)}*

by removing the DA CAPO (repeated and embellished) part of the aria, by using chorus and instrumental solos only to reinforce the dramatic action, and by not allowing the singers to insert their own music. Gluck completed his career in Paris, where he became a master of French opera's serious form, the TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE.

During the 18th century, opera began to fall into two distinct categories: OPERA SERIA and OPERA BUFFA. Opera seria (serious opera) focused on historical, religious or Greco-Roman subjects. The glorification of saints, kings and gods went hand-in-hand with the grandiose baroque style and the spectacular stage effects of court opera. Librettist Pietro Metastasio provided 28 libretti that continued to serve composers again and again well into the 19th century. Opera buffa (comic opera) had its roots with the popular audience, each country specializing in its own distinct form. In France, CHARLES-SIMON FAVART'S operas of the 1740s parodied the serious tragédie lyriques of Lully (the Opéra-Comique, the Paris theater for comic opera, would later be named after him). In Naples, Italy, the INTERMEZZI (short comic works inserted in between acts of a serious opera), of GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI paved the way to the development of opera buffa in the latter half of the 18th century. His masterpiece, *La serva padrona* (1733), is considered a milestone in the development of comic opera.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Mozart's Don Giovanni

Opera during the Classical Period

GIUSEPPE SARTI 1729–1802
FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN 1732–1809
GIOVANNI PAISIELLO 1740–1816
DOMENICO CIMAROSA 1749–1801
ANTONIO SALIERI 1750–1825
VICENTE MARTIN Y SOLER 1754–1806
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756–1791

Two composers are invariably linked to the Classical Period – FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN and WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART. Of the former, few of his operas are produced today even though he wrote over 25, most of which were created and performed for his employer, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy. Mozart's operas, however, remain in repertory as some of the most frequently produced works. Of the five most favorite – *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782), *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), *Così fan tutte* (1790), *The Magic Flute* (1791) – two are SINGSPIELS (a popular German form, replacing sung recitative with spoken dialogue), two opera buffas and one opera "semi-seria." Two opera serias (the form Mozart preferred, incidently) frame his adult career – *Idomeneo* (1781) was his first mature opera and *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) was his last commission.

Artist rendering of Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Mozart's The Abduction from the Seraglio

Lesser composers of this period include ANTONIO SALIERI (born in Legnago, settling later in Vienna), who served the court of Emperor Joseph II. Through the emperor's influence with his sister, Marie Antoinette, Salieri made headway in Paris as well, establishing himself as a worthy successor of Gluck in the serious vein of his tragédie lyriques. Returning to Vienna in 1784, Salieri found himself in strict

competition with other leading composers of the day, GIOVANNI PAISIELLO and VINCENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER. These two composers were known partly from their brief service to Catherine the Great of Russia, along with several other advanced Italian composers including GIUSEPPE SARTI and DOMENICO CIMAROSA.

After the Revolution – French Grand Opera

LUIGI CHERUBINI 1760–1842
FERDINANDO PAER 1771–1839
GASPARE SPONTINI 1774–1851
DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER 1782–1871
GIACOMO MEYERBEER 1791–1864

In the decades following the French revolution, FRENCH GRAND OPERA developed extensively, moving from a private entertainment for royalty to an art form eagerly consumed by the upwardly mobile bourgeoisie. Opera in France at the turn of the 19th century was dominated by expatriate Italian composers. First and most notable was LUIGI CHERUBINI, who established residence in Paris in 1785. Eventually rising to the position of director of the national conservatory, he virtually ceased composing operas in 1813. The most lasting work in his oeuvre is *Médée* of 1797.

Paris Opéra – Palais Garnier (completed in 1875; still in use)
The old Opéra on the Salle de la Petelier, birthplace of French Grand Opera, burned down in 1873

FERDINANDO PAER came to prominence during the first empire of Napoleon I – he was engaged as the Emperor's *maître de chapelle* in 1807 and later became the director of the Opéra-Comique. Just before Napoleon's abdication, Paer assumed directorship of the Théâtre Italien, a post he held until it was yielded to Rossini in 1824. None of his many operas survive in the modern repertory, although the libretto he wrote for one, *Leonora* (1804), served to inspire Ludwig van Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio* (1805). GASPARE SPONTINI was another Italian who moved to Paris and eventually ran the Théâtre Italien, a theater devoted to producing Italian works in their native language. Most popular among his repertoire were *La Vestale* (1807) and *Fernand Cortez* (1809).

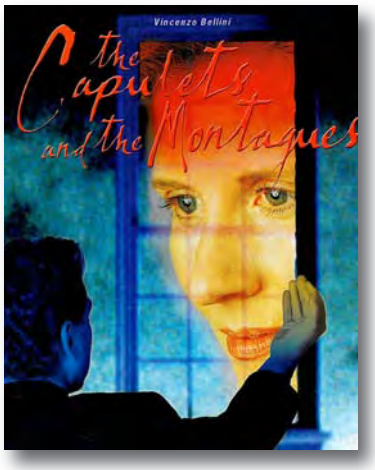
Today's Opéra National de Paris
at the Place de la Bastille (completed in 1989)

French grand opera came into its own through the efforts of two composers: DANIEL-FRANÇOIS-ESPRIT AUBER and GIACOMO MEYERBEER. Collaborating with Eugène Scribe (whose plays would later serve as inspiration for a number of Verdi operas), Auber produced *La muette de Portici* (1828), the first definite *grand opéra* of this period, which proved extremely popular with French audiences. Characteristic of the genre was a five-act framework that incorporated spectacular stage effects, large crowd scenes and a ballet. A specific, mannered formula for the drama's unfolding was also inherent in the art form.

Meyerbeer brought grand opera to fruition first with *Robert le diable* (1831), then with *Les Huguenots* (1836), and with these works, also established a close relationship with Scribe. Two later works of note include *La prophète* (1849) and *L'Africaine* (1865), also cast in the grand opera schema.

Early 19th-century Italy – The Bel Canto composers

GIOACHINO ROSSINI 1792–1868
GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797–1848
VINCENZO BELLINI 1801–1835



Promotional material for Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Bellini's The Capulets and the Montagues

Back in Italy, opera saw the development of a distinctive style known as BEL CANTO. Bel canto (literally "beautiful singing") was characterized by the smooth emission of tone, beauty of timbre and elegance of phrasing. Music associated with this genre contained many TRILLS, ROULADES and other embellishments that showed off the particular singer's technique. Traditionally, a bel canto aria begins with a slow, song-like CANTABILE section followed by an intermediate MEZZO section with a slightly quicker tempo. It ends with a dazzling CABALETTA, the fastest section, where the singer shows off his or her talents. Often these were improvised upon, or replaced with "suitcase" arias of the singers' own choosing, much to the consternation of the composer.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Rossini's Semiramide

GIOACHINO ROSSINI was the first and perhaps best known of the three composers associated with this style. In his early years, between 1813 and 1820, Rossini composed rapidly, producing two or three operas a year. The pace slowed after he moved to France in 1824 – there he produced five works for the Paris Opéra, several of which show tendencies of the French grand opera style. *William Tell* was his last opera – Rossini retired at age 37 with 39 more years to live.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia

GAETANO DONIZETTI and VINCENZO BELLINI were two other Italian Bel Canto composers who premiered operas in both Paris and Italy. A tendency that began with Rossini and continued into their works was the practice of accompanied recitatives. Opera to this point had been organized in a very specific manner with more elongated "numbers" (arias, duets, ensembles) alternated with recitative (essentially dialogue set to music, intended to move the action along). In Mozart's day, these recitative would be played by a harpsichord or fortepiano (sometimes doubled with cellos and basses) and was known as RECITATIVO SECCO. As Rossini's style progressed, the orchestra took over playing the recitatives which became known as RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO. The practice continued into Verdi's day.

Set model for Minnesota Opera's 2010 production of Donizetti's Roberto Devereux

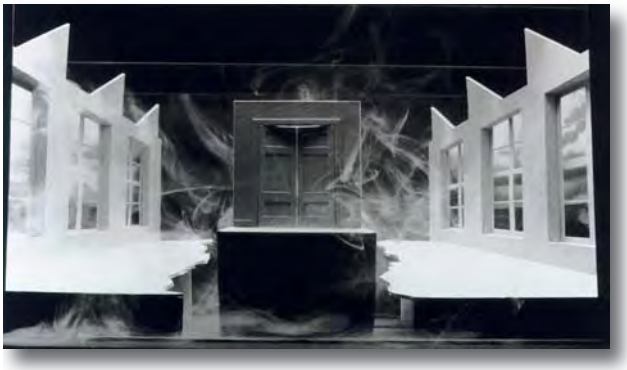
Three Masters of Opera

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813–1901
RICHARD WAGNER 1813–1883
GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858–1924

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1998 production of Verdi's Aida

GIUSEPPE VERDI's roots began in bel canto but the composer transformed the Italian style into a more fluid, less structured form. With a legacy of 26 operas, Verdi is never out of the repertory and four of these (*Rigoletto*, 1851; *Il trovatore*, 1853; *La traviata*, 1853; *Aida*, 1871) are some of the most familiar of the art form.

Verdi's contemporary, RICHARD WAGNER, is also considered one of the greats. Taking the idea of "fluidity" one step further, Wagner developed his operas into freely flowing MUSIC-DRAMAS united by melodic motifs that become associated with persons, places and things. Taking the grandeur of French opera one step further, he crafted his own libretti out of Nordic legends and created spectacular operatic moments. Wagner also greatly expanded the orchestra and developed his own particular brass instruments for greater impact. A Wagnerian singer is one with great stamina – they must sing over a large orchestra in an opera that can be up to four hours long.



Set model for Minnesota Opera's 1992 production of Wagner's The Flying Dutchman

Italian opera's successor to Verdi turned out to be GIACOMO PUCCINI. With a gift of popular melody and musical economy, his operas *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904) remain at the top of the standard repertory.

Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's 1994 production of Verdi's Il trovatore

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2004 production of Puccini's Madame Butterfly

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2002 production of Verdi's Don Carlos

Later French Opera

HECTOR BERLIOZ 1803–1869
CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD 1818–1893
JACQUES OFFENBACH 1819–1880
EDOUARD LALO 1823–1892
CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS 1835–1921
LÉO DELIBES 1836–1891
GEORGES BIZET 1838–1875
JULES MASSENET 1842–1912
GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER 1860–1956

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2009 production of Bizet's Les pêcheurs de perles

The grand opera schema continued into the latter half of the 19th century in such works as HECTOR BERLIOZ's *Les Troyens* (composed 1856 – 58), and CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD's *Faust* (1859) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). An element of realism began to slip into the French repertoire, seen in works by GEORGES BIZET (*Carmen*, 1875) and GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER (*Louise*, 1897). JACQUES OFFENBACH revolutionized the art of comic operetta in such works as *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), *La belle Hélène* (1864) and *La Périchole* (1868). Other composers of this period include CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (*Samson et Dalila*, 1877), EDOUARD LALO (*Le Roi d'Ys*, 1875) and JULES MASSENET (*Manon*, 1884; *Werther*, 1892; *Cendrillon*, 1899).

