

**INVITED DRESS
REHEARSAL**
Rigoletto
Nashville Opera

**PERFORMANCE
GUIDEBOOK**



**2019-20 SEASON
for Young People**

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For 135 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as has our region. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

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Thank you, teachers,

for giving your students this wonderful experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.



Dear Teachers~

We are so pleased to be able to partner with Nashville Opera to bring students to the invited dress rehearsal of Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

This guidebook includes Nashville Opera's extensive study guide for adults with synopsis, background, and musical information. We have also added some additional material for you to use with students.

Please look particularly at the opera rehearsal information which will help students understand the special factors present in an invited dress rehearsal.

Enjoy!

TPAC *Education*

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Nashville Opera Guidebook by Anna Young and Cara Schneider

TPAC Guidebook compiled by Lattie Brown

Image from *The Man Who Wasn't There* (Coen Brothers, 2001)



Most final dress rehearsals are almost exactly like a performance. The director will stop the action if needed, but it is exceedingly rare and generally only for a technical malfunction on the stage. As in theatre, an opera's dress rehearsal is the final chance before the performance to make a complicated collaboration come together seamlessly.

In the Studio

The Nashville Opera's rehearsal schedule begins with two weeks at the opera rehearsal space in the new Noah Liff Opera Center. 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. The time period may seem short for such a large production.

It only works because opera singers begin rehearsals knowing every bit of their music by heart and having rehearsed it themselves over a period of months, sometimes years. If they do not know the role on the first day, the director has the right to replace them immediately. The opera company will fly in a new singer to take over their part. Once opera singers learn a particular role, they keep it in their repertoire and play the role many more times at different opera companies around the world.

In the Theater

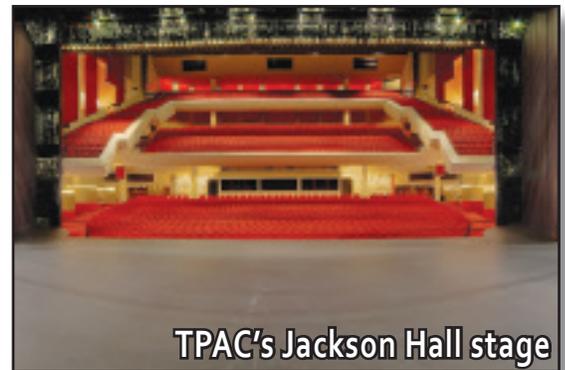
Four to five days before the first performance, the set is "loaded in" to the theater, and the lights are hung and focused. Students will notice a table in the middle of the orchestra level seats for the stage manager, the director, and the designers.

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

Technical Rehearsals and Dress Rehearsals

Opera rehearsals use a skilled piano accompanist, but once the company 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-thru" 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 put together the work that they have been doing in separate orchestra rehearsals and staging rehearsals.



TPAC's Jackson Hall stage

A piano tech rehearsal is held without costumes to let the singers get used to the set and give the set crew their first chance to practice scene changes. The next rehearsal is a piano dress rehearsal that adds costumes. Finally, the orchestra dress rehearsal puts all the elements together: lighting, set changes, costumes, the orchestra, and the supertitles (the English translations of the lyrics, called the libretto.) The supertitles will be in operation at the final invited dress rehearsal.

Final Dress

The final dress rehearsal allows the finishing polish before the performance, and invited dress rehearsals add the last important element to the opera, an audience. Because of the strenuous nature of the singing, singers may choose to "mark" on the final dress rehearsal in order to preserve their voices for all the performances. "Marking" does not have the same meaning in opera as it does in theatre. In theatre, it means just going through the blocking and the words of the lines. In opera, it specifically means that the singer may choose not to sing at full volume, not pushing their voice to the utmost. All of their acting and vocal expression will be at full power, however, with all the passion and conviction that opera requires. You will be their first audience; they are ready and excited to give you the story and the music.

Opera Film Noir

The music, stories, and characters of great opera are timeless, with universal themes that continue to engage contemporary audiences. For that reason, classic operas lend themselves easily to a variety of stylistic interpretations in set, costumes, staging, and even acting style.

