



PREVIEW - Oct 19 - 7:00 PM (Thu)
SHOWS - Oct 20 - 7:00 PM (Fri)
Oct 21 - 7:00 PM (Sat)
Oct 22 - 3:00 PM (Sun)

OPERA EDUCATION
for
YOUTH & NEWBIES

G. Verdi

La Traviata



TEACHER'S GUIDE

2023

2023-2024

This Teacher's Guide is brought to you by the
PLA's OPERA EDUCATION PROGRAM
and presented by the
BAJA NETWORKS



Email pacificlyricassociation@gmail.com
if you have any questions or suggestions. We would love to hear your feedback.

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MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Opera “La Traviata” has a very special place in my heart. It was the first opera I had ever seen in my life. I was 7 years old then and did not know much about the story, or the characters. But the fusion of music, acting, and other theater elements created an amazing parallel reality in which the story was unfolding from the beginning to the end, and I enjoyed every moment of it.

On that day I thought “wow! I really want to be an opera conductor when I grow up”. And here I am... about to conduct this beautiful opera for you.



People often think that opera is all about singing. Well, let us see... would you go to hear fifty people singing for 3 hours in a foreign language without orchestra, costumes, props, set, lights, or makeup...? Exactly! I will not be interested either. Then what is this mysterious opera thing about?

Well... it is all about the story! Just like any musical. The only difference is that opera voices are much more powerful and expressive, and opera singers are accompanied by the full symphony orchestra instead of a band or a soundtrack. It is also a tradition to perform operas in original language. So, we do need to know the story in advance.

Experienced opera audience members enjoy every moment of the show because they know everything about it. They know the story, the name of each character and their voice types. They know who the orchestra conductor and the stage director are, they know the names of all performers and know some of them in-person. They know all the musical numbers and what the lyrics are about. They know the difference between aria and cavatina, between dramatic and lyric voice, and other nuances that a newbie or a younger person will not have any idea about. This knowledge allows them to appreciate every little detail of the show and see things that others do not.

This Teacher’s Guide is designed to provide the information that is necessary to understand and enjoy the show and have a great first opera experience. Read this guide at home before coming to the theater, and you will never feel out-of-place at the opera ever again!

Remember, true opera magic only happens in the theater when stage set, costumes, makeup, lights, sound of an orchestra, acting, and beautiful voices come together to tell you the story from the beginning to the end in real time.

Alexandra Keegan

Know the story! In opera, it is important to know as much as possible about what is going on beforehand, including the ending. By all means, read the synopsis and libretto; listen to a recording! Once the music, the voices, the setting, the lights, and the dramatic staging come together at the performance, audience members will be better able to fit all the elements seamlessly together into the plot. The plot then becomes the springboard for the real power of opera, the music.



Experience the music! Composers use many tools to communicate with music. They create melodies that evoke a variety of emotions. They use tempos (how slow or fast) and dynamics (how loud or soft) and rhythms (the frequency and pattern of beat). They choose particular instruments to add color to the music they have written. Think of instrument choice as a type of painting for your ears! The term "soundscape" is often used in describing the music of an opera, and it can set the atmosphere and give information about character and plot. What is it telling you?



Understand the singers! Opera singers are vocal athletes. They practice every day to exercise their vocal chords and their extensive breath control. The combinations of notes that they have to sing are very difficult, and the things that they can do with their voices are extreme. You can easily compare a regular singing voice and an opera singing voice to a weekend jogger and a gold-medal-winning Olympic track champion! BUT, the reason that their voices are prized is that they can express so much emotion on a grand scale.



Plunge in! This is the most important step. Everything about opera is over-the-top, on the edge, enormous in every way. It's an art form that thrives on its intensity and passion. Opera stories portray people at their most extreme, and the singers and the music communicate in ways that words alone cannot. You have to let go, allow yourself to stop thinking and analyzing and simply FEEL THE EMOTION!





OVERTURE: An orchestral introduction to an opera.

ARIA: A solo piece written for a main character, which focuses on the character's emotion.

RECITATIVE: Words sung in a conversational style, usually to advance the plot.

FINALE: The last musical number of an opera or the last number of an act.

COLORATURA: Very high and mobile soprano that can handle many fast notes and trills.

SOPRANO: High women's voice.

MEZZO-SOPRANO or ALTO: Low women's voice.

CONTRALTO: Very low women's voice.

TENOR: High men's voice.

BARITONE: Low men's voice.

BASS: Very low men's voice.

TO MARK: To sing very softly or not at full voice.

TESSITURA: Literally "texture" - refers to the average pitch of a role. Two roles may have the same range from the lowest to the highest note, but the one with a higher average note has the higher tessitura.

TROUSER ROLE: A role depicting a young man or boy but sung by a woman (can be a soprano or mezzo).

VIBRATO: A natural wavering of frequency (pitch) while singing a note.

VOCAL REST: Period of time required for the vocal cords to rest after performance, or to recover from illness.

CONCERTMASTER: The first-chair violinist who plays occasional solos and is responsible for coordinating all of the stringed instruments.

PRINCIPAL: Singer who has a big role.

COVER: An understudy who replaces a principal in case of illness or other misfortune.

BLOCKING: Directions given to singers for on-stage acting and movements.

CUE: A signal to a singer or orchestra member to begin singing or playing.

CURTAIN CALL: At the end of a performance, all of the members of the cast and the conductor take bows. Sometimes this is done in front of the main curtain, hence the name curtain call. Often, however, the bows are taken on the full stage with the curtain open.

ORCHESTRA READ: The rehearsal for an orchestra in a rehearsal studio or a pit without singers.

SITZPROBE: Means "seated rehearsal". It is the first rehearsal of all singers with the orchestra and no acting.

TECH: Short for technical rehearsal.

DRESS REHEARSAL: A final rehearsal that uses all of the costumes, lights, etc. While sometimes it is necessary to stop for corrections, an attempt is made to make it as much like a performance as possible.

HOUSE: Seating area for audience and a lobby.

HOUSE MANAGER: The person who is responsible for the audience and everything related to audience.

