

WNO



La traviata

Supported by the Helena Oldacre Trust

Welcome to WNO, and to this exciting new production of Verdi's masterpiece *La traviata*.

I am especially thrilled to welcome one of the UK's most dynamic and talented directors, David McVicar to WNO. I can't wait for the curtain to rise on what I know will be a very special and exhilarating experience.

Making her WNO, and indeed UK debut, in the title role of Violetta, is the brilliant young Greek soprano Myrtò Papatnasiu, and making his WNO debut as Alfredo is English tenor, Alfie Boe. His father, Germont, will be performed by Dario Solari, returning to the company after his recent success as Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades*. Our Italian maestro is Andrea Licata, also making his WNO debut.

There is definitely a 'love and passion' theme going through this 2009/2010 season, starting this autumn with *La traviata*, continuing with *Madam Butterfly* and culminating in *Wozzeck* – a truly dynamic combination, covering a roller-coaster of emotions, from the most light-hearted to the darkest and most tortuous aspects of love and relationships.

Come and experience them yourself – they cannot be missed!

This production of *La traviata* is supported by the Helena Oldacre Trust, which has been a loyal and much valued ally to the company for many years. We are very grateful to Helena and her fellow trustees not only for their ongoing generosity, but also for the warmth and wisdom which accompanies that support.

Croeso i OCC, ac i'r cynhyrchiad newydd cyffrous hwn o gampwaith Verdi *La traviata*.

Rwy'n arbennig o falch croesawu un o gyfarwyddwyr mwyaf bywiog a dawnus Prydain, David McVicar, i OCC. Rwy'n disgwyl yn eiddgar i weld y llen yn codi ar yr hyn a fydd, mi wn, yn brofiad cyffrous ac arbennig iawn.

Bydd Myrtò Papatnasiu, y soprano ifanc ragorol o Wlad Groeg, yn canu ym Mhrydain am y tro cyntaf yn rhan Violetta, ac yn canu gydag OCC am y tro cyntaf bydd y tenor o Sais, Alfie Boe. Cenir rhan ei dad, Germont, gan Dario Solari, a fydd yn dychwelyd at y cwmni ar ôl ei lwyddiant yn ddiweddar yn canu rhan Yeletsky yn *The Queen of Spades*. Ein maestro fydd Andrea Licata o'r Eidal, a fydd hefyd yn gweithio gydag OCC am y tro cyntaf.

Mae 'cariad a nwyd' yn sicr yn thema gyson drwy dymor 2009/2010, gan ddechrau yn ystod yr hydref eleni gyda *La traviata*, yna *Madam Butterfly* ac yn diweddu gyda *Wozzeck* – cyfuniad gwirioneddol ddeinamig sy'n cwmmpasu storom o emosiynau, o'r mwyaf ysgafngalon i'r agweddau mwyaf tywyll a chreulon ar serch a pherthynas pobl â'i gilydd. Dewch i'w profi drosoch eich hun – peidiwch â cholli'r cyfle!

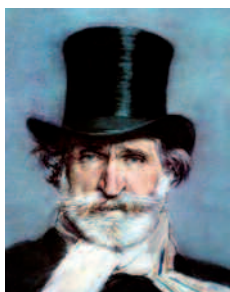
Caiff y cynhyrchiad hwn o *La traviata* ei gefnogi gan Ymddiriedolaeth Helena Oldacre, sydd wedi bod yn gymorth teyrngar a gwerthfawr iawn i'w cwmni ers blyneddodd. Rydyn ni'n ddiolchgar tu hwnt i Helena a'i chyd-ymddiriedolwyr, nid yn unig am eu haelioni parhaus, ond hefyd am eu cynhesrwydd a'u doethineb wrth roi'r gefnogaeth honno.



John Fisher

Chief Executive & Artistic Director | Prif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr Artistig

La traviata



Giuseppe Verdi



Alexandre Dumas fils

Opera in three acts by Giuseppe Verdi

Text by Francesco Maria Piave after the novel of 1848 and play of 1852, *La dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils

First performed at Teatro La Fenice, Venice on 6 March 1853

First performance by Welsh National Opera, of this production, at Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff on 12 September 2009

Sung in Italian with English and Welsh surtitles

A co-production with Scottish Opera and Gran Teatre del Liceu

Supported by the Helena Oldacre Trust

All performances start at 7.15pm unless otherwise stated

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff	Saturday 12 September 2009 Monday 14 September 2009 Friday 18 September 2009 Tuesday 29 September 2009 Thursday 1 October 2009 Saturday 3 October 2009
Swansea Grand Theatre	7pm on Wednesday 7 October 2009 7pm on Friday 9 October 2009
Venue Cymru, Llandudno	Tuesday 13 October 2009 Friday 16 October 2009
Liverpool Empire Theatre	Wednesday 21 October 2009 Friday 23 October 2009
New Theatre, Oxford	Tuesday 3 November 2009 Friday 6 November 2009
The Bristol Hippodrome	Tuesday 10 November 2009 Friday 13 November 2009
Birmingham Hippodrome	Tuesday 17 November 2009 Friday 20 November 2009
The Mayflower, Southampton	Wednesday 25 November 2009 Friday 27 November 2009

Cast

Violetta Valéry	Myrtò Papatanasiu (Until 23 Oct)
	Katia Pellegrino (From 3 Nov)
Flora	Louise Poole
Marquis of Obigny	Philip Lloyd-Evans
Baron Douphol	Eddie Wade (Until 20 Nov)
	Jack O'Kelly (From 25 Nov)
Doctor Grenvil	David Soar (ex 3 Oct)
	Martin Lloyd (3 Oct)
Gaston	Howard Kirk
Alfredo Germont	Alfie Boe
Annina	Joanne Thomas
Giuseppe, <i>Violetta's servant</i>	Philip Pooley
Giorgio Germont, <i>Alfredo's father</i>	Dario Solari (Until 20 Nov)
	Eddie Wade (From 25 Nov)
The Messenger	George Newton-Fitzgerald
Flora's servant	Laurence Cole
Female Dancers	Jo Jeffries Sophia McGregor Nicki Munroe Jenna Sloan
Male Actors/Dancers	Gordon Brandie Henrik Jessen Al Sill Matthew Tilley Paul Wood

Conductor	Andrea Licata (Until 13 Nov) Andrew Greenwood (From 17 Nov)
Director	David McVicar
Designer	Tanya McCallin
Lighting	Jennifer Tipton
Choreographer	Andrew George
Chorus Master	Stephen Harris
Music Staff	Stephen Wood
Staff Directors	Sarah Crisp Marie Lambert
Language Coach	Jolanda Pupillo
Stage Manager	Julian Johnson
Production Manager	Robert Pagett

Scenery built and painted by Scottish Opera
 Properties, costumes and wigs by Scottish Opera
 Additional costumes and wigs by Welsh National Opera
 Make up provided by **MAC**

Front cover image 'The Ball', c1878 (oil on canvas) by James Jacques
 Joseph Tissot (1836-1902), Musee d'Orsay, Paris, France / Lauros /
 Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library

Rehearsal photographs by Brian Tarr

Costume design illustrations by Tanya McCallin

English surtitles by Simon Rees
 Welsh surtitles by Mary Jones

The performance lasts approximately 2 hours 40 minutes
 There will be intervals after Act 1 and Act 2 Scene 2

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Introduction

Verdi took Alexandre Dumas fils' play *La dame aux camélias* as the basis for his opera *La traviata*, and his librettist Piave adapted the plot to agree with the stipulations of the Venetian censors. The opera was first performed in Venice at the Teatro La Fenice on 6 March 1853. The title was originally to have been *Amore e morte* – Love and Death – but was changed to *La traviata* – The Fallen Woman. Verdi wanted the opera to be performed in modern dress but, again, the censors forced him to set the opera in around 1700. Returning the opera to a contemporary setting restores Verdi's intentions and reinforces the immediacy of Violetta's tragedy.

Plot summary

Violetta Valéry, already ill, falls in love with Alfredo Germont, but his father objects to their relationship because it will jeopardise his daughter's prospects of marriage. Violetta agrees to leave Alfredo, but he follows her to Paris and denounces her. Violetta succumbs to her illness, and is reconciled with Alfredo before dying.

