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LA TRAVIATA

La Traviata

An Opera by Giuseppe Verdi

Presented by Muddy River Opera Company

Friday June 28th, 2024 | 7 PM

Sunday June 30th, 2024 | 2 PM

Mary Ellen Orr Auditorium
John Wood Community College
1301 S. 48th Street
Quincy, Illinois

PROGRAM:

Act I.....35 minutes
Intermission.....15 minutes
Act II - Scene 1.....30 minutes
Intermission.....15 minutes
Act II - Scene 2.....35 minutes
Intermission.....15 minutes
Act III.....35 minutes

Runtimes are approximate

Total Time: 3 hours

Orchestra

1st Violins

Jane Polett | *Concert Master*
Preston Trinh
Vicki Daggett

2nd Violins

Joan Mast
Patricia Mahoney-Kuhn

Violas

Zoe Agrimonti
Devon Miller

Cello

Christina Cane

Bass

Donovan Briscoe

Flute

Kristen Rizzo

Clarinet

Alan Nichols

Bassoon

Jane Holt

Trumpet

John Hume

Trombone

Darin McDonald

Timpani

Rebecca Washington

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Act I

The Salon at Violetta's House

Violetta Valéry, a famed courtesan, throws a lavish party at her Paris home to celebrate her recovery from a recent illness. Gastone, a Count, has brought his friend and young nobleman, Alfredo Germont. It is rumored that Alfredo is fascinated by Violetta and has been visiting and enquiring after her health daily. The crowd is touched by the sweet sentiment and asks Alfredo for a toast. Alfredo obliges, celebrating the joys of love. (*Libiamo ne'lieti calici*). The guests move to the ballroom but Violetta withdraws, feeling faint. The infatuated Alfredo lingers and declares his love (*Un di, felice, eterea*). She initially rejects him but is moved by his sincerity. Before Alfredo leaves, she gives him a camellia and tells him to return to her once the flower has wilted. They are to meet the next day. After the party ends and Violetta is alone, she wonders if Alfredo could have awakened a desire within her to be truly loved. Dismissing the thought, she declares to live a life of freedom and pleasure above all else (*Sempre libera*).

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Act II - Scene 1

Violetta's House Outside Paris

Three months later, Alfredo and Violetta are deeply in love and living together in her country house outside Paris. She has completely abandoned her former life and Alfredo praises their contentment (*Lunge da lei...De'miei bollenti spiriti*).

Annina, Violetta's maid, arrives from Paris where she confides in Alfredo that she has just sold some of Violetta's belongings to support their country lifestyle. Alfredo, shocked, leaves for Paris immediately to settle matters himself. An invitation awaits Violetta for a Parisian party that evening, hosted by her friend, Flora. As she reads the invitation, she is called upon by Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father. Germont demands that she break off the relationship saying the affair will ruin the reputation of his family and engagement of Alfredo's sister

(*Pura siccome un angelo*). The devastated Violetta eventually agrees to end the romance knowing that she will break Alfredo's heart (*Ah! Dite alla giovine*). Witnessing her sacrifice, Germont is filled with gratitude and impressed by Violetta's nobility. He leaves her alone to weep.

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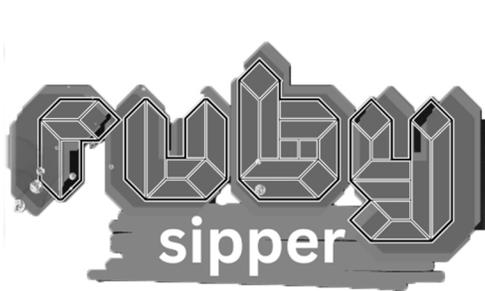
Act III

Violetta's Bedroom, a few months later

Doctor Grenvil confides in Annina, saying that Violetta's illness has worsened and she will soon die. When alone, Violetta reads a letter from Alfredo's father explaining that though the duel did take place, Alfredo was only wounded and has since learned the truth of her sacrifice. Alfredo seeks forgiveness and plans to return to her immediately. Violetta fears she will not live long enough to see him again (*Addio, del passato*). Just then, Annina rushes in with Alfredo. The lovers reunite and Alfredo urges Violetta to leave with him for Paris (*Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo*). Greatly weakened, she knows her life is fading. Giorgio enters with Dr. Grenvil, regretting his part in the separation of the two lovers. Suddenly, Violetta revives (*Ma se tornando...Ah! Gran Dio! Morir si giovane*), but a moment later collapses and dies in Alfredo's arms (*Prendi, quest'è l'immagine de' miei passati giorni*).

