

# La traviata

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Feb 12 at 1:30pm; Feb 14, 16 & 18, 2012 at 7:30pm

Approximate running time: two hours and  
40 minutes including one intermission

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Composed by **Giuseppe Verdi**

Libretto by **Francesco Maria Piave**

Conducted by **Steven White**

Production originally created by **Jonathan Miller** for  
Glimmerglass Opera and Vancouver Opera

Directed and choreographed by **Elena Arazo**

Set and costumes designed by **Isabella Bywater**

Lighting designed by **Robert Wierzel**

Supertitles **Kelley Rourke**

Assistant costume designer **Sidney Shannon**

Assistant lighting designer **Bradley King**

Stage managers **Jenny Lazar, Anne Dechene,  
Samantha Greene**

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## CAST

Violetta

**Laquita Mitchell**

Flora Bervoix

**Karin Mushegain+**

Alfredo

**David Pomeroy+**

Giorgio Germont

**Stephen Powell**

Gaston de Letorieres

**Jeffrey Halili**

Marquis d'Obigny

**Krassen Karagiozov+**

Doctor Grenvil

**Kenneth Overton+**

Baron Douphol

**John Maynard+**

Annina

**Jennifer Tiller**

+debut artist

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Scenery, costumes, and supertitles originally created for  
Glimmerglass Opera and Vancouver Opera.

*La traviata* is made possible with the generous  
support of Charles R. Wall. Leadership support  
is provided by John and Penelope Biggs.

### *La traviata*

Sunday, February 12, 2012

\$25 tickets to this performance have been  
made possible thanks to the generosity of  
The Reed Foundation.

### *La traviata*

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

\$25 tickets to this performance have been  
made possible thanks to the generosity of  
Charles R. Wall.

# La traviata

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Laquita Mitchell



Karin Musegain



David Pomeroy



Stephen Powell



Jeffrey Halili



Krassen Karagiozov



Kenneth Overton



John Maynard



Jennifer Tiller

# La traviata

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Photo by Tim Matheson



## SYNOPSIS

### Act I

At a party she is hosting, Violetta Valéry is introduced to young Alfredo Germont. Though Violetta suddenly feels weak, she assures her guests that she is fine.

Alfredo, left alone with Violetta, confesses that he has loved her from afar for a year. Though she initially dismisses him, Violetta is touched by his sincerity. After Alfredo and the other party guests leave, Violetta reflects on her tender feelings for him and on what life would be like if she ceded to his love. But she abruptly shrugs off her fantasies and rededicates her life to the pursuit of pleasure.

### Act II

For three months, Violetta and Alfredo have been happily living together in the country. But when Alfredo learns that Violetta has been selling her possessions in order to pay their expenses, he leaves for Paris to make other financial arrangements. Alfredo's father unexpectedly visits, demanding that Violetta release his son from their illicit relationship so that his daughter's impending marriage will not be threatened. Violetta struggles with the elder Germont, but finally promises to renounce Alfredo forever. She writes him a letter ending the relationship, but before she can depart, Alfredo returns. He is confused by her agitated state, but after Violetta leaves, he reads her letter. Germont returns and tries to comfort his son, but Alfredo decides to avenge himself.

At a soiree given by Violetta's friend Flora Bervoix, the guests are surprised by Alfredo's arrival. Though Violetta soon appears with Baron Douphol, her new paramour, Alfredo plays cards with the gentlemen, pretending not to notice Violetta, who is worried by his belligerent behavior. Fearing for his safety, Violetta begs Alfredo to leave, but he demands that she leave with him. When Violetta refuses, Alfredo summons the other revelers and publicly humiliates Violetta. Germont arrives in time to revile his son, the Baron challenges Alfredo to a duel, and the guests express their sympathy for Violetta.

### Act III

Violetta is now gravely ill, and Dr. Grenvil confides to Annina, the maid, that Violetta will not live much longer. Violetta rereads a letter from Germont, who writes that Alfredo fled after wounding the Baron in the duel, but that he now knows of Violetta's sacrifice and is hurrying to her side. Alfredo arrives, begging Violetta's forgiveness. The lovers dream of resuming their idyllic life together. But it is too late, and Violetta dies with Alfredo at her side.