Cyflwyniad

Cymerodd Verdi y ddrama *La dame aux camélias* gan Alexandre Dumas fils fel y sail ar gyfer ei opera *La traviata*, ac addaswyd y stori gan ei libretydd Piave i gyd-fynd â rheolau sensoriaid Fenis. Cafodd yr opera ei pherfformio am y tro cyntaf yn Fenis yn y Teatro La Fenice ar 6 Mawrth 1853. Bwriadwyd mai'r teitl gwreiddiol fyddai *Amore e morte* – Serch ac Angau – ond cafodd ei newid yn *La traviata* – Y Wraig Bechadurus. Dymuniad Verdi oedd i'r opera gael ei pherfformio mewn gwisg gyfoes, ond unwaith eto, gorfodwyd ef gan y sensoriaid i leoli'r opera tua'r flwyddyn 1700. Mae gosod yr opera unwaith drachefn mewn cefndir cyfoes yn adfer bwriadau Verdi ac yn atgyfnerthu cyfoesedd trasiedi Violetta.

Crynodeb o'r Stori

Mae Violetta Valéry, sydd eisoes yn sâl, yn syrthio mewn cariad ag Alfredo Germont. Ond mae ei dad yn gwrthwynebu'r berthynas oherwydd y bydd yn peryglu gobeithion ei ferch ei hun o briodi'n dda. Mae Violetta yn cytuno i adael Alfredo, ond mae e'n ei dilyn i Baris ac yn ei diarddel. Mae salwch Violetta yn gwaethygu, ac mae hi yn cymodi ac Alfredo cyn marw.



Violetta costume design



Alfredo costume design

Synopsis

The action takes place in Paris in the 19th century.

Act 1

Violetta's apartment

Violetta Valéry, a celebrated courtesan, is throwing a party to mark her recovery from a serious illness. Gaston introduces his shy young friend Alfredo Germont, explaining that Alfredo has called every day to enquire after her health. Charmed, Violetta pointedly remarks that her protector, Baron Douphol, has failed to show a similar concern. The Baron is instantly jealous of Violetta's new guest. Supper is announced and Gaston calls on the Baron to propose a toast. He refuses and Alfredo is persuaded to sing instead.

A band strikes up in the adjoining room and Violetta invites her guests to dance, but suddenly she turns pale and falters; her illness has returned. The others go through but Alfredo stays behind. He seizes the chance to confess to Violetta that, for over a year, he has been in love with her from afar. She laughs in his face and tells him frankly that love is something she has never known nor can offer in return. Crestfallen, he turns to go but Violetta makes a bargain with him, giving him a flower with instructions to return when it has withered – tomorrow.

It is nearly dawn and the guests take their leave. Left alone, Violetta is torn; Alfredo's declaration of love has touched her profoundly, although she is certain that her life is destined to be brief and devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. But Alfredo's voice haunts her.

Act 2

Scene 1 – A house near Paris

Three months have passed since Violetta first met Alfredo and she has fallen deeply in love with him. Renouncing her former life as a courtesan, she has set up home with him at Bougival, in the countryside on the outskirts of Paris. But Alfredo is not rich and Violetta has begun secretly to sell her possessions to support them. Alfredo learns this from Annina, Violetta's maid, and sets off for the city to raise money to buy them back.

Flora Bervoix, an old friend from the demi-monde, has invited Violetta and Alfredo to a party that evening in Paris. Violetta happily declines.

An unexpected visitor is announced – Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father. He begins by angrily accusing her of ruining his son. Insulted

and upset, she lets him see the sale receipts for her belongings and he moderates his tone. But he still means to obtain a sacrifice from her; the scandal of his son's open relationship with a courtesan has disgraced the Germont name and put the respectable marriage of Alfredo's sister in jeopardy. He demands that she give Alfredo up. Violetta is distraught and tries to explain the immensity of the love she feels for Alfredo; even the disease that she knows will deprive her of many more years of happiness. Germont listens sympathetically but stands firm. With brutal politeness, he points out that Violetta's relationship with Alfredo will never be acceptable to Society and is inevitably doomed. Finally, she agrees. She asks that Germont remain nearby to comfort his son and begins to write a letter to Baron Douphol. Germont leaves.

Annina is sent to Paris to deliver the letter and Violetta begins to write another to Alfredo, who surprises her with his sudden return. An angry note from his father was waiting for him in Paris and Alfredo is expecting a visit at Bougival. Confused and desperate, Violetta is forced to bid a loving farewell to Alfredo, who cannot understand the reason for her passionate outburst. She leaves the house on a pretext but ensures that her letter is delivered to Alfredo. The letter tells him that she is leaving to return to her former life and lover, Baron Douphol. As Violetta asked, Germont is at hand to try to comfort his son but Alfredo's eyes fall on the invitation to Flora's party and in desperation he heads for Paris, determined to find Violetta.

Scene 2 – Flora's apartment in Paris

Flora has spared no expense in throwing her party; Gaston is in charge of the entertainment and she is expecting Violetta as guest of honour. Her lover, Marquis d'Obigny, tells her and their friend, Doctor Grenvil, that Violetta has left Alfredo and will be coming with the Baron instead. Gaston arrives with an entourage to entertain the guests.

Alfredo suddenly appears, apparently unconcerned about Violetta, who now arrives on the Baron's arm. Uneasily, the guests settle down to a game of cards, which swiftly turns into a hostile battle between Alfredo and Baron Douphol. When dinner is announced, Violetta begs Alfredo to stay behind to talk with her.

Hurt and angry, Alfredo accuses her. Desperately, Violetta lies and tells him that she is in love with the Baron. Alfredo furiously calls the company back from the table; he intends publicly to pay her in full for her services and throws his winnings from the Baron in her face.

The guests are appalled and Giorgio Germont has arrived in time to witness the scene. He renounces his son and the Baron throws his glove to Alfredo in challenge.

ACT 3

Violetta's bedroom, several months later

The tuberculosis that has haunted her life has taken hold and Violetta is close to death. With bailiffs waiting at the door and abandoned by friends and protectors, she is attended only by Annina and Doctor Grenvil, who does his best to alleviate her pain. She constantly re-reads a letter from Giorgio Germont; Alfredo has fled France after wounding the Baron in the duel but his father assures her that he is now aware of her sacrifice and will come home soon. But time is running out and Violetta is willing herself to stay alive for his return.

Outside, all Paris is celebrating the Carnival season, the singing of the crowd drifting into the dying woman's apartment. Suddenly Annina rushes in to prepare her for Alfredo's arrival. The lovers embrace, forgiving each other, but even the joy of seeing Alfredo again cannot save Violetta. Full of remorse, Giorgio Germont arrives to beg Violetta's forgiveness. With death fast approaching, she presses a miniature portrait of herself into Alfredo's hands as a keepsake. Violetta dies.



David McVicar in rehearsal

Myrtò Papatanasiu
and Alfie Boe
in rehearsal



Giuseppe Verdi



Born: Le Roncole, near Busseto, 1813

Died: Milan, 1901

Born the son of an innkeeper, young Verdi was offered a grant to study in Milan by a local merchant but was turned down by the Conservatoire. He studied privately instead and later married his patron's daughter.

Tragedy struck when the composer had completed his first two (unremarkable) operas. In quick succession Verdi's wife and two young children died. By 1840 he was totally alone and prostrate with grief. Verdi declared he would abandon music altogether but was persuaded to write one more opera. *Nabucco* premièred in 1841 and overnight made him the most prominent Italian composer of his generation.

The theme of fathers losing children and children losing their fathers runs through the majority of Verdi's mature works. Frequently his most poignant music is written for young women and their father figures, such as Violetta Valéry and Giorgio Germont in *La traviata*.

Verdi rapidly consolidated his operatic ascendancy with triumphs like *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il trovatore* (1853) and *Un ballo in maschera* (1858). He was frequently at odds with the local censors because the politics of his operas invariably attacked authority.

Hugely in demand, Verdi composed for many opera houses and was requested to write an Egyptian opera for the celebrations attending on the opening of the Suez Canal. He declined but later changed his mind and penned *Aida* (1871) when he heard that the Khedive had approached Wagner. Verdi then hit an operatic block. His next opera *Otello*, was not premièred until 1887 when it was hailed not only as his masterwork but possibly the best Italian opera ever. His final opera, *Falstaff*, was first staged in 1893.