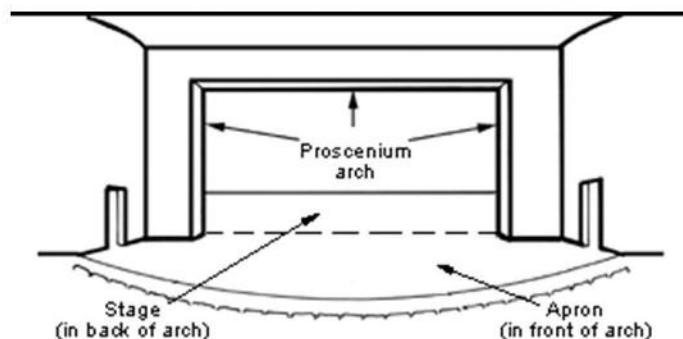
SYNOPSIS: A written description of an opera's plot (in some cases including instructions for acting).

LIBRETTO: Exact words of the whole opera.

MAESTRO: Literally "master;" used as a courtesy title for the male or female conductor.

CHORUS MASTER: The one in charge of chorus during rehearsals and performances.

PROSCENIUM: Short for proscenium arch.



APRON: The rounded area in front of the proscenium.

PIT: The "apron" is usually a lift that goes up and down. It becomes an orchestra pit once it's all the way down.

CYC: [saik] Short for cyclorama. It is a curved plain cloth filling the rear of the stage. Backwall of the stage.

There are many different kinds of songs in opera. Performers may sing alone, in couples (duets), trios, or larger groups, and there are also moments when no one sings at all - and each composer develops his or her own preferred combinations of these options.

THE OVERTURE

An opera usually begins with an orchestral piece of music called the overture, which functions as an introduction to the opera. Lasting anywhere from five to twenty-five minutes, these opera overtures usually contain important themes from the rest of the production. Before 1800, house lights were not dimmed while the overture played, and audience members continued to talk, drink, and even play cards! This ceased in the 1900's as the overture became a more integral part of an operatic performance. At the end of the overture, the curtain rises and the story of the opera unfolds through a series of scenes. These scenes are organized into acts.

ARIA

An aria is a solo moment for an opera singer and is usually accompanied by the orchestra. Italian for "air" or song, an aria stops the plot momentarily, giving each character the opportunity to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. These pieces also provide an opportunity for the singer to demonstrate their vocal and artistic skill. Mozart, Verdi and Puccini were able to achieve a remarkable balance between memorable melodies that perfectly suit the human voice while still reflecting the drama of the text.

RECITATIVE

Recitatives, a type of singing unique to opera, help to advance the plot. They can be accompanied either by a full orchestra, or, as is often the case with opera written before 1800, by harpsichord or keyboard instrument. Often introducing an aria, the text is delivered quickly and encompasses a very limited melodic range. It has no recognizable melody and the rhythms follow those of the spoken word.

ENSEMBLE

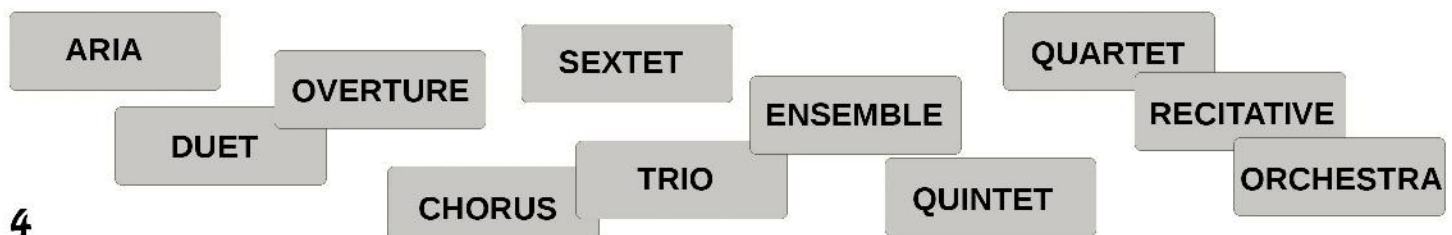
Ensemble singing deals with two or more voices of different range performing together. These include duets, trios, quartets, quintets, and sometimes sextets. The composer blends the voices depending on the dramatic requirements of the plot. For instance, a love duet may begin with each performer singing different music at different times, then gradually unifying into harmony. Conversely, the music of a duet may depict conflict. Georges Bizet used this technique in Carmen: if you listen to the duets sung by Carmen and Don Jose, you might notice that their musical lines are never completely blended, and this foreshadows their tragic ends.

CHORUS

Most operas include music sung by a large group of singers (sometimes more than 40) called a chorus. The chorus often appears in a crowd scene and can provide a stunning contrast to solo or ensemble singing. In one opera by Benjamin Britten, the chorus is played by a single male and a single female, as in the tradition of ancient Greek theatre.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

The orchestra accompanies the singing and introduces the opera with the overture. Musical and emotional themes often appear in orchestral introductions and conclusions to arias, recitatives, and choruses. In many cases, the orchestra plays such an important role, the gravity of its existence is that of a leading character.



In-Studio Rehearsals

The PLA Opera's season begins with rehearsals outside of the theater, at the regular rehearsal studios. The stage action is mapped out, the performers experiment with their characters, and the director's ideas for the flow of the opera are shared with the cast. At the same time, the orchestra is rehearsing with conductor at the separate rehearsal studio. Once everyone is done preparing their own material, it is time to combine the effort.

Moving Into the Theater

Four to five days before the first performance, the sets, costumes and props are "loaded in" to the theater. There is a table in the middle of the orchestra-level seats for the stage manager, the director, and the designers. This serves as a central location for communicating with the singers and crew onstage, the conductor in the orchestra pit, and the technicians in the lighting booth and backstage.

Sitzprobe

For the studio rehearsals opera companies use a skilled piano accompanist, but once the show moves into the theater, the performers will have a Sitzprobe rehearsal (a German word meaning to sit and try out.) The Sitzprobe is a "sing-through" with the orchestra and conductor, concentrating on the nuances of the music only, without staging. It is the first time that the orchestra and singers meet. Sitzprobe is for the singers and conductor to work out fine musical details before adding costumes, lights, and staging.

