

RIGOLETTO

2022-23 Guidebook
Student Matinee



EXPERIENCE OPERA
WITH US!

A LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear Teachers,

Opera Colorado is pleased to provide engaging educational programs and performances for students across Colorado. What follows is a guide we hope you and your students find useful in exploring Opera Colorado's Student Matinee performance of Giuseppe Verdi's classic opera *Rigoletto*.

In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons connecting the production with different subjects. The lessons reference the Colorado Department of Education's Academic Standards, focusing specifically on third grade expectations. Please feel free to adapt Guidebook materials and use them in the manner most helpful for you and your students. We encourage you to expand, alter, and modify these lessons to best suit you and your students' needs. Following the performance, you will receive a link to a brief survey. Your feedback is much appreciated. We look forward to seeing you at the opera!

Thank you!



- Cherity Koepke -
Director of Education & Community Engagement
ckoepke@operacolorado.org | 303.778.0371



- Bethany Wood -
Manager of Education & Community Engagement
bwood@operacolorado.org | 303.778.7350

Opera Colorado makes every effort to ensure the information provided in this Guidebook is accurate. With the exception of materials used for educational purposes, none of the contents of this Guidebook may be reprinted without the permission of Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs department. Unless otherwise noted, the materials in this Guidebook were written and created by Bethany Wood.

Table of Contents

Story

- 3 Meet the Artists**
- 5 Meet the Production Team**
- 6 Meet the Music Team**
- 6 Quick Facts**
- 8 Synopsis**

Background

- 13 Play vs. Opera**
- 14 Composer Biography**
- 16 Librettist Biography**
- 18 Censorship**
- 19 Writing Rigoletto: Why is the Duke so Bad?**

Lesson Plans & Resources

- 20 Music: Response to Music - Theory of Music**
- 21 Reading, Writing, and Communication: Writing and Composition**
- 23 Drama and Theatre Arts: Critically Respond**
- 26 Bibliography**

MEET THE ARTISTS

For the Student Matinee performance, Opera Colorado's Artists in Residence perform the principal roles. Each season, Opera Colorado auditions over 350 emerging artists from across the country for its Artists in Residence Program. During their eight-month residency, the selected six singers and one pianist bring opera to students across the Rocky Mountain region. This year's performance also features returning artist Thomas Lynch in the title role!



THOMAS LYNCH
RIGOLETTO



FRANCESCA MEHROTRA
GILDA



DAVID SOTO ZAMBRANA
DUKE OF MANTUA



JOANNE EVANS
MADDALENA/GIOVANNA

MEET THE ARTISTS

For the Student Matinee performance, members of the mainstage cast join Opera Colorado's Artists in Residence. Cody Luan sings in the chorus of our mainstage *Rigoletto*, and Jill Skinner plays one of the women of the Duke's court.



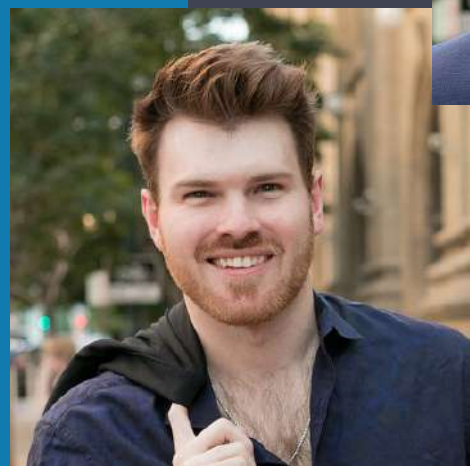
CODY LAUN
BORSA



DANTE MIRELES
MARULLO



KEITH KLEIN
SPARAFUCILE



TURNER STATON
MONTERRONE



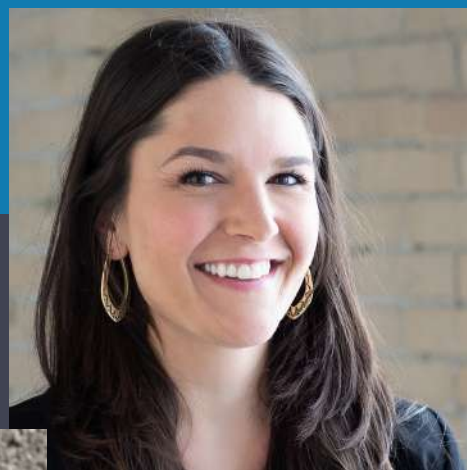
JILL SKINNER
PAGE

MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Opera Colorado's production of *Rigoletto* has over 200 people working behind the scenes. This includes technical staff, production staff, design staff, dressers, and stage hands.