In old age Verdi lived well on his royalties and kept an interest in politics – he passionately supported the cause of Italian unification. He lived for many years with the singer Giuseppina Strepponi. After her death in 1897 he ceased composing altogether.

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Dario Solari and
Myrtò Papatanasiu
in rehearsal



La traviata

Lynne Walker

'*La traviata* last night – fiasco. Was the fault mine or that of the singers? Time will be the judge.' Verdi's letter to a friend, indicating that the first performance of his 18th opera had bombed, was written before any reviews had been published. When they did appear, however – and each new Verdi opera now generated many column inches in the national and foreign press – they were not wholly unfavourable. Time indeed has been the judge and, far from being the flop Verdi feared, *La traviata* soon became, and has remained, one the composer's most popular works.

From life to opera

Responding to a commission from the management of Venice's Gran Teatro La Fenice in April 1852 for the following year's March carnival season, Verdi wrote that 'nothing could be kinder or more flattering' than their invitation. He had been impressed by the 'zeal and commitment' of the company in bringing off the first production of *Rigoletto* the previous year and he looked forward to another collaboration with the skilled librettist Francesco Maria Piave. Yet months passed before Verdi decided on his daringly original subject matter and it wasn't until early January 1853 that he declared: 'I shall be

doing *La dame aux camélias* [The Lady of the Camellias] for Venice, possibly under the title of *La traviata* [The Fallen Woman, or Woman Led Astray]. A subject for our time.'

'Others', he added, 'would not have done it because of the conventions, the epoch and for a thousand other stupid scruples, but I did it with great pleasure.' The composer who had aroused controversy by putting a hunchback on stage in *Rigoletto*, now planned to put a 'woman of pleasure' – an upmarket prostitute – centre stage. The libretto was carved out of the play which Alexandre Dumas the Younger had made of his best-selling, vaguely autobiographical novel *La dame aux camélias*, published in 1848. There is no evidence that Verdi saw any production (after the censor had lifted his ban) but he certainly knew the book and also the Parisian society it describes. He had lived in that city, off and on, between 1847 and 1852, not with his wife but with the soprano who was to become his lifelong companion. He may even have been aware of the stories surrounding the former *grisette* Marie Duplessis – the woman with whom Dumas had enjoyed a brief but intense affair and on whom he had based his doomed fictional heroine,

Andrea Licata
in rehearsal



Marguerite – reincarnated by Verdi as his more fragrant character, Violetta.

But it wasn't her background, her rise from rags to riches to become one of the most sought after women among the *demi-monde* of the French capital, which interested Verdi. It was the grand love affair – and smouldering sexual chemistry – between the two lead characters in the play (or novel) which paralleled the brief but intense relationship experienced by Duplessis and Dumas himself. Though he lost his battle to have his new opera staged in contemporary dress, Verdi turned out a work – his most intimate and personal creation – that shocked in its brazen topicality and was roundly condemned for its immorality.

The Venetian censors insisted that the opera's working title 'Amore e morte' (Love and Death) be replaced with *La traviata* and Piave (consistent with Dumas' play, diluted in tone and content from the original novel) portrayed Violetta as a victim of self-sacrifice in a venal, materialistic society. Gone are any references to the red camellias this unconventional heroine wore on the days of the month when she was 'not available', such physical references a taboo in polite society. Gone too is her

enjoyment in promiscuity and in its place is the ideal of a love which burns undimmed by the attempts of men to corrupt it or manipulate her. Yet, three years after its première, *The Times* railed against the opera's 'foul and hideous horrors', and the subject matter was considered far too indelicate for translations of the libretto to be made available at performances in Victorian Britain.

Sanitised though it was, the role of Violetta was scarcely typical of the kind of parts favoured by operatic divas in the 1850s. 'Looks, soul and a good stage presence' were the qualities Verdi demanded of his prima donna, plus, he might have added, the ability to produce a tubercular cough while coping with a notoriously tricky vocal part. In the event Fanny Salvini-Donatelli – though too robustly well-endowed to convey Violetta's frailty – apparently rose impressively to the musical challenges. Reports that the first-night audience broke into laughter at her prolonged death scene appear to have been greatly exaggerated. The blame lay rather with the ailing tenor in the role of Alfredo (his illness causing the third performance to be suspended) and the baritone, who merely 'walked' through the role of Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont,



Alexandre Dumas fils



Marie Duplessis at the theatre

daunted by the high-lying vocal line. (The part was later revised, along with several other sections, before the second production at the Teatro San Benedetto a year later.)

What to listen out for

La traviata was Verdi's only opera to be set entirely indoors (the rollicking Carnival chorus outside Violetta's window in the last act only emphasising the stultifying atmosphere inside), and one of the very few not to be based on a biblical or historical subject or one drawn from Schiller or Shakespeare. The score – which was composed at great speed – has a luminous beauty, evident from the opening. As though presenting a musical flash-

forward, Verdi begins the Prelude with a translucent 'sobbing' string figure, associated with Violetta's dwindling life in Act 3. Next comes the descending melody linked to Violetta's love for Alfredo (later heard in Act 2 Scene 1 'Amami, Alfredo'), this same tune heard again on lower strings, intertwined with the delicate ornamentation with which Violetta is portrayed in Act 1.

When the curtain rises on a boisterous party, it is to the accompaniment of brash dance tunes. Voices vie with the music in a remarkably realistic representation of a noisy social occasion as the characters are introduced. After Alfredo, badly

smitten by Violetta, has led a toast in a lilting brindisi (drinking song), a stage band takes up the dance music. As the festivities, and indeed life, go on in the next room, Alfredo offers the evidently sickly Violetta his protection in at first hesitant tones. He describes how he first saw her as an ethereal vision, 'Un di felice, eterea', his passion building and blossoming into 'Di quell'amor ch'è palpito' (Verdi introducing a kind of melodic emblem of Alfredo's love) as Alfredo claims that love is their destiny.

That aria turns into a duet before the waltz re-emerges and, as the stage band music is taken over by the full orchestra, the guests chorus their farewells. Violetta, left alone, wonders if Alfredo is the redeemer she dreams about ('È strano... è strano! – Ah, fors'è lui?'), her substantial solo scena drifting into the music to which he declared his love ('Di quell'amor'). She shrugs off all sentimental thoughts ('Follie!') with a brilliant cabaletta 'Sempre libera degg'io' (Give me freedom) full of dizzying coloratura effects. From below her balcony, Alfredo's voice floats up, reiterating 'Di quell'amor' in a stroke of dramatic and psychological genius on Verdi's part.

The music of Act 2 Scene 1, in the country, is quite different in

its almost domestic quality. When Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, vividly characterised by Verdi, arrives to persuade Violetta that she must give up his son, their intimate solo lines are eventually drawn together, the music suggesting an emotional bond in a long central duet which acts as an impressive dramatic pivot in the opera. Germont's nostalgic musical picture of Alfredo's family home in Provence ('Di provenza il mar, il suol') cannot, however, distract Alfredo from his determination for vengeance.

In Act 2 Scene 2, boisterous masquerades of gypsies and bullfighters provide the obligatory ballet sequences, before – after a heated exchange between a bemused and jealous Alfredo and a miserable Violetta – a brutal orchestral tutti launches Alfredo's humiliation of Violetta. What follows is one of the greatest ensembles in all opera as each of the principal characters expresses his or her reaction to the situation in a hauntingly beautiful melody that soars then falls.

The Prelude to Act 3 opens with the music heard right at the beginning of the opera, now as eerily death-ridden as the heroine herself. After reading aloud a letter from Giorgio Germont (her speech underpinned by solo strings

quietly playing Alfredo's 'Di quell'amor'), Violetta intones in a sepulchral voice (as instructed in the score by Verdi) 'Too late'. In her aria 'Addio, del passato' she bids farewell to life, her loneliness emphasised by a solo oboe, her isolation made all the more poignant by the Shrove Tuesday revellers outside. Not even the return of Alfredo and their excited plans for a blissful future together ('Parigi, o cara/caro') can restore her health. After a thunderous brass chord, the lovers abruptly change their tune in 'Gran dio! morir si giovine' in which, as Violetta realises her life is ebbing away, bars of loud and soft music fluctuate feverishly. One final burst of consumptive energy and

one last orchestral reprise of 'Di quell'amore' give Violetta the illusory hope that her strength is returning before she expires on the words 'O gioia!'