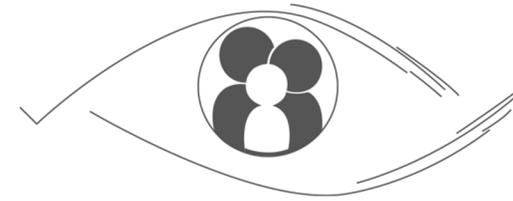
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Act II - Scene 2

Party at Flora's House

Violetta enters the party with Baron Douphol making it evident to the others that her relationship with Alfredo has ended. She sees Alfredo at the gambling table and the Baron soon joins in the game. Alfredo, after winning several hands in a row, begins to leave with handfuls of money. Violetta fears that in a fit of anger, the Baron will challenge Alfredo to a duel and asks to speak with him in private. The jealous Alfredo demands that she admit to his face that she loves the Baron. Alfredo furiously calls the guests in to witness him publically denounce and humiliate Violetta. He throws his recent winnings at her feet, declaring it as payment for the affair (*Alfredo, di questo core*). Appalled by the scene, the guests and Giorgio denounce Alfredo's actions. He is immediately remorseful for his heartless behavior. Though scorned, Violetta stays, telling Alfredo of the deep love she still has for him. The scene ends as the Baron challenges Alfredo to a duel to avenge Violetta's public humiliation.



Violetta

Penelope Shumate

penelopeshumate.com

Penelope Shumate has been praised by The New York Times for her "bell-like clarity and surpassing sweetness." A frequent soloist at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, she has performed in works including Messiah, Carmina Burana, and Mozart's Requiem. Her operatic roles span

Violetta in La Traviata to Musetta in La Bohème. Shumate's acclaimed recitals and recordings, alongside numerous awards, underscore her versatility and artistry. Upcoming engagements feature her return to Carnegie Hall for Messiah and the world premiere of Kindness at Lincoln Center.



Alfredo

Ganson Salmon

gansonsalmon.com

Ganson Salmon, lauded by the New York Times as a "dashing lyric tenor," is celebrated for his "powerful and nuanced" performances (Opera News). He recently portrayed Rodolfo in La Bohème with First Coast Opera

and Prince Karl Franz in The Student Prince with Regina Opera. Notable past roles include Don José in Carmen and Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly. Salmon, a graduate of Mannes School of Music, has performed across the U.S. and internationally, including at Tel Aviv Summer Opera and Sarasota Opera. He is also a dedicated Italian art song performer and a finalist in the 2016 International Tosti Competition.

Meet Our Choir!



Emily Goerlich (Gypsy) was last seen in Elixir of Love and is thrilled to be back with Muddy River Opera! She works as a speech-language pathologist for Hannibal Regional Hospital in outpatient pediatrics and also contracts to The Learning Center preschool in Bowling Green. When not working or performing, she enjoys playing flute, piano, and ukelele; singing in local choirs; writing her novel; and making inside jokes with her twin brother, Andrew.



Gavin Radkins (Matador) is a sophomore at John Wood Community College. He decided to participate in the opera as a chance to meet new people, hang out with friends, and try something new. He was in choir and theater crew all through high school, and currently serves as coordinator of audio/visual services at John Wood.



Belle Mitchell is a student at John Wood Community College studying to be a medical laboratory technician. She credits her involvement with the theater to her drama instructor, Dr. Soebbing. While in high school she participated in band and choir. Since school is out, she spends most of her time working or hanging out with friends.



Gabriella Kearns is a recent graduate from John Wood Community College. She spends most of her time working, preparing to transfer to a new school, going to the gym, hanging out with friends, and practicing one of her instruments. Within the past two years, she's found her love for anything theatre related.

Gabby credits this to the vocal show, choir, and band classes at JWCC. She plans to attend WIU in the fall, with a major in Music Therapy and a minor in Theatre!

Meet Our Choir!



Kiara Scriven is a sophomore at John Wood Community College, studying veterinary medicine. In the following semester, she will be theater guild president, helping to keep the excitement of theater alive at JWCC!



Janet Ellison teaches as an adjunct English instructor at Culver-Stockton College. She sings in Quincy Symphony Chorus and plays clarinet in the Quincy Concert Band and Quincy Park Band. She is honored to be in this production.



Adam Brown is going into his 4th year as the band/choir director at Marion County R-II. He's played with the HLG concert band and is excited to be performing with Muddy River Opera Company!

Chorus Master



Amy Stollberg, who has a bachelor's in music education from Culver-Stockton College, and a master's in education administration, grew up in nearby Palmyra, MO, but came to Quincy in 1990 when she got married. In addition to serving as the choir director for Christ Lutheran Church since 2003, Amy has served as a fine arts recruiter for Culver-Stockton College. Presently, she is the Associate Dean of Transfer and Graduate Admissions for Quincy University. She has also previously served as the general manager of the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association, and the Director of Choirs for Quincy University. Amy and her husband, Jeff, have three daughters (Ashley, Emily, and Erika) and two granddaughters (Harper and Maeve).



Flora & Annina Lisa Blake

Mezzo-Soprano Lisa Blake is returning to the stage for her eighth production with MROC. Most recently, she has appeared *The Tender Land*, *The Magic Flute*, *Elixir of Love*, and *Helen*. Lisa holds degrees from Truman State University, Culver Stockton, and Missouri State University. She currently teaches middle school and high school band and choir at Knox County R-1. Lisa also serves as voice faculty at Culver Stockton College and has a private studio.