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2009 production of Gounod's Faust

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2008 production of Gounod's Roméo et Juliette

Verismo in Late 19th-century Italy

RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO 1857–1919
PIETRO MASCAGNI 1863–1945
UMBERTO GIORDANO 1867–1948

A realist vein began to penetrate Italian opera toward the end of the 19th century, influenced in part by naturalism in French literature of the period and by the writings of an Italian literary circle, the SCAPIGLIATURA. Translated as the "dishevelled ones," the Scapigliatura displayed their distaste for bourgeois society in works of gritty realism, often bordering on the morbid and the macabre. Nearly all the members of the group (lead by GIOVANNI VERGA) led tragic lives ending in early death by alcoholism and suicide.

Operas to come out of the resulting VERISMO school include PIETRO MASCAGNI's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890), RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO's *Pagliacci* (1892) and UMBERTO GIORDANO's *Mala vita* (1892). Other works are attributed to this movement by nature of their rapid action with passionate tension and violence quickly alternating with moments of great sentimentality.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Leoncavallo's Pagliacci

Opera in Russia

MIKHAIL IVANOVICH GLINKA 1804–1857
PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY 1840–1893
NIKOLAY ANDREYEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOV 1844–1908
MODEST PETROVICH MUSORGSKY 1839–1881
SERGEI PROKOFIEV 1891–1953
DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH 1906–1975

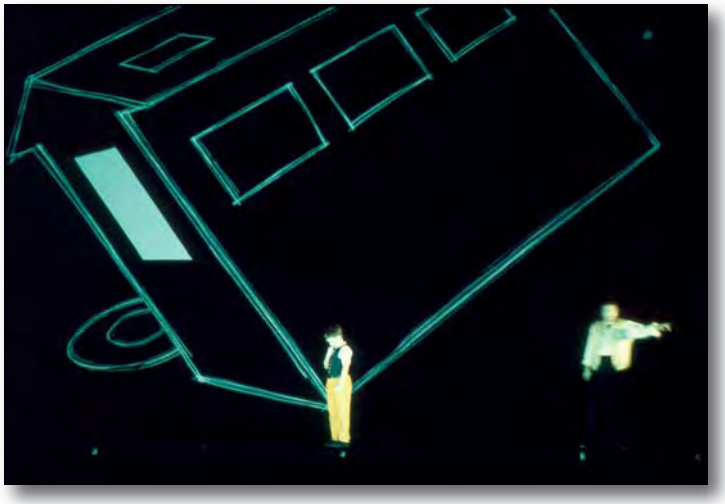
Opera was introduced in Russia during the succession of powerful czarinas that culminated in the reign of Catherine the Great (ruled 1762 – 1796). She employed a number of important Italian composers (see above) and established St. Petersburg as a major city for the production of new opera, later to be elevated to the same par as London, Paris and Vienna by her descendent, Nicholas I (ruled 1825 – 1855). Of native Russian composers, the first to come to prominence was MIKHAIL GLINKA with *A Life for the Tsar* (1836), and later, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842). PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY, now known more for his ballets and symphonies, was a prolific composer of opera. His best works include *Eugene Onegin* (1879), *Mazepa* (1884) and *The Queen of Spades* (1890). Other Russian composers of the latter 19th century include NIKOLAY RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (*The Snow Maiden*, 1882; *The Tsar's Bride*, 1899; *The Golden Cockerel*, 1909) and MODEST MUSORGSKY (*Boris Godunov*, 1874).

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1978 production of Prokofiev's The Love for Three Oranges

Russian opera continued into the 20th century with works by SERGEI PROKOFIEV composed *The Love for Three Oranges* (1921) and *The Gambler* (1929), among others. His crowning achievement, written toward the end of his life, was *War and Peace* (1948), based on the novel by Leo Tolstoy. DMITRI SHOSTOKOVICH's most notable work is *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934). Both artists suffered censure from the Soviet government.

Into the 20th Century

CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862–1918
RICHARD STRAUSS 1864–1949
PAUL DUKAS 1865–1935
ARNOLD SCHOENBERG 1874–1951
IGOR STRAVINSKY 1882–1971
ALBAN BERG 1885–1935
DARIUS MILHAUD 1892–1974
PAUL HINDEMITH 1895–1963
KURT WEILL 1900–1950
BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913–1976



A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1996 production of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2010 production of Strauss' Salome

CLAUDE DEBUSSY's impressionist score for *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) paved the way for the radical changes in 20th-century opera. Also based on a Symbolist text by Maurice Maeterlinck was PAUL DUKAS' *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1907), an opera about the notorious Bluebeard and his six wives. But causing the most sensation was RICHARD STRAUSS' *Salome* (1905), which pushed both tonality and the demands on the singers to the limits. He followed that opera with an even more progressive work, *Elektra* (1909), drawn from the Greek tragedy by Sophocles.

Important innovations were taking place in Vienna. ARNOLD SCHOENBERG made a complete break with tonality in his staged MONODRAMA *Erwartung* (1909), giving all twelve tones of the chromatic scale equal importance. He codified this approach in his TWELVE-TONE SYSTEM where a theme is created with a row of notes using all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. This "row" can be played in transposition, in reverse, upside-down, or in any combination of the three. Schoenberg also evolved a particular style of singing, SPRECHSTIMME, an intoned speech halfway between singing and speaking.

Sprechstimme was well suited to the expressionist nature of operas being produced at this time. Schoenberg's student, ALBAN BERG, employed it in *Wozzeck* (1925) and used the serialized twelve-tone method in his opera *Lulu* (1937). Another avant-garde composer, PAUL HINDEMITH, created a series of expressionist one-act operas that shocked audiences of the day: *Murder, Hope of Women* (1921), *Das Nusch-Nuschi* (1921) and *Sancta Susanna* (1922). Two later operas include one based on a short story by E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Cardillac*, 1926) and a satire on modern social behavior (*News of the Day*, 1929). At about the same KURT WEILL was causing an uproar with his new works: *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930) and *Der Silbersee* (1933). The up-and-coming Nazi party did not favor his works, and he was forced to leave the country, eventually to settle in America.

In Paris, Russian IGOR STRAVINSKY was shocking audiences and causing riots with his ballet music. His early operas include *The Nightingale* (1914) and *Mavra* (1922). *Oedipus Rex* (1927) is representative of his first neoclassical works, using forms from the 18th century with modern tonality and orchestration. His later (and longest) opera, *The Rake's Progress* (1951), is a culmination of this neoclassical style. French composer DARIUS MILHAUD was extremely prolific in all genres of music. In opera, he produced the one-act *Le pauvre matelot* (1927) and a large-scale work in the tradition of grand opera, *Christophe Columbe* (1930). Later in his life he composed *La mère coupable* (1966), based on the Beaumarchais Figaro trilogy (which includes *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*).

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1999 production of Britten's The Turn of the Screw

In England, BENJAMIN BRITTEN emerged as one of Britain's foremost composers of opera since Henry Purcell. Out of his 16 original works for the stage the most popular include *Peter Grimes* (1945), *Billy Budd* (1951), *Gloriana* (1953) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954).

20th- and 21st-century American Composers of Opera

VIRGIL THOMSON 1896–1989
GEORGE ANTHEIL 1900–1959
SAMUEL BARBER 1910–1981
GIAN CARLO MENOTTI 1911–2007
CARLISLE FLOYD 1926–
DOMINICK ARGENTO 1927–
CONRAD SUSA 1935–
PHILIP GLASS 1937–
JOHN CORIGLIANO 1938–
JOHN ADAMS 1947–

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1998 American premiere of Antheil's Transatlantic

Paris in the 20s served to inspire the next generation of composers, several of which were expatriates from America. GEORGE ANTHEIL was the first American composer to have an opera premiered in Europe – his work, *Transatlantic*, was written in France but premiered in Frankfurt in 1930. Compatriot VIRGIL THOMSON studied with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger and later produced *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) and *The Mother of Us All* (1947), both to texts by Gertrude Stein. SAMUEL BARBER stayed on American soil, studying at the newly founded Curtis Institute in 1935. He went on to compose *Vanessa* (1958), and to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center, *Antony and Cleopatra* (1966).

On *Vanessa*, Barber collaborated with another composer, GIAN CARLO MENOTTI, who wrote the libretto. Also the author of 25 libretti for his own operas, Menotti is best known for *The Medium* (1946), *The Consul* (1950), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1951) and *The Saint of Bleecker Street* (1954). Another American composing at about the same time was CARLISLE FLOYD, who favored American themes and literature. His most important works include *Susannah* (1955), *Wuthering Heights* (1958), *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* (1962) and *Of Mice and Men* (1970).

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1989 production of Glass' The Juniper Tree

During the sixties and seventies, THE MINNESOTA OPERA was the site of many world premieres of lasting significance: CONRAD SUSA's *Transformations* (1973) and *Black River* (1975), and DOMINICK ARGENTO's *The Masque of Angels* (1964), *Postcards from Morocco* (1971), *The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe* (1976), *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (1981) and *Casanova's Homecoming* (1985; revived in 2009). Other Argento works of merit include *Miss Havisham's Fire* (1979) and *The Aspern Papers* (1988).

Other composers currently at the fore include PHILIP GLASS, JOHN CORIGLIANO and JOHN ADAMS. The Minimalist music of Philip Glass has won popular acclaim among even non-opera-going audiences – his oeuvre includes *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *Ahknaten* (1984), and most recently, *The Voyage* (1992), commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. The Met also commissioned *The Ghosts of Versailles* from JOHN CORIGLIANO in 1991 – like Milhaud's opera of 1966, its text involves Beaumarchais' third part of the Figaro trilogy with the playwright himself appearing as the lover of 18th-century Queen of France Marie

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2005 production of Adams' Nixon in China

Antoinette. JOHN ADAMS' focus on contemporary events lead him to compose *Nixon in China* (1987) and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991).