Marie Duplessis, like Dumas' 'factional' heroine and Verdi's operatic creation, died in obscurity but, thanks in no small part to Verdi, her life and character as 'La traviata' became the stuff of legend. Whether he partly created the myth or merely revived it, through the timeless music of *La traviata*, he fleshed it out in a way that continues to fascinate and move audiences everywhere.

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Lynne Walker is a broadcaster and journalist who writes on theatre and music mainly for *The Independent*. She is a frequent presenter of platform events for arts organisations throughout the UK.

Recommended recordings

Carlos Kleiber; Cotrubas, Domingo, Milnes, Malagu, Bavarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon)

Ileana Cotrubas gets right under Violetta's skin and shows a deep understanding of Verdian style without sounding a bit self-conscious, while her duets with Domingo have a touching intimacy. Kleiber's conducting is powerfully communicative too on this, in my opinion, still unmatched 1977 recording.

Carlo Maria Giulini; Callas, di Stefano, Bastianini, Zanolli, Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala di Milano (EMI)

Widely admired for Giulini's magnificent interpretation of the score as much as for La Divina's vulnerable Violetta and di Stefano's sensitive Alfredo (though Bastianini's Giorgio Germont is less enchanting), EMI's 1998 transfer greatly improves the primitive sound of the 1955 live mono recording of Visconti's production at La Scala. Also available as a highlights disc.

Consumed by Love

Clark Lawlor



The Tomb of Marie Duplessis

The beautiful Lady Mary!
How could she die? – and of
consumption! But it is a path
I have prayed to follow. I would
wish all I love to perish of that
gentle disease. How glorious!
to depart in the hey-day of the
young blood – the heart all
passion – the imagination all
fire – amid the remembrances
of happier days – in the fall of
the year – and so be buried up
forever in the gorgeous
autumnal leaves!
Edgar Allan Poe, Metzengerstein

When I was young I could not
have accepted as a lyrical poet
anyone weighing more than
ninety-nine pounds.
Théophile Gautier

Consumption was most
definitely a fashionable disease
in the 19th century – not
merely in France, but also
across Europe and America.
Even in China we find
consumptive heroines in novels.
Now known as pulmonary
tuberculosis, consumption was
the badge of honour for pining

poets and fading maidens. As
Alexandre Dumas put it: 'In
1823 and 1824 it was the
fashion to suffer from the
lungs; everybody was
consumptive, poets especially;
it was good form to spit blood
after each emotion that was at
all sensational, and to die
before reaching the age of 30.
Of course Adolphe and I, being
tall and very thin, considered
we were entitled to indulge
ourselves too.'

Why? Why did a terrible killer of
a disease have such an appeal to
novelists, poets, composers and
even 'real' people? According to
the records of the time,
consumption killed almost one
in four people. It was difficult to
avoid: the Brontë family was
decimated by the illness and it
killed as many artists and
composers as any other sector
of the population in Western
Europe. An answer to this
question partly lies in the 'story'
of the disease itself: each
disease has its own narrative or
progress of symptoms.

Consumption (of the lungs) – to
put it simply – consumed its
victim: it made one thin, pale
unless suffering the 'hectic
flush' of the cheeks, it usually
took many years or months to
become very serious, and it
involved little pain or mental
derangement as there are not

many nerves in the area of the lungs. Consumption did not mark the face either, unlike nasty diseases such as smallpox.

These symptoms matter because they gave consumption the aura of a 'golden disease', as John Bunyan put it, a disease that actually conformed to the classical model of female beauty and that often meant the sufferer was unaware of its presence until late on in the process. The coughing and fever was something that might be brought on by a cold or flu and often did not arrive until the later stages of consumption. Thus Lord Byron toyed with the idea of being consumptive: "I look pale, I should like to die of a consumption." "Why?" asked his [Byron's] guest. "Because the ladies would all say, 'Look at

that poor Byron, how interesting he looks in dying.'" At Athens he used to take the bath three times a week to thin himself, and drink vinegar and water, eating only a little rice.'

La traviata picks up the redemptive idea of consumption, which had been growing since the fallen heroine of Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa* – raped by the rake Lovelace and dying of a holy consumption in a beautifully spectacular and lovely manner – set the pattern for sentimental heroines throughout Europe in art and literature. Clarissa is both beautiful and good: once raped she turns her thoughts to God and reflects the long-established traditions of consumption as the disease of love (dying of consumption



Alfie Boe and Myrto Papatanasiu in rehearsal

David Soar and
Myrtò Papatanasiu
in rehearsal



Violetta's Daughters

Violetta Valéry may have died childless but she has many daughters

Adrian Mourby

From Greta Garbo in *Camille* to Nicole Kidman in *Moulin Rouge* there have been any number of consumptive good-time girls based pretty much directly on the character of Marguerite Gautier, the prototype for Verdi's Violetta. Descending less directly, but still betraying a distinct family resemblance, are Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman* Ali McGraw in *Love Story* and Shirley McLaine in *Sweet Charity*. There are even echoes of Marguerite in characters as disparate as Mimi in Puccini's *La bohème* and Sally Bowles of *Cabaret* fame.

As for the character of Marguerite herself, she has been played by Sarah Bernhardt, Ida Rubenstein and Pola Negri. In 1921 Alla Nazimova was a

scarily bouffanted Marguerite opposite Rudolph Valentino as Armand Duval (the character that Dumas based on his younger self). On television Kate Nelligan and Greta Scacchi have taken the role, the latter opposite Colin Firth (with Ben Kingsley as Duval Père and John Gielgud as Marguerite's ageing patron, the Duke de Charles).

Marguerite has also cropped up in at least four ballets and even in other operas. In 1929, Chicago Civic Opera premièred *Camille* by an ambitious – some might even say hubristic – young American composer called Hamilton Forrest who thought he could do better than Giuseppe Verdi. Mary Garden took the title role, the libretto was authentically French but



Myrtō Papatanasiu in rehearsal

the setting was a contemporary 1920s Paris. The opera was soon forgotten despite the acclaim lavished on Mary Garden's performance, but then camellia girls rarely fail to wow their audiences.

In 1910 the American theatre critic, Clayton Hamilton, attempted to explain why we have never ceased to be fascinated by Marguerite, Camille and Violetta.

"No woman has ever failed as Camille. [The role] is kept alive because it contains a very easy and celebrated part that every ambitious actress wants to play. 'La dame aux camélias' is brought back decade after decade, not by reason of the permanent importance of the author but by reason of recurrent aspirations of an ever-growing group of emotional actresses."

But Alexander Dumas did more than supply a vehicle for histrionic divas to give their all. In Marguerite Gautier he created a mythic figure who fascinates us still. What was it then that made this doomed demi-mondaine a template for future generations?

First and foremost she is a loving woman from the wrong side of the tracks. Marguerite is

not one of us but neither is she a street corner prostitute of the kind that Dickens and Victor Hugo depicted. She has dignity and taste, despite her poverty-stricken origins, and she knows how to love, despite selling her body on a regular basis.

Dumas introduced one wholly fictional element into his *roman à clef* of 1848 which made his Marguerite irresistible to the French public. While Dumas sacked the real Marguerite three years earlier because he claimed he could no longer afford to keep her, the *fictional* Marguerite renounces her claim on her lover – and all hope of happiness – to save Armand from social disgrace.

In the eyes of the 19th century public, this self-sacrifice took Marguerite Gautier out of the gutter and elevated her to the pantheon of Romantic heroines. She was like Rebecca in Scott's *Ivanhoe* or Rachel in Halevy's *La Juive*, a woman who gives up the man she loves because she would rather lose him than harm him in any way.

Four elements, then, create a 'Camellia Girl': unsuitable background, a great capacity to love and spread happiness, noble self-sacrifice and of course untimely death. Not every one of Violetta's

daughters displays all of these qualities, but they all share that unfortunate background.

Julia Roberts as Viv Ward (the world's least convincing streetwalker in *Pretty Woman*) doesn't die but she does breathe new life into emotionally damaged Edward Lewis (Richard Gere). Mimi in *La bohème* has a dual career as penniless seamstress and a kept woman. She doesn't exactly cheer everyone up around her, but she certainly makes an impact with her death.

