



LA TRAVIATA BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Music by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901). Libretto in Italian by Francesco Maria Piave, based on "La Dame aux Camélias," play by Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, after his novel by the same name. The play is known in English as "Camille." Premiere: Venice, March 6, 1853. Romantic tragedy. Set numbers; recitative. Setting: Paris; time, about 1850. Originally in three acts; present-day productions usually in four acts, dividing the original Act II (116 min).

ACT I: Violetta's Paris salon, luxuriously furnished (31 min). ACT II: A villa near Paris (33 min). ACT III: Ballroom in Flora's mansion (22 min). ACT IV: Violetta's bedroom (30 min).

Synopsis. At one of her brilliant supper parties, the beautiful but frail demi-mondaine, Violetta Valéry, meets the well-born Alfredo Germont, and for love of him abandons her feverish life of pleasure. Alfredo's father intrudes on their idyllic existence in the country and, although realizing her sincerity, persists in his demand that Violetta renounce Alfredo. Violetta determines to make the sacrifice and departs, leaving only a note for Alfredo. She appears at a ball in Flora's house on the arm of an old admirer, Baron Douphol, to the fury of Alfredo. The two men play at cards; Alfredo wins consistently. Unable to persuade Violetta to go with him, Alfredo insults her and is challenged by the Baron. Violetta becomes ill, and all her friends desert her, leaving her virtually penniless. Alfredo at last returns. His father has told him of Violetta's noble renunciation, and urged him to seek her forgiveness. Overjoyed at the sight of him, Violetta attempts to rise. But it is too late. As Germont and the doctor enter, Violetta dies in Alfredo's arms.

**--Reprinted from *Opera Production: A Handbook* by Quaintance Eaton
(University of Minnesota Press, 1961).**