Opera continues to be a living and vital art form in the revival of many of these works as well as the commissioning of new pieces. Among world premieres in the last two decades include TOBIAS PICKER'S *Emmeline* (1996) by Santa Fe Opera, DANIEL CATÁN'S *Florencia en el Amazonas* (1996) by Houston Grand Opera, MYRON FINK'S *The Conquistador* (1997) presented by San Diego Opera, ANTHONY DAVIS' *Amistad* (1997) presented by Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Central Park* (1999) by Glimmerglass Opera, a trilogy of short operas set by three composers. Recent seasons included such new works as POUL RUDERS' *The Handmaid's Tale* (Royal Danish Opera; 2000), BRIGHT SHENG'S *Madame Mao* (Santa Fe Opera; 2003), DANIEL CATÁN'S *Salsipuedes* (Houston Grand Opera; 2004), RICHARD DANIELPOUR'S *Margaret Garner* (Michigan Opera Theatre; 2005), RICKY IAN GORDON'S *The Grapes of Wrath* (Minnesota Opera; 2007), JONATHAN DOVE'S *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North, Leeds; 2008), HOWARD SHORE'S *The Fly* (Los Angeles Opera; 2009), JAKE HEGGIE'S *Moby Dick* (Dallas Opera; 2010), KEVIN PUTS' *Silent Night* (Minnesota Opera; 2011) and Douglas J. Cuomo and John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt* (Minnesota Opera; 2013).

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2003 American premiere of Ruders' The Handmaid's Tale

A scene from Minnesota Opera's Pulitzer Prize-winning 2011 world premiere of Puts' Silent Night

Costume sketch for Minnesota Opera's 2009 American premiere of Dove's The Adventures of Pinocchio

Minnesota Opera combines a culture of creativity and fiscal responsibility to produce opera and opera education programs that expand the art form, nurture artists, enrich audiences and contribute to the vitality of the community.

Minnesota Opera's roots were planted in 1963 when the Walker Art Center commissioned Dominick Argento to compose an opera (*The Masque of Angels*) for its performing arts program, Center Opera. Center Opera focused on the composition and performance of new works by American composers, and, under the influence of the Walker Art Center, emphasized visual design. The company grew steadily, and in 1969 became an independent entity, changing its name in 1971 to The Minnesota Opera.

Throughout the first 12 years of its history, The Minnesota Opera was known as a progressive, "alternative" opera production company, a complement to the traditional orientation of the annual Metropolitan Opera tour and the productions of the St. Paul Opera. In 1976, The Minnesota Opera merged with the St. Paul Opera, adding a focus on traditional repertory to its program of contemporary opera.

Set design for Minnesota Opera's 1971 production of Dominick Argento's Postcard from Morocco

In January 1985, The Minnesota Opera entered a new era with the opening of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, one of the nation's most respected performance halls. Today, the company presents its entire season at the Ordway.

In September 1990, the company moved its scenic and costume shops, rehearsal facilities and administrative offices to the 51,000 square-feet Minnesota Opera Center, which comprises three renovated warehouses on the Mississippi riverfront in Minneapolis. Winner of a 1990 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Award, the Minnesota Opera Center is one of the finest opera production facilities in the nation and has served to strengthen the company both artistically and institutionally.

Throughout the 1990s, the company gained a national reputation for its high-quality, innovative productions of standard repertoire operas like *Aida*, *Carmen* and *Turandot*, which were seen on stages across the nation, and firmly established Minnesota Opera's reputation as a lead coproducer in the industry. In that decade, Minnesota Opera also grew institutionally, launching an artistic development campaign to establish a foundation for the expansion of its season and increased artistic quality.

In 1997, the company launched its Resident Artist Program to bridge the gap between an artist's academic training and their professional life on the world stage. The RAP is acclaimed for its exceptional, intense and individualized training as well as the elite group of young artists it produces. Alumni have earned engagements at prestigious houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival and Covent Garden.

In 2000, Artistic Director Dale Johnson articulated a new artistic vision for the company inspired by bel canto ("beautiful singing"), the ideal upon which Italian opera is based. Bel canto values, which emphasize intense emotional expression supported by exquisite technique, inform every aspect of the company's programs, from repertoire selection, casting and visual design to education and artist training. As one manifestation of its philosophy, Minnesota Opera is committed to producing one work from the early 19th-century Bel Canto period each season, attracting luminary singers like Bruce Ford, Vivica Genaux, Brenda Harris and Sumi Jo to its stage.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 1984 *production of Peter Schickele's* The Abduction of Figaro

Minnesota OPERA

Minnesota Opera is also recognized for its progressive and far-reaching educational programs. Residencies in schools, opera education classes and pre-performance discussions are building an audience for tomorrow and enhancing the enjoyment of audiences today.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2000 production of Gioachino Rossini's Semiramide

Throughout its history, Minnesota Opera has attracted international attention for its performances of new operas and innovative productions of masterworks. Among its most renowned world and American premieres are: Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*, *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* and *Casanova's Homecoming*, William Mayer's *A Death in the Family*, Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus*, Oliver Knussen and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and *Black River*, PDQ Bach's *The Abduction of Figaro*, Robert Moran's *From the Towers of the Moon*, Gioachino Rossini's *Armida*, Evan Chen's *Bok Choy Variations*, George Antheil's *Transatlantic*, Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*, Laurent Petitgirard's *Joseph Merrrick dit Elephant Man*, Saverio Mercadante's *Orazi e Curiazi*, Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Reinhard Keiser's *The Fortunes of King Croesus*, Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Kevin Puts' Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* and Douglas J. Cuomo's *Doubt*.

Building on the legacy of its commitment to new work and following the overwhelming success of its commission of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 2007, Minnesota Opera launched the New Works Initiative, a landmark program designed to invigorate the operatic repertoire through the production and dissemination of new commissions and revivals of contemporary American works. The seven-year, $7 million program includes an international coproduction (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, 2009), three revivals (*Casanova's Homecoming* in 2010; *Wuthering Heights* in 2011 and *The Dream of Valentino* in 2013) and three commissions (*Silent Night* in 2011; *Doubt* in 2013 and *The Manchurian Candidate* in 2015).

On the Minnesota Opera stage, talented national and internationally known artists are brought together to create productions of the highest artistic integrity, emphasizing the balance and total integration of theatrical and musical values. Throughout the past five decades, the company has presented such artists as Tim Albery, Isabel Bayrakdarian, John Lee Beatty, Harry Bicket, Richard Bonynge, William Burden, John Conklin, Roxana Constantinescu, David Daniels, Bruce Ford, Elizabeth Futral, Vivica Genaux, Colin Graham, Denyce Graves, Greer Grimsley, Nancy Gustafson, Brenda Harris, Jason Howard, Judith Howarth, Robert Indiana, Robert Israel, Sumi Jo, Kelly Kaduce, Antony McDonald, Catherine Malfitano, Daniel Massey, Johanna Meier, Suzanne Mentzer, Erie Mills, Sherrill Milnes, Julia Migenes, Fernando de la Mora, James Morris, Suzanne Murphy, Maureen O'Flynn, Susanna Phillips, Ashley Putnam, Patricia Racette, James Robinson, Neil Rosenshein, William Shimell, James Valenti, David Walker and Keith Warner.

A scene from Minnesota Opera's 2001 production of Carl Orff's Carmina burana

Minnesota Opera, now the 13th largest opera company in the nation with an annual budget of $10.2 million (Fiscal Year 2012), is guided by President and General Director Kevin Ramch and Artistic Director Dale Johnson.

Today Minnesota Opera is enjoying unprecedented stability and unity of mission, working toward its vision to create a new, dynamic opera company model based upon innovation, world-class artistic quality and strong community service.

Minnesota OPERA

Minnesota Opera Repertoire – 1963–2014

2013–2014
Manon Lescaut (Puccini)
Arabella (Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
The Dream of Valentino (Argento)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)

2012–2013
50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON
Nabucco (Verdi)
Anna Bolena (Donizetti)
§ † *Doubt* (Cuomo)
Hamlet (Thomas)
Turandot (Puccini)

2011–2012
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
§ † *Silent Night* (Puts)
Werther (Massenet)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
Madame Butterfly (Puccini)

2010–2011
Orfeo ed Euridice (Gluck)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
Maria Stuarda (Donizetti)
La traviata (Verdi)
Wuthering Heights (Herrmann)

2009–2010
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Casanova's Homecoming (Argento)
Roberto Devereux (Donizetti)
La bohème (Puccini)
Salome (R. Strauss)

2008–2009
Il trovatore (Verdi)
Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Mozart)
Faust (Gounod)
* *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Dove)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)

2007–2008
Un ballo in maschera (Verdi)
L'italiana in Algeri (Rossini)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
* *Croesus* (Keiser)
Rusalka (Dvořák)

2006–2007
La donna del lago (Rossini)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
§ † *The Grapes of Wrath* (Gordon)
Lakmé (Delibes)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)

2005–2006
Tosca (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
* *Orazi e Curiazi* (Mercadante)
* *Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man* (Petitgirard)

2004–2005
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
Maria Padilla (Donizetti)
Carmen (Bizet)
Nixon in China (Adams)

2003–2004
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Lucrezia Borgia (Donizetti)
Passion (Sondheim)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)

2002–2003
Die lustige Witwe (Lehár)
Norma (Bellini)
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
La traviata (Verdi)
* *The Handmaid's Tale* (Ruders)

2001–2002
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
La clemenza di Tito (Mozart)
La bohème (Puccini)
Little Women (Adamo)
Don Carlos (Verdi)

2000–2001
Turandot (Puccini)
I Capuleti ed i Montecchi (Bellini)
Street Scene (Weill)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Pagliacci/Carmina burana (Leoncavallo/Orff)
❧ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)

1999–2000
Der Rosenkavalier (R. Strauss)
Macbeth (Verdi)
Semiramide (Rossini)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
❧ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)

1998–1999
Otello (Verdi)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Turn of the Screw (Britten)
Faust (Gounod)
❧ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)

1997–1998
Aida (Verdi)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
* *Transatlantic* (Antheil)
Tosca (Puccini)
❧ *Cinderella* (Rossini, Massenet)

1996–1997
La traviata (Verdi)
Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)
The Rake's Progress (Stravinsky)
Carmen (Bizet)
❧ *Carmen* (Bizet)

1995–1996
La bohème (Puccini)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Pelléas et Mélisande (Debussy)
Les contes d'Hoffmann (Offenbach)
❧ *The Bohemians* (Puccini)

1994–1995
Turandot (Puccini)
Il barbiere di Siviglia (Rossini)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
§ † *Bok Choy Variations* (Chen and Simonson)
❧ *Figaro's Revenge* (Rossini, Paisiello)