# Who's Who

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## **Steven White** (conductor)

Praised by *Opera News* as a conductor who “squeezes every drop of excitement and pathos from the score,” Steven White is one of North America’s premiere conductors of both operatic and symphonic repertoire. Having made his acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in 2010 conducting performances of Verdi’s *La traviata* starring Angela Gheorghiu, Thomas Hampson, and James Valenti, Maestro White will return again in April of 2012 for additional performances. At the famed opera house, he has been involved in the productions of *La sonnambula*, starring Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Florez; *Iphigénie en Tauride*, starring Plácido Domingo and Susan Graham; and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Grand Finals Concert, among other works. Additional engagements this season include performances of *La traviata* with Lyric Opera Baltimore and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, as well *The Enchanted Island* and *Billy Budd* for the Metropolitan Opera. Next season he will return once again to Baltimore to conduct *La bohème* and will continue his Wagnerian work leading performances of *Der fliegende Holländer*. Recent notable engagements include the Strauss *Four Last Songs* with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and the Naples Philharmonic, internationally televised concerts with Rolando Villazon and the Greek National Radio Symphony Orchestra at the United Nations and Alice Tully Hall; *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*, and *La bohème* at New York City Opera; *Lucia di Lammermoor* at L’Opera de Montréal; *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La fille du regiment*, and *I puritani* with Vancouver Opera; *La traviata* at Opera Colorado; *L’elisir d’amore* with Pittsburgh Opera; *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Michigan Opera Theater; *Roméo et Juliette*, *I puritani*, *La sonnambula*, and *L’assedio di Corinto* with Baltimore Opera; the Festival Finale Concert at Spoleto Festival USA; an all-Wagner concert with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and Opera Birmingham; and a concert with Angela Gheorghiu and the Canadian Opera Company orchestra at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto.

## **Jonathan Miller** (production)

Birthplace: London, England. This season at City Opera: *The Elixir of Love*. City Opera debut: *Der Rosenkavalier* (1996). Career highlights: productions for opera companies throughout the

world, including La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, and Royal Opera House; numerous productions for English National Opera since his 1978 debut with *Le nozze di Figaro*; recent New York productions include St. Matthew Passion at BAM and *Le nozze di Figaro* at Metropolitan Opera (PBS telecast); theater productions in London, Europe, and US; artistic director of the Old Vic (1988—90); co-authored and appeared in *Beyond the Fringe* in London and New York; author of *The Body in Question* and *States of Mind*; and fellow of American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

## **Elena Arazo** (stage director and choreographer).

Elena Arazo is a Latin-American stage director of opera and spoken theater. Attracted to epic stories, her productions are known for huge dance-like theatrics and acutely naturalistic acting. During the 2010—11 season, Arazo served as choreographer and associate director for Jonathan Miller’s *La traviata* at Vancouver Opera. Her acclaimed operetta *War Music*, which she adapted with composer Paul Philips from Christopher Logue’s retelling of the *Iliad*, uses six performers to stage scenes from the Trojan War. *War Music*, commissioned by performance ensemble Aurea for the FirstWorks Prov Festival, was also presented by the New York Institute for the Humanities, Chicago Humanities Festival, the Chorus of Westerly, and toured New England. Other commissions for adaptations: *Faust* for Aurea and a tango music-theater piece for the Chekhov Theatre Ensemble in New York. She is co-developing a dance-like and shadow puppet adult version of *Hansel and Gretel*. Arazo has stage directed for the Brooklyn Philharmonic, including *Falstaff* with Sir Thomas Allen at BAM, choreographed the *Latin Lovers* concert by Steven Blier at Glimmerglass Opera, and staged concerts for Opera New Jersey and the Martina Arroyo Foundation. Arazo has directed theater off-Broadway, regionally, and internationally, including the first English-language play commercially produced in Beijing. She will direct *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for Prague Shakespeare Festival in the Czech Republic. *The New York Times* has praised her productions as “striking,” “primal,” and “wild,” and *The Boston Globe* as “riveting” and “dreamy.” As her productions are critically acclaimed for superb acting, Arazo regularly teaches acting to singers at universities and young artist programs. She