Piano Tech

A piano tech rehearsal is held to give singers a chance to adapt to the set and lights. The rehearsal accompanist comes into the orchestra pit and plays the music when it is needed for the tech crew and singers. The conductor is also in the pit with the piano player to lead the singers and the chorus if needed. This rehearsal also gives the tech crew time to practice scene changes, synchronize lights with the music and plot, check communication devices, and bring all other technical elements together. Singers usually do not sing their difficult arias and other big music numbers to save time, and allow the tech crew to practice, and set up their equipment.

Orchestra Tech

Finally, the orchestra tech rehearsal puts all the elements together: lighting, set changes, costumes, make-up, the orchestra, and the supertitles (if any). The time set aside for the orchestra tech is usually 1 hour more than the length of a show. The extra hour is needed in case if something goes wrong and the tech crew must stop the "run", go back and fix the problem.

Dress Rehearsal

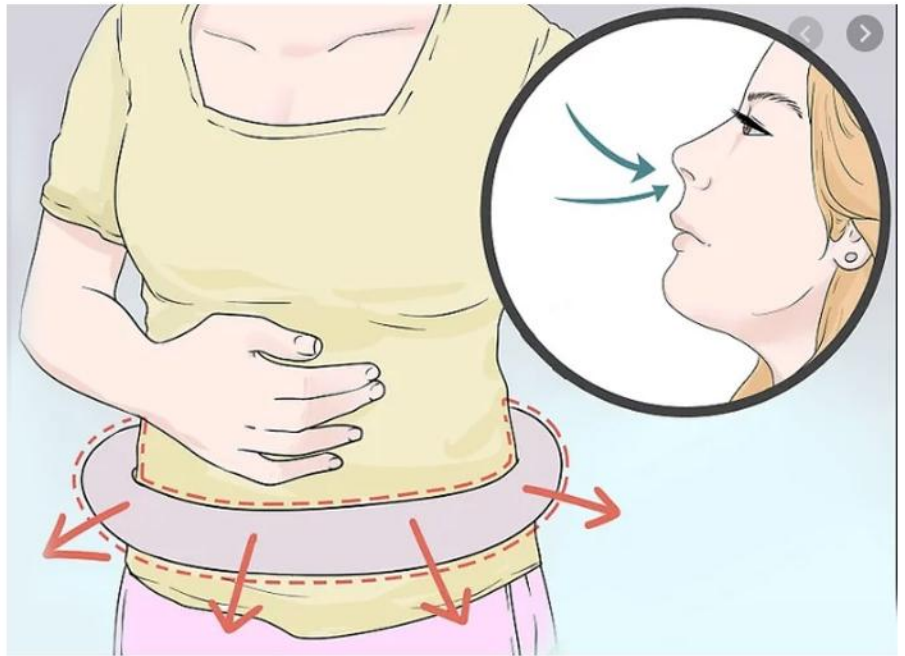
The dress rehearsal is basically a "preview" of the show with all tech elements, full cast, full orchestra and some audience. The director will stop the action if needed, but it is exceedingly rare and generally only for a technical malfunction on the stage. Like theatre, an opera dress rehearsal is the final chance before the performance to make an extremely complex collaboration come together seamlessly.

During the final dress rehearsal, the audience may notice lighting changes as the designer makes final adjustments.

Because of the strenuous nature of the singing, singers may choose to "mark" (sing half-voice) on the final dress rehearsal in order to preserve the vocal chords for the next day performance. Nevertheless, all of their acting and vocal expression will be at full power, with all the passion and conviction that opera requires. They are ready for their first audience, and excited to present their story and their music.

How Singers Breathe

Every day, opera singers work on improving their breath control, because it's an essential element of vocal technique. They must be able to sing very complicated musical passages, to sustain long notes, and to project their voices without microphones. They work all the time on their abdominal muscles, particularly the diaphragm muscle which runs along the bottom of the rib cage.



DO IT YOURSELF

1. Practice Correct Breathing Technique

- Breathe deeply from your lower lungs - imagine a rubber ring around your waist (see pic)
- Breathe in and try to push the ring outwards.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose and mouth.
- Avoid raising your shoulders as you breathe in - keep them relaxed and level.

2. Exercise your breathing muscles

- Fill your lungs with the biggest breath you can, and let it out as slowly as you can with a hissing sound.
- Try it again and while you are hissing have your partner count how long you can make the hissing sound.
- Now do it again making "aaaaah..." sound.

Which one is harder?

If you were to practice this every day, you would build the muscles and be able to make sound for longer periods of time, as opera singers can.

During the performance - pay attention to which passages seem to require the most breath control.

WHAT TO WEAR

Many people think of a night at the opera as a glamorous event and like to bring out their fancy attire. But it is also acceptable to dress comfortably. A big warm scarf, and a cozy jacket will also be appropriate.

BIG BAGS

Big backpacks are not allowed in the theater. If there is no other choice, you should check your big item in at the lobby, and pick it up after the show.

NO FOOD OR DRINKS

"No food or drinks" is an international standard for all major opera houses. The lobby is the only appropriate place for snacks and drinks unless otherwise specified.

ALWAYS BE EARLY

Please arrive early to ensure you have enough time to locate a restroom, finish your snack, talk to people you know, and find your seat before the orchestra tunes and the performance begins. Experienced opera patrons arrive 30-40 min in advance.

GETTING TO YOUR SEAT

Modern opera theater etiquette requires all patrons to enter the row while facing the back of the theater, that your rear end is not gliding along the row ten inches in front of people's faces. On the contrary, if you are in your seat and someone is approaching you the wrong way, the only way to avoid an "awkward moment" is to stand up.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Be sure to turn off your phone and other electronic devices you have with you.