For this production of *Rigoletto*, director John Hoomes has embraced a film noir sensibility. Film noir (literally “black film” from the French) began as a style or genre marked by a mood of fatalism and cynical characters. The term originated with a group of French critics describing American thrillers and detective movies of the 1940s and 1950s. Visually, these films had a certain look, generally black and white cinematography, shadowy or high contrast lighting, with long camera shots on objects or scenery that created a foreboding atmosphere.



Film noir can refer to these original crime drama movies such as John Huston’s *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) or to movies that seem to evoke some element or quality of these, such as Curtis Hanson’s *L.A. Confidential* (1997). Film noir style suits *Rigoletto* because even for opera, it is an especially dark and dramatic story of revenge gone wrong. The synopsis in this guidebook from Nashville Opera is written to reflect this change of setting. Remember that the music and libretto will stay the same, though the supertitles may have a more modern translation of the Italian.

- 👉 Ask students to compare this synopsis with the classic story of *Rigoletto* and note the contrasts and similarities.
- 👉 Ask students to identify the benefits a new interpretation that sets an opera in a different style or time frame.

Examples of original film noir movies:

The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941)
Double Indemnity (Billy Wilder, 1944)
Laura (Otto Preminger, 1944)
The Big Sleep (Howard Hawks, 1946)
Out of the Past (Jacques Tourneur, 1947)
The Third Man (Carol Reed, 1949)
Touch of Evil (Orson Welles, 1958)

Examples of film noir inspired movies, sometimes called neo-noir:

Chinatown (Roman Polanski, 1974)
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (Robert Zemeckis, 1988)
L.A. Confidential (Curtis Hanson, 1997)
Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (Drew Goddard, 2005)
The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, 2008)
John Wick (Shane Black, 2014)

NOTE:

Examples may not be appropriate for students to watch. Teachers should view before recommending.

Breathe like Singers

The power of opera singers’ breath control is formidable. 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 ribcage.

- 👉 Pay attention to your breathing. What part of your body is moving? Place your hands lightly on your stomach, just below your ribcage, and try to push them out slightly as you breathe in.
- 👉 Keep your hands more firmly in place, take a breath in, and say “ha!” You should feel your diaphragm jump.
- 👉 Try to 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 a partner count how long you can make the hissing sound or (harder) how long you can make the sound “ahhh.” If you were to practice this every day, you would build the muscle and be able to make sound for longer periods of time, as opera singers can.

Every once in a while during the performance, try to pay attention to which passages seem to require the most breath control.



**RIGO
LETTO**

RIGOLETTO

Opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi
Text by Francesco Maria Piave after Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*
Premiere March 11, 1851, Teatro la Fenice, Venice

APRIL 9 + 11, 2020

The Ann & Frank Bumstead Production
Andrew Jackson Hall, TPAC

Directed by John Hoomes
Conducted by Dean Williamson
Featuring the Nashville Opera Orchestra
Original film noir by Penumbra Entertainment

CAST & CHARACTERS

Duke	Zach Borichevsky*
Borsa	Michael Anderson†
Ceprano's Wife	Helen Zhibing Huang†
Rigoletto	Michael Mayes
Marullo	Spencer Reichman†
Count Ceprano	Mark Whatley
Monterone	David Crawford*
Sparafucile	Christian Zarembo*
Gilda	Kathryn Lewek
Giovanna	Kaylee Nichols†
Cigarette Girl	Helen Zhibing Huang†
Henchman	Luke Harnish
Maddalena	Kaylee Nichols†

* Nashville Opera debut

† 2020 Mary Ragland Emerging Artist

TICKETS & INFORMATION

Contact Nashville Opera at 615.832.5242 or visit nashvilleopera.org.

Study Guide Contributors

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THE STORY

THIS SYNOPSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT NASHVILLE OPERA'S NEW 2020 PRODUCTION INSPIRED BY FILM NOIR.

Rigoletto is a bartender/bouncer/comic in the nightclub owned by Duke, the head of the local mob. The hunch-backed Rigoletto is mean-spirited and good at humiliating the men at the nightclub, which makes Duke laugh. The men hate Rigoletto.