§ World Premiere
* American Premiere
† Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
▲ Tour production
❧ Outreach/Education tour
• New Music-Theater Ensemble production

Minnesota OPERA

1993–1994
Julius Caesar (Handel)
* *Diary of an African American* (Peterson)
Il trovatore (Verdi)
§ *The Merry Widow and The Hollywood Tycoon* (Lehár)
▲ *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

1992–1993
Der fliegende Holländer (Wagner)
* *Armida* (Rossini)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)

1991–1992
Tosca (Puccini)
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
Le nozze di Figaro (Mozart)
§ † *From the Towers of the Moon* (Moran & La Chiusa)
▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
Carousel (Rodgers & Hammerstein)

1990–1991
Norma (Bellini)
The Aspern Papers (Argento)
Carmen (Bizet)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
▲ *Così fan tutte* (Mozart)
▲ *Swing on a Star* (Winkler)

1989–1990
La bohème (Puccini)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)
Roméo et Juliette (Gounod)
§ † *Frankenstein, The Modern Prometheus* (Larsen)
My Fair Lady (Lerner & Loewe)
• § *Snow Leopard* (Harper & Nieboer)
▲ *Madame Butterfly* (Puccini)
Where the Wild Things Are (Sendak/Knussen)

1988–1989
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
Salome (R. Strauss)
The Mikado (Gilbert & Sullivan)
The Juniper Tree (Glass & Moran)
Show Boat (Kern & Hammerstein)
§ † • *Without Colors* (Wellman & Shiflett)
§ † • *Red Tide* (Selig & Sherman)
§ † • *Newest Little Opera in the World* (ensemble)
▲ *Cinderella* (Rossini)
▲ *Tintypes* (Kyte, Marvin, Pearle)

1987–1988
Die Fledermaus (J. Strauss)
Rigoletto (Verdi)
Rusalka (Dvorak)
• *Cowboy Lips* (Greene & Madsen)
§ † • *Fly Away All* (Hutchinson & Shank)
• *Book of Days* (Monk)
Oklahoma! (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
▲ *Carmen* (Bizet)
▲ *Jargonauts, Ahoy!* (McKeel)

1986–1987
Les pêcheurs de perles (Bizet)
The Postman Always Rings Twice (Paulus)
Ariadne auf Naxos (R. Strauss)
South Pacific (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
§ † ▲ *Jargonauts, Ahoy!* (McKeel)

1985–1986
* *Where the Wild Things Are/Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (Knussen/Sendak)
La traviata (Verdi)
L'elisir d'amore (Donizetti)
The King and I (Rodgers & Hammerstein)
§ † *Opera Tomorrow*
▲ *The Fantasticks* (Schmidt)
▲ *The Magic Flute* (Mozart)
§ † ▲ *The Music Shop* (Wargo)

1984–1985
* *Animalen* (Werle)
§ † *Casanova's Homecoming* (Argento)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
▲ *La bohème* (Puccini)
▲ *Meanwhile, back at Cinderella's* (Arlan)

1983–1984
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Madama Butterfly (Puccini)
La Cenerentola (Rossini)
§ *The Abduction of Figaro* (PDQ Bach)
▲ *The Boor* (Argento)
▲ *Chanticleer* (Barab)
▲ *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti)

1982–1983
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti)
§ *A Death in the Family* (Mayer)
Kiss Me, Kate (Porter)
▲ *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini)
▲ *The Frog Who Became a Prince* (Barnes)
▲ *Zetabet* (Barnes)

1981–1982
Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)
The Village Singer (Paulus)
Gianni Schicchi (Puccini)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
§ *Feathertop* (Barnes)
§ *The Mask of Evil* (Mollicone)
▲ *Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
§ *Rosina* (Titus)

1980–1981
The Merry Widow (Lehar)
Black River (Susa)
Carmen (Bizet)
A Water Bird Talk (Argento)
§ *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (Argento)
▲ *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)
▲ *The Threepenny Opera* (Weill)

1979–1980
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert & Sullivan)
La bohème (Puccini)
§ † *Rosina* (Titus)
▲ *A Christmas Carol* (Sandow)

1978–1979
The Love for Three Oranges (Prokofiev)
§ *The Jealous Cellist* (Stokes)
The Passion According to St. Matthew (J.S. Bach)
La traviata (Verdi)
The Consul (Menotti)
▲ *Viva la Mamma* (Donizetti)

1977–1978
* *Christopher Columbus* (Offenbach)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)
§ *Claudia Legare* (Ward)

1976–1977
The Bartered Bride (Smetana)
The Passion According to St. Matthew (J.S. Bach)
Candide (Bernstein)
Mahagonny (Weill)

1975–1976
§ † *Black River* (Susa)
El Capitan (Sousa)
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
§ † *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe* (Argento)

1974–1975
§ † *Gallimaufry* (Minnesota Opera)
§ *Gulliver* (Blackwood, Kaplan, Lewin)
The Magic Flute (Mozart)
Albert Herring (Britten)

1973–1974
El Capitan (Sousa)
Transformations (Susa)
Don Giovanni (Mozart)
§ † *The Newest Opera in the World* (Minnesota Opera)

1972–1973
The Threepenny Opera (Weill)
Postcard from Morocco (Argento)
The Barber of Seville (Rossini)
§ † *Transformations* (Susa)

1971–1972
§ † *Postcard from Morocco* (Argento)
§ † *The Business of Good Government* (Marshall)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)
The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart)

1970–1971
§ † *Christmas Mummeries & Good Government* (Marshall)
§ † *Faust Counter Faust* (Gessner)
The Coronation of Poppea (Monteverdi)
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)

1969–1970
§ † *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (Marshall)
* *Punch and Judy* (Birtwistle)
* *17 Days and 4 Minutes* (Egk)
§ † *The Wanderer* (Paul and Martha Boesing)

1968–1969
Così fan tutte (Mozart)
§ † *Horspfal* (Stokes)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1967–1968
The Man in the Moon (Haydn)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Britten)

1966–1967
The Mother of Us All (Thomson)
The Sorrows of Orpheus (Milhaud)
* *The Harpies* (Blitzstein)
Socraties (Satie)
Three Minute Operas (Milhaud)

1965–1966
The Abduction from the Seraglio (Mozart)
The Good Soldier Schweik (Kurka)

1964–1965
The Rape of Lucretia (Britten)
The Wise Woman and the King (Orff)

1963–1964
§ † *The Masque of Angels* (Argento)
The Masque of Venus and Adonis (Blow)
Albert Herring (Britten)

§ World Premiere
* American Premiere
† Commissioned by The Minnesota Opera or by The Minnesota Opera Midwest Tour
▲ Tour production
❧ Outreach/Education tour
• New Music-Theater Ensemble production

Minnesota OPERA

eighteenth century

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756–1791
- *The Abduction from the Seraglio 1782*
- *The Marriage of Figaro 1786*
- *Don Giovanni 1787*
- *Così fan tutte 1790*
- *The Magic Flute 1791*

nineteenth century

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827
- *Fidelio 1805*

Gioachino Rossini 1792–1868
- *The Barber of Seville 1816*
- *La Cenerentola 1817*

Gaetano Donizetti 1797–1848
- *The Elixir of Love 1832*
- *Lucia di Lammermoor 1835*
- *Don Pasquale 1843*

Vincenzo Bellini 1801–1835
- *Norma 1831*

Richard Wagner 1813–1883
- *The Flying Dutchman 1843*
- *Tannhäuser 1845*
- *Lohengrin 1850*
- *Tristan und Isolde 1865*
- *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg 1868*
- *The Ring Cycle 1876*
  - *—Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried and Götterdämmerung*
- *Parsifal 1882*

Giuseppe Verdi 1813–1901
- *Rigoletto 1851*
- *Il trovatore 1853*
- *La traviata 1853*
- *La forza del destino 1862*
- *Don Carlos 1867*
- *Aida 1871*
- *Otello 1887*
- *Falstaff 1893*

Charles-François Gounod 1818–1893
- *Faust 1859*
- *Roméo et Juliette 1867*

nineteenth century (continued)

Jacques Offenbach 1819–1880
- *Les contes d'Hoffmann 1881*

Georges Bizet 1838–1875
- *Carmen 1875*

Modest Musorgsky 1839–1881
- *Boris Godunov 1874*

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840–1893
- *Eugene Onegin 1879*

Engelbert Humperdinck 1854–1921
- *Hänsel und Gretel 1893*

Ruggero Leoncavallo 1857–1919
- *Pagliacci 1892*

Pietro Mascagni 1863–1945
- *Cavalleria rusticana 1890*

twentieth century

Giacomo Puccini 1858–1924
- *Manon Lescaut 1893*
- *La bohème 1896*
- *Tosca 1900*
- *Madama Butterfly 1904*
- *Turandot 1926*

Claude Debussy 1862–1918
- *Pelléas et Mélisande 1902*

Richard Strauss 1864–1949
- *Salome 1905*
- *Elektra 1909*
- *Der Rosenkavalier 1911*
- *Ariadne auf Naxos 1912*

Alban Berg 1885–1935
- *Wozzeck 1925*
- *Lulu 1937*

Benjamin Britten 1913–1976
- *Peter Grimes 1945*
- *Albert Herring 1947*
- *Billy Budd 1951*
- *The Turn of the Screw 1954*

Often called "all the arts in one" opera includes the Aristotelian elements of drama: theme, spectacle, plot, diction, movement and music. A production is truly successful only when these components work together. Many individuals are engaged to accomplish this purpose.

IN THE BEGINNING

A subject is selected by a COMPOSER. It may be mythical, biblical, historical, literary or based on current events. A LIBRETTIST is employed to adapt the story into poetic verse and the composer then writes the music (or SCORE).

THE OPERA COMPANY

An opera company's ARTISTIC DIRECTOR agrees to stage the work. In many cases, an opera has already been written and staged many times.

ADMINISTRATION

The company's MARKETING department sells tickets and the DEVELOPMENT department raises funds through donations to cover the costs of the production. The FINANCE department controls costs and balances the production's budget. The EDUCATION department prepares the audience for what they are going to see on stage.

CASTING

The opera company's ARTISTIC DIRECTOR selects performers from auditions. These performers are divided into PRINCIPALS, COMPRIMARIOS (singers in secondary roles), CHORISTERS, and players for the ORCHESTRA. Often in a production, SUPERNUMERARIES are employed (people who act but do not sing). Sometimes the opera has a BALLET which requires dancers, or a BANDA which requires orchestra members to play on stage.