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has worked extensively with Jonathan Miller, as assistant and associate director for his operas at Seattle Opera, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, and his Broadway production of *King Lear*. She received the Dr. David Farrar Assistant Stage Director Grant and she holds her MFA from the University of Texas at Austin. [www.elenaaraoz.com](http://www.elenaaraoz.com)

**Isabella Bywater** (set and costume designer)  
Birthplace: London, England. City Opera debut: *The Elixir of Love* (2006). Career highlights: opera credits include *Nabucco*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and *La Clemenza di Tito* for Opernhaus, Zurich; *I Puritani* for Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; *Ermione* for Santa Fe and *Oregon* for Santa Fe and Seattle; *Don Pasquale* for Maggio Musicale, Florence, Royal Opera House, London, and Teatro Real, Madrid; *Falstaff* and *Rosenkavalier* for New National Theatre, Tokyo; and *Fidelio* for Musikhuset, Arhus, *Jenufa*, and *La traviata* for Glimmerglass. She has also designed *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Il Trittico*, *La Duenna*, *Snegourochka*, *King Arthur*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Figaro*, *L'incontro Improviso*, *La Finta Giardiniera*, *Ezio*, *The Makropulos Case*, and *The Masked Ball*. Theater credits include *Titus Andronicus* for RSC; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Wind in the Willows*, *A Doll's House*, *All My Sons*, *School for Wives*, and costumes for *Jack and the Beanstalk* at Salisbury Playhouse; *Of Mice and Men* for Nottingham Playhouse; *Hedda Gabler* for Chichester; and *The Cherry Orchard* for Sheffield Crucible Theatre. Recent engagements: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed Claudia Solti for the Mariinsky in St. Petersburg.

**Robert Wierzel** (lighting designer)  
Birthplace: New York, NY. This season at City Opera: *Monodramas*. City Opera debut: *Mother of Three Sons* (1991). Career highlights: *L'Etoile*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Paul Bunyan*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* among others at City Opera; and over 30 productions at Glimmerglass. Recent notable productions: *The Grapes of Wrath* at Minnesota Opera and *Of Mice and Men* at Westport Country Playhouse. Many collaborations with the choreographer/director Bill T. Jones and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company;

productions at Seattle Opera, Minnesota Opera, Opéra National de Paris, Boston Lyric, Canadian Opera, Vancouver Opera, and Tokyo Opera. Broadway: *FELA!* at Eugene O'Neill Theater, productions at numerous off-Broadway theaters, and major regional theater companies throughout the country.

**Laquita Mitchell** (soprano, Violetta)  
Birthplace: New York, NY. City Opera debut: Michaela in *Carmen*. Career highlights: Bess in *Porgy and Bess* at the San Francisco Opera; Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Los Angeles Opera; Micaëla in *Carmen* with New York City Opera; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at the Portland Opera; Clara in *Porgy and Bess* with Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, Opéra Comique in Paris, and Lyric Opera of Chicago; Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* at Carnegie Hall; Sharon in Terrance McNally's *Master Class* at the Kennedy Center; Mimi in *La bohème* at Utah Symphony and Opera; and Bess in *Porgy and Bess* at the Atlanta Opera. She will perform Leonora in *Il trovatore* at Bob Jones University, as well as a spring concert with Symphony Orchestra Augusta and as a soloist in the Robert Russell Bennett arrangement of *Porgy and Bess* with the Madison Symphony.

**Karin Mushegain** (mezzo-soprano, Flora Bervoix)  
Birthplace: Pasadena, CA. Career highlights: Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* at Virginia Opera, *Flight* at Austin Lyric Opera, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Ash Lawn Opera Festival, Alessandro in *Tolomeo* at Glimmerglass Opera, the title role in *El gato con botas* at Gotham Chamber Opera, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at Opera Memphis, and Angelina in *La Cenerentola* at Opera Idaho. Upcoming: Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette* at Annapolis Opera. Graduate of Northwestern University (bachelor of music) and UCLA (master of music).