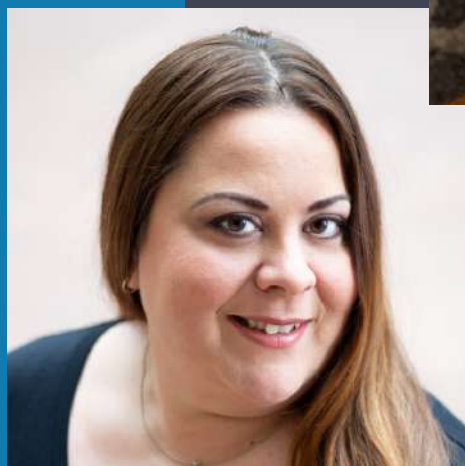
IAN SILVERMAN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



ALISON MILAN
COSTUME DIRECTOR



MARCIE FRIEDMAN
STAGE MANAGER



RONELL OLIVERI
WIG AND MAKEUP DESIGNER



BEN KARASIK
PRODUCTION MANAGER

MEET THE MUSIC TEAM

Members of Opera Colorado's music team for *Rigoletto* work with the on-stage performers as well as the fifty-seven members of the opera's orchestra.



SAHAR NOURI
CONDUCTOR



OLEG BELLINI
REPETITEUR



NATHAN SALAZAR
PRINCIPAL REPERTOIRE
COACH



CODY GARRISON
CHORUS MUSIC
REHEARSAL ACCOMPANIST



ANGIE DOMBROWSKI
ORCHESTRA MANAGER

Quick Facts

Composer: Giuseppe Verdi
Librettist: Francesco Maria Piave
Premiere: March 11, 1851
Source: Adapted from the 1832 play by Victor Hugo
Setting: Mantua in the 16th century

Monterone's Curse

The plot of *Rigoletto* revolves around the curse Monterone, the grieving father, calls down on Rigoletto and the Duke, bringing ultimate doom by the opera's end. Verdi originally planned to highlight the importance of the curse by titling the opera *La maledizione* (*The Curse*). He wrote to the librettist Piave, saying, "The whole theme [of the opera] lies in that curse." Verdi insisted on Monterone only appearing twice in the opera to say "a very, very few, strong, prophetic words" in order to give the curse dramatic emphasis.

272

Opera companies worldwide will stage 272 productions of Verdi's many operas in the 2022-23 Season.

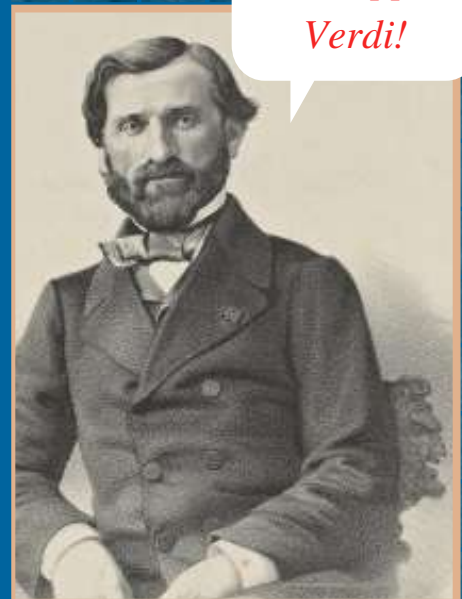
26

26 companies will produce *Rigoletto* as part of their 2022-23 Season.

7

Rigoletto was Verdi's seventh major opera.

*I'm
Giuseppe
Verdi!*





RIGOLETTO

BASICS

Main Characters

Duke of Mantua (Maun-TU-ah) - The corrupt leader of Mantua who cares only about parties and flirting.

Rigoletto (ree-go-LEH-toh) - The Duke's jester. His sharp tongue has made him many enemies.

Monterone (Mon-ta-ROH-nah) - An official who is grieving because the Duke has wronged his daughter.

Gilda (JEEL-dah) - Rigoletto's daughter. Her father keeps her hidden from society and only allows her to leave the house to attend church.

Giovanna (Gee-o-VAH-nah) - Gilda's servant and keeper.

Sparafucile (Spar-uh-foo-CHEE-leh) - An assassin for hire.