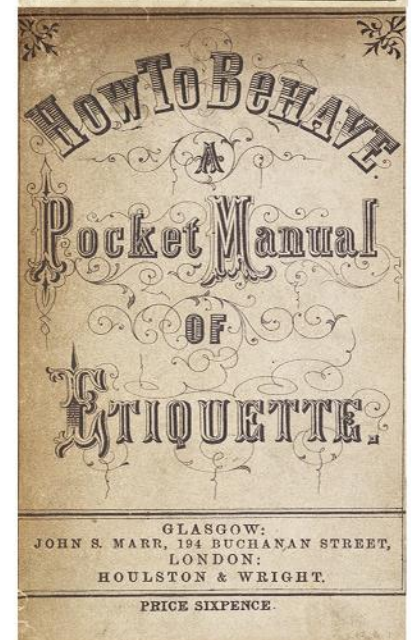
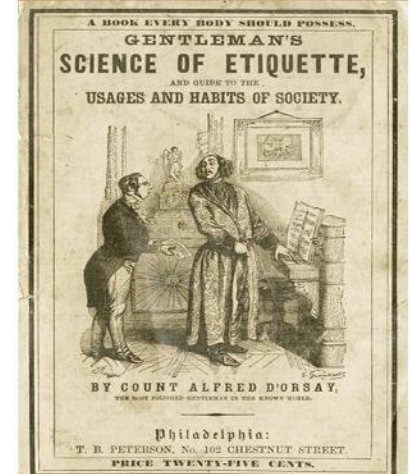
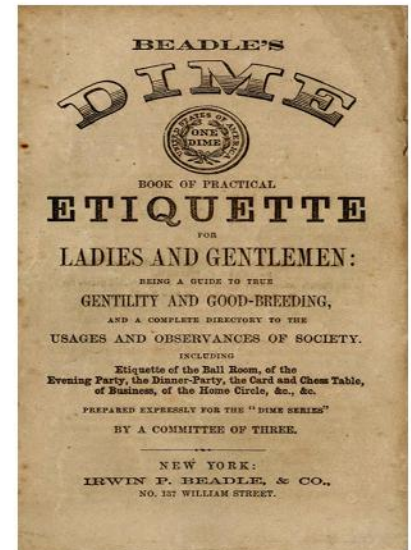
REMAIN SEATED

Once in the theater it is courteous to remain seated and involved in the production until intermission. Please do not leave the theater unless there is an emergency.

APPLAUSE WELCOME

There are several times during a performance when it is appropriate to applaud the performers: when the conductor comes in; after the Overture; after an aria, ensemble or a big finale number. At the conclusion of the performance it is appropriate to continue applauding until all singers have stepped forward to accept their applause during "curtain call". Sometimes, audience members stand up to applaud to show extra appreciation. This is called a "standing ovation."

NO PHOTOS OR RECORDINGS PERMITTED



G. Verdi La Traviata

Artistic Director / Conductor

ALEXANDRA KEEGAN

Staging Director

GABRIEL REOYO PAZOS

Oct 19 (Thu) - 7:00PM

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Center Theater at CCAE

340 N Escondido Blvd, Escondido

CAST

Violeta	Emma Berggren (Oct 20,22) Ella Yoon (Oct 19,21)
Alfredo	Felipe Prado (Oct 19,21) Gerardo Gaytan (Oct 20,22)
Germont	Michael Sokol (Oct 19,21) Carlos Oliva (Oct 20,22)
Flora	Hiroko Yoshinaga (Oct 20,22) Kelsey Fahy (Oct 19,21)
Baron	Thomas Lokensgard
Marquis	Stephen Blavet
Gaston	Shawn Taylor (Oct 20,21,22) Jack Adkins* (Oct 19)
Annina	Sara Frondoni (20,21,22) Lily Berthol* (Oct 19)
Doctor	Bryan Dahl

* understudy



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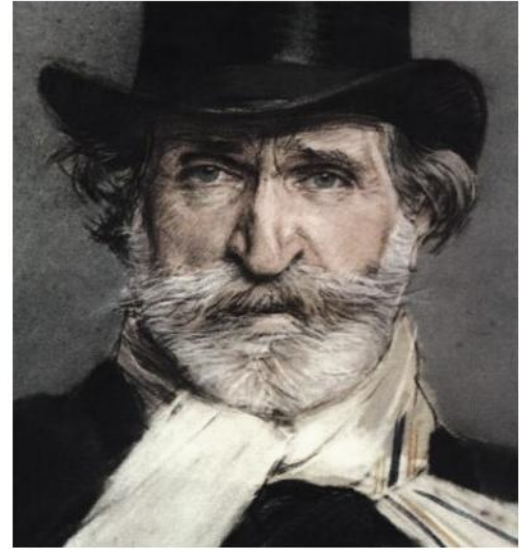
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2023

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Who Was Giuseppe Verdi?

Giuseppe Verdi was born in Italy in 1813, prior to Italian unification. Verdi produced many successful operas, including *La Traviata*, *Falstaff* and *Aida*, and became known for his skill in creating melody and his profound use of theatrical effect. Additionally, his rejection of the traditional Italian opera for integrated scenes and unified acts earned him fame. Verdi died on January 27, 1901, in Milan, Italy.



Early Life

Famed composer Giuseppe Verdi was born Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi on October 9 or 10, 1813, in the community of Le Roncole, near Busseto in the province of Parma, Italy. His mother, Luigia Uttini, worked as a spinner, and his father, Carlo Giuseppe Verdi, made a living as a local innkeeper.

Verdi first developed musical talents at a young age and began studying musical composition. In 1832, Verdi applied for admission at the Milan Conservatory, but was rejected due to his young age. Subsequently, he began studying under Vincenzo Lavigna, a famous composer from Milan.

First Opera "Oberto"

Verdi got his start in Italy's music industry in 1833, when he was hired as a conductor at the Philharmonic Society in Busseto. In 1838, at age 25, Verdi returned to Milan, where he completed his first opera, *Oberto*, in 1839, with the help of fellow musician Giulio Ricordi; the opera's debut production was held at La Scala, an opera house in Milan.

Earning Wide Acclaim

In 1840's he composed two new, four-part operas in 1842 and '43, *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* (best known simply as *I Lombardi*), respectively. Both pieces earned the composer a great amount of success. Subsequently, Verdi held a prominent reputation in Italy's operatic theater scene and, later, in the country's political scene as well. He became known for his skill in creating melody and his profound use of theatrical effect. His rejection of the traditional Italian opera for integrated scenes and unified acts only added to his fame.