Germont Steven Soebbing

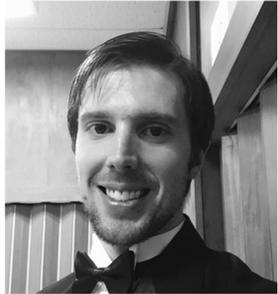
This is Steven's seventh appearance with Muddy River Opera! He is the department chair of humanities, education and fine arts for John Wood Community College. Additionally, he serves on the board of directors for Muddy River Opera. A native of Quincy, he received his doctorate and masters degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a bachelors in vocal performance and English from the University of Notre Dame. He was the librettist for an original work, *Helen*, composed by Garrett Hope, that premied with MROC in 2020.

Comprimario Cast



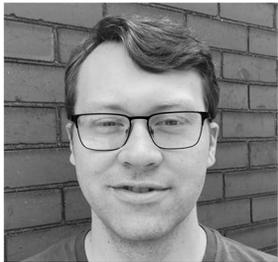
Marquis

Andrew Goerlich is excited to return as a tenor to the Muddy River Opera chorus, last appearing in *L'elisir d'amore* (The Elixir of Love) in 2022. He is passionate about music in many forms, and enjoys performing in various capacities as a vocalist and multi-instrumentalist (cello, piano, euphonium, and bass guitar). Outside of music, Andrew works as the Technology Coordinator for St. Peter Church and School in Quincy. Andrew also enjoys biking, hiking, enjoying the great outdoors, and making hilarious inside jokes with his twin sister, Emily.



Gastone

Mason Ellison works for WGEM as a Senior Master Control operator. He has been involved in several past productions at Quincy Community Theater and sings in the Quincy Symphony Chorus. He is excited to be part of this amazing production!



The Doctor & The Baron

Joseph Regner is excited about singing in his very first Muddy River Opera Production! He is currently a student at John Wood Community College, and hails from Quincy. Joseph sings with Schola at the Church of St. Peter, and also enjoys everything Quincy Community Theatre. He hopes everyone enjoys a wonderful evening at *La Traviata*!



Servant

Doris Sanders is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University with a degree in Music. She is a frequent performer on the Sunday Music Series and is a member of the Quincy Symphony Chorus. She also has performed on stage with The Muddy River Opera Company and Quincy Community Theatre. She is president of Encore! the Volunteer Council for the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association.



A **BIG** thank you
to JWCC for graciously
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Maestro

David Galant

David Galant is the music director and conductor of the Kanawha Valley Symphony Orchestra. He previously held the position of Assistant

Professor at Creighton University and now serves as the Director of Orchestra at Eastern Kentucky University's School of Music. David graduated from the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Doctor of Musical Arts and a Masters of Music in orchestral conducting. Dr. Galant is known to be an energetic and passionate conductor on the podium and enjoys guest conducting internationally.

Director's Note

Welcome to the Muddy River Opera Company's production of *La Traviata*. This timeless masterpiece by Giuseppe Verdi continues to resonate with audiences for its rich emotional depth and poignant exploration of love, sacrifice, and societal expectations.

At its heart, *La Traviata* tells the story of Violetta Valéry, a courtesan who dares to seek love in a world that scorns her for her profession. Her journey is one of profound transformation, from a life of fleeting pleasures to one marked by genuine, selfless love. The opera's themes of redemption, the clash between personal desires and societal pressures, and the ephemeral nature of happiness are as relevant today as they were in Verdi's time.

This production has been a labor of love, brought to life by an incredible team of artists both onstage and behind the scenes. Our cast has poured their hearts into their roles, delivering performances that capture the intense emotions and complex characters that Verdi so masterfully created. Our orchestra has infused every note with passion, bringing Verdi's lush and evocative score to life.

In directing this production, my goal has been to honor the timeless beauty of Verdi's music and the depth of its characters while creating a space for the audience to reflect on the enduring power of love and the often-painful choices it demands. *La Traviata* is not just an opera about a courtesan; it is a profound exploration of human vulnerability and the resilience of the human spirit.

As you watch Violetta's story unfold, I hope you find yourself moved by her courage and the universal truths embedded in her journey. **Thank you for joining us and supporting the Muddy River Opera Company.**

We are honored to share this experience with you!

Alex G. Craig
Director | *La Traviata*
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2024 Season

Spring Premiere

Children's Opera | *Pinocchio*

Our Children's Opera tours local grade schools and shows a public performance to teach children about opera!

Summer Premiere

Mainstage Opera | *La Traviata*

The Mainstage Opera is our flagship program, showcasing the talents of trained opera professionals.

Autumn Premiere

Community Event | *A Night at the Museum*

Our Community Event is for all ages! This year, we've partnered with the Quincy Museum to bring a free movie night to Quincy. We'll be showing *A Night at the Museum* and will have prizes for the best costumes!

Winter Premiere

Holiday Program | *Handel's Messiah*

Get in the Christmas spirit and come sing Handel's Messiah with us! Hosted at the Luther Memorial Church, this sing-a-long is followed by a free soup supper and reception!

Dates, times, and additional details can be found on our website:



muddyriveropera.org/current-season

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