SETS AND COSTUMES

A design team is assembled consisting of a STAGE DIRECTOR, SET DESIGNER and COSTUME DESIGNER. They agree on a visual concept for the opera and sets and costumes are created.

REHEARSAL

The production goes into REHEARSAL. Principals, choristers and the orchestra often rehearse separately until the director begins staging. The CONDUCTOR of the orchestra attends staging rehearsals which are accompanied by a RÉPÉTITEUR, or rehearsal pianist. The orchestra joins the singers for the first time at the SITZPROBE. During TECH WEEK, sets and lighting are put into place at the theater. Several DRESS REHEARSALS (with the performers in costume and the orchestra in the pit) occur before the first performance of the opera. Sometimes these rehearsals are attended by a select audience.

THE PREMIERE

The first presentation of the opera to the general public is known as the PREMIERE. Long before the curtain goes up, preparations are being made.

6:00 PM — Continuity
STAGEHANDS (1) set the scenery for the first act of the production.

6:15 PM — Makeup calls
PRINCIPALS and COMPRIMARIOS (2) begin to arrive at the theater to be put into costume by DRESSERS, then are wigged by the WIGMASTER (1A) and made up with theatrical makeup.

6:30 PM — House opens
Opera patrons are admitted to the AUDITORIUM (4) and seated by USHERS (5). The HOUSE MANAGER (6) oversees the activities in the front of the house, including the ushers and concession sales. The BOX OFFICE MANAGER (7) takes care of any last minute ticket purchases. Patrons may remain in the LOBBY (8) to attend an informational session of *Opera Insights,* led by the Opera's music staff.

6:45 PM — Notes
The STAGE DIRECTOR may give last minute instructions to the cast before the performance begins.

7:00 PM — Warm-ups
PRINCIPALS and COMPRIMARIOS (2) warm-up in their dressing rooms.

7:15 PM — Chorus and orchestra warm-ups
The CHORUS (10), who have already put on their costumes, warms up with the CHORUSMASTER. The ORCHESTRA warms up in the ORCHESTRA PIT (11).

7:25 PM — Places
The PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER (12) calls places. Two other STAGE MANAGERS (13) are posted stage left and stage right to cue the entrances of the singers and choristers.

7:28 PM — Orchestra tune
The principal oboe gives a concert "A" to which the ORCHESTRA tunes. The SURTITLE PROMPTER (15) cues the preshow titles. The CONDUCTOR shakes the CONCERTMASTER's hand and mounts the podium.

7:30 PM — Curtain
The house lights goes out, and the FLYMAN (1A) raises the CURTAIN (16). The show begins.

8:25 PM — Intermission
The audience returns to the LOBBY (8) for refreshments while the STAGEHANDS (1) reset the STAGE (14) for the next act.

10:15 PM — Curtain calls
The performance ends, and the STAGE DIRECTOR, DESIGNERS, CONDUCTOR and SINGERS get to take a bow for all their hard work.

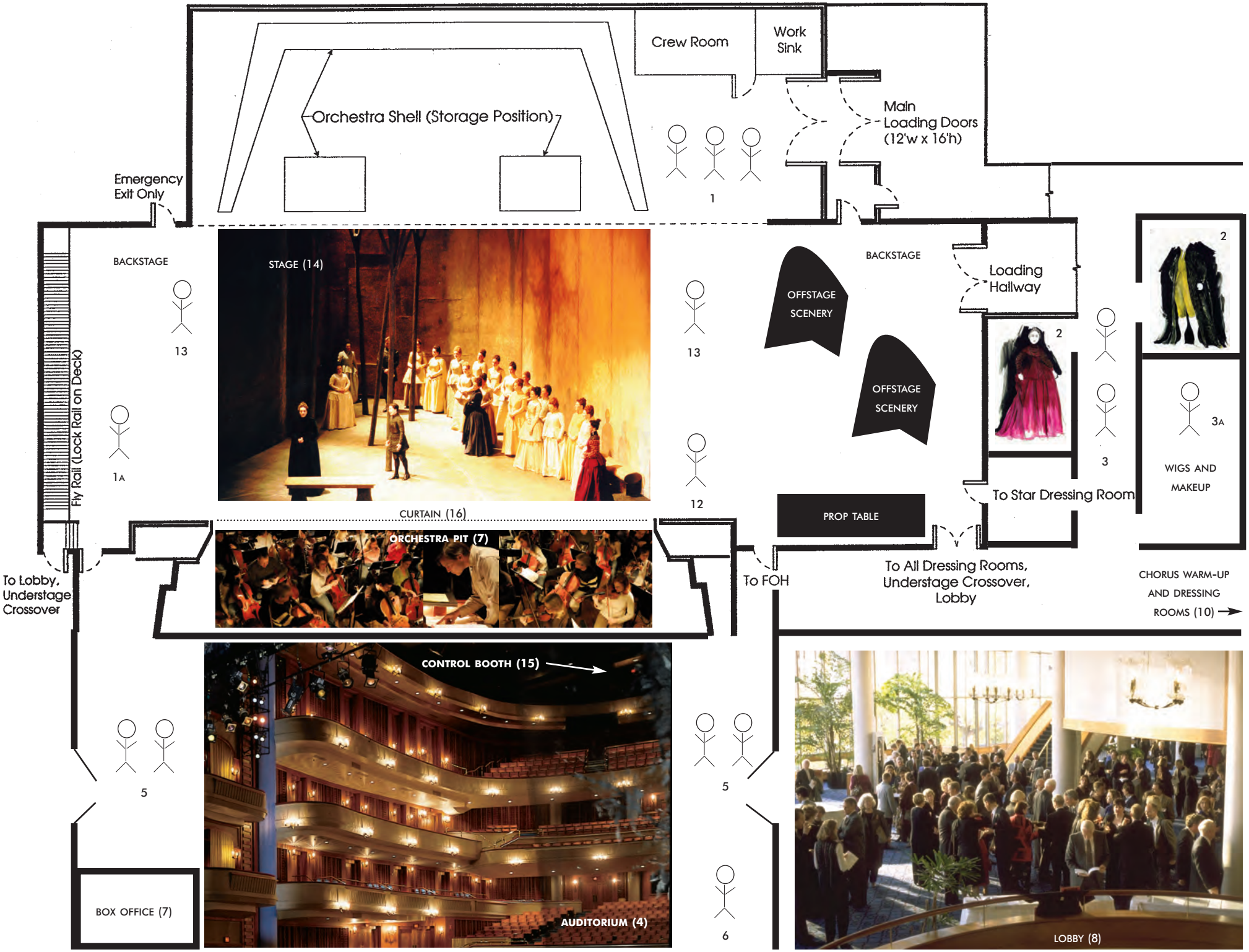
STAGEHANDS move scenery and props and handle lighting. DRESSERS help the cast into their often elaborate costumes.

PRINCIPALS sing the major roles. COMPRIMARIOS sing minor named roles. CHORISTERS make up the rest of the singing cast and are prepared by the CHORUSMASTER.

The CONDUCTOR leads the orchestra. The STAGE DIRECTOR instructs the cast where to move onstage. He or she generally stays only for the PREMIERE.

The ORCHESTRA rehearses several times independently from the singers. The first rehearsal during which singers and orchestra perform together is called a SITZPROBE. The CONCERTMASTER is the first violin and is responsible for "bowing" the string parts so the performers all move their bows together.

The PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER "calls" the show, announcing entrance and lighting cues. Two other STAGE MANAGERS assist in getting the cast and chorus on and off the stage. The SURTITLE PROMPTER cues the English translations projected above the stage from the control booth.


Crew Room
Work Sink
Orchestra Shell (Storage Position)
Main Loading Doors (12'w x 16'h)
Emergency Exit Only
1
BACKSTAGE
STAGE (14)
13
13
Fly Rail (Lock Rail on Deck)
1A
12
CURTAIN (16)
ORCHESTRA PIT (7)
To Lobby, Understage Crossover
BACKSTAGE
OFFSTAGE SCENERY
OFFSTAGE SCENERY
Loading Hallway
2
2
3
3A
WIGS AND MAKEUP
To Star Dressing Room
PROP TABLE
To FOH
To All Dressing Rooms, Understage Crossover, Lobby
CHORUS WARM-UP AND DRESSING ROOMS (10)
CONTROL BOOTH (15)
AUDITORIUM (4)
5
5
BOX OFFICE (7)
6
LOBBY (8)

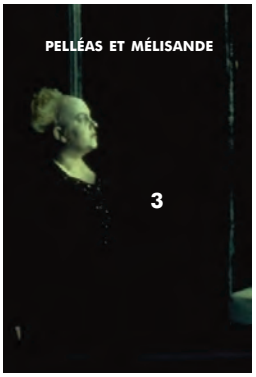
The most important part of the opera is the singers. They are categorized into six different voice types.

THE SOPRANO

High-voiced woman. Voted "Most Likely to Die Before the Curtain Goes Down." Putty in the hands of the TENOR, BARITONE and occasionally even the MEZZO (especially if she is in pants).

THE MEZZO-SOPRANO

Middle- to lower-voiced woman. Nobody's pawn. May hook up with the BARITONE, unless she's playing a young man, in which case she usually gets the SOPRANO.



THE CONTRALTO

Lowest-voiced woman. Usually the mother, maid or duenna (an older woman charged with monitoring the virtue of the impressionable SOPRANO). Generally the CONTRALTO calls herself a MEZZO in order to get more work.

THE TENOR

High-voiced man. Whether comic or tragic, most often the misunderstood romantic role. Often kill themselves; almost always get the girl.

THE BASS AND BARITONE

Middle- to lowest-voiced man. Usually the bad guy, the father or guardian, or the hero's best friend. If he hooks up with another singer, it's usually a MEZZO.

THE FAT LADY

There is no fat lady in helmet and horns—that is a myth. It ain't over till the curtain goes down for the last time and everyone around you is clapping.