For the rest of the 1840s, and through the 1850s, '60s and '70s, Verdi continued to garner success and fame. Comprising a popular operatic series throughout the decades were *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il trovatore* (1853), *La traviata* (1853), *Don Carlos* (1867) and *Aida*, which premiered at the Cairo Opera House in 1871. Four years later, in 1874, Verdi completed *Messa da Requiem* (best known simply as *Requiem*), which was meant to be his final composition. He retired shortly thereafter, but couldn't stop writing operas for the rest of his life despite his old age.

Death and Legacy

Verdi died on January 27, 1901, in Milan, Italy. Composing more than 25 operas throughout his career, Verdi continues to be regarded today as one of the greatest composers in history. Furthermore, his works have reportedly been performed more than any other performer's worldwide.



LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT G. VERDI

1. "I don't know whether the quartet is beautiful or not, but I know that it is a quartet."

It was only at the age of 60 that Verdi wrote his first ever string quartet; supposedly out of boredom because he had to pause his work on *Aida*. His only string quartet was written in a hotel room in Naples, although he was actually convinced that instrumental music was a "thing of the Germans and the string quartet a plant that is not suited to the Italian climate". Nevertheless, he presented his work on the evening of 1 April 1873 (as an April Fool's joke?) at a dinner for friends, who he nevertheless coyly asked not to fall asleep. But when it was over, the guests even demanded the piece be repeated. Verdi stated: "I don't know whether the quartet is beautiful or not, but I know that it is a quartet." Minimum requirement fulfilled.

2. Verdi, the politician

Verdi's operas can certainly be interpreted politically – which many contemporaries did. Accordingly, the censors regularly tried to intervene in his works. But to this day, it cannot be proven conclusively how much Verdi was actually interested in politics. Nevertheless in 1861, he was elected as a deputy to the new Italian parliament in Turin, where he served until 1865.

3. The farmer of St. Agata

Verdi liked to flirt with the fact that he was actually an "opera farmer" and preferred the simple country life. After his first financial successes, he built the Villa Sant'Agata near his birthplace where he devoted himself to farming: he bred horses, planted vines and had ponds built in the shape of his initials G and V, which still exist today.

4. Verdi, the foodie

The world-famous composer Verdi was apparently what we today would call a foodie. In numerous letters he wrote about his passion for food, gave cooking tips, talked about recipes and anecdotes from the kitchen. He sent hams and cheeses to friends as a kind of ambassador for his region and organized lunches at his villa. His specialty was apparently risotto alla Milanese.

5. Casa Verdi

"Among my works that I like best is the house I built in Milan to house elderly singers." In 1889, Verdi commissioned the construction of a retirement home for poor musicians. At around the age of 50, Verdi himself was so financially independent that he was able to retire. Since he could apparently remember different times, he became very socially involved and organized meals for the poor. Incidentally, his retirement home, the Casa Verdi, still houses artists and musicians today.



Francesco Maria Piave

Francesco Maria Piave, born in Venice in 1810 during the brief Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, was known as a jack-of-all-trades of the theatre. He was an excellent librettist, working with many successful composers of the day, a journalist and translator, as well as the resident poet and stage manager at La Fenice where he first met Verdi. Both men were known as ardent Italian patriots and together completed 10 operas; the two most famous were *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto*.

It was said that Verdi tended to bully Piave in their working relationship “enslaving the librettist, who becomes scarcely more than an instrument in his hands...Piave’s libretti are in fact those best suited to Verdi’s music simply because, in detail as well as in general shape, Verdi himself composed them.”

This impression comes from Verdi’s style of composition for which he is well known. The composer structured scenes around the arrangement of musical pieces which then laid the groundwork for the text. In other words, Verdi valued his own musical structure over the text of the piece. This controlled the dramatic arc and could perhaps take away some of the creativity of Piave.

However, the two seemed to have a sincere friendship and Piave was known as someone Verdi loved. In 1859, Piave worked as the stage manager of La Scala in Milan. Though he found success in different vocations, he is most known for his work with Verdi.



CHARACTERS

Violeta (Lead Soprano)

Violeta is a young and attractive woman who lives in Paris. She lives a glamorous life, attends opera, and organizes parties using wealthy men's money.

Alfredo (Lead Tenor)

A young man from respectable family who is in love with Violeta.

Germont (Lead Baritone)

Alfredo's father who is a respectable and distinguish gentleman. He also has a daughter, Alfredo's sister.

Flora (Lead Mezzo)

Violeta's friend and social butterfly. She also uses men's money in exchange for escorting them in private and social settings.

Annina (Featured)

A girl, Violeta's maid and confidant.

Baron (Featured)

A wealthy gentleman who is in love with Violeta and a gambler.

Marques (Featured)

Baron's friend who never misses a party.

Gaston (Featured)

Alfredo's friend who introduces Violeta to Alfredo.

Doctor (Featured)

Violeta's doctor.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1 (Act I)

Violetta Valéry's salon is one of the premier locales of the Paris demimonde. The party is in full swing as more guests arrive fresh from gambling at the home of Flora, Violetta's friend and fellow hostess. Violetta bids all her guests to enjoy an evening of delight. Among the attendees is Alfredo Germont, who has enlisted the help of his friend Gastone, a viscount and friend of Violetta, to make the acquaintance of the charming demimondaine. Gastone introduces Alfredo and reveals the depth of the young man's admiration by citing his faithful daily visits to Violetta's home while she was recently ill. Violetta takes this opportunity to skewer her companion, Baron Douphol, noting that he had not shown as much zeal as this newcomer. The Baron, understandably, takes an immediate disliking to this young upstart.

Glasses are filled and a toast is called for. Gastone approaches first the Baron, who demurs, then Alfredo, who delivers an impassioned toast to love and his hostess "whose eyes enchant us all". Violetta responds by asserting that love is "a fleeting flower that is born and dies never to return." She extols pleasure over all as the guests declare that the new dawn will find them still reveling in this pleasure paradise. Music is heard from the next room and all the guests accept Violetta's invitation to dance. As she leads them, she is seized by a sudden weakness. She dismisses the incident as 'nothing', but urges everyone to avail themselves of the dance floor where she will join them later.