Ali McGraw in *Love Story* is only unsuitable because she is working class (while Ryan O'Neill isn't) but she makes her lover happy and she does die. Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* is a

sexually indiscriminate nightclub singer who is enormous fun. She doesn't so much renounce Brian (Michael York) as walk out because she knows that the marriage they intend won't work out given her temperament. Satine in Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* gives sexual favours to the highest bidder. Once again she renounces her lover to save him, and of course she dies.

All these women should know better than to fall in love. The tagline that Baz Luhrmann wrote for *Moulin Rouge* was 'No Laws. No Limits. Never Fall In Love.' and yet all Violetta's daughters make the mistake of falling, much good that it does them!

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Annina costume design



Flora costume design

Eddie Wade and
Myrtò Papatanasiu
in rehearsal





Andrea Licata

Andrea Licata Conductor (Until 13 Nov)

Andrea Licata has conducted many opera and symphonic orchestras in Italy and abroad, including Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Orchestra Regionale della Toscana, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, RPO, Festival of Two Worlds Orchestra of Spoleto and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In Spoleto he conducted the world première of contemporary opera *Sarah*, based on the life of Marilyn Monroe composed by Paul Vy and directed by Petrika Ionesco.

From 1991 to 1994 he was Musical Director of Theatre Vincenzo Bellini of Catania, where he conducted *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Bianca e Fernando*, *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, *La Gioconda*. In the early 1990s Andrea also spent significant time conducting performances for Rome Opera.

More recent engagements include *Aida*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *La fanciulla del West*, *La bohème*, *Tosca* (Baltimore



Andrew Greenwood

Opera); *Norma*, *Nabucco*, *La bohème*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *Il tritico* (Opera Australia); *Un ballo in maschera* (Bari); *La traviata* (Teatro Regio di Parma); *Andrea Chenier* (Teatro Massimo di Palermo); *Ernani* (Messina); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (New Zealand Festival); *Un ballo in maschera* (Sydney; Melbourne). Last season he conducted *Aida* (Baltimore); *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* (Opera Australia); *Tosca* (Opera North). Recordings include *Bianca e Fernando*, *Adelson e Salvini*, *Jacquerie* by Gino Marinuzzi (Nuova Era); *Preludes, Symphonies and Intermezzos from Italian Operas* and Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* with RPO; *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev; *Jeux d'Enfants* by Bizet.

Andrew Greenwood Conductor (From 17 Nov)

Born in Yorkshire, Andrew Greenwood read music at Clare College, Cambridge, before joining the music staff at

ROH. Subsequently appointed Chorus Master at WNO, until 1990, where he conducted *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Otello*, *The Trojans*, *Fidelio*, *Salome*, *Der Rosenkavalier*. In 1990 he made his ENO debut with *The Magic Flute*, and has since conducted *Madam Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni*, *Don Pasquale*. He was appointed Music Director of English Touring Opera in 1995. International engagements include First Conductor at Oper der Stadt, Köln and a highly successful period with Royal Danish Opera. He has conducted many of Britain's major symphony orchestras and is a frequent broadcaster for the BBC with BBC National Orchestra of Wales and BBC Concert Orchestra.

Recent engagements include *Albert Herring* (New National Theatre, Tokyo); *Roberto Devereux*, *Der Wildschütz*, *La Perichole*, *Maria Padilla*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Lucrezia Borgia* (Buxton Festival, where he was appointed Artistic Director in 2006); *L'elisir d'amore*, *Così fan tutte* (Copenhagen); *The Rake's*



David McVicar

Progress, Manon, La traviata (ETO); *Carmina Burana* (Royal Albert Hall); opera galas in Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, London; *Iphigénie en Tauride, Salome* (WNO). Future plans include *Carmina Burana* (Royal Albert Hall); *Luisa Miller* (Buxton Festival).

David McVicar Director

Born in Glasgow, David McVicar trained at Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Productions include *Così fan tutte, La traviata, Madama Butterfly, Der Rosenkavalier, Idomeneo* (Scottish Opera); *Il trovatore* (Metropolitan Opera); *Carmen, Giulio Cesare, La bohème* (Glyndebourne); *Salome* (ROH); *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Copenhagen); *Der Rosenkavalier, Tosca* (ENO); *Don Carlos* (Frankfurt); *Manon* (Chicago; Barcelona); *Don Giovanni* (San Francisco; Belgium); *Siegfried, Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Così fan tutte* (Strasbourg); *Carmen, Giulio Cesare* (Lille); *La clemenza di Tito* (ENO; Copenhagen); *L'incoronazione di Poppea, Semele*

(Champs-Élysées); *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Salzburg); *Le nozze di Figaro; Faust, Die Zauberflöte, Rigoletto* (ROH – all televised, latter nominated for an Olivier Award); *Il trovatore, Billy Budd, Giulio Cesare* (Chicago); *Turn of the Screw* (ENO; Marinsky); *Macbeth* (Kirov; ROH; Kennedy Center; Met); *Agrippina* (ENO; Frankfurt; La Monnaie; Champs-Élysées); *The Rape of Lucretia* (ENO/Aldeburgh – BBC TV, Olivier Award nomination); *Alcina, Manon* (ENO; New Zealand; Dallas; Houston); *Der Rosenkavalier, Don Giovanni, Sweeney Todd, Hamlet, Il re pastore* (Opera North); *Tamerlano* (Dusseldorf). David won the South Bank Show Award for *Giulio Cesare* (Glyndebourne). His production of *La clemenza di Tito* was nominated for two Olivier Awards in 2006. David has been nominated for outstanding achievement in Opéra for *Agrippina* and *The Turn of the Screw* (ENO) and Best



Tanya McCallin

New Production for *The Turn of the Screw* at 2008 Olivier Awards. Future plans include productions for Opéra de Lille and Royal Opera House.

Tanya McCallin Designer

Tanya McCallin has worked extensively in Europe, USA and Australia. She has been associated with premières of works by Arthur Miller, Pam Gems and Mike Leigh and productions of Chekhov, Sheridan and Shakespeare. After training at Central St Martin's School in London, she became resident designer with a number of British regional repertory companies. Jonathan Miller's production of *The Barber of Seville* (ENO) was her first major opera design. In 2006 she worked with Francesca Zambello to design *Carmen* (ROH). Earlier that year she collaborated again with David McVicar for whom she designed *Le nozze di Figaro* (ROH; Valencia); *Turn of the Screw* (ENO); *Macbeth* (Mariinsky-Kirov; ROH; Kennedy Center; Metropolitan



Jennifer Tipton

Opera); *Manon* (ENO; Chicago; Dallas; New Zealand; Houston; Barcelona); *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Salzburg Festival). She also designed sets for *Semele* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées); costumes for *Così fan tutte* (Opéra National du Rhin Strasbourg; Scottish Opera), *Rigoletto* (ROH; BBC DVD) and *Der Rosenkavalier* (Scottish Opera; ENO). In the West End Dennis Potter's *Sufficient Carbohydrate*, *Bodies, Exchange*, Michael Frayn's translation of *Uncle Vanya*, Arthur Miller's *Ride Down Mount Morgan*. Productions designed for National Theatre include *The Elephant Man*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *After the Fall*. She has also worked at Royal Court, Regent's Park Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Chichester Festival Theatre with director James Kerr.

Jennifer Tipton Lighting

Jennifer Tipton is well known for her work in theatre, dance and opera. Her recent work in opera includes *Il trovatore* (Metropolitan



Andrew George

Opera) directed by David McVicar and the Wooster Group's *La Didone*. Her recent work in dance includes Balanchine's *Jewels* for the Royal Ballet, Trisha Brown's *O Composite* for the Paris Opera Ballet and Paul Taylor's *Beloved Renegade* at City Center in New York. In theatre her recent work includes Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* directed by Gordon Edelstein at the Longwharf Theater in New Haven, CT and Euripides' *The Bacchae* directed by JoAnne Akalaitis at the Delacorte Theater, Central Park, NYC. Jennifer teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama. She received the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, the Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003 and in April 2004 the Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture in New York City. In 2008 she became a MacArthur Fellow and the United States Artist Gracie Fellow.