Maddalena (ma-da-LEH-nah) - Sparafucile's sister. She helps him trick his victims.

Brief Summary

Operas portray grandiose stories about overwhelming emotions and momentous events. This way, the grandeur of the plot matches the grandeur of the staging and the music. *Rigoletto* achieves heights of emotion and horror through what one historian has described as "blood-and-thunder romantic melodrama." *Rigoletto* tells the story of a court jester, whose jokes embolden the cruelties of the Duke he serves. When the Count of Monterone seeks justice, Rigoletto mocks his pleas, and the revered man places a curse on the jester. That evening, the Duke preys on Rigoletto's daughter, Gilda. Rigoletto seeks revenge, but his plot unwittingly destroys his one source of happiness when Gilda decides to sacrifice her life to save the Duke's.



RIGOLETTO

PLOT SUMMARY

act one, scene one - *Setting: A grand room in the Duke of Mantua's palace where the Duke is giving a ball*

The Duke of Mantua sings about the many beautiful women dancing at the ball. All women entrance him, he says, and no single woman will rule his heart.

Meanwhile, the Duke's advisers believe they have discovered a secret – Rigoletto, the Duke's jester, has a sweetheart! The advisers have all been hurt by Rigoletto's teasing at one time or another and plot to kidnap Rigoletto's supposed mistress to avenge the humiliations they have suffered.

Suddenly, the Count of Monterone barges into the palace. He accuses the Duke of dating his daughter and then abandoning her, breaking her heart. Monterone wants justice, but Rigoletto makes fun of him as well, mocking his tears. Enraged, Monterone calls down a curse on both Rigoletto and the Duke. Rigoletto is afraid, but the Duke says the curse is nothing to worry about.

(Continued on next page)



Illustration of the curse from Le roi s'amuse, 1832 Bibliotheque Nationale de France



RIGOLETTO

PLOT SUMMARY

act one, scene two - *Setting: The courtyard of Rigoletto's house and a nearby street*

As he walks home that night, Rigoletto meets a strange man, a hired assassin named Sparafucile. The man offers Rigoletto his services, but the jester refuses.

Rigoletto reaches the courtyard of his house, and his daughter Gilda runs to meet him. Gilda has recently returned home after finishing her schooling at a convent, where she was sent after her mother died. Now that she is home, she longs to explore the city, but Rigoletto forbids her from going out. He is afraid the Duke's advisers will kidnap Gilda to exact revenge on Rigoletto.

Rigoletto calls for Gilda's guardian, Giovanna, who assures him she is always careful to lock the courtyard door. Just then, Rigoletto hears someone in the street. When he goes outside to check, the Duke, disguised as a commoner, sneaks into the courtyard, throwing Giovanna a bag of money to ensure her silence. The Duke has come to flirt with Gilda.

As he hides, the Duke learns Gilda is Rigoletto's daughter! Rigoletto leaves, unaware the Duke is in the courtyard with Gilda. The Duke emerges from hiding and declares his love for Gilda but tells her he is a poor student. Unaware the Duke is lying, Gilda pledges her love, promising to be his forever.

Suddenly, they hear someone coming. The Duke flees, thinking it is Rigoletto, but the sound is really the Duke's courtiers, come to kidnap Gilda. Just as the men are about to climb over the courtyard wall, Rigoletto returns. The courtiers trick Rigoletto into joining them, saying they are playing a joke. They give Rigoletto a mask to wear, but, in the dark, he does not realize it is really a blindfold. While Rigoletto steadies the ladder, the men take Gilda away. Realizing something is wrong, Rigoletto tears off his mask. He sees Gilda's scarf on the ground and knows Monterone's curse has come true—Rigoletto has lost his daughter to his enemies!

(Continued on next page)



The Duke woos Gilda in Opera Colorado's 2014 production - photo by Matthew Staver



RIGOLETTO

PLOT SUMMARY

act two - *A drawing room in the Duke of Mantua's palace*

The Duke, concerned about Gilda's fate, vows to find who has taken her. Just then, his advisers enter, laughing about how they have taken Gilda from Rigoletto and brought her to the palace. Delighted that Gilda has been found and, even better, brought to his palace, the Duke leaves to claim her for his own.