Alfredo stays behind out of concern for his fragile hostess. Though she assures him she is feeling better, he warns her that her fast lifestyle will lead to her ruin and suggests that she needs someone to take care of her. Violetta laughs this off and frankly advises Alfredo to flee from her, for she is immune to love. Smarting from this rebuff, Alfredo prepares to leave at once, but Violetta holds him back, proffering him a camellia with instructions to bring it back to her when it has withered—tomorrow. Alfredo's hope is rekindled and he hurries out. Violetta's other guests stream in from the ballroom and exclaim that, as dawn has broken, they must depart to rest themselves for another night of revelry. Left alone, Violetta contemplates the possibility of her finding true love. Could Alfredo be the man she has secretly dreamed of? Rebelling against this daydream, she declares she must be forever free to live her life of pleasure, going from joy to joy. The sound of Alfredo's voice serenading her with words of love weakens her resolve momentarily, but she quickly returns to her theme of living and dying in pleasure.

Scene 2 (Act II)

Three months later, Violetta and Alfredo are living together in a country house. Alfredo enters and rhapsodizes over the fact that since Violetta declared her love for him, he feels he is living in heaven. His happiness is disturbed when he finds out from Violetta's maid, Annina, that her mistress plans to sell all she has to sustain the expense of country life. Alfredo, determined to prevent this, bids Annina to keep their conversation secret from Violetta and goes to Paris. Violetta receives a party invitation from Flora, but her friend will wait for her in vain. The servant Giuseppe announces the arrival of a gentleman and shows him in. The man quickly identifies himself as the father of the young man who is 'running to his ruin' by associating with Violetta.

SYNOPSIS

(continues)

After bridling at the initial insult, Violetta decides to share with Germont her plan to sell all she owns. Germont sees this as evidence her past is making her feel guilty. She declares that the past no longer exists now that she loves Alfredo. Still, Germont wants to ask her to make a sacrifice. He explains that he has two children: Alfredo and a daughter. The daughter is engaged to an upstanding young man who will withdraw his offer of marriage if Alfredo does not sever his ties with Violetta. Violetta is relieved, and immediately agrees to part from Alfredo for a while, 'it will be difficult, but...' Germont makes it clear that he is asking her to renounce Alfredo forever.

Violetta is thunderstruck. Almost hysterically she protests that she is without friend or family and that Alfredo has promised to be everything for her. Eventually she yields and bids Germont tell his daughter of the sacrifice made for her. Germont realizes the enormity of the sacrifice he has asked and recognizes the true love Violetta has for his son. He exhorts her to have courage—her noble heart will sustain her. Finally, she implores Germont to someday tell Alfredo of the circumstances of her sacrifice and begs him not to allow Alfredo to curse her memory. They bid each other farewell. Violetta decides her first course of action to keep her promise to Germont is to accept Flora's invitation with the Baron as her escort.

After she dispatches Annina with the note, she writes to Alfredo. He enters, interrupting her. Alarmed at her agitation, he asks to whom she was writing. When he asks to read it, she tells him he must wait until later. He mentions that his father had been at the house and left him a stern letter stating his intention to return later to see his son. This throws Violetta into a panic, fearing that Germont will find her still on the premises. As she leaves, she promises Alfredo she will always be there with him and implores him to love her as she loves him. Soon a messenger enters bearing a letter for Alfredo 'from a woman in a carriage'. Alfredo is visibly shaken when he reads the letter that begins: 'My dear Alfredo, By the time you read this...' Alfredo's father enters to comfort his son. He begs him to come back to his family in Provence, but Alfredo is in a fury to confront Violetta. He chances to see the invitation from Flora and suspects Violetta is on her way there. Deaf to his father's protests he immediately sets out for Paris.

Scene 3 (Act II)

At Flora's the festivities are already under way. Flora tells the Marquis and Dr. Grenvil that she has invited Violetta and Alfredo—to which the Marquis responds with the information that the two have parted. Violetta is coming to the party with the Baron. Alfredo arrives alone, to everyone's surprise. He immediately goes to the gaming tables and exhibits a prodigious winning streak. 'Unlucky at love, lucky at cards,' he says. Violetta and the Baron arrive. When the Baron sees that Alfredo is there, he instructs Violetta not to speak with him. Goaded by Alfredo's statement that he would use his winnings to go back to the country with 'one who had been with me, but who ran away', the Baron is furious. The Baron challenges Alfredo to a game, in which Alfredo's winning streak continues. As the guests go to dinner, the two exchange ominous words indicating their intent to fight a duel. Violetta returns to the gaming room having asked Alfredo to follow her. She pleads with him to leave at once to avoid the Baron's anger.