Andrew George Choreographer

Andrew George was born in Tonyrefail, South Wales. He trained at Laban Centre. British

opera credits include *Salome* (Royal Opera House); *Turn of the Screw*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Agrippina*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Die Walküre* (ENO); *Giulio Cesare*, *Carmen* (Glyndebourne Festival); *La traviata* (Scottish Opera); *Der Rosenkavalier* (Scottish Opera; Opera North). European opera choreography: *Don Carlos* (Frankfurt); *Turn of the Screw* (Mariinsky-Kirov); *Cavalleria rusticana* / *Pagliacci* (Essen; Amsterdam); *L'elisir d'amore* (Amsterdam); *Giulio Cesare* (Lille); *Ariodante*, *Semele* (Champs-Élysées, Paris); *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Champs-Élysées; Strasbourg; Staatsoper Berlin; La Monnaie; Copenhagen); *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, *Così fan tutte* (Opéra National du Rhin); *La Belle Hélène* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Salzburger Festspiele); *Griselda* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); *La bohème* (Hamburg); *Tannhäuser* (La Scala); *Agrippina*, *Orphée aux Enfers* (La Monnaie); *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Dido and Aeneas* (Vlaamse Opera;



Alfie Boe

Innsbruck Early Music Festival); *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Maastricht); *The Handmaid's Tale* (Copenhagen); *Il trovatore* (Gothenburg); *I Capuletti e i Montecchi* (Grange Park Opera). American opera productions: *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Daphne* (New York City Opera); *Don Giovanni* (Metropolitan Opera); *Il trovatore* (Los Angeles); *Giulio Cesare* (Chicago). Future engagements include *A Little Night Music* (Paris); *A Love For Three Oranges* (Grange Park Opera); *Orlando* (Lille; Paris; Dijon); *Tristan und Isolde* (Tokyo).

Alfie Boe Alfredo Germont

From Fleetwood in Lancashire, Alfie Boe studied at Royal College of Music and National Opera Studio. He was one of the first artists accepted into the Vilar Young Artists Programme at Royal Opera House, 2001.

Operatic roles include Alfredo, Tamino, Don Ottavio and Rodolfo. After performing Rodolfo *La bohème* at Glyndebourne, he went on to win a Tony Award for

his Broadway performances in Baz Luhrmann's production, for which he also won John McCormack Young Voice award and Lyric Tenor of the World Audience award. Most recently, Rodolfo in Sir Jonathan Miller's new production at ENO. Other engagements include title role *Albert Herring* (Glyndebourne); Lysander *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ENO, La Monnaie); Young Servant *Elektra* (ROH); Ferrando *Così fan tutte* (Opera National du Rhin); Caliph *Kismet*, Camille du Rosillon *The Merry Widow*, Italian Tenor *Der Rosenkavalier* (ENO). In concert Alfie has performed with Philharmonia Orchestra, RLPO, LPO, Ulster Orchestra, RSNO, RPO, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Ulster Orchestra, BBC NOW, Kristiansand Symfoniorkester, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Recordings include his debut album *Alfie* (Classic FM Presents); *Onward* with RLPO and *La Passione*, a collection of Neapolitan songs and



Laurence Cole

arias (EMI). A new album of Lehár songs and arias with Orchestra of Scottish Opera will be released in October 2009.

Future plans include Tybalt *Romeo et Juliette* (ROH); Nadir *The Pearl Fishers*, Kudrjas *Katya Kabanova* (ENO).

Laurence Cole Flora's Servant

Laurence has been a full time member of the Chorus of WNO since April 2008. Originally from Hertfordshire, he graduated in English from University of York, where he sang with the University Chamber Choir and Gilbert and Sullivan Society where roles included title role *The Mikado*, Zuniga *Carmen*, Abe *Summer Song*. While working for the BBC he began singing lessons under Barbara Spooner and Gareth Roberts before beginning a second degree at Birmingham Conservatoire, 1999, under baritone Adrian Clarke.

He became a regular soloist with St Chad's Cathedral Choir and Conservatoire Chamber Choir, where roles include Faure's *Requiem*,



Howard Kirk

Handel's *Dixit Dominus*. Operatic roles at the Conservatoire include Curio *Giulio Cesare*, Commendatore *Don Giovanni*, Bartolo *The Marriage of Figaro*, Wotan *Das Rheingold*, Seneca *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Simone *Gianni Schicchi* and Priest *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Recent operatic roles include Sarastro *The Little Magic Flute*, Gaoler *Tosca*, Zaretsky *Eugene Onegin* (ETO); Fifth Jew *Salome*, Customs Sergeant *La bohème* (WNO). Recent oratorio roles include Mozart's *Requiem*, Handel's *Samson*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Tippett's *Child of our Time*.

Howard Kirk Gaston

Born in Leicestershire, Howard trained at Royal College of Music where he was awarded the John Ireland Prize. In 1998 he was awarded a Wingate Scholarship to study at Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Opera Course. He has worked for Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera; English National Opera; English Touring Opera;



Martin Lloyd

Bampton Classical Opera and Wexford Festival Opera. Engagements include Vaughan Williams' *Hugh the Drover*; Monostatos *The Magic Flute*; Sellem *The Rake's Progress*; Antinous *Penelope*; Macheath *Beggar's Opera*; Janek *The Makropoulos Case*; Lindoro *Nina*. Howard joined the chorus of WNO in January 2004 where roles include Apprentice 2 *Wozzeck*, Borsa *Rigoletto*, Vicomte Cascada *The Merry Widow*, the Steersman *The Flying Dutchman*, Benoit *La bohème*, Lillas Pastia/Guide *Carmen*, Servant *Khovanshchina*, Monostatos *The Magic Flute*, Don Curzio *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Martin Lloyd Doctor Grenvil (3 Oct)

Martin Lloyd comes from Swansea and is a graduate of Aberystwyth University and McMaster University in Canada. He joined WNO in August 2006 where roles include 2nd Streltsy *Khovanshchina*, 2nd Armed Man *The Magic Flute*, Officer *The Barber of Seville*, Second Soldier *Salome*. He has worked previously with various



Philip Lloyd-Evans

small touring companies. Roles performed have included Sarastro *The Magic Flute*, Seneca *The Coronation of Poppea*, Colline *La bohème* and Zuniga *Carmen*. He has also performed throughout the country as a concert and oratorio soloist. Oratorio works performed recently include Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. He has appeared in several television broadcasts for S4C and has enjoyed considerable success in competition, including the Blue Ribbon Prize at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in 2004.

Philip Lloyd-Evans Marquis of Obigny

Philip Lloyd-Evans studied at University of East Anglia and Royal Academy of Music. He appeared with Kent Opera and Royal Opera House before joining WNO in 1989 where roles have included Prince Yeletsy *The Queen of Spades*, Ping *Turandot*, Dancaire *Carmen*, Sid *La fanciulla del West*, Cappadocian *Salome* (also in Japan), Sailor / Helmsman *Tristan and Isolde*,



George Newton-Fitzgerald

Yakuside *Madam Butterfly*, Wigmaker *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Father / Sandman *Hansel and Gretel*, Novice's Friend *Billy Budd*, Wagner *Faust*, Second Yeoman *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Silvano *Un ballo in maschera*, Thierry / 2nd Commissionaire *The Carmelites*, Counsel *Trial by Jury*, Fiorello *The Barber of Seville*, Dikoy / Kudriash *Katerina* (by Ruth Byrchmore), First Minister, première of *The Doctor of Myddfai* by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Scythian Man *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Recordings include roles in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *HMS Pinafore* (Telarc), *Osud Janáček* (EMI), Ping *Turandot* for the S4C series of animated operas, and Wagner *Faust* for Channel Four. Philip is also a member of the teaching staff at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

George Newton-Fitzgerald The Messenger

George Newton-Fitzgerald studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire graduating with a 1st class degree. Upon leaving he joined



Jack O'Kelly

the cast of *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* playing the role of Reuben / Butler, and on occasions, Jacob. Operatic roles include Dick Deadeye / Carpenter *HMS Pinafore* for D'Oyly Carte Opera Company; Herman *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Count Cetrano *Rigoletto* for Mid-Wales Opera; Baron Zeta *The Merry Widow* for Columbia Artistes; Marullo *Rigoletto* for European Chamber Opera; Aeneas *Dido and Aeneas* for the Ukraine State Opera. George is a member of WNO's chorus where roles have included Uncle Yakuside *Madama Butterfly*, Old Gypsy *Il trovatore*, Flora's Servant *La traviata* and Wig-Maker *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He has also worked with Chris de Burgh as his principal backing singer, both in the studio and on tour.