**David Pomeroy** (tenor, Alfredo)  
Birthplace: Newfoundland, Canada. Pomeroy is a regular presence with the Canadian Opera Company, where he began as a member of the company's ensemble. He has also appeared with the Vancouver Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, and the Opera Theater of St. Louis. He made his European operatic debut in 2008 in Scottish Opera's production of Smetana's *The Two Widows*. In the autumn of 2009, Pomeroy made

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his Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He returned to the Canadian Opera Company as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. In February 2010 he sang his first performances of Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for L'Opera de Montréal and Don José in *Carmen* for Manitoba Opera, and in July 2010 he made his German operatic debut in *Carmen* at the Stuttgart Opera. Pomeroy has been a soloist with the Toronto Symphony, CBC Radio/TV, Toronto's Opera in Concert, Opera Ontario, Toronto Operetta Theatre, Toronto's Aldeburgh Connection, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Vancouver and Victoria Symphonies, the Newfoundland Symphony, Chorus Niagara, Orpheus Choir, Amadeus Choir, Saskatoon Symphony, Mississauga Choral Society, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. In the 2010—11 season, Pomeroy appeared at the Opera Company of Philadelphia in the role of Don José in *Carmen*. After *La traviata* with New York City Opera, he will appear in the role of Erik in Wagner's *Der Fliegende* (Hollander Opera Lyra Ottawa) and at the Canadian Opera Company as Hoffmann in *Les Contes D'Hoffmann*.

**Stephen Powell** (baritone, Giorgio Germont)  
Birthplace: West Chester, PA. City Opera debut: Mathis in *Mathis der Maler* (1995). Career highlights: Zurga in *Les pêcheurs de perles*; Ulysses in *The Return of Ulysses*, Germont in *La traviata*, Ford in *Falstaff*, and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at City Opera; Ping in *Turandot* and Schelkalov in *Boris Godunov* at Metropolitan Opera; Onegin in *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Festival of New Jersey; Marcello in *La bohème* with Lyric Opera of Chicago; Valentin in *Faust* with Opera Company of Philadelphia; Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in Rio; Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Opéra de Quebec; Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* at L'Opera de Montreal; Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd* with Arizona and Cleveland Opera; Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at San Francisco Opera; Germont in *La traviata* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at Los Angeles Opera; and Miller in *Luisa Miller* at Cincinnati May Festival.

**Jeffrey Halili** (tenor, Gaston de Letorieres)  
Birthplace: Canada. City Opera debut: Bardolfo in *Falstaff* (2007). Career highlights: Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Minnesota Opera and Hawaii Opera Theater; Goro in

*Madama Butterfly* with Virginia Opera, Florida Grand Opera, San Antonio Opera, and St. Barth's Music Festival; Ajax II in *La Belle Héléne* with Santa Fe Opera; Harry in *La fanciulla del West* with Florida Grand Opera; Nick in *Fanciulla* at St. Barth's Music Festival; Pong in *Turandot* with Michigan Opera Theater and Opera Tampa; Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with New Orleans Opera; Nerone in *Agrippina* and Gastone in *La traviata* with Virginia Opera; and David in *Die Meistersinger*, in concert with Philadelphia Orchestra. Featured in *Opera News*' "Sound Bytes."

**Krassen Karagiozov** (baritone, Marquis d'Obigny)  
Birthplace: Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Career highlights: the title role in *Eugene Onegin*, Sgt. Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Marcello in *La bohème*, Figaro in *Barbiere di Siviglia*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, Vronsky in *Anna Karenina*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Lescaut in *Manon*, and Escamillo in *Carmen* at Opera San Jose. Other credits: the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, as well as performances with Opera Carolina, Opera San José, Lake George Opera Festival, Spoleto Opera Festival, Aspen Opera Theater, the Opera Company of North Carolina, Opera Roanoke, Piedmont Opera Theater, and Capital Opera Raleigh. North Carolina district winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and first prize winner of the Charlotte Opera Guild Competition, as well as a finalist of the Irene Dalis Vocal Competition and Heinz Rehfuss Vocal Competition. Upcoming: Silvio in *I Pagliacci* for Opera San Jose.