SYNOPSIS

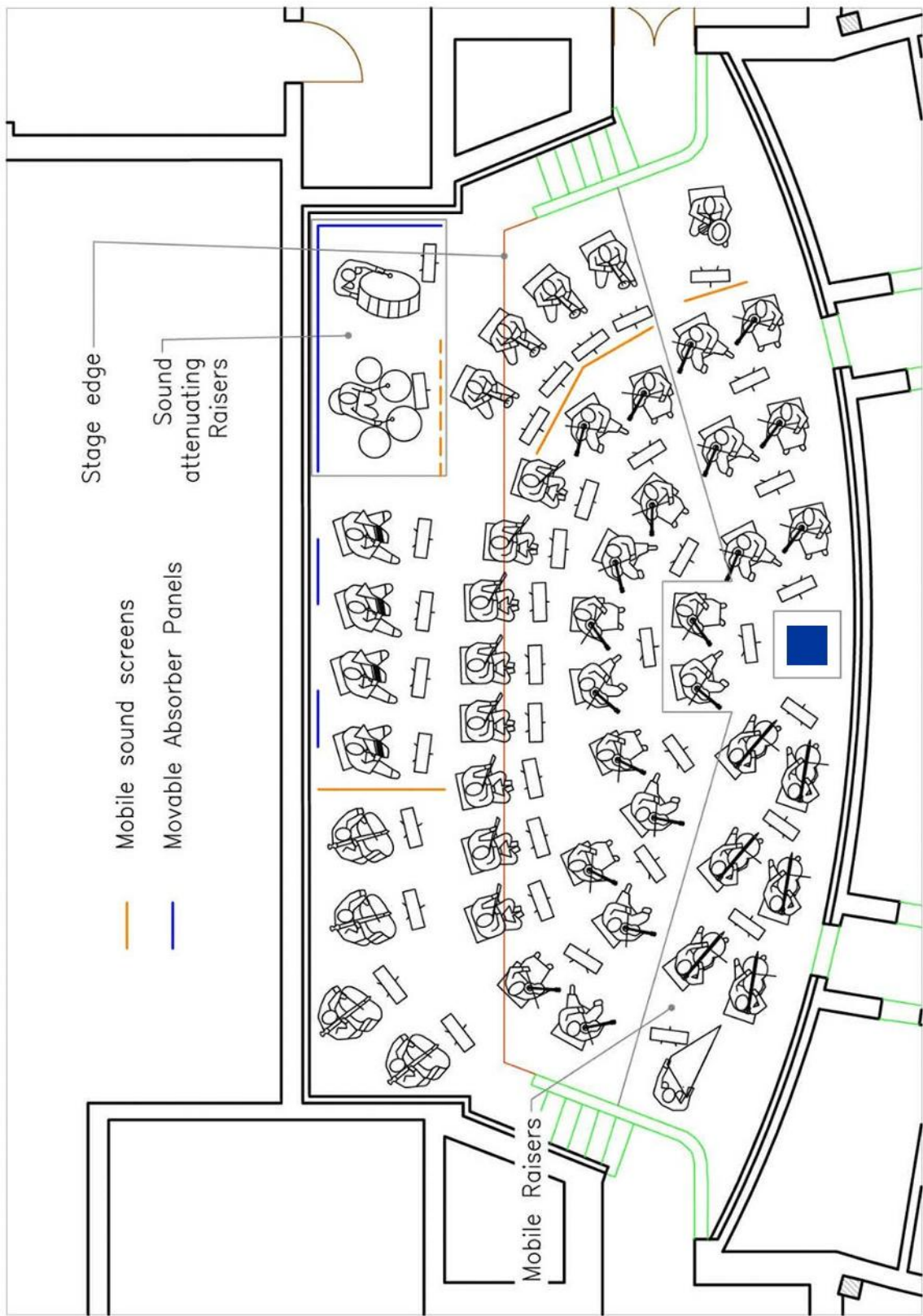
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Alfredo is defiant, but says he will agree if she promises to follow him. She says that she cannot because someone made her swear an oath to stay away from Alfredo. Alfredo thinks that it must be the Baron who demanded such a promise—Violetta agrees, and when asked even says that she is in love with the Baron. Alfredo calls all the guests to hear him. He describes how Violetta had planned to sell all she owns for his benefit, but that he is glad that he found out soon enough to prevent it. Throwing a purse of money at Violetta's feet he calls upon all present to witness that he has paid her for her services. The party guests are enraged by this shocking display and demand that he leave. Having discovered where Alfredo had gone, Germont enters. He berates his son for publicly insulting a woman. Alfredo is immediately remorseful. Flora, the doctor, and the guests comfort Violetta as the Baron pledges to avenge the insult and Germont ponders that, though he knows Violetta truly loves Alfredo, he must remain silent.

Scene 4 (Act III)

It is early morning and from her sickbed Violetta orders Annina to open the blinds. Dr. Grenvil enters and examines Violetta, offering hope to the invalid, but telling Annina that her mistress has but a few hours left on this earth. She asks Annina for her box of correspondence and tells her to give half of the money she has left to the poor. Alone, she rereads the letter she has received from Germont, detailing that the duel has taken place with the Baron's being wounded. Alfredo has gone abroad but will return to her soon to ask her pardon. Germont will accompany him. Violetta despairs that as she waits she can observe how quickly her illness is taking its toll. She says a touching goodbye to the bright memories of the past and petitions God to pardon her and welcome her to his bosom. All is finished. Annina enters hurriedly and tells Violetta she wishes to prepare her for a joyous surprise. Violetta guesses it: Alfredo has returned. The two fall into each other's arms as Alfredo promises Violetta that they shall leave Paris and live out their lives together. Her health will return.

Overcome with joyous hope, Violetta wants to go to a church to give thanks for Alfredo's return but, alas, she is too weak even to dress. Alfredo sends Annina for the doctor. Violetta curses her fate for dying so young just at the point when she was about to attain happiness as Alfredo begs her to remain hopeful. Annina returns with Dr. Grenvil and Germont, who instantly recognize that Violetta is near death. Germont is filled with remorse at the part he has played in this tragedy. Violetta takes out a portrait of herself from earlier, happier days and gives it to Alfredo. She tells him that if one day a pretty young girl should give him her heart, he should marry her and give her the portrait, telling her that it is a gift from one who prays for them both in heaven. Suddenly, Violetta whispers that the spasms of pain have ceased...she feels life returning to her... She falls lifeless.



Did you know that preparing for an opera production takes between 1 and 2 years? Below is a timeline of events leading up to Opening Night:

18 months before - Choice of Opera

The Artistic Staff meets (while the current opera is being planned) and chooses the opera for the following season. Many factors are considered when making this choice, including past opera productions, current talent pool, other local opera companies' season, etc.

8 months before - Initial Auditions

Pacific Lyric Association publicizes its auditions to our large database of singers, as well as placing notifications in publications and online. Singers are asked to submit videos of 2 contrasting arias (opera solos).

7 months before - Final Round of Auditions

Singers who pass the initial audition are asked to attend an in-person audition for a particular role.

6 months before - Cast is Announced

Following the final round of auditions (which can take up to one month), the Artistic Staff (Artistic Director, Stage Director, and Chorus Master) meets to decide on the final cast. PLA double-casts all of the major roles, to make sure that singers are not overtaxed, and we always have a backup if a singer becomes ill.

4 months before - Production Meetings Begin

Production meetings consist of the Artistic Team (Artistic Director, Stage Director, Chorus Master, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Property Master [props]) meeting to discuss the look of the production and timeline. These meetings continue as needed until Opening Night.