Duke is a ladies man and chases every skirt he sees. As the opera begins, we learn that he's recently noticed a young lady every Sunday on her way to church. He has vowed to dis-

cover who she is and have his way with her. No one realizes the girl is Rigoletto's beloved daughter Gilda. Gilda has seen Duke every Sunday and has fallen in love with him.

An older businessman, Monterone, storms into the nightclub, furious that Duke has ruined his daughter's life. Rigoletto ridicules Monterone, and Duke laughs. Monterone puts a curse on them both. Later, the men from the club discover that Rigoletto is secretly living with Gilda, whom they believe to be his mistress. To humiliate Rigoletto, they kidnap Gilda and deliver her to Duke's bedroom, where she is assaulted by Duke.

Rigoletto returns to the nightclub and reveals to the men's amusement that Gilda is his daughter. Consumed with the desire for revenge, Rigoletto contacts a hit man named Sparafucile, who has a beautiful sister named Maddalena. He contracts the two of them to lure Duke to Sparafucile's bar on the river where Sparafucile will murder Duke. Knowing Duke will find Maddalena irresistible, Rigoletto takes Gilda to stand outside the tavern so she can see for herself that Duke is not a faithful lover. Gilda is crushed as she looks through the window to see Duke seducing Maddalena.

Rigoletto tells his daughter to disguise herself in men's clothing and then flee the city. Rigoletto pays Sparafucile half the money and then leaves. Gilda later returns to the bar and overhears Maddalena and Sparafucile plotting to kill Duke. Maddalena convinces Sparafucile not to kill Duke but instead to kill the first customer who comes through the door and give that body to Rigoletto instead. He agrees to the plan.

Gilda now realizes what she must do: she knocks on the door, enters the tavern, and is stabbed by Sparafucile. The thief then shoves her body into a sack. He then gives the sack to Rigoletto upon his return. Thinking he has won vengeance on Duke, Rigoletto prepares to throw the body into the river. He hears Duke singing in the distance! He opens the sack and, to his horror, discovers his almost-dead daughter. They sing a heartbreaking duet, Gilda dies, and the wretched Rigoletto wails that the curse has come to pass.



Nashville Opera's last production of RIGOLETTO was in April 2010 and featured Ryan MacPherson as the Duke and Audrey Babcock as Maddalena.

THE MUSIC

ACT I

Prelude — The prelude first introduces a theme in the brass known as the “curse motive.” The theme of the curse is heard throughout the opera. The prelude presents a “musical synopsis of the opera’s dramatic essentials.”

“Questa o quella” — After declaring his desire to seduce Countess Ceprano and being warned of the Count’s jealousy, Duke responds saying he can have any woman he pleases.

“E il sol dell’anima” — The disguised Duke and Gilda sing a love duet.

“Caro nome” — Gilda meditates on the false name Duke has given her, “Gualtier Maldè.” She has completely fallen in love with the unworthy man, not knowing that he is the cruel employer of her father, Rigoletto.

ACT II

“Parmi veder le lagrime” — Duke has discovered that Gilda has been abducted and he laments the loss of his “beloved.”

“Cortigiani, vil razza dannata” — When Rigoletto arrives at the palace demanding the return of Gilda, the men do not let him through and Rigoletto unleashes his rage upon them.

ACT III

“La donna è mobile” — At Sparafucile’s inn, Duke sings of the fickle nature of women and how they cannot be trusted.

“Bella figlia dell’amore” — The famous quartet in which Duke seduces the assassin’s sister, Maddalena, while Gilda suffers the pain of seeing Duke betray her. Rigoletto sings of revenge.

“Lassu in cielo” — As Gilda dies, she begs for her father’s forgiveness.

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

AUDIO

Label: EMI Classics, 1956

Conductor: Tullio Serafin

Artists: Tito Gobbi, Giuseppe di Stefano, Maria Callas

Label: Decca, 1985

Conductor: Richard Bonyge

Artists: Sherrill Milnes, Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Sutherland

Label: RCA, 1964

Conductor: Georg Solti

Artists: Robert Merrill, Alfredo Kraus, Anna Moffo

VIDEO

Konzertvereinigung Wiener Staatsopernchor, 1982

Artists: Luciano Pavarotti, Ingrid Wixell, Edita Gruberova,

Ferruccio Furlanetto, Victoria Vergara

Riccardo Chailly, conductor

Sung in Italian with English subtitles.