Rigoletto enters and begs the courtiers to return his daughter, but they refuse. Gilda then enters, weeping because the Duke has been treating her poorly and she is deeply hurt. Rigoletto is enraged. Gilda begs her father to forgive the Duke, but Rigoletto vows to take his revenge.



act three - *A rundown inn on the bank of the Mincio river on the outskirts of Mantua*

Rigoletto takes Gilda to spy on the people at an inn on the banks of the Mincio river. Sparafucile, the hired assassin, runs the inn with his sister Maddalena.

Rigoletto and Gilda see the Duke enter the inn and flirt with Maddalena. Gilda's heart is broken as she hears the Duke promise Maddalena the same love he once swore to her.

Rigoletto sends Gilda home, telling her to disguise herself as a man and flee to Verona, where he will meet her later. He then pays Sparafucile to kill the Duke, arranging to return at midnight to throw the Duke's body into the river personally.

(Continued on next page)

The censors did NOT approve of acts two and three of *Rigoletto*. Learn about their reactions on page 18 of the Guidebook.



Gordon Hawkins as Rigoletto in Opera Colorado's 2014 production - photo by Matthew Staver



RIGOLETTO

PLOT SUMMARY

act three - *A dilapidated inn on the bank of the Mincio river on the outskirts of Mantua*

After the Duke falls asleep, Maddalena argues with her brother; she has fallen in love with the Duke and does not want to kill him. Gilda, who has returned disguised as a man, overhears their conversation. She hears the siblings agree to kill any stranger who enters the inn and place the stranger's body in a sack, which they will then give to Rigoletto, telling him it is the body of the Duke. Maddalena agrees to the plan, but worries no one will come, since a violent storm is approaching. Summoning her courage, Gilda knocks on the door, determined to give her life in place of the Duke's. Maddalena opens the door, and lightning flashes as Gilda meets her death.

The storm dies down, and Rigoletto enters to claim the Duke's body. He carries the shrouded body to the river, rejoicing in his victory over the Duke. Just as he is about to heave the sack into the river, Rigoletto hears a voice singing. It is the Duke!

Tearing the sack open, Rigoletto sees Gilda, who revives long enough to reveal what has happened. Crying out in despair, Rigoletto realizes Monterone's curse has come true—Rigoletto's actions have destroyed his own daughter!





The final scene in act three of Opera Colorado's 2005 production

Play → Opera

Rigoletto closely follows the plot of Victor Hugo's 1832 play *Le roi s'amuse* (*The King Amuses Himself*). Learn which parts inspired Verdi.

Play



- Verdi argued “*Le roi s’amuse* is the greatest subject and perhaps even the greatest drama of modern times.”
 - Hugo's jester Triboulet inspired Verdi, who said: "Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare!!" and “[He is] one of the greatest creations that the theatre can boast of, in any country and in all history.”
- 
- 
- The timeline is a bit longer in the play; Triboulet waits over a month to enact his revenge, performing at court as he bides his time.
 - Hugo's Francis I (the Duke character in the opera) sings:
"A woman oft doth change,
and mad is he who trusts her!"
lines supposedly written by Francis I himself.

Opera



- Verdi's opera follows Hugo's play closely, keeping much of the action and characterization.
 - Verdi's opera keeps much of Hugo's characterization for the main character Rigoletto.
- 
- The opera added Gilda's understanding of her mother as a protective angel.
 - The song in Hugo's play inspired Verdi's catchiest tune, the famous "[*La donna è mobile*](#)."



Verdi c. 1855 - New York Public Library

Composer Biography: Giuseppe Verdi

"I adored and I adore this art; and when I am alone and am wrestling with my notes, then my heart pounds, tears stream from my eyes, and the emotions and pleasures are beyond description."
— *Verdi writing to Piave, 1860*

October 10, 1813 - January 27, 1901

Today, musicians, producers, and audiences recognize Giuseppe Verdi as one of the most influential composers in opera. Although extremely talented, Verdi experienced many disappointments on his path to becoming famous.

Born in 1813 near Busseto, Italy, Verdi began to love music at a young age, fascinated alike by tunes from the passing organ grinder and music played and sung at church. Verdi's parents worked hard operating an inn and tavern, and they supported their son's interest in music, even giving him a spinet, a type of small harpsichord, which Verdi often played late into the night. He also played the organ at church, and, at the age of ten, became the part-time organist at San Michele Arcangelo.

By this time, Verdi's impressive musical talent earned him the patronage of Antonio Barezzi, a local merchant who gave money to help young musicians afford their studies.