3 months before - Initial Costume Fittings

Actors are asked to submit measurements to the Costume Designer before meeting with him/her to try on the costumes. The Costume Designer then makes adjustments to the costumes so they are ready to go when the production moves into the theater.

6 weeks before - Music Rehearsals Begin

Music rehearsals represent the official start of the opera production process. At least one or two weeks of rehearsals are dedicated to learning the music. This is necessary before turning the cast over to the Stage Director.

4 weeks before - Staging Rehearsals Begin

Once music is learned, the Stage Director works with the actors and instructs them on their entrances and exits, where to stand in each scene, and what props they use - all while singing.

2 weeks before - Orchestra Rehearsals Begin

In a separate rehearsal space, the conductor rehearses the music with the orchestra.

4 days before - Move into Theater

Once all elements have been thoroughly rehearsed in the rehearsal venue, it's time to move into the theater, build the set, prepare the orchestra pit, and move costumes and props in.

3 days before - Technical Rehearsals

Technical rehearsals can at times be tedious, as each technical element (lighting, set changes, etc) of the production is carefully worked out.

2 days before - Dress Rehearsal #1

After all technical elements have been perfected, we do a final run-through without stops, just as if an audience is present.

1 day before - Final Dress Rehearsal (Preview Performance)

Youth is invited to see the opera, which gives the actors a final chance to test everything before a live audience.

Scene 1 (Act I) - party at Violetta's house

Chorus 'Dell'invito trasversa è già l'ora' - Flora, Violetta, Alfredo, Gastone, Chorus

Brindisi 'Libiamo ne' lieti calici' - Alfredo, Violetta, Chorus

Duet 'Non gradireste ora le danze' - Violetta, Alfredo, Chorus

Recit and Aria 'È strano... Ah, forse lui... Sempre libera' - Violetta

Scene 2 (Act II) - garden

Recit and Aria 'Dei miei bollenti spiriti ... O mio rimorso' - Alfredo, Annina

Recit and Duet 'Pure siccome un angelo' - Violetta, Annina, Germont

Recit 'Dammi tu forza, o cielo' - Violetta, Annina

Recit and Aria 'Di Provenza il mar' - Giorgio, Alfredo, Giuseppe, Commissioner

Scene 3 (Act II) - party at Flora's house

Finale 'Avrem lieta di maschere la notte' - Marchese, Flora, Dottore, Chorus

Gypsy Chorus 'Noi siamo zingarelle' - Chorus

Matadors Chorus 'Di Madride, noi siam mattadori' - Chorus

Scene 'Alfredo! Voi' - Alfredo, Flora, Barone, Violetta, Marchese, Servant, Chorus

Finale 'Di sprezzo degno se stesso rende' - Ensemble

Scene 4 (Act III) - Violetta's dwelling

Recit and Aria 'Addio, del passato' - Violetta, Annina, Dottore Grenvil

Bacchanale 'Largo al quadruplo' - Chorus

Recit and Duet 'Parigi, o cara' - Annina, Violetta, Alfredo

Finale 'Prendi, quest'è l'immagine' - Germont, Violetta, Alfredo, Annina, Dottore

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1. Beautiful Music

Ok, maybe you saw this one coming. Opera is, quite literally, nothing without its music. Is there anything quite like hearing your favorite aria performed live, or experiencing the full force of a commanding chorus? And don't forget the power of the full symphony orchestra with all the bells and whistles – or, perhaps more accurately, chimes and triangles.

2. Vocal Artistry at the Highest Level

The sheer athleticism required to perform operatic repertoire continues to astound us. An opera singer must care for their voice as if it's the most delicate, precious jewel and train for years in order to sing at the professional level. The best of the best make it look effortless, all the while traversing the stage in elaborate costumes and conveying the power and emotion of their characters. Oh, and they don't use microphones. Talk about a wow factor.

3. Opera is for Everyone

Whether you're a live music lover, a visual artist, a history buff, a strictly-in-the-shower singer, a binge-watcher, a social butterfly, a bookworm, a fashionista, a storyteller, an athlete – the list goes on – there truly is something for everyone to enjoy in opera. As our General Director and President David B. Devan would say, "Open ears and a warm heart is all you need."

4. Maestro!

A conductor is the connective tissue that holds an opera together, making sure the singers on stage and the musicians in the pit are perfectly in sync. With the mighty maestro leading the way, these highly skilled artists are able to enchant an audience from the overture to the final bow. Plus, sometimes they make really epic gestures.

5. Oscar-worthy Drama and Laugh-Out-Loud Comedy

Think nothing can compare to your darker-than-dark Netflix queue or your favorite funny movie? Welcome to opera, where there's always someone dying, crying, lying or getting married. From Mozart's masterful comedies to Shakespearean tragedies, the classic stories found on an opera stage are just as fresh and relevant to modern audiences as when they premiered, sometimes centuries ago.

6. Emotions For Days

Talk about All. The. Feels. If a story makes singing your feelings to a huge audience seem normal, you can bet emotions are running high. We're talking the deepest love, the most crushing loss, utter joy, and irrepressible rage. The orchestra will move you. The singing will move you. The acting will move you. Bring tissues.

7. Sumptuous Sets

Operatic action can't take place just anywhere. A great set design complements the dramatic happenings onstage and in the pit with a dash (ok, maybe more than a dash) of spectacle. No matter whether it's in a grand opera house, an old warehouse, or a museum, you'll be completely transported by your surroundings.

8. Incredible Costumes

You don't have to be a fashion plate to recognize the utter fantasy that comes with theatrical costume. Huge gowns, dreamy suits, crazy wigs, exaggerated makeup; it all weaves together to help form a character on stage, one you'll surely notice from even the tip-top tier of the theater.

9. Centuries of Culture & History

Opera is a 400-year-old genre, with artists working in it all over the globe. Since its inception, composers, singers and directors have used the art form to tell important stories, to entertain, and to comment on the issues of their day. Now, traditional stagings open up dialogues on our cultural history and modern productions give us new ways to see the world. And you can be part of it.