Metropolitan Opera, 1977

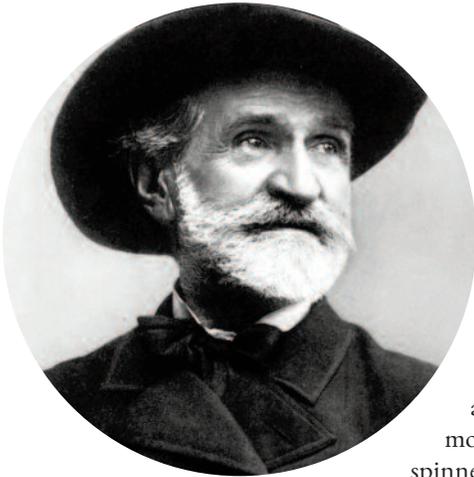
Artists: Plácido Domingo, Cornell MacNeil,

Ileana Cotrubas, Justino Díaz, Isola Jones

James Levine, conductor

Sung in Italian with English subtitles.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



GIUSEPPE VERDI | 1813–1901

G i u s e p p e
F o r t u n i n o
 Francesco Verdi
 was born into a
 family of small
 landowners and
 traders. His
 father, Carlo, was
 an innkeeper and his

mother, Luigia Uttini, a
 spinner. Verdi's father
 believed whole-heartedly in

music education, starting him at the age of four. By the time he was nine years old, he held a permanent position as organist at the church of St. Michele. Though Verdi moved to Busseto to study with the maestro di cappella at the church of St. Bartolommeo, he strived to study at the Milan Conservatory. He applied for admission and scholarship at the age of 18 but was ultimately rejected because of his unorthodox piano technique. This rejection affected Verdi for the rest of his life. He began to study with Vincenzo Lavigna at La Scala in Milan who trained him in strict counterpoint, encouraged him to attend the theatre regularly, and introduced him into the Milanese musical society.

Verdi eventually moved back to Busseto and was appointed the new *maestro di musica* at St. Bartolommeo. During this time he married Margherita Barezzi with whom he had two children. In 1837 after an unsuccessful attempt to stage his opera *Roccester* at the Teatro Ducale in Parma, he revised the work and renamed it *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*. It received its premiere nine months later at La Scala. After this success, he was commissioned to compose three more operas for La Scala. The first, *Un Giorno di Regno* was an unfortunate disaster and could have echoed his great personal loss—the death of his wife Margherita which followed the deaths of both children over the two previous years. His professional failure and personal loss caused him to cease composing music for nearly two years. The hiatus ended with the astounding success of his next opera, *Nabucco*. A remarkable trend was set in which Verdi produced 16 operas between the years of 1842 and 1853, averaging the completion of an opera every nine months. During these successful years, Verdi fell in love with soprano Guiseppina Strepponi who became his lifelong companion.

Verdi continued to compose operas forming a particular structure of composition choosing operatic subjects that fit the singers available to him. Between his middle to late years, he composed famous works such as *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Aïda*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*. As Verdi's health diminished, he composed his final

piece, a setting of the religious text *Stabat Mater*. In 1901, while residing at the Grand Hotel et de Milan, Verdi suffered a stroke and died six days later on January 27, 1901. A month after his death, a large crowd, said to be one of the largest public assemblies of any event in Italian history, gathered to process through Milan and mourn the death of their beloved patriot composer. In his lifetime, Verdi composed 28 operatic works, 11 choral works, 22 songs/vocal trios, and six instrumental works.

VIVA VERDI! The Resurgence, or *Risorgimento*, was a period of time in 19th-century Italy that began with the ending of the Napoleonic rule and resulted in the unification of Italian city states into one Italian state. This was a turbulent time in Italy's history marked by insurrection, revolution, and conflict. This was also a time when a sense of Italian pride began to emerge from citizens all over the Italian peninsula.