When he was twelve years old, Verdi enrolled in a music school run by librettist and composer Ferdinando Provesi, who taught him piano and composition. As a teenager, Verdi composed numerous pieces in different styles, including marches, church music, theatre pieces, and choral music. At the age of eighteen, Verdi applied for admission to the Imperial Royal Conservatory for Music in Milan. His parents, mentors, and sponsors wrote letters of support, and Verdi performed well at his audition. Despite Verdi's hard work and talent, the men in charge of admissions felt he was too old to become a great musician, and one admissions official stated that Verdi "would turn out to be a mediocrity."

Verdi was deeply disappointed, but he did not give up. Instead of returning home, he requested funds from his sponsors and stayed in Milan.

(Continued on next page)



Composer Biography: Giuseppe Verdi (Continued)

Illustration of Verdi and his operas - New York Public Library

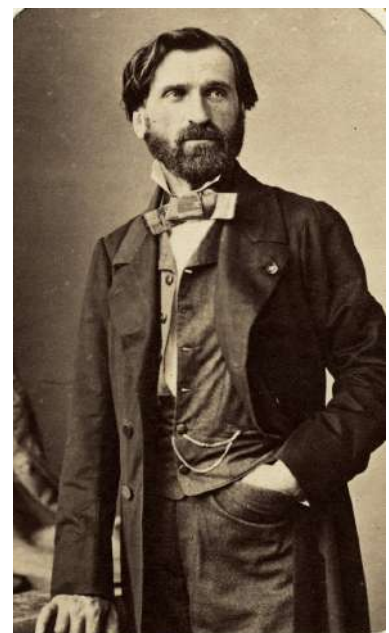
While in Milan, Verdi decided to take private music lessons with Vincenzo Lavigna, who had served as the music conductor at the Teatro alla Scala, the most famous opera house in Italy.

Verdi left his studies abruptly to return home to Busseto, where he expected to receive an appointment as maestro di cappella and organist for the vestry of San Bartolomeo, a prestigious and well-paid job. The church, however, had other plans, and Verdi was once again disappointed. Ever resilient, Verdi found work conducting the local Philharmonic.

In 1836, Verdi married Margherita Barezzi, his patron's daughter. The couple soon moved to Milan, where they hoped a theatre would produce Verdi's newly-finished opera. When no one in Milan seemed interested, Verdi tried to sell the idea to theatre managers in Parma, but they were not interested either. Finally, the manager of La Scala accepted *Oberto* for production, and, in 1839, Verdi's first opera received a prestigious debut. His next opera

Nabucco, premiered at La Scala in 1842 and established Verdi as the foremost composer of Italian opera in his day. Numerous operas followed, including *Ernani* (1844), based on a play by Victor Hugo and written with the librettist Francesco Piave. Verdi's most famous works include *Rigoletto* (1851), *La traviata* (1853), *Aida* (1871), *Otello* (1887), and *Falstaff* (1893).

Worldwide, the 2022-23 opera season will see 272 productions of Verdi's works, bringing his music to audiences across the globe in over 1,900 performances.



Verdi - Stiftung
Stadtmuseum, Berlin



Piave - portrait by G. Favretto

Librettist Biography: Francesco Maria Piave

May 18, 1810 - March 5, 1876

Francesco Maria Piave was born in Murano, a series of islands just one mile north of Venice. Murano was famous for the art of glass making, and Piave's father owned a glass factory. When their family fell on hard times, Piave and his father moved to Rome in order to find work. Piave, who had studied at the seminary in Venice, found jobs writing and translating and became friends with poets and literati in Rome.

After the death of his father, Piave returned to Venice in September 1838, where he worked as a proofreader and editor for a publisher named Guiseppe Antonelli. Piave also wrote about the arts for the *Gazzetta privilegiata di Venezia*, a magazine for privileged Venetians.

(Continued on next page)





Librettist Biography: Francesco Maria Piave (Continued)

Photograph of Piave

In 1841, Piave turned his efforts to writing a libretto for composer Samuel Levi, an adaptation of Carlo Goldoni's *La bottega del caffè* (*The Coffee House*). The work was never performed, but the exercise gave Piave his first experience writing for opera. Piave completed a second libretto, for composer Giovanni Pacini, and, in 1843, agreed to write a libretto for an opera to be performed at Venice's famed Teatro La Fenice—the composer for this opera was Giuseppe Verdi.