Jack O'Kelly Baron Douphol (From 25 Nov)

Jack O'Kelly is from County Carlow in Ireland. He studied with Veronica Dunne in Dublin, and won Best Male Voice in The Golden Voice of Ireland Competition. Jack's operatic debut



Myrtò Papatnasiu

was with Opera Theatre Company as Guglielmo *Così fan tutte*. In 1988 he sang Masetto *Don Giovanni* for Dublin Grand Opera. He has worked in oratorio and on the concert platform with the RTE orchestras and was a member of the RTE Chamber Choir before joining the WNO Chorus in 1988 where roles include Alessio *La sonnambula*, Baron *La traviata*, Man in Crowd *Torrrak*, José Castro *La fanciulla del West*, Marullo *Rigoletto*, Minister *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Silvano *Un ballo in maschera*, Gaoler *Tosca*, Registrar *Madama Butterfly*, Custom House Sergeant *La bohème*, Narumov *The Queen of Spades*, 2nd Nazarene *Salome*, Woodsman *Don Carlos*, Officer *The Barber of Seville* and Monterone *Rigoletto*.

Myrtò Papatnasiu Violetta Valéry (Until 23 Oct)

Born in Larissa (Greece), Myrtò Papatnasiu began her musical studies at the Conservatory of her hometown. She graduated in musicology and finished her vocal



Katia Pellegrino

studies at Conservatory of Thessaloniki. Winner of a scholarship from Megaron of Athens, she continued her studies in Milan under guidance of Roberto Coviello. She made her debut at Thessaloniki Opera in Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* followed by Lauretta Gianni Schicchi, Marzelline Fidelio, Monica Medium by Menotti.

She had great success as Violetta in Franco Zeffirelli's new production (Rome Opera); Sifare *Mitridate re di Ponto* (La Monnaie; Teater an der Wien); Donna Anna *Don Giovanni* (Nederlandse Opera; Theater an der Wien; Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova; Macerata Festival); Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte* (Verona Philharmonic); Rossini's *La scala di seta* (Vienna Konzerthaus); Bruckner's *Mass in F minor, Te Deum* by Dvořák (Tonhalle Zürich); Anna Erisso *Maometto II* (Amsterdam Concertgebouw); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (Rome); *Petite Messe Solennelle* (Teatro Bellini di Catania); Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with

conductor Gianluigi Gelmetti (Sydney); Countess *Le nozze di Figaro* (La Coruña); title role *Tosca*, Nedda *Pagliacci* (Rome) in Zeffirelli's new productions; Alice *Falstaff* (Cagliari); Konstanze *Seraglio* (Thessaloniki); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* for first visit of the Pope to Australia for World Youth Day (Sydney Opera House). She recorded arias and duets by Rossini (CD Classic); Fiorilla *Il turco in Italia* (Naxos); Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with Sydney Opera Symphony. Future plans include Countess *Le nozze di Figaro* (Berlin Staatsoper; New National Theatre, Tokyo); *La traviata* (Rome Opera; Dallas Opera); *Don Giovanni* (Vienna Staatsoper; Amsterdam; Paris); Vitellia *La clemenza di Tito* (Teatro Comunale di Bologna).

Katia Pellegrino Violetta Valéry (From 3 Nov)

Born in Lecce (Italy) Katia Pellegrino studied violin and singing at conservatory B Marcello in Venice and attended the Accademia Lirica

Mantovana directed by Katia Ricciarelli.

In 1998 she won first prize at the I A Corradetti contest in Padua and made her debut as Violetta *La traviata* (Salerno). Roles include Mimi *La bohème* (Padua and San Gimignano Festival); *Norma* (Teatro Bellini; Catania; Teatro Regio in Parma; Cremona, Como, Brescia, Pavia and Piacenza theatres); Leonora *Il trovatore* (Teatro Regio; Teatro San Carlo; Teatro dell'Opera; Teatro Verdi; Teatro São Carlos; Sofia Opera Theatre; Bregenz Festival; Villa Pallavicino; Vigoleno Summer Festival; WNO; Teatro Lirico); Liù *Turandot* (Teatro dell'Opera); title role *Luisa Miller* (Como, Cremona, Pavia, Brescia, Bergamo and Teatro Massimo); Giselda *I lombardi alla prima crociata* (Teatro Comunale); Desdemona *Otello*, Tatyana *Eugene Onegin*, Maddalena, *Andrea Chénier* (Teatro Verdi); Elvira *Ernani* (Vigoleno Festival); Lidia *La battaglia di Legnano* (Teatro Comunale; Teatro Alighieri); Leonora *La forza del destino* (Perù); Cio-Cio-San *Madam Butterfly* (Teatro



Louise Poole

Sociale); title role *Lauriane* (Teatro São Carlos); title role *Aida* (Teatro Comunale; Teatro Goldoni; Teatro Carlo Coccia).

In concerts she regularly sings with I Solisti Veneti conducted by Claudio Scimone. She has performed Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* (Teatro Filarmonico; Teatro Comunale; Festival delle Nazioni); Verdi's *Requiem* (Reggio Emilia; Parma; Modena); Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* (Auditorium Verdi).

Louise Poole Flora

Born in North Yorkshire, Louise studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the National Opera Studio. Awards include the Nicholas John and Peter Stuyvesant scholarships, Sybil Tutton Prize and The Glyndebourne Wessex award.

Louise made her operatic debut as Tina *The Aspern Papers* by Dominic Argento while still at the Guildhall, where other roles included Florence Pike *Albert Herring*, Solokha *The Tsarina's*

Shoes and Eurycleé in Fauré's *Penelope*.

Subsequent appearances include Marcellina *The Marriage of Figaro* (Garden Opera); Isabella *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Opera Project); Julia in Elizabeth MaConchy's *The Departure* (Independent Opera); title role *Carmen* (London City Opera); Ruggiero *Alcina* (English Touring Opera); 2nd Witch *Dido & Aeneas* and Rosette *Manon* (Opera North); Olga *Eugene Onegin* (English National Opera); Nancy *Albert Herring* and Third Lady *Die Zauberflöte* (Glyndebourne on Tour); Hippolyta *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Glyndebourne Festival). Recent engagements include title role *Carmen* for Raymond Gubbay (Royal Albert Hall) and Rosette *Manon* (Scottish Opera). Future engagements include Flora *La Traviata* (Welsh National Opera), Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Opera de Lille and Opera de Caen) and Ottavia *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Glyndebourne).



Philip Pooley

Philip Pooley Giuseppe

Philip Pooley was born in Birmingham. A former St. Paul's Cathedral chorister he studied at Christ Church College, Oxford and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under Theresa Goble. Much of his early career was spent singing for early music ensembles, including The Sixteen, The English Concert, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Cardinal's Musick, the Huelgas Ensemble and the Choir of Brompton Oratory. In 2003 Philip joined the chorus of WNO after seasons at De Vlaamse Opera, the Royal Opera House and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Concert performances include The Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* in Groningen, The Netherlands; Vaughan-Williams *Serenade to Music* in St John's Smith Square; Vaughan-Williams *On Wenlock Edge* in the Holywell Music Rooms in Oxford; Britten's *War Requiem* at the Fairfield Hall, Croydon.

Roles include The Mayor *Albert Herring* for GSMD; Ferrando *Così fan tutte*, Alfredo *La traviata* for

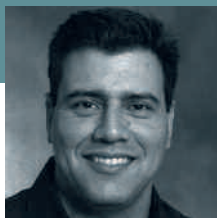


David Soar

Surrey Opera; Mime *Das Rheingold* for The Ring Project; Officer *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Parpignon *La bohème* for WNO.