During this time of *Risorgimento*, Verdi established himself amidst his fellow countrymen as an advocate for statehood. After a performance of his opera, *Nabucco*, audiences cheered for an encore of the “*Va pensiero*” chorus, the song of the Hebrew slaves. To the citizens of Italy, “*Va pensiero*” became a song of statehood and nationalism that made Verdi a fixture in the Italian resurgence. People would shout “Viva V.E.R.D.I.,” a secret slogan based off of Verdi's name that meant “*Vittorio Emanuele Re D'Italia*.” (Victor Emmanuel King of Italy)

One month after Verdi died, hundreds of thousands of mourning Italian citizens gathered to follow Verdi's remains to their final place of rest. As the procession progressed through Milan, the crowd sang the “*Va pensiero*” chorus. Verdi was seen as a hero to the Italian people.

VERDI'S CELEBRATED WORKS

Nabucco — 1842

Ernani — 1844

Macbeth — 1847

Luisa Miller — 1849

Rigoletto — 1851

Il Trovatore — 1853

La Traviata — 1853

Simon Boccanegra — 1857

Un Ballo in Maschera — 1859

La Forza del Destino — 1862

Don Carlos — 1867

Aïda — 1871

Otello — 1887

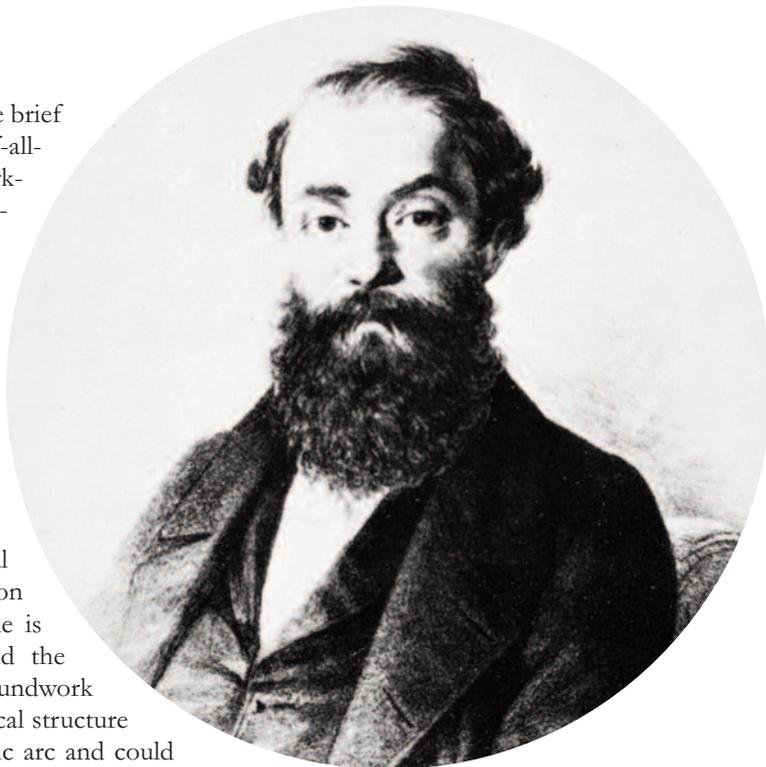
Falstaff — 1893

ABOUT THE LIBRETTIST

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 being *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 wellknown. 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.



Daniel Sutin as Rigoletto
and Megan Monaghan as Gilda
in Nashville Opera's 2010 production
of RIGOLETTO

OPERA ETIQUETTE

ALWAYS BE EARLY!

Please arrive early to ensure you are able to find your seat before the performance begins and before the orchestra tunes. If you are late, you may miss the overture or even the first act!

OPERA IS FOR ALL AGES TO ENJOY!

Opera is full of emotion, passion, human conflict, and discovery. Nashville Opera usually presents operas in their original language and projects supertitles above the stage so the audience can understand every word.

WHAT TO WEAR

Many people think of a night at the opera as a glamorous event and an excuse to bring out the fancy attire. But, it is also acceptable to dress comfortably. For dress rehearsals, the casual attire that students wear to school is perfectly acceptable. A light sweater, jacket, or wrap is suggested because the theater is air-conditioned.

USE THE RESTROOM

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.