Piave and Verdi had not met, but the two corresponded by letter to collaborate on the libretto for *Ernani*, an adaptation of Victor Hugo's play *Hernani*. Piave completed the libretto in less than two months, but Verdi feared the writer's inexperience with staging had led him to overload the libretto with sections of too many words, which would be difficult for singers to sing and audiences to hear accurately. Traveling to Venice, Verdi met Piave for the first time. Piave and Verdi became close friends, often traveling so that they could work together in person and corresponding regularly when collaborating across distances. Verdi was

sometimes domineering, as when the production of *Rigoletto* was in jeopardy, but Piave remained loyal. Piave once described their friendship as “a faith, a religion, a cult.”

On December 5, 1867, Piave suffered a stroke, which robbed him of his ability to speak and move. Verdi, along with others in the music community, helped support the librettist and his family during his illness. During his lifetime, Piave wrote approximately seventy librettos, but today, he is primarily remembered for the ten he wrote for Verdi's operas, including *Macbeth* (1847), *Rigoletto* (1851), and *La traviata* (1853).



Illustration showing
Piave as a jack of all
theatrical trades



CENSORSHIP

Before opening, Verdi's opera had a run-in with the police. Not surprising, given the history of its source.

NOVEMBER 22, 1832 LE ROI S'AMUSE - DEBUT

Victor Hugo's play debuts at the Theatre Francais in Paris.

NOVEMBER 23, 1832 LE ROI - BANNED

The day after Hugo's play premiered, the theatre received a order prohibiting performances because "public morality is outraged in numerous passages of the drama."

NOVEMBER 10, 1850

LIBRETTO DEMANDED

The Venetian police demand a complete libretto for *Rigoletto*.

NOVEMBER 17, 1850

LIBRETTO PROVIDED

Verdi provides the Venetian police with a copy of the libretto.

NOVEMBER 28, 1850

RIGOLETTO - BANNED

The Austrian Military Governor of Venice forbids the production, saying the story is "disgustingly immoral and obscenely trivial."

JANUARY 24, 1851

LIBRETTO APPROVED

The Venetian police approve the revised libretto.

MARCH 11, 1851

RIGOLETTO - DEBUT

The opera audiences and critics praise the music, although several express misgivings about the morality of the content.

1882

LE ROI - SECOND PERFORMANCE

Fifty years after its debut, *Le roi s'amuse* receives its second performance.

Read about the adaptation on the next page



Writing Rigoletto: Why is the Duke so Bad?

When Verdi suggested Victor Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse* as a source text for his next opera, the composer knew he would encounter opposition from censors charged with preventing rude and distasteful material from reaching the stage. In 1832, French censors had banned the play the day after its debut, in large part, because of its depictions of the king as a grossly immoral man.

Verdi, however, saw tremendous dramatic potential in *Le roi*, particularly in the main character, the jester Triboulet. In a letter to Piave, Verdi exclaimed, "*Le roi s'amuse* is the greatest subject and perhaps even the greatest drama of modern times. Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare!!" Verdi feared censors might prohibit the depictions of wickedness that were important to the plot and urged Piave to "turn Venice upside down and make the censors allow this subject."

Piave and the management of La Fenice, Venice's opera house, endeavored to do as Verdi asked, but, once authorities reviewed the libretto, their decision was immediate: the Austrian Military Governor of Venice forbade the opera, calling the story "disgustingly immoral and obscenely trivial."

While *Rigoletto*'s attempt to assassinate the Duke did not sit well with the authorities, their

main objection was the Duke's immorality, particularly his behavior towards Gilda.

The managers of La Fenice received permission to proceed with the opera if Verdi would reform the Duke's treatment of women. Verdi refused, explaining to Piave that "all the dramatic developments result from the frivolous, licentious character of the Duke." The Duke had to be an evil character in order for the plot to make sense. Verdi argued, "The Duke absolutely must be a libertine; without that, Triboulet's [*Rigoletto*'s] fear that his daughter will emerge from her hiding place isn't justified, the drama is impossible . . . on the conscience of an artist I cannot set this libretto to music."

Ultimately, the censors agreed to allow Verdi's opera as long as the composer changed the location and implications of some of the action, so local powerful noble families would not interpret the wickedness of the Duke as a slight on their own families.

Accordingly, the Duke in *Rigoletto* remains one of opera's most despicable characters. Forman describes him as a "chauvinist, womanizer and cad," and in the 1920s, women at the the Met turned their backs to the stage during Gilda's entrance in act two in order to protest his behavior.

MUSIC

Response to Music - Theory of Music

Hear songs from
the show!