CLOCKWISE, LEFT TO RIGHT: ÉLISABETH; EBOLI; GIULIETTA, ROMEO; MIMÌ, RODOLFO; EDGARDO, ENRICO; LUCIA; HANNA; PHILIPPE, GRAND INQUISITOR; GENEVIÈVE; SERVILIA, ANNIO

Minnesota OPERA

1 - SOPRANO; 2 - MEZZO; 3 - CONTRALTO; 4 - TENOR; 5 - BARITONE; 6 - BASS

acoustics	The science of sound; qualities which determine hearing facilities in an auditorium, concert hall, opera house, theater, etc.
act	A section of the opera, play, etc. usually followed by an intermission.
area lights	Provide general illumination.
aria	(*air, English and French; ariette, French*). A formal song sung by a single vocalist. It may be in two parts (binary form), or in three parts (see da capo) with the third part almost a repetition of the first. A short aria is an arietta in Italian, ariette or petit air in French.
arioso	Adjectival description of a passage less formal and complete than a fully written aria, but sounding like one. Much recitative has arioso, or songlike, passages.
azione teatrale	(*It.: 'theatrical action', 'theatrical plot'*). A species of Serenata that, unlike many works in this genre, contained a definite plot and envisioned some form of staging.
atonality	Lack of a definite tonal focus, all sharps and flats being applied in the score when necessary. With no key and therefore no sense of finality, such music sounds odd to the conservative ear, but with practice the listener can find pleasure in it.
artistic director	The person responsible for the artistic concept of the opera – the overall look and "feel" of the production.
backdrop	A large, painted surface at the rear of the stage, associated with old-fashioned stage settings, two-dimensional, but often striving with painted shadows and perspective to suggest a third dimension.
backstage	The area of the stage not visible to the audience, usually where the dressing rooms are located.
ballad opera	A play with many songs; the number has ranged from fifteen to seventy-five. In the early eighteenth century its music was drawn from popular folk song or quite sophisticated songs appropriated from successful operas.
banda	A group of musicians who perform onstage or slightly offstage.
baritone	The male singing voice which is higher than a bass but lower than a tenor.
baroque	A style of art and music characteristic in particular of the Louis xiv period in France and the Charles II period and after in England. Baroque pictorial art is associated with theatrical energy and much decoration but nevertheless respects classical principles. The music theater of the Baroque, highly pictorial, developed the opera seria, with comic intermezzi between the acts.
bass	The lowest male singing voice.
bel canto	Although meaning simply "beautiful song," the term is usually applied to the school of singing prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Baroque and Romantic) which gave much attention to vocal purity, control, and dexterity in ornamentation.
bravo (a) (i)	An acknowledgement of a good performance shouted during moments of applause (the ending is determined by the gender and the number of performers).
bravura	Implying brilliance and dexterity (bravura singing, a bravura aria, etc.). Intended for display and the technical execution of difficult passages.

CABALETTA	A fast, contrasting short aria sung at the close of or shortly following a slower aria (called a *cantabile*, often for vocal effect only but sometimes dramatically motivated.
CADENCE	A resting place or close of a passage of music, clearly establishing tonality.
CADENZA	An elaborate passage near the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.
CAMERATA	A group of musicians, poets and scholars who met in Florence in 1600 and created opera.
CANTILENA	Originally a little song, but now generally referring to smooth cantabile (*It: 'singable,' or 'singing'*) passages.
CAVATINA	Originally an aria without a repeated section. Later used casually in place of aria.
CHORUS	A group of singers (called choristers) who portray townspeople, guests or other unnamed characters; also refers to the music written for these people.
CHORUS MASTER	Person who prepares the chorus musically (which includes rehearsing and directing them).
CLAQUE	A group attending performances in the larger opera houses and paid by leading singers to encourage and direct applause (a member of which is a claqueur).
COLORATURA	A voice that can sing music with many rapid notes, or the music written for such a voice.
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE	Masked comedy or improvised Italian comedy of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. A popular theatrical form with a sketched-out plot and stock characters, a pair of lovers without masks surrounded by comedians—Arlecchino, Brighella, Pantalone, Dottore, etc. Some of Mozart's and Rossini's operas retain the vestiges of these characters. Strauss, Busoni, and other recent composers have deliberately used them.
COMPRIMARIO	A small singing role, often a servant or other minor character.
CONDUCTOR	The person who supervises all musical detail, rehearsals and leads the orchestra and advises the artistic director about the hiring of singers and musical staff (also called the music director).
CONTRALTO	The lowest female singing voice.
COUNTERTENOR	The highest natural male voice, not a castrato. True male altos may be heard in choirs. The term falsettist is sometimes used but disputed.
CYCLORAMA	A curved curtain or wall enclosing the playing area of the stage and hiding the work areas behind it.
DA CAPO	(*It: 'from the top, or back to the beginning'*). A familiar direction in music. A da capo aria of the Baroque period repeats the first part of the aria, with different embellishments, after the singing of a contrasting second part.
DESIGNER	The person who creates the lighting, costumes or sets.
DIAPHRAGM	The muscle which separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. It is used by singers for breath control and it allows them to "project" their voices to the back of the auditorium.
DIRECTOR	The person who instructs the singer/actors in their movements on stage and in the interpretation of their roles.
DOWNSTAGE	The front of the stage nearest the audience.
DRAME LYRIQUE	(*It: dramma lirico*). Modern term for opera, not necessarily of a lyrical character. The English term "lyrical drama" is used in the same way.

DRAMMA PER MUSICA	A term that refers to text expressly written to be set by a composer and by extension also to the composition. The term was the one most commonly used for serious Italian opera in the eighteenth century (as opposed to the modern term opera seria, with which it is in effect interchangeable).
DUET	Music written for two people to play or sing together.
EMBELLISHMENT	Decoration or ornament. A grace-note addition to the vocal line (also instrumental) of any kind, a four-note turn, or a trill.
ENSEMBLE	Three or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.
FALSETTO	The falsetto voice is of high pitch and produced by the vibrations of only one part of the vocal folds. The normal male voice sounds strained and effeminate in falsetto, but a natural alto or high tenor can produce effective vocal sound by this method. It is a singing mannerism to produce high tenor notes in falsetto.
FESTA TEATRALE	(*It.: 'theatrical celebration'*). A title applied to a dramatic work. Feste teatrali fall into two quite distinct classes: opera and serenatas.
FINALE	The last musical number of an opera, or of an act of an opera.
FIORITURA	(*It: 'flowering', 'flourish'; plural fioriture*). When a composition for the voice contains decorative writing such as scales, arpeggios, trills and gruppetti (the groups of notes sometimes known in English as 'turns'), it is described as 'florid' and the decorations themselves will be described collectively as 'fioritura'. It is a more accurate term than 'coloratura', which is frequently used as an alternative.
FLATS	Stretched canvas and wood panels on which scenery is painted.
FLIES	The space above a stage where scenery is "flown" when not in use. A counterweight system simplifies raising and lowering flats, larger set pieces, and back drops.
FULL DRESS REHEARSAL	The final rehearsal before opening night with all singers present in full costume.
GRAND OPERA	Traditionally, a serious epic or historical work in four or five acts which makes extensive use of the chorus and also includes a ballet. Also contains magnificent special effects.
GRID	Gridiron. Framework from which lines are hung and battens attached for the "flying" of scenery. The grid is situated high in the flies just beneath the ceiling of the fly loft.
HANDLUNG FÜR MUSIK	(*Ger: 'action in music'*). Term used by Wagner to describe the libretto for *Lohengrin* and *Tristan und Isolde*; it has occasionally been used since.
INTERLUDE	A short piece of instrumental music played between scenes or acts to fill in delays brought about by scenery changes.
INTERMEZZO	An instrumental interlude played between acts, or short two-act comic opera played between the acts of an opera seria.
LEITMOTIV	A recurring musical figure used to identify a person, event or idea.
LEGATO	A smooth, flowing line. In vocal music it demands steadiness of emission and a sensitivity to phrasing.
LIBRETTO	The words of an opera.

MASKING — A scenic frame or device to prevent the audience from seeing into the wings of the stage. Door and window openings are usually masked, often with realistic backings.

MASQUE — An entertainment popular in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth. A form of "total theater," it combined music, scenic splendor, poetry, and some drama. Milton's *Comus*, with music by Henry Lawes, is the most celebrated.

MELODRAMA — A basically serious play, frequently using comedy for relief, it only outwardly resembles tragedy. The conflicts and calamities are more interesting in themselves than are the characters, who tend to be stereotyped, good and bad. Passion, excitement, and action, often unmotivated, are emphasized. Intended for undiscriminating audiences, it uses much music to stimulate the emotions and much scenic effect to please the eye.

MÉLODRAME — In addition to being the French word for melodrama, this term refers to a technique, which became popular during the eighteenth century, of playing orchestral music under or between the phrases of spoken dialogue.

MELODRAMMA — Dramma per musica (drama for music) and Melodramma (sung drama) antedate by many years the term opera, now in general use for works of this kind.

MEZZA VOCE — Half-voice, with reference to a passage required to be sung softly throughout. A similar term, messa di voce, has the different meaning of beginning a tone softly, swelling it gradually, and then softening it again.

MEZZO-SOPRANO — The middle female singing voice, lower than soprano but higher than contralto.

MOTIVE — A short musical idea on which a melody is based.

MUSICAL PLAY — A convenient but inexact designation which has become popular in English-speaking countries to distinguish the more ambitious works in the popular field of lyric theater from (a) European operetta or imitations thereof, (b) musical comedy of the vaudevillian sort, and (c) opera, especially in New York where the form is supposed to belong to the Metropolitan and the New York City Opera Company and is somewhat provincially considered "poison at the box office." David Ewen regards *Show Boat*, 1927, as the first work of the new genre, the musical play. By the 1930s, this term had become a catchall.

OPERA — A term now used to cover musical-dramatic pieces of all kinds except musical comedy and operetta, although comic opera comes very close to these forms. The seventeenth-century Italian term for opera was Dramma per musica or Melodramma.

OPERA BUFFA — A precise Italian definition, meaning Italian comic opera of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Musical numbers are strung along a continuum of dry recitative.

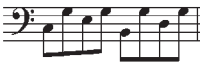
OPÉRA COMIQUE — French light opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Strictly speaking, any theater piece written with spoken dialogue between the musical numbers (*Faust, Carmen*, and *Manon*) whether a comedy or not. The Paris Opéra Comique is also called the Salle Favart and was originally the home of all works using spoken dialogue, while the Opéra confined itself to through-composed works.

OPERA SERIA — Literally "serious opera." An opera form of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which uses historical, biblical or mythological subjects with a focus on revenge, danger and death.