PLEASE BE COURTEOUS...

to everyone in the audience and on stage. Opera is a live performance, so any talking, cell-phone use (including texting) or other noise/light disruption takes away from everyone's experience at the opera. Remember that unlike many staged performances, opera singers do not use microphones. This makes it essential to wait until intermission to unwrap gum/candy, talk to your neighbor or use electronic devices that may distract others. Be sure to turn off cell phone and pagers.

APPLAUSE WELCOME!

There are several times during a performance when it is appropriate to applaud the performers. The first opportunity to applaud takes place when the conductor takes the podium at the very beginning of the performance and when he/she returns to the podium following intermission(s). It is also acceptable to applaud after an overture or aria in the middle of a performance. Applaud when the performance moves you. You may show your appreciation to the performers by shouting "Bravo!" for a male performer, "Brava!" for a female performer, or "Bravi!" for an ensemble. At the conclusion of the performance, singers who performed principal roles in the opera will take their "curtain call." It is appropriate to continue applauding until all singers have stepped forward to accept their applause. Sometimes, audience members are so impressed with the overall performance of the opera, they will stand and applaud the entire ensemble. This is called a "standing ovation."

NO PHOTOS OR RECORDINGS PERMITTED



A SOUND ANATOMY OF OPERA

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.

ARIAS

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.

RECITATIVES

Recitatives, a type of singing unique to opera, help propel the action forward. 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 (“TOGETHER”)

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 José, 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.

ON OPERATIC VOICES

Every voice is unique and no singer gets to choose the category in which they sing but must work with the vocal attributes with which they were born. Composers usually assign a voice type to a character based on his/her personality or age. Read these descriptions for examples.

WOMEN

SOPRANO

This is the highest female voice and has a range similar to a violin. In opera, the soprano most often plays the young girl or the heroine (sometimes called the prima donna), since a high bright voice traditionally suggests femininity, virtue, and innocence. The normal range of a soprano is from middle C through two octaves above middle C, sometimes with extra top notes. Most women are sopranos. In *Rigoletto*, the roles of Gilda, Ceprano's Wife (the Countess in traditional productions), and the Cigarette Girl (Page) are sung by sopranos.

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Also called a mezzo, this is the middle female voice with a range similar to an oboe. A mezzo's sound is often darker and warmer than a soprano's. In opera, composers generally use a mezzo to portray older women, villainesses, seductive heroines, and sometimes even young boys. Mezzo-sopranos also often serve as the friend or sidekick to the soprano. The mezzo-soprano's normal range is from the A below middle C to the A two octaves above it. In *Rigoletto*, the role of Maddalena is sung by a mezzo-soprano.

CONTRALTO

This is the lowest female voice and has a voice similar in range to a clarinet. Contraltos usually sing the roles of older females or special character parts such as witches and old gypsies. The range is two octaves from F below middle C to the top line of the treble clef. A true contralto is very rare—some believe they don't exist at all! There is no featured contralto in *Rigoletto*.

MEN

COUNTER-TENOR

This is the highest male voice, which was mainly used in very early opera and oratorio. The voice of a countertenor sounds very much like a mezzo-soprano's voice and they often sing the same repertoire. Like the contralto, true countertenors are very rare. There are no counter-tenors in *Rigoletto*.

TENOR

This is usually the highest male voice in an opera. It is similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color, and acoustical ring. The tenor typically plays the hero or the love interest. His voice ranges from the



Reed Hummel

C below middle C to the above. In *Rigoletto*, the roles of Duke, Matteo, and Borsa are for tenors.

BARITONE

This is the middle male voice and is close to a French horn in range and tone color. The baritone usually plays villainous roles or father-figures. In *Rigoletto*, the title role is sung by a baritone, as are the roles of Monterone and Marullo. The range is from the G an octave and a half below middle C to the G above.

BASS

This is the lowest male voice and is similar to a trombone or bassoon in range and color. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera. In *Rigoletto*, the roles of Sparafucile and Ceprano are sung by basses. The range spans from roughly the F above middle C to the F an octave and a fourth below.

Above, Daniel Sutin in Nashville Opera's last production of RIGOLETTO, 2010

Special Thanks

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