**Kenneth Overton** (baritone, Doctor Grenvil)  
Overton began the 2011 season as Porgy in a new production of *Porgy and Bess* with Lexington Opera Society and the University of Kentucky, and recently returned to San Francisco Opera as Sid in *La Fanciulla del West*, starring Deborah Voigt, and to Opera Carolina as Porgy. In 2010, Overton made his debut with the Sarasota Orchestra, with return engagements to Opera Memphis as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and Sacramento Opera as Germont in *La traviata* after making his debut in 2006 as Ping in *Turandot*. After a successful debut at Deutsche Oper Berlin as Porgy, Overton started off the 2009 season as Porgy with Opera Theatre

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of Pittsburgh, followed by concert appearances in the same role with the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, and Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Other engagements of *Porgy* include a tour of the UK where he sang the role at the Dublin Opera, Belfast Opera, and Cardiff. In 2009 he made his New York City Opera debut in a concert performance of *Troubled Island* by William Grant Still and his San Francisco Opera debut as Lawyer Frazier in *Porgy and Bess*. Recent engagements include the soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Norwalk Symphony and Phoenix Symphony and Verdi's Requiem at Montclair State University and the Cathedral Basilica (NJ). Overton also made his Pensacola Opera debut this season in the world premiere of David Ott's *The Widow's Lantern* and as Joe in *Showboat*. Other recent engagements: performances with Nashville Opera, Connecticut Opera, Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Kentucky Symphony Orchestra, Duluth Superior Symphony, and San Antonio Symphony, among others. He made his Broadway debut in Baz Luhrman's *La bohème*. Later this season, he reprises the role of Porgy for the 75th Anniversary Tour to Montreal. Overton is a winner of the Leontyne Price Competition, the Leiderkranz Competition, and the Rosa Ponselle Foundation Competition. In 2011 he returned to New York City Opera in a concert production of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and released his debut CD, *Negro Spirituals and Afro-American Art Songs*, for Albany Records, produced by Everett McCorvey. In addition, he is a member of the American Spiritual Ensemble and serves as the co-founder and artistic director of Opera Noire of New York.

**John Maynard** (baritone, Baron Douphol)  
Birthplace: San Francisco Bay Area, CA. A recent graduate of the Merola Opera Program and recipient of the Richard F. Gold career grant from the Shoshana Foundation, Maynard was a finalist in the Boston district of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2009. He performed staples of the comic repertoire including Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Bartolo in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Villains in his repertoire include Zuniga in *Carmen* and Geronte di Ravoir in *Manon Lescaut*, among others. Now, as a baritone, he looks forward to developing his repertoire of dramatic roles while

also maintaining his penchant for comedy. He recently added the title role of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* to his resume, and as the title role in Giordano's *Il Re*, Maynard was described by *Opera News* as having "an amused comic detachment well suited to the character." He also places strong emphasis on interpreting the great concert works and oratorios. In 2010, Maynard performed the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the solos in Bach's Mass in B-Minor, and the solos in Mozart's *Requiem*. In addition to his singing work, Maynard is an avid composer, writer, and translator. He has composed in a wide range of genres, including songs, solo piano pieces, wind quintets, chamber ensembles, and more. He is the author of poems and libretti, and he prepared and sung his own translation of Bach's *Coffee Cantata* with the Monmouth Civic Chorus in 2011. Maynard earned a degree in English literature from the University of California at Berkeley before discovering his operatic talents.

**Jennifer Tiller** (soprano, Annina)  
Birthplace: Richmond, VA. Tiller recently transitioned to soprano from mezzo-soprano. This season at City Opera: Notary's wife in *Intermezzo*. City Opera debut: Second Maid in *Daphne* (2004). Career highlights: Nedda in *I Pagliacci* with Anchorage Opera; Suzuki in the Emmy Award-winning broadcast of *Madama Butterfly*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Maddalena in *Il Viaggio a Reims*, the Fox in *The Little Prince*, and Alecto and Dika in *Lysistrata*, all with New York City Opera; Augusta Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and Bertha in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Illinois; Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, Tulsa Opera, and Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Festival; La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* with Indianapolis Opera; Mrs. McLean in *Susannah* with the Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Festival; and Stéphanie in *Roméo et Juliette* with Opera Grand Rapids and Opera Northeast.

# New York City Opera

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