OPERETTA	A loosely used term, often used interchangeably with comic opera, opéra bouffe, and musical comedy. In Italian it originally meant "little opera," a short, light musical work. It has come to mean a full-length piece on a light subject, with musical numbers and spoken dialogue, and characterized by ingratiating tunes, decorative dances, colorful settings, social irresponsibility, a slender dramatic line, and the requirement of at least two well-trained voices.
ORATORIO	A musical-dramatic work originating in the twelfth century, now generally performed, in contradistinction to opera, without action, costumes, and scenery. They are invariably associated with sacred subjects.
ORCHESTRA PIT	The sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.
OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to the opera, usually played before the acting begins.
PARLANDO	(*It: 'in speaking style'*). An informal and realistic technique occasionally used in Italian opera, bringing singing close to speaking.
PORTAMENTO	An Italian singing term, asking the voice to glide from one note to another at some distance. An authentic and effective device, to be distinguished from the mannerism of scooping.
PRINCIPAL	A major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.
PROSCENIUM	The stage opening, resembling a three-sided picture frame. Immediately behind it and concealing the acting areas is the curtain. The proscenium arch was originally created in the 1700s to conceal the machinery used to create special stage effects.
QUARTET	Four singers, or the music written for that group.
RECITATIVE	Musical singing in the rhythm of speech.
RECITATIVO ACCOMPAGNATO	A sung passage with orchestral accompaniment, lacking the formality of an aria, yet more declamatory and agitated than recitativo secco.
RECITATIVO SECCO	Dry recitative. A sung passage so close to everyday speech that although the pitches and time values are respected, a conversational quality prevails. A keyboard instrument generally supplies the sketchy accompaniment. Commonly used in Italian opera seria and opera buffa.
REPERTORY	A system of stage production in which a number of works are played, virtually in rotation, by a resident company throughout a season.
RÉPÉTITION	French term for "rehearsal." A répétition générale is a dress rehearsal to which critics and guests are invited.
REVOLVE	Revolving stage. Turntable. A section of the stage floor (permanently established) or a circular construction on a central pivot which revolves, to change scenery or supply movement of objects as well as people.
RITORNELLO	A short instrumental piece, literally meaning repetition or refrain. In Monteverdi's works it usually consists of a few bars played between the verses of a strophic song.
ROCOCO	In art, associated with the late Baroque period and the late eighteenth century. In contrast to the dignity, heaviness, and occasional pomposity of Baroque, Rococo art is playful, lighter in tone and color, and adorned with scrolls, acorns, and shells.
ROLE	The character that a singer portrays.

ROMANTICISM	The movement strongly associated with nineteenth-century Germany, but felt through all Europe and responsible for far-reaching changes in all forms of art. Rebels against the establishment (which was founded on a deep respect for the classics), the romanticists opposed authority and advocated freedom from formal regulations. They encouraged a subjective, strongly emotional approach as an antidote to classical decorum.
SCORE	The music of an opera or other musical work in which the parts for different performers appear vertically above one another.
SCRIM	A thin curtain, often painted. When lit from behind, one can see through it.
SERENATA	A dramatic cantata, normally celebratory or eulogistic in intent, for two or more singers with orchestral accompaniment. In dramaturgical respects the serenata most closely resembles the Baroque oratorio.
SINFONIA	A symphonic work the precedes an opera (English: overture); a shorter version is referred to as a *prelude*.
SINGSPIEL	A German form of comic opera with spoken dialogue.
SITZPROBE	A sit-down rehearsal where the performers sing with the orchestra for the first time.
SOPRANO	The highest female singing voice.
SPRECHSTIMME	A form of declamation halfway between speech and song. Instead of exactly notated pitch an approximation is given. The time, however, is given exactly and the singer is not allowed absolute license. Notations up and down are also meant to be respected. This style of singing is found in the works of Schoenberg and Berg.
STAGE LEFT	The left side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STAGE RIGHT	The right side of the stage from the performer's perspective as s/he faces the audience.
STRETTA	An accelerated passage at the end of an aria, scene, or act.
TENOR	The highest male singing voice.
TESSITURA	Literally "texture." The approximate range of a role or an aria.
THROUGH-COMPOSED	Through-composed opera is a continuous music drama uninterrupted by spoken dialogue or obviously recognizable recitative.
TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE	A French term associated mainly with Lully and Rameau. Tragédie lyrique comes somewhat closer to the spoken play in dramatic expressiveness than does the Italian opera seria of the same period, which may exceed it in vocal expressiveness.
TRILL	A musical ornament requiring the rapid alternation of two adjacent notes.
TROUSER ROLE	Also called "pants role." The part of a male character sung by a woman, usually a mezzo-soprano.
UNDERSTUDY	A replacement for a particular role in case of illness or emergency (also called a "cover").
VERISMO	A type of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italian opera that emphasized realistic subjects.
WANDELPROBE	Musical rehearsal which allows the conductor to hear what the singers sound like when they perform on the set.
WINGS	The sides of the stage where the performers wait before making their entrances.

Sources: *Opera: Dead or Alive*, by Ronald E. Mitchell. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970.
New Grove Dictionary of Opera, edited by Stanley Sadie. London: MacMillan Press Limited, 1992.
New York City Opera Education Department, Edmonton Opera

ADAGIO	Slowly and smoothly.
AD LIBITUM	As you please; freely.
AFFECTUOSO	Expressively; tenderly; lovingly.
AGITATO	Agitated.
ALBERTI BASS 	Stereotyped figures of accompaniment, consisting of broken chords.
ALLARGANDO	Slowing and broadening.
ALLEGRETTO	Fairly lively; not as fast as allegro.
ALLEGRO	Lively; fast.
A MEZZO VOCE	With half the voice.
ANDANTE	Going; moving; at a moderate rate.
ANDANTINO	Sightly faster than andante.
ANIMATO	With spirit; animated.
APPOGGIATURA	An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note or tone. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.
ARPEGGIO	Producing the tones of a chord in succession but not simultaneously.
ASSAI	Very; very much.
A TEMPO	At the preceding rate of speed.
ATONAL	Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it uses the chromatic scale impartially, does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.
AUGMENTATION	The presentation of a melody in doubled values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become half notes.
BAR	A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into units.
BUFFO, BUFFA	Comic.
CADENZA	A flourish or brilliant part of an aria commonly inserted just before a finale.
CANTABILE	Songlike; singingly.
CANTATA	A choral piece generally containing scriptural narrative texts.
CON BRIO	With spirit.
CONTINUO	A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of a succession of bass notes with figures that indicate the required chords. Also called figured bass, thoroughbass.
COUNTERPOINT	Music consisting of two or more lines that sound simultaneously.
CRESCENDO 	Gradually getting louder.
DIATONIC	Relating to a major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.
DIMINUENDO 	Gradually getting softer.
DIMINUTION	The presentation of a melody in halved values so that, e.g. the quarter notes become eighth notes.
DISSONANCE	A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.
DOLOROSAMENTE	Sadly; grievingly.

DOMINANT	The fifth tone of the diatonic scale: in the key of C, the dominant is G.
FERMATA 	Pause sign; prolonged time value of note so marked.
FORTE *f*	Loud.
FORTISSIMO *ff*	Very loud.
FURIOSO	Furious; violent.
GIOCOSO	Playfully.
GIUSTO	Strict; exact.
GLISSANDO	A rapid sliding up or down the scale.
GRANDIOSO	With grandeur; majestically.
GRAVE	Slow; heavy; solemn.
GRAZIOSO	Elegantly; gracefully.
LAMENTOSO	Mournfully.
LARGHETTO	Somewhat less slowly than largo.
LARGO	Broadly and slowly.
LEGATO	Smoothly and connectedly.
LEGGIERO	Light; airy; graceful.
LENTO	Slow.
MAESTOSO	Majestic; stately; grand.
MAESTRO	From the Italian "master": a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.
MARCATO	Marked.
MEZZO	Half; middle; medium.
MISTERIOSO	With mystery.
MODERATO	Moderately; at a moderate rate.
MOLTO	Much; very.
MORENDO	Dying away.
MOSSO	Moved; agitated; lively.
MOTO	Motion; movement.
OBBLIGATO	An elaborate accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by a single instrument.
OCTAVE	A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees: therefore, from C^1 to C^2 is an octave.
ORNAMENTATION	Extra embellishing notes – appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas – that enhance a melodic line.
OVERTURE	An orchestral introduction to an act or the whole opera. An overture can appear only at the beginning of an opera.
OSSIA	Or; or else; an alternate reading.
PENTATONIC	A five-note scale, like the black notes within an octave on the piano.
PIACERE	To please.
PIANO *p*	Soft.
PIANISSIMO *pp*	Very soft.
PITCH	The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.
PIÙ	More.
PIZZICATO	For bowed stringed instruments, an indication that the string is to be plucked with a finger.
POCO	Little.
POLYPHONY	Literally "many voices." A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed in harmony; counterpoint.

POLYTONAL	The use of several tonal schemes simultaneously.
PORTAMENTO	A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another.
PRESTO	Very fast; lively; quick.
QUAVER	An eighth note.
RALLENTANDO	Gradually slower.
RITARDANDO	Gradually slower.
RITENUTO	Held back; slower.
RITORNELLO	A short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.
ROMANZA	A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is usually shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage and anger.
ROULADE	A florid vocal embellishment sung to one syllable.
RUBATO	A way of playing or singing with regulated rhythmic freedom.
SEMITONE	One half of a whole tone, the smallest distance between two notes in Western music. In the key of C, the notes are E and F, and B and C.
SEMPLICE	Simply.
SEMPRE	Always.
SENZA	Without.
SERIAL MUSIC	Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.
SFORZANDO *sf*	With accent.
SORDINO	Muted.
SOSTENUTO	Sustained.
SOTTO	Under; beneath.
STACCATO	Detached; separated.
STRINGENDO	Hurried; accelerated.
STROPHE	Music repeated for each verse of an aria.
SYNCOPATION	Shifting the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; it is a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.
TACET	Silent.
TEMPO	Rate of speed.
TONALITY	The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).
TRISTE	Sad.
TWELVE-TONE	The 12 chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting with some permitted permutations and derivations the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note gets repeated.
VELOCE	Rapid.
VIBRATO	A "vibration"; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone for added warmth and expressiveness by slight and rapid variations in pitch.
VIVACE	Brisk; lively.

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DISCOGRAPHY

NAXOS 8.660013-14 Chorus	Tumagian, Ferrarini, Ramiro; Rahbari Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra and Slovak Philharmonic
PHILIPS 412 592-2	Shicoff, Bruson, Gruberova; Sinopoli Coro e Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia
RCA VICTOR GOLD SEAL CDMB 69827	Maffo, Kraus, Merrill; Solti RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra and Chorus
LONDON/DECCA 414269	Milnes, Pavarotti, Sutherland; Bonynge London Symphony Orchestra and Ambrosian Opera Chorus

VIDEOGRAPHY

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON	Pavarotti, Wixell, Gruberova, Vergara, Furlanetto, Chailly; Ponnelle
EMI CLASSICS	Damrau, Flórez, Lucic; Lehnhoff
KULTUR	Gavanelli, Schäfer, Alvarez; McVicar

Word Search

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INSTRUCTIONS: Find the words in CAPITALS.

