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VERDI'S



Rigoletto

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, based on the 1832 play *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo **First Performance** on March 11, 1851 at La Fenice in Venice

Dates April 23, 25, 29 at 7:30 pm April 27, 2:30 pm | The Royal Theatre **Sung in** Italian with English surtitles

This performance is approximately two hours and thirty minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.

CAST

Rigoletto	. Grant Youngblood
Gilda	. Sarah Dufresne
Duke of Mantua	. Matthew Pearce
Sparafucile	. Matthew Treviño
Maddalena	. Marion Newman
Count Monterone	. James Demler
Marullo	. Justin Welsh
Matteo Borsa	. Jan van der Hooft
Count Ceprano	. Andrew Greenwood
Countess Ceprano	. Jayne Hammond
Giovanna	. Rebekah Janzen
Usher	. Graeme Linton
Page	Michaela Dickey

With the **Victoria Symphony** and the

Pacific Opera Chorus

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor Robert Tweten
Stage Director Glynis Leyshon
Set Designer James Rotondo
Costume Designer Pam Johnson
Lighting Designer Gerald King
Chorus Director Giuseppe Pietraroia & Assistant Conductor
Fight Director Jacques Lemay
Intimacy Director Treena Stubel
Stage Manager Christopher Sibbald
Assistant Stage Manager Giselle Clarke-Trenaman
Assistant Stage Manager Katerina Sokyrko
Royal Theatre Stage Employees and Running Crew, Members of IATSE Local 168

Cast and programme are subject to change

House Programme Design Trapeze Communications | **Synopsis** Robert Holliston **Production & Editor** Rhonda Ganz











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Rigoletto
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Synopsis

ACT ONE

At a lavish party he is hosting, an amoral Duke reveals to his courtier Borsa that he has met a sweet young girl in church. She believes him to be an impoverished student, and he means to have her—and any other woman that catches his fancy. He particularly enjoys seducing women in front of their loved ones, as he proceeds to do with Countess Ceprano, knowing that her husband, the seething Count, can do nothing to avenge the dishonour. This insult is compounded by the Duke's court jester Rigoletto, who mocks the Duke's victims mercilessly and with absolute impunity, knowing that his boss will protect him from retaliation. The courtier Marullo hurries in with a delicious piece of gossip: Rigoletto has a mistress. The courtiers determine to strike back at the despised court jester.

The evening's festivities are brought to an abrupt stop by the arrival of Count Monterone, the outraged father of a young woman the Duke has debauched and discarded. Rigoletto viciously ridicules Monterone's grief: in response, the Count hurls a vehement father's curse at both the Duke (who is unaffected) and the jester (who is profoundly unnerved).

Walking home through the dark back streets, Rigoletto is approached by Sparafucile—a self-described "assassin for hire." The jester declines the assassin's services—for now.

Rigoletto arrives home to visit briefly with his beloved daughter Gilda, whom he has kept sequestered from the world in a convent since the death of her mother until recently bringing her to live with him—thus preserving her innocence, but also making her vulnerable to an outside world she does not really comprehend. In fact, she is the young girl the Duke has met at church, and whom he is wooing under an assumed name—Gaultier Maldé—and an assumed identity—a poor student. The ruse has been successful: Gilda has fallen in love from afar with this apparently ardent and idealistic young man. Of course she dare not tell her father; the young girl's only guardian during Rigoletto's frequent absences is her unscrupulous nurse Giovanna, who does not hesitate to accept a bribe from the disguised Duke, who arrives and professes love to the enraptured Gilda. Warned by Giovanna that someone is coming to the house, the Duke leaves, and the courtiers arrive to abduct Rigoletto's "mistress." They are interrupted by the jester's return; he is easily fooled into helping them kidnap "Countess Ceprano," but the real prey is his own daughter; by the time he comprehends that a trick has been played on him, Gilda has been abducted and taken beyond his protection. The father's curse!

Intermission

ACT TWO

The next morning, the Duke is pouting because Gilda has apparently abandoned him. The courtiers arrive with their gift: Rigoletto's "mistress." Meanwhile Rigoletto, searching for Gilda, confronts the courtiers, revealing that the girl is not his mistress but his daughter, and begging for their compassion. The courtiers remain unmoved—if anything, this is an even sweeter revenge. Gilda emerges from the Duke's chambers distraught and dishevelled, but full of compassion for the man for the man she now knows to be the Duke. They are interrupted by Monterone who, on the way to execution, regrets that his curse has had no effect on the Duke and his debauchery. In response Rigoletto swears vengeance on the Duke, both for himself and for Count Monterone.

ACT THREE

Between the second and third acts, Rigoletto has been in contact with Sparafucile, determined as he now is to avenge his daughter and the Count's. The Duke has been lured to a tavern on the outskirts of the city, occupied by Sparafucile and his sister (and co-conspirator) Maddalena, who is attractive enough to arouse the Duke's interest and persuasive enough to lure him to the hut. The Duke arrives in high spirits and sings the opera's most famous number, in which he claims that women are fickle and unreliable, thus justifying his own fickleness and unreliability.

Outside the hut, Rigoletto forces his daughter to witness the Duke's seduction of Maddalena as he professes love with the very same words he once used on Gilda. He orders his heartbroken daughter to flee the city; he will join her the next morning. However, Gilda stays outside the tayern.

As a storm begins to rage, Rigoletto and Sparafucile settle on a price to kill the Duke and arrange that Rigoletto will return for the body at midnight. Unfortunately, Maddalena is now intrigued by the Duke, and convinces her brother to spare him, even suggesting that they kill Rigoletto instead. Ultimately they agree that if a stranger comes to the tavern seeking refuge from the storm, they will substitute that victim for the Duke. Overhearing this, Gilda decides to sacrifice her own life, thus she knocks on the door and meets her fate.