David Soar Doctor Grenvil (ex 3 Oct)

David studied organ and singing at Royal Academy of Music. After working as a freelance organist, singer and conductor, he joined the Chorus of WNO, where roles included Captain / Zaretsky *Eugene Onegin*, Doctor Grenvil *La traviata*, Bertrand *Iolanta*, Sarastro *The Magic Flute*. After studying at the National Opera Studio David returned to WNO where he is currently an Associate Artist supported by the Chris Ball bursary and first recipient of the Parry Family Bursary. Roles for WNO include Colline *La bohème*, Zuniga *Carmen*, Bonze *Madam Butterfly*, Brander *The Damnation of Faust*, Bass *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Ferrando *Il trovatore*, Alidoro *La Cenerentola*, The King *Aida*, Lodovico *Otello*, Surin *The Queen of Spades* and title role *The Marriage of Figaro*. Roles elsewhere include



Dario Solari

Banquo *Macbeth*, Zaccaria *Nabucco*, Alvise Badoero *La Gioconda* (Opera Holland Park); Donner *Das Rheingold* (Lucerne Festival). Concert repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, *Creation*, *Elijah*; Mozart's and Brahms' *Requiem*; Beethoven's *Symphony No 9* and *Missa Solemnis*; Verdi's *Requiem*; Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Apostles*; Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*; Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*; Bach's *Mass in B minor*, *St John Passion*, *St Matthew Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and numerous cantatas including *Ich habe genug* for solo bass. Future plans include Escamillo *Carmen*, Nightwatchman *Die Meistersinger* for WNO and his ROH debut singing Quinault *Adriana Lecouvreur*.

Dario Solari Giorgio Germont (Until 20 Nov)

Born in Montevideo (Uruguay), Dario Solari studied at the National School, then travelled to Italy to study with Paolo Washington. Awards include "Best Young Singer" at Ferruccio

Tagliavini Competition, Deutschlandsberg; Tito Schipa International Competition, Lecce; Iris Adami Corradetti International Competition, Padova. Roles include Figaro *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Teatro Filarmonico, Verona); Il Conte Robinson *Il matrimonio segreto* (Teatro Regio, Turin); Silvio *Pagliacci*, Sharpless *Madama Butterfly*, Lord Guglielmo Cecil *Maria Stuarda*, Giorgio Germont *La traviata* (Teatro dell'Opera di Roma); *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il matrimonio segreto*, *Don Carlos*, *I puritani*, *Don Pasquale*, *Madama Butterfly* (Opéra de Monte Carlo); Rodrigo *Don Carlo* (Teatro Comunale di Firenze; Athens Concert Hall); Lescaut *Manon Lescaut* (Teatro Petruzzelli, Bari); Paride in Marchetti's *Romeo e Giulietta* (Martina Franca Festival); Sharpless (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Giorgio Germont, *Rigoletto* (Teatro Solis, Montevideo); Escamillo *Carmen* (Teatro Pergolesi di Jesi; Fermo; Landestheater Salzburg; Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; Arena di Verona); Renato *Un ballo*



Joanne Thomas

in maschera (Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; Teatro Municipal, Santiago); *Conte di Luna II trovatore*, Prince Yeletsky *The Queen of Spades* (WNO); Rodrigo (Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in Tel Aviv); Giorgio Germont (Palm Beach Opera). Future plans include Marcello *La bohème* (Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse); Rodrigo *Don Carlo* (Vlaamse Opera); *Il trovatore* (Tel Aviv); Silvio *Pagliacci* (Teatro Municipal).

Joanne Thomas Annina

Joanne studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music with Beatrice Unsworth. She represented Wales in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2001.

Roles for WNO include Mme Larina *Eugene Onegin*, Third Lady *Magic Flute*, Witch, Mother and Dew Fairy *Hansel and Gretel* (WNO MAX). Other roles include Azucena *Il trovatore*; Santuzza *Cavalleria rusticana*; Ramiro *Die Gartnerin aus Liebe*; Charlotte *Werther* and Mrs Peachum *The Beggars' Opera*. Joanne has performed in



Eddie Wade

concert in Germany, Malta, Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand. Notable performances include Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*; Britten's *A Charm of Lullabies* and excerpts from Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, all broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Verdi's *Requiem*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*; Bach's *B Minor Mass* (St John's Smith Square). Recital work includes *Klavierfest Ruhr* (Herten) and *Songmakers Almanac* (Wigmore Hall) with Graham Johnson; St David's Hall, Purcell Room and a BBC Radio 3 broadcast from Fishguard Festival, where she premièred Rhian Samuels' *Three Ancient Songs*. Future plans include Verdi's *Requiem* and Elgar's *Music Makers*.

Eddie Wade Baron Douphol (Until 20 Nov)

Giorgio Germont (From 25 Nov)

Born in Yorkshire, Eddie studied at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and National Opera Studio. Roles with WNO include Foreman *Jenûfa*, Peter

Hansel and Gretel, Sharpless *Madam Butterfly*, Melot *Tristan und Isolde*, Marcello *La bohème*, Baron *La traviata* and Flemish Deputy *Don Carlos*. Other roles include Baron Douphol *La traviata*, Mandarin *Turandot* and Indian *Bartered Bride* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden); Executioner *Ines de Castro* and Sharpless (Scottish Opera); Germont père and Baron Douphol *La traviata* (Glyndebourne Touring Opera); Foreman and title role *Macbeth* (English Touring Opera); Banderillero *Conchita* (Wexford Festival). Concert performances include Scottish Opera's Essential Concert Tour and performances with the London Symphony Orchestra and with Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall and Barbican Centre. Recent performances include Beethoven's *9th Symphony* at the Barbican, Orff's *Carmina Burana* for the RTE concert orchestra (Lyric FM live broadcast) and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Wells Cathedral. Future plans include Baron Douphol for Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

Orchestra of WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

Leader David Adams

Assistant Leader Simon Lewis

First Violin

David Adams
Lowri Porter
Simon Lewis
Martin Kegelmann
Robert Tonkin
Catherine Hings
Susan Plessner
Peter Lilley
Mathias Maurer
Emma Menzies
Jane Atkinson

Second Violin

Antony Tarlton
Donald McNaught
Ann Jones
Marilyn Shewring
Luke Roskams
Gillian Bradley
Jane West
Deborah Neath
James Slater

Viola

Philip Heyman
Cédric David
Barry Friend
Domini Lipman
Stephen Lloyd
Louise Brodrick
Audrey Barr

Cello

Christopher Hodges /
Calum Cook
Arthur Davies
Simon Davison
Alexandra Robinson
Dewi Watkins
Claudine Liddington

Double Bass

Kate Saxby /
Ashley Frampton
Mikeal Price
Mary Condliffe
Neil Watson

Flute

Jonathan Burgess
Maxine Willis

Piccolo

Maxine Willis

Oboe

Sasha Calin /
Philip Harmer
David Probert

Clarinet

Leslie Craven
Alan Asquith /
Kate McDermott

Bassoon

Stephen Marsden
Christopher Vale

Horn

Angus West /
Neil Mitchell
Donald Clist
David Shillaw
James Mildred

Trumpet

Dean Wright
Martin McHale

Trombone

Roger Cutts
John Hendy

Bass Trombone

Alan Swain

Cimbasso

Jonathan Riches

Timpani

Patrick King

Percussion

Andrew Cookson
Philip Girling
Jonathan Helm

Stage Band

Piccolo

Catherine White

Clarinet

Peter Fielding

Horn

Iestyn Porter /
Neil Mitchell
David Shillaw
James Mildred

Trumpet

Robert Johnston

Trombone

Jo Hirst

Harp

Katherine Thomas

Chorus of WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

Chorus Master Stephen Harris

Sopranos

Meriel Andrew
Anitra Blaxhall
Paula Bradbury
Megan Llewellyn Dorke
Claire Hampton
Fiona Harrison
Rosie Hay
Samantha Hay
Emma Mary Llewellyn
Laura Pooley

Mezzos

Amanda Baldwin
Neda Bizzarri
Alison Dunne
Jessica Handley Greaves
Helen Greenaway
Dorothy Hood
Sian Meinir
Anne Morgan
Nicola Morgan
Sarah Pope

Tenors

Michael Clifton-Thompson
Simon Curtis
Paul Gyton
Philip Lloyd Holtam
Howard Kirk
Huw Llywelyn
Gareth Lloyd
Philip Pooley
Carthaigh Quill
Joe Roche

Basses

Julian Boyce
Laurence Cole
Jasey Hall
Martin Lloyd
Philip Lloyd-Evans
Alastair Moore
George Newton-Fitzgerald
Jack O'Kelly
James Robinson-May
Stephen Wells