Grade Level: Third (adaptable for other grades)

Time: 30-45 minutes

Overview: Students use "La donna è mobile" to discuss timber elements along with expressive qualities and intent.

Materials:

- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer with internet connection and speakers to play audio and video links embedded in lesson

COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Standards

- 3. Theory of Music
- 4. Response to Music

GLEs

- 3. Identify and demonstrate advanced form, meter, and timbre elements
- 1. Select and use specific criteria in making judgements about the quality of a musical performance (Evidence Outcome a)

Detailed Steps:

1. Context: "La donna è mobile," from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, is one of the catchiest tunes in opera. Verdi reportedly hid the music before the premier so no one could copy his masterpiece.
2. Let students know they are going to listen to "La donna è mobile" a few times. Ask them to just listen the first time. Play "[La donna è mobile](#)" (audio only).
3. Next, have students fold a piece of paper in half. Instruct them to make notes or sketch on one half as they listen, considering the following questions: How does the music make you feel? What does it make you think of? Play "[La donna è mobile](#)" (audio only).
4. Have students share their notes in small groups and/or with the class. As they share their response, encourage them to consider why they responded as they did. What was it about the music that prompted them to say _____?
5. Ask students to unfold the paper. As they listen again, have them make notes or sketches on the blank half with ideas about what it is in the music that inspired their response. Consider instruments, tempo, dynamics, pauses, etc. Play "[La donna è mobile](#)" (audio only).
6. Have students share their notes in small groups and/or with the class.
7. Repeat step five, but this time, show the video, which highlights various instruments. Share responses and then have students consider how they think Verdi wanted the audience to feel when listening to this song. Ask if they believe he was successful in this intent. Why or why not?



READING, WRITING, AND COMMUNICATING

Writing and Composition

Hear songs from
the show!

Grade Level: Third (adaptable for other grades)

Time: 30-45 minutes

Overview: Examples of "La donna è mobile" in popular culture serve as writing prompts for opinion pieces.

Materials:

- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer with internet connection and speakers to play audio and video links embedded in lesson

COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARD

Standard

3. Writing and Composition

GLE

1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Writing and Composition (30-45 minutes)

Description: Students analyze uses of "La donna è mobile" in popular culture.

Detailed Steps:

1. Setup: Ask students to list several products they have seen advertised lately. Write suggestions on the board.
2. Let students know they are about to hear "La donna è mobile." Ask them to make notes or sketch as they listen, considering the following questions: How does the music make you feel? What is the mood of this song? What does it make you think of?
3. Play "La donna è mobile" (audio only). Have students share their notes in small groups and then with the class.
4. The feelings this song inspires make it a popular choice with marketers. Show selected examples from the list below. Ask students to jot some notes about why this song is a good choice (or not) to use in commercials. How do they think customers might feel about products associated with this song? Examples: Pillsbury Breadsticks, Tomato Paste, Doritos, Doritos (again), and Ristoronte Pizza.
5. Either as groups or individually, assign students one of the products listed on the board. Ask students to pretend they are marketers in charge of making an ad for this product. Have them write a brief paragraph arguing why the advertisement should or should not use "La donna è mobile."



MUSIC

La donna è mobile

Lyrics to "La donna è mobile"

Woman is changeable,
False as the weather,
Woman's a feather
Born by the breezes.

She loves variety,
One day she'll kiss you,
Then she'll dismiss you,
Change as she pleases.

Woman is wayward,
False as the weather,
Woman's a feather borne by the
breeze.

And if we trust in her
She will deceive us,
Heartlessly leave us,
Laugh in our faces!

But she is loveable,
So we pursue her,
Tenderly woo her,
Seek her embraces!

Woman is wayward,
False as the weather,
Woman's a feather borne by the
breeze.

La donna è mobile
from Rigoletto

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

Allegretto (♩ = 138)
8 *con brio*

18 *pp*

DRAMA AND THEATRE ARTS

Critically Respond

Grade Level: Third (adaptable for other grades)

Time: 30-45 minutes

Overview: Students use the costumes in *Rigoletto* to analyze artistic choices

Materials:

- Worksheets (pages 24 and 25 of the Guidebook)
- Drawing and coloring materials

COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARD

Standard

3. Critically respond

GLE

1. Perceive and analyze artistic work (Evidence Outcome a)

Critically Respond (30-45 minutes)

Description: Students consider the costumes in *Rigoletto* to analyze artistic choices.

