

# LA TRAVIATA

GIUSEPPE VERDI

## VISUAL ARTS: Costume Design

### Students Will

- Identify and illustrate concepts from direct observation and personal experiences
- Apply elements of art through a personal expression
- Create original works from information and personal experiences

### Copies for Each Student

- “*La Traviata* Synopsis “
- “The Characters”
- Costume Examples

### For the Teacher

- “*La Traviata* Synopsis “
- “The Characters”
- Costume Examples

**Getting Ready:** Decide how you want your students to complete the assignment (Digital, Paint, Sketch, Fabric, etc) and gather materials:

- Pencils or Charcoal
- Canvas/ Mixed Media Paper/ Art Surface
- Paint/ Paper/ Clay
- Fabric (Optional)
- Posterboard/ Presentation Board
- \*Camera (Students can use cell phones)
- Any additional art supplies as directed by the instructor\*

**Instructional Time:** One to two 45-minute class period

### Introduction

Tell the students “Opera is a combination of both visual and performing arts. Many operagoers can recognize a famous aria or melody from an overture written over a century ago. However, an equally important component of opera is the visual effect of the costumes and set design. You will take on the role of costume designer and create a design board of costume drafts for operagoers to remember for years to come.”

### Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level and the ability of your students, you may choose to conduct this project as a class, in small groups, with partners, or individually. After reading the Synopsis and The Characters, have the students brainstorm various costume designs and styles for the characters in the opera. The students will create a costume design board for their original *La Traviata* production. The students must create a costume for at least two characters in the opera. You may wish to give the students a particular set design or style to consider for their assignment.

*\*Students may use photography for this project if permission is granted by the instructor.*

# *La Traviata*

## **For further study**

Students may want to search online or in their school library for additional resources for fashion, theater costume design, and opera productions.

## **Evaluation**

When students have completed their design board, have them present it before the class. Lead the class in a discussion to analyze and evaluate the work of their peers.

## **TEKS**

### **Fine Arts**

#### **Middle School 1, Art**

117.202 c. 1 A,B,C,D Foundations: observation and perception

117.202 c. 2 A,C Creative expressions

117.202 c. 3 B Historical and cultural relevance

117.202 c. 4 A,B,E Critical evaluation and response

#### **Middle School 2, Art**

117.203. b. 1 A,B,C,D Foundations: observation and perception

117.203. b. 2 A,C,D Creative expression

117.203. b. 4 A,B,E Critical evaluation and response

#### **Middle School 3, Art**

117.204. b. 1 A,B,C,D Foundations: observation and perception

117.204. b. 2 A,C,D Creative expression

117.204. b. 4 A,B,D Critical evaluation and response

#### **Art, Level I**

117.302. c. 1 A,B Foundations: observation and perception

117.302. c. 2 D,F Creative expression

117.302. c. 3 B Historical and cultural relevance

117.302. c. 4 B Critical evaluation and response

.

#### **Art, Level II**

117.303. c. 1 A,B Foundations: observation and perception

117.303. c. 2 A,B,C,D,F Creative expression

117.303. c. 4 B,C Critical evaluation and response

#### **Art, Level III**

117.304. c. 1 B,C,D Foundations: observation and perception

117.304. c. 2 A,B,C,D,F Creative expression

117.304. c. 4 B,C,D Critical evaluation and response

#### **Art, Level IV**

117.305. c. 1 B,C Foundations: observation and perception

117.305. c. 2 C,D Creative expression

117.305. c. 4 B,C,D Critical evaluation and response

# *La Traviata*

**Correlates:** Language Arts, Drama

**Gardner's Intelligences:** Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Visual-Spatial,

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** Understand, Analyze, Apply, Evaluate

**Sources:**

*La Traviata* Libretto

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, Oxford University Press, 1992.

**Online Resources:**

[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)

[www.aria-database.com](http://www.aria-database.com)

## Synopsis

### ACT ONE

In her Paris salon, the courtesan Violetta Valéry greets party guests, including Gastone, who introduces a new admirer, Alfredo Germont. This young man, having adored Violetta from afar, addresses her with a drinking song; she joins him in the salute to pleasure. An orchestra is heard in the next room, but as guests move there to dance, Violetta suffers an attack of faintness. Concerned, Alfredo returns and, since they are alone, confesses his love. At first Violetta protests that love means nothing to her. Something in the young man's sincerity touches her, however, and she promises to meet him the next day. After the guests have gone home, Violetta wonders if Alfredo could actually be the man to fulfill her need for love. But she decides she prefers freedom, though Alfredo's voice, heard outside, argues in favor of romance.

