



Washington National Opera
The Kennedy Center

Timothy O'Leary
General Director

Francesca Zambello
Artistic Director

Press Release
September 12, 2018

**Washington National Opera presents
Verdi's everlasting story of love and sacrifice**

La traviata

**Artistic Director Francesca Zambello directs grand new production
featuring WNO debuts by Venera Gimadieva, Joshua Guerrero,
and Lucas Meachem**

**Tony Award®-winning designer Jess Goldstein returns to WNO with
costumes evoking turn-of-the-century Paris fashions**

**October 6–21, 2018
in the Kennedy Center Opera House**

Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance on October 19

(WASHINGTON)—Washington National Opera opens its 2018–2019 season with a stunning new production by WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello of Verdi's [*La traviata*](#), October 6–21, 2018, in the Kennedy Center Opera House. Tickets start at \$45. From the famous brindisi drinking song to the heartbreaking “Addio del passato” aria, the original “Pretty Woman” proves it's better to have loved once than not at all. Verdi's romantic masterpiece and familiar tunes are as timeless as the storyline is contemporary, pitting tensions of social class against Violetta's personal sacrifice.

With an elegant new set designed by Peter Davison and costumes by Jess Goldstein, Zambello directs this classic tale for modern audiences. Headlining the main cast in their WNO debuts are Russian soprano Venera Gimadieva (Violetta), hailed by the *Guardian* as an artist of “huge presence, compelling to watch, with a voice of thrilling security and range;” American tenor Joshua Guerrero (Alfredo), whom *The New York Times* called “gifted;” and Grammy®-award winning baritone Lucas Meachem (Germont). Former Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist soprano

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Jacqueline Echols joins tenor Mario Chang (WNO debut) and baritone Michael Chioldi for three performances in the second cast. A special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist performance is presented in the Opera House on Friday, October 19, 2018, and features three first-year emerging artists in the primary roles: soprano Marlen Nahhas, tenor Joshua Blue, and baritone Joshua Conyers. A great interpreter of Verdi works, Italian conductor Renato Palumbo returns to WNO for this run of 11 performances. WNO audiences last saw him conduct Verdi's *Macbeth* in 2007.

The supporting cast for all performances includes Deborah Nansteel (Flora Bervoix), Alexandria Shiner (Annina), Arnold Livingston Geis (Gastone), Michael Hewitt (Baron Douphol), Samuel Weiser (Marquis d'Obigny), and Timothy J. Bruno (Doctor Grenvil).

In addition to Zambello, Davison, and Goldstein, the creative team includes associate director Jennifer Williams (WNO debut), lighting designer Mark McCullough, and choreographer Parker Esse (WNO debut).

As a courtesan, the beautiful Violetta is the life of every party, toasting to high-class pleasures alongside wealthy men. But Violetta holds a devastating secret: she's dying. When the affluent Alfredo admits his love for her, happily-ever-after seems within reach—until his father condemns her past and low social status. As emotions soar, Violetta must make an impossible choice between her own happiness or Alfredo's reputation.

The opera's running time is approximately two hours and 30 minutes, including one 25-minute intermission. *La traviata* is performed in Italian with projected English titles. Visit WNO's [website](#) for more information.

Washington National Opera's 2018–2019 season continues with the company premiere of Kevin Puts's and Mark Campbell's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Silent Night* (November 10–25, 2018); Tchaikovsky's epic *Eugene Onegin* (March 9–29, 2019); Gounod's devilishly entertaining *Faust* (March 16–30, 2019); and Puccini's towering masterpiece *Tosca* (May 11–25, 2019). The season also features a revival of WNO's hit holiday family opera *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* (December 14–16, 2018); new works to premiere during the American Opera Initiative Festival (January 11–13, 2019); a special Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist performance *A Concert of Comic Masterpieces* (May 24, 2019); and other exciting vocal events. [Tickets](#) are available now.

La traviata Performance and Ticket Information

Saturday, October 6 at 7 p.m. ▪ Sunday, October 7 at 2 p.m. ▪ Tuesday, October 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Saturday, October 13 at 7 p.m.

Sunday, October 14 at 2 p.m. ▪ Monday, October 15 at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, October 17 at 7:30 p.m. ▪ Friday, October 19[†] at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 20 at 7 p.m. ▪ Sunday, October 21 at 2 p.m.

[†]Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance

Ticket Information

Tickets start at \$45 and are available [online](#), in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, and by calling (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center's *MyTix* program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. *MyTix* performance discounts for *La traviata* include October 9, 11, and 19. For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/mytix

Opera Insights before every performance, Kennedy Center Opera House

WNO presents a free pre-performance education event prior to every performance of *La traviata*. These events begin one hour prior to curtain in the Opera House and last approximately 20–25 minutes. Musicologist Saul Lilienstein's Opera Insights on Wednesday, October 17, begins at 6:15 p.m. and lasts approximately 35–40 minutes.

La traviata Production Information

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, based on the novel *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas

La traviata is a co-production of Washington National Opera, The Atlanta Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Seattle Opera, and Indiana University.