Detailed Steps:

1. Explain that the job of a costume designer is to create clothing that tells the audience something about a character on stage.
2. On the following page, choose one of the costumes from *Rigoletto* and draw or write down your impressions of the clothing. Does the outfit imply a particular country, occupation, economic status, time period, mood, etc.?
3. Ask students to imagine they are the costume designer for a new production of *Rigoletto* or another opera, maybe based on a story they are studying in class. Have them choose a character and draw a costume for that character using the worksheet on page 25. Ask them to make notes about what your costume design reveals about the character.





Rigoletto Costumes

Costumes tell the audience a lot about a character. Choose one of the costumes shared by our costume shop below. Circle your choice. Then, imagine what kind of character might wear these clothes. Feel free to guess, write your impressions, or leave spaces blank.

(Continued on next page)



Job: _____

Favorite Colors: _____

Mood: _____

Status: _____

Time Period: _____

Country or Region: _____

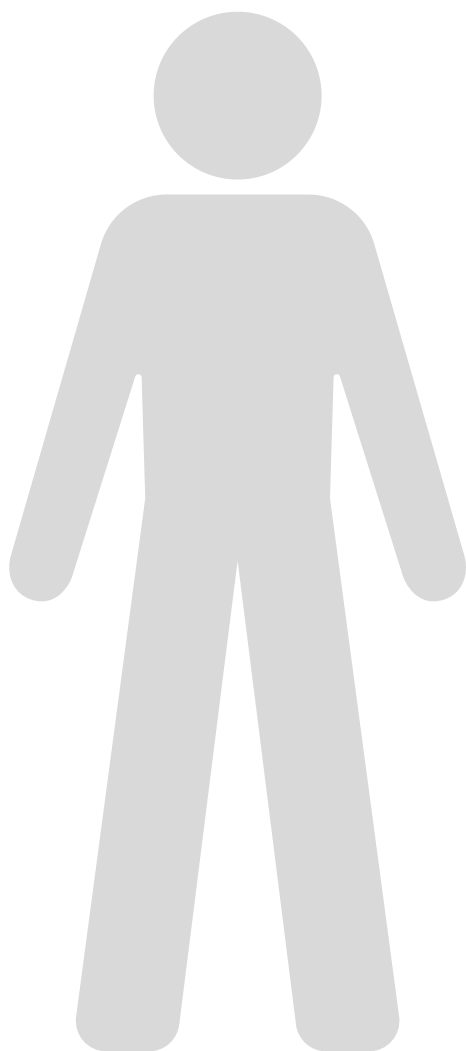
Additional ideas: _____



Rigoletto Costumes

(continued)

Imagine you are a costume designer for an opera! Create a costume for a character of your imagining. Make notes about what you want your design to tell the audience about this character.



Job: _____

Favorite
Colors: _____

Mood: _____

Status: _____

Time
Period: _____

Country or Region: _____

Additional ideas: _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baker, Evan. *From the Score to the Stage: An Illustrated History of Continental Opera Production*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Chusid, Martin. *Rigoletto*, Ricordi Opera Vocal Score Series, University of Chicago Press.
- Forman, Denis. *A Night at the Opera: An Irreverent Guide to the Plots, the Singers, the Composers, the Recordings*. New York: The Modern Library, 1998.
- Grout, Donald Jay and Hermine Weigel Williams. *A Short History of the Opera*. 4th edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Hugo, Victor. *Le roi s'amuse*. Translated by I. G. Burnham. Philadelphia: The Rittenhouse Press, 1895. Hathi Trust Digital Library. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c020934409&view=1up&seq=259&skin=2021>.
- McCants, Clyde T. *Rigoletto, Travatore, and Traviata: Verdi's Middle Period Masterpieces On and Off the Stage*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009.
- Phillips-Matz, Mary Jane. *Verdi: A Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Riding, Alan and Leslie Dunton-Downer. *Opera*. New York: DK Publishing, 2006.
- Rostagno, Antonio. "Piave, Francesco Maria," *Biographical Dictionary of Italians*. Accessed August 11, 2022. https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-maria-piave_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.
- Whiting, Jim. *The Life and Times of Giuseppe Verdi: Masters of Music: The World's Greatest Composers*. Hockessin, Delaware: Mitchell Lane Publishers, Inc. 2005.



Gordon Hawkins as Rigoletto in Opera Colorado's 2014 production - photo by Matthew Staver