### ACT TWO

#### *Scene I*

Alfredo and Violetta are living in a villa near Paris, where he praises their contentment. When the maid, Annina, reveals that Violetta has pawned her jewels to keep the villa, Alfredo leaves for the city to raise money. Violetta receives an invitation from Flora to a party that night. She has no intention of going back to her old life, but trouble intrudes with the appearance of Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont. He demands she renounce his son: the scandal of Alfredo's affair with her has threatened his daughter's engagement. Violetta says she cannot, but Germont eventually convinces her. Alone, the desolate woman sends a message of acceptance to Flora and begins a farewell note to Alfredo. He enters suddenly, surprising her, and she can barely control herself as she repeats how deeply she loves him before rushing out. A servant hands Alfredo her farewell note as Giorgio returns to console his son with reminders of family life in Provence. But Alfredo, seeing Flora's invitation, determines to confront her at the party that evening.

#### *Scene II*

At her soirée, Flora learns from the Marquis that Violetta and Alfredo have parted, then clears the floor for a band of Gypsies and dancers, who sing of a bullfighter and his coy sweetheart. Soon Alfredo strides in, making bitter comments about love and gambling recklessly at cards. Violetta has arrived with Baron Douphol, who challenges Alfredo to a game and loses a small fortune to him. Everyone goes in to supper, but Violetta has asked Alfredo to stay behind. Fearful of the Baron's anger, she wants Alfredo to leave, but he misunderstands her apprehension and demands that she admit she loves Douphol. Crushed, she pretends she does. Alfredo calls in the others, denounces Violetta and hurls his winnings at her feet. As the guests rebuke him and Douphol challenges him to a duel, the elder Germont enters in search of his son and also denounces his behavior.

### ACT THREE

In Violetta's bedroom, Dr. Grenvil tells Annina that Violetta has not long to live; tuberculosis has claimed her. Alone, Violetta rereads a letter from Germont saying the Baron was only wounded in his duel with Alfredo, who has now been told the truth and is on his way to beg her pardon. But Violetta senses it is too late. Paris is celebrating Mardi Gras, and after revelers pass outside, Annina rushes in to announce Alfredo. The lovers ecstatically plan to leave Paris forever. Giorgio Germont enters with the doctor before Violetta is seized with a last resurgence of strength. Feeling life return, she gets out of bed, staggers and then falls dead at her lover's feet.

## The Characters

**Violetta Valéry** (soprano): A Parisian courtesan. Violetta says she values her freedom above all else, but she has a deeper need for love. She meets Alfredo Germont, who wins her heart, and they struggle to make a life together.

**Alfredo Germont** (tenor): A young bourgeois from a provincial family. He falls in love with Violetta despite his father's disapproval. Alfredo's gambling problem and short temper contributed to their difficulties.

**Giorgio Germont** (baritone): Alfredo's father. He strongly disapproves of the relationship between Alfredo and Violetta, and convinces Violetta to leave his son. He experiences a change of heart at the end of the opera and brings a doctor to aid Violetta in her illness.

**Flora Bervoix** (mezzo-soprano): Violetta's friend. Flora throws a party after Alfredo and Violetta part ways, and Alfredo confronts Violetta there.

**Annina** (soprano): Violetta's maid.

**Gastone de Letorières** (tenor): Alfredo's friend. He introduces Alfredo to Violetta at the beginning of the opera.

**Baron Douphol** (baritone): Violetta's lover, Alfredo's rival. Violetta enters a relationship with Douphol after she leaves Alfredo. The Baron can afford her the lifestyle she is accustomed to. Alfredo cannot handle the betrayal and challenges Douphol to a duel.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Visual Arts: Observation Sheet

**Instructions:** After reading the synopsis and the characters, brainstorm different costume designs for at least two of the characters. Create a design board to organize your costume sketches. Be sure to consider the type of set design that will complement your costume sketches.

**Self-Evaluation:** Answer the following questions for your design board.

1. Which characters did you choose for your costume sketch? Why?
2. What style did you choose for your costume sketches? Is it modern, period, etc.?
3. How did you represent the character in your costume sketch?
4. Give a small description or example of the set design for your costume sketches.
5. What fabric(s) will you use for your costumes?

**Peer-Evaluation:** Answer the following questions to evaluate the design board(s) of your peer(s).

1. Which characters did they choose for their costume sketches?
2. What style did they choose for their costume sketches?
3. Did they represent their characters in their designs? Why or Why not?
4. Do you feel the costumes complement the description or example of their set design?
5. Do you see similarities in their designs and your designs? Provide an explanation for your answer.

# Violetta Party Crown



Necklace

Earrings