1. *Rigoletto* was first performed in VENICE.
2. Act III has a famous TRIO with storm – a piece for three voices and, in this case, a humming chorus.
3. *Rigoletto* is based on the French play, LE ROI S'AMUSE, which portrays events from the life of King FRANCIS I.
4. GILDA is Rigoletto's daughter.
5. The title character, RIGOLETTO, is commonly portrayed as a JESTER with a HUNCHBACK. He is based on a actual person, TRIBOULET.
6. SPARAFUCILE is MADDALENA's brother.
7. The STAGE DIRECTOR tells the performers where to move on stage, while the CONDUCTOR leads the principal singers and CHORUS musically from the pit, as well as directing the ORCHESTRA from the SCORE.
8. The CHOREOGRAPHER directs dance segments, such as the opening scene in Act I.
9. A SUPERNUMERARY is a character who performs on stage, but does not sing or speak.
10. During the opening scene, the Duke of MANTUA flirts with the COUNTESS CEPRANO.
11. The opera is full of DUETS, or musical pieces for two people. Act III has a famous QUARTET, sung by four characters.
12. The LIBRETTO is the text of an opera which is set to music.
13. The five most common vocal types are SOPRANO, MEZZO, TENOR, BARITONE and BASS.

Crossword Puzzle

DOWN

2. *Rigoletto* had its premiere at this Venetian theater.
3. Maddalena is Sparafucile's _____.
4. The story of *Rigoletto* is based on a play by French author _____ _____.
9. The first name of the composer of *Rigoletto* (with 22 ACROSS).
10. At the beginning of the opera, the Duke confides in _____ about his amorous adventures.
11. Gilda first meets the disguised Duke at _____.
13. Rigoletto is haunted by a _____ throughout the opera.
15. Sparafucile is a professional _____.
16. The ____ __ _____ is tireless in his pursuit of women.
17. In Act III, _____ brings Gilda to witness the Duke's debauchery.
19. To cover his tracks, _____ tells Rigoletto the courtiers are about to kidnap the Countess Ceprano when they accidentally meet in front of his house.
20. The courtiers _____ Gilda, whom they give to the Duke for his pleasure.
21. In Act I, Rigoletto taunts Count _____ as the Duke flirts with his wife.
25. Sparafucile stuffs Gilda's body into a _____ so Rigoletto cannot tell who it is.
26. At Maddalena's suggestion, Sparafucile agrees to _____ the first person who arrives at the tavern before midnight.
27. During the party in Act I, the Duke and Countess Ceprano _____ together.

ACROSS

1. The chorus is made up of _____, who are noblemen in the service of the Duke.
5. In "Caro nome," _____ sings of her first love.
6. _____ is Gilda's *duenna,* or guardian.
7. Ceprano thinks Rigoletto has a _____, but she is really his daughter.
8. Sparafucile and Maddalena conduct their business at a seedy _____ on the edge of town.
12. In Act III, the Duke sings "La donna è mobile," a(n) _____ about the fickleness of women.
14. The first two names of the librettist of *Rigoletto* (with 29 ACROSS).
18. At the beginning of Act I, scene two, Rigoletto meets _____, who offers to eliminate any rivals.

19. In Act I, Count _____ angrily interrupts the party with his accusations.
22. The last name of the composer of *Rigoletto* (with 9 DOWN).
23. When he meets with Gilda, the Duke disguises himself as a poor student named _____ Maldè.
24. *Rigoletto* is an opera in three _____.
26. In Act III, a _____ rages outside while Sparafucile and his sister argue.
28. In Act III, _____ flirts with the Duke and decides that she likes him.
29. The last name of the librettist of *Rigoletto* (with 14 ACROSS).

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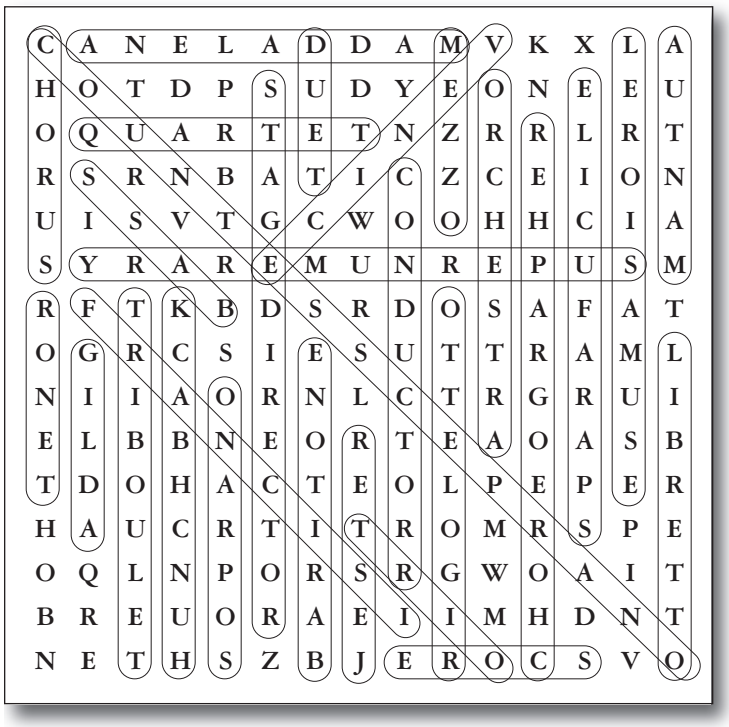
Answers can be found in the Synopsis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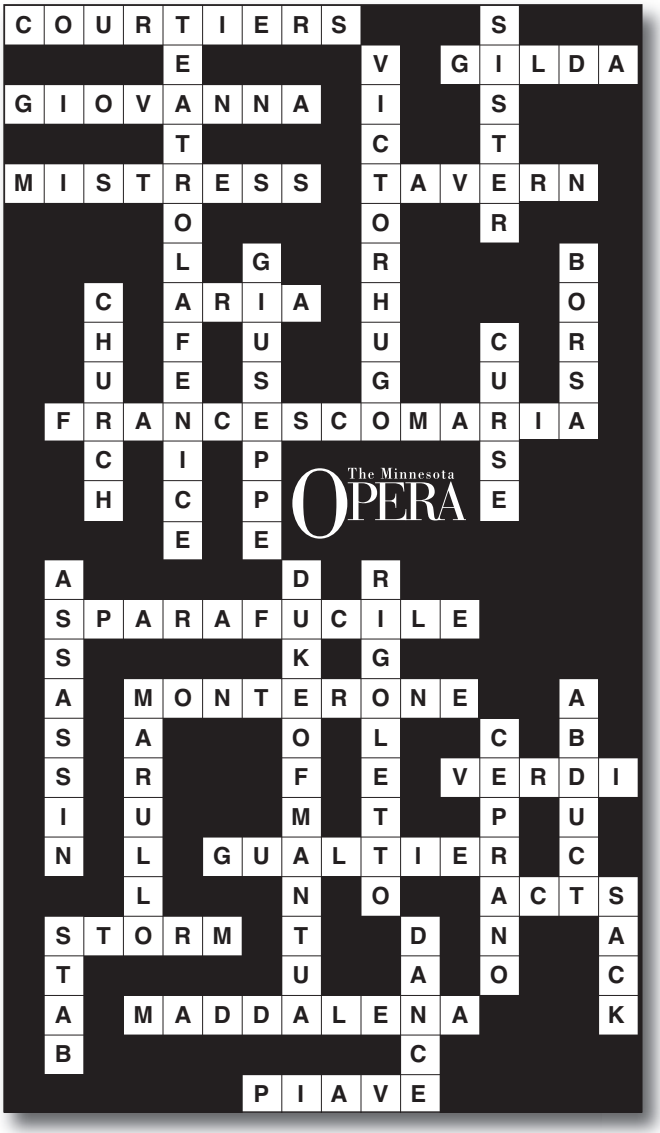
COURTIERS S
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MISTRESS TAVERN
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CARIA H O
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UE S G U S
FRANCESCOMARIA
C I P S
H C P E
E E
The Minnesota OPERA
A D R
SPARAFUCILE
S K G
A MONTERONE A
S A O L C B
S R F E VERDI
I U M T P U
N L GUALTIER C
L N O ACTS
STORM T D N A
T U A O C
A MADDALENA K
B C
PIAVE

Opera Box Teacher's Guide Evaluation

Rigoletto

1 I teach this subject and grade level(s): _____

2 I found the Opera Box useful:

YES NO

3 These are the items I used: (check all that apply)

_____*Rigoletto* FULL SCORE (Ricordi)
_____*Rigoletto* VOCAL SCORE (G. Schirmer)
_____*Rigoletto* LIBRETTO (G. Schirmer)
_____CD *Rigoletto* (EMI, Muti, conductor, Zancanro, Dessì)
_____CD *Rigoletto* (BMG, Gavazzeni, conductor, Scotto, Kraus)
_____DVD *Rigoletto* (Hardy Classic, Egaddi, conductor, Kraus, Nucci, Serra)
_____DVD *Rigoletto* (Decca, Chailly, conductor, Pavarotti, Wixell, Gruberova)
_____BOOK *Verdi* by Julian Budden
_____BOOK *The Complete Operas of Verdi* by Charles Osbourne
_____BOOK *Opera Guide No. 15: Rigoletto* by the English National Opera
_____BOOK *Opera Composers Works Performers* by András Batta
_____Teacher's Guide

4 I wish I had the Opera Box for more time:

YES NO

4A If you said YES, how much more time would you like to have? _____

5 Rental cost for the Opera Box was:

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6 I used the material in this Opera Box to: (circle all that apply)

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Prepare students prior to a performance Meet a Minnesota High Standard

7 Would you like to receive some training related to the content in the Opera Box?

YES NO

8 Items I would like to see in future Opera Boxes: _____

9 I would attend a summer workshop about how to teach opera (with graduate credit available):

YES NO

10 I used, or directed my students to, imagineopera.org website.

YES NO

11 Please offer any further comments or suggestions on the back of this form.

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Acknowledgments

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous help received in creating this Teacher Guide from these very busy and talented individuals. Without their comments and ideas, this project would never have gotten off the ground.

Marcia Aubineau (University of St. Thomas, St. Paul)
Sandy Kaslow (Forest Lake Public Schools)
Jane Kolp-Andrews (Valley View Middle School, Edina)
Dr. Doug Orzolek (University of St. Thomas, St. Paul)
David Sander (Dramaturg, Minnesota Opera)
Dan Weinstein (Intern, Minnesota Opera)

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