



# LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave after Alexandre Dumas (ii)'s play *La Dame aux camélias*.  
Opera in 3 acts  
*Sung in Italian.*

Recorded April-May 2015  
From Teatro Real, Madrid

Approximately 2h05

## CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Renato Palumbo
Director	David McVicar
Sets and costumes	Tanya McCallin
Lighting	Jennifer Tipton
Choreography	Andrew George
Chorus Master	Andrés Máspero

## ARTISTIC TEAM

Violetta Valéry	Ermonela Jahó
Alfredo Germont	Francesco Demuro
Giorgio Germont	Juan Jesús Rodríguez
Flora Bervoix	Marifé Nogales
Annina	Marta Ubieta
Gastone	Albert Casals
Doctor Grenvil	Fernando Radó
Giuseppe	Alejandro González
Marqués d'Obigny	Damián del Castillo
Barón Duphol	César San Martín

Production of Teatro Real in coproduction with Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona, Scottish Opera Glasgow and Welsh National Opera Cardiff.

Teatro Real Chorus and Orchestra

(Coro Intermezzo / Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid)

## PRESENTATION

After its initial rejection, Verdi's unique opera, whose action unfolds in a contemporary setting, **La traviata**, based on Alexandre Dumas' **The Lady of the Camellias**, became one of the most acclaimed works of the composer. This came about because of the universal values that are brought to light following the tragedy of a high-society courtesan -another of those left in the wake of the history of opera- who renounces even life itself to protect the honour of her lover, demonstrating with her self-sacrifice a grandeur lacking in the hypocritical bourgeois society that abused and then rejected her. A story that brought **Verdi** legendary status through music with a profound sense of humanity and psychological portrayal of the characters and their feelings. Behind the outward show of luxury and frivolous pleasure, the "populous desert they call Paris" hides the stark cruelty of a social class for whom everything can be bought and sold. With this backdrop of bitter transience, only Violetta stands as a classic heroine, whose sacrifice transcends love and death. These two themes that the opera revolves around are also brought to **life by the staging of David McVicar**, who, with his usual elegance, sets the drama in a world of romantic references while retaining an up-to-date perspective.

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

Violetta Valéry, a demi-mondaine, is giving a big reception. A friend, Gaston, introduces the young Alfredo Germont who is secretly in love with her and has come each day for news during her recent illness. Violetta ironically remarks to her protector, Baron Douphol, that he shows less interest in her than this unknown young man. Alfredo proposes a toast. In an adjoining room dancing resumes, but Violetta, feeling suddenly faint, asks that she be left alone. Alfredo, though, remains with her. He declares his love, but Violetta, though touched, does not seem to take him seriously. Nevertheless, she gives him a flower and asks him to bring it back to her the next day when it has faded. The guests take their leave and, alone, Violetta admits to herself that she is troubled by this young man who has awakened within her dreams that have lain buried since childhood. But she pulls herself together: her destiny is not to live for the love of a single man and she must remain free to follow the paths of pleasure.

### ACT II

Scene I: Three months have passed. Violetta has yielded to Alfredo's love and has taken refuge with him in a country house. Alfredo sings of his joy and happiness. However, he learns from Annina, Violetta's maid, that her mistress must sell her assets to meet their material needs. He decides to go back to Paris to find the necessary money. Violetta is expecting her business advisor, but it is Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father, who makes an appearance. He speaks to Violetta coldly, persuaded that the young woman is only interested in extracting money from his son. His manner softens when he discovers the truth, but he still asks Violetta to renounce Alfredo. She refuses. Germont tells her about his daughter who is unable to marry because of her brother's scandalous liaison. Understanding that her past will always dog her, Violetta yields, death in her heart: she will leave Alfredo and take up her former life again.

Germont takes his leave, moved by the nobility of the woman he has compelled to sacrifice herself. She prepares to write a farewell letter to her lover. She is interrupted by Alfredo's return and leaves after bidding farewell to the young man who is uncomprehending. He understands on opening the letter which Violetta has had brought to him a few moments later. Germont returns and, not mentioning his visit to Violetta, tries to console his despairing son and praises the virtues of family life. But Alfredo's only thought is to find Violetta again.

Scene II: The party is in full swing at the house of Flora Bervoix, a friend of Violetta's. Alfredo appears. Flora is astonished to see him alone, but then Violetta makes her entrance, accompanied by Baron Douphol. Alfredo's only desire is vengeance. He plays at cards with the baron and wins a considerable sum. Violetta is torn between the desire to explain and the promise she has made to Germont. Finally, she pretends that she loves Douphol. Mad with rage, Alfredo throws the money in Violetta's face in front of all the guests, thus paying her for his three months of love. Violetta faints and the baron provokes Alfredo to a duel. Germont, who has followed his son, reproaches him for insulting a woman in such a way.

### ACT III

Violetta is seriously ill and abandoned by everybody. Only the faithful Annina remains at her side. The doctor comes to visit her as he does every morning and confides to Annina that Violetta has only a few hours to live. Outside, the streets of Paris resound to the sounds of the carnival. Germont has written to the young woman to tell her that Alfredo wounded the baron in the duel. He had to go away, but his father has told him the truth and he is on his way back. Violetta awaits him desperately, even though she thinks it is now too late. Alfredo finally arrives. He asks Violetta to forgive him. They will leave Paris again and she will recover her health. Germont also comes to visit the young woman, whom he now considers as his daughter, but she has no strength left. One last burst of vitality seems to animate her, then she falls back, dead.