Performed in Italian with Projected English Titles

October 6, 7m, 9, 11, 13, 14m, 15, 17, 20, and 21m

Cast and Creative Team

Violetta Valéry	Venera Gimadieva * Jacqueline Echols ± (10/7m, 14m, 20)	Conductor	Renato Palumbo
Alfredo Germont	Joshua Guerrero * Mario Chang * (10/7m, 14m, 20)	Director	Francesca Zambello
Giorgio Germont	Lucas Meachem * Michael Chioldi (10/7m, 14m, 20)	Associate Director	Jennifer Williams *
Flora Bervoix	Deborah Nansteel ±	Set Designer	Peter Davison
Annina	Alexandria Shiner ‡	Costume Designer	Jess Goldstein
Gastone	Arnold Livingston Geis ‡	Lighting Designer	Mark McCullough
		Choreographer	Parker Esse *
		Assistant Director	Joshua Horowitz *
		Stage Manager	Lynn Krynicki

Baron Douphol	Michael Hewitt ±
Marquis d’Obigny	Samuel Weiser ‡
Doctor Grenvil	Timothy J. Bruno ±
Giuseppe	Aurelio Dominguez
Messenger	Rob McGinness
Flora’s servant	Spencer Adamson

* Washington National Opera Debut

± Alumnus of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

‡ Current member of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program

La traviata: The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Performance

Friday, October 19, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Center Opera House

Cast

Violetta Valéry	Marlen Nahhas ‡
Alfredo Germont	Joshua Blue ‡
Giorgio Germont	Joshua Conyers ‡
Flora Bervoix	Deborah Nansteel ±
Annina	Alexandria Shiner ‡
Gastone	Arnold Livingston Geis ‡
Baron Douphol	Michael Hewitt ±
Marquis d’Obigny	Samuel Weiser ‡
Dottore Grenvil	Timothy J. Bruno ±

La traviata Related Programs and Events

Washington National Opera’s *La traviata* in Context

Monday, September 24 at 6 p.m., Embassy of Italy, 3000 Whitehaven St., N.W.

Presented by WNO, the Embassy of Italy, and the Italian Cultural Institute. Join WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello and other special guests for a program of discussion and music that explores the composer’s inspiration as well as the historical and social context of Verdi’s romantic masterpiece. Opera stars from the production perform some of the opera’s most beloved arias. Admission is free but reservations are required. Visit the website of the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) for more information and reservations.

Guided Rehearsal: *La traviata*

Sunday, September 30, 2018 at 7 p.m., Kennedy Center Opera House

Explore the Arts. Audience members get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of a world-class opera production through this unique open rehearsal experience. Through audio headsets, attendees can learn more about the production through expert commentary while watching a rehearsal with piano and the professional cast. Visit the [WNO website](#) for ticket information.

Musical Preview of *La traviata*

Thursday, October 4 at 6 p.m., Kennedy Center Family Theater

Enjoy a free preview of musical highlights from this timeless classic, starring members of WNO's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. *Free general admission tickets will be distributed in the Hall of States starting at approximately 5:00 p.m., up to two tickets per person.*

Artist Q&As: *La traviata*

Immediately following the performances on Sunday, October 7; Sunday, October 14; Monday, October 15; and Sunday, October 21, Kennedy Center Opera House

Join WNO artistic staff for a wide-ranging discussion with the artists for an inside scoop on the production. These events are free to patrons presenting a *La traviata* ticket and begin immediately after the performance.

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of newly appointed General Director Timothy O'Leary and world-renowned Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse repertory of grand opera across three main venues of the Kennedy Center. From classic operas to more contemporary pieces each season, WNO's artistic output also includes several commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts, youth operas, and events.

Recent celebrated productions have included the world premiere of Philip Glass's reconceived *Appomattox*, presented in conjunction with cultural events throughout Washington, D.C.; the powerful performances of Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars*; and the massive feat of WNO's first-complete *Ring* cycle, which was helmed by Zambello and played to sold-out houses following international acclaim.

Founded in 1956 and an artistic affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of more than 100 new productions, plus world premieres, international tours, live recordings and radio broadcasts, as well as innovative education and community-engagement programs. Throughout its history, WNO has been led by titans in the opera field, including the legendary Plácido Domingo who headed the company for 15 years, as well as luminaries such as Music Director Emeritus Heinz Fricke and former Director of Artistic Operations Christina Scheppelmann.

Among the company's most successful programs is the *American Opera Initiative (AOI)*, a commissioning program that develops new one-act works for WNO's annual festival. By mentoring emerging composers and librettists, the Initiative works to expand the American operatic repertory and enhance its relevance to our time. Since its inception, AOI has commissioned 28 chamber opera world premieres, with some going on to future productions around the country.

With a commitment toward youth, WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 17th season, is one of the nation's most competitive professional training programs, providing two years of intensive study to a highly selective cadre of young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to successful careers at major opera houses worldwide. The WNO Opera Institute nurtures the ambitions of high-school-age singers from across the nation during an intensive three-week summer program held at American University in Washington.

The most popular of WNO's community-engagement programs is *Opera in the Outfield*[®], a free Kennedy Center Opera House production broadcast on the high-definition scoreboard at Nationals Park. The company's other education programs include the Kids Create Opera program at local elementary schools,

Look-In performances for students in grades 3–8, and the Student Dress Rehearsal Program for middle and high school students. The company also offers free Opera Insights programs before every performance in the Opera House.

Discover [Washington National Opera](#) on social media:



#LatraviataDC

FUNDING CREDITS

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WNO's Presenting Sponsor
General Dynamics

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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