Rigoletto then returns to collect the Duke's body. As he prepares to throw the sack containing the corpse into the river, he hears the Duke's voice in the distance, singing one of the most familiar tunes in all opera. Rigoletto rips open the sack to find Gilda. Struggling to breathe, she begs him to find forgiveness, and promises she will be watching over him in heaven. But with her last breath the Count Monterone's curse is fulfilled.





GRANT YOUNGBLOOD | Rigoletto

This is Mr. Youngblood's début at Pacific Opera Victoria. His 2023/24 season included performances of *Rigoletto* at Opera Delaware and Opera Baltimore; chamber music with the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, the Pyxis Piano Trio, and the Navo Ensemble of Omaha; a return to Virginia Opera for performances of Sharpless in Mo Zhou's new production of *Madama Butterfly*; and a role début as Jack Rance in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* for Central City Opera.

SARAH DUFRESNE | Gilda

Soprano Sarah Dufresne has been celebrated for her "style and elegance" (*Bachtrack*), and "richness of tone... angelic high notes and admirable control" (*ArtsDesk*). This season saw Sarah make role débuts as Ophelie in Thomas' *Hamlet* (Opéra de Montréal), Semele in Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae* (Bayerische Staatsoper), and Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, which marks her company début with Pacific Opera Victoria. She looks forward to reprising the role with Vancouver Opera next season.

MATTHEW PEARCE | Duke of Mantua

Tenor Matthew Pearce is praised for his "confidence, brightness and high level of control." In 2024/25, he sings Don Pizzarro in Paer's *Leonora* (Chicago Opera Theatre), the Duke in *Rigoletto* (Pacific Opera Victoria), and his sixth Don José in *Carmen* (Kentucky Symphony Orchestra), following the Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera, and Washington National Opera. Last season, he performed with Livermore Valley Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Dallas Symphony, Chattanooga Symphony, and in a workshop with the Metropolitan Opera.

MATTHEW TREVIÑO | Sparafucile

Matthew Treviño is hailed as "a bass of rare talent" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and is a winner of the Austin Critic's Table Award for Best Singer. Matthew is making his company début with Pacific Opera Victoria as Sparafucile in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. This past season, Matthew's engagements included Bartolo in Calgary Opera's *Le nozze di Figaro* and Dr. P. in Nashville Opera's *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*.



MARION NEWMAN | Maddalena

Marion Newman, a Kwagiulth and Stó:lō mezzo-soprano, débuted with Pacific Opera Victoria in *Wozzeck* (2003) and returned for *The Tempest, La Cenerentola, Suor Angelica,* and *Missing*. She has performed with major Canadian opera companies and orchestras, with recent highlights including *Migrations* (Welsh National Opera) and *Song from the Uproar* (City Opera Vancouver). Marion is an Assistant Professor of Voice at UVic and hosts CBC's *Saturday Afternoon at the Opera*.



JAMES DEMLER | Count Monterone

In 2024/25, bass-baritone James Demler returns to the Metropolitan Opera covering Benoit/Alcindoro in *La bohème* and sings the same role with Opera Company of Middlebury. Other engagements include *Silent Light* (National Sawdust), Morris in *Adoration* (Los Angeles Opera) and Monterone in *Rigoletto* (Pacific Opera Victoria). Next season, he will sing Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Amarillo Opera). In 2023/24, Mr. Demler sang with the Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Orlando, and the Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra.



JUSTIN WELSH | Marullo

Baritone Justin Welsh participated in Pacific Opera Victoria's first Young Artist Program and made his company début in 2005 as Lapak the Dog in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Most recently, he performed the role of Weidhoff (Braunfels' *Die Vögel*), Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), the Immigration Officer (*Flight*), White Rabbit (*The Garden of Alice*), and Marcello (*La bohème*). Recent performance highlights include Schaunard (*La bohème*, Canadian Opera Company), Barone di Kelbar (*Un giorno di regno*, VoiceBox: Opera in Concert), and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*, Edmonton Opera).



JAN VAN DER HOOFT | Matteo Borsa

Canadian tenor Jan van der Hooft is a local soloist and educator known for his "exciting vocal lyricism." An alumnus of Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Program, he holds a Master's in Voice from McGill University. Jan's Pacific Opera Victoria credits include Bear in *The Flight of the Hummingbird*, and Devon in the 2019 remount of *Missing*. Jan recently performed as soloist with the Victoria Choral Society, and teaches at the Victoria Conservatory of Music and Kaleidoscope Theatre.







ANDREW GREENWOOD | Count Ceprano

After retiring from the Vancouver Fire Department in 2023 after 32 years of service, Andrew has just completed his Master's in Opera Performance at UBC with the following roles: The Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Pandolfe in *Cendrillon*, Frank Maurrant in Street Scene, Le Comte des Grieux in Manon, as well as Vodník in Rusalka in Teplice, Czech Republic. This is Andrew's ninth appearance with Pacific Opera Victoria, last appearing as Zuniga in Carmen, in 2012.



Creative Team

ROBERT TWETEN | Conductor

A native Victorian, Robert Tweten makes his début with Pacific Opera Victoria conducting Rigoletto. Robert has performed extensively and with distinction as both a conductor and pianist throughout the USA, Canada and Europe. He currently holds the positions of Head of Music Staff for the Santa Fe Opera, a position created for him in 2000, Music Director for the Sag Harbor Song Festival, and Music Director of Graduate Opera Studies for the New England Conservatory in Boston.



GLYNIS LEYSHON | Stage Director

With a celebrated career in opera and theatre, Glynis Leyshon has directed over 30 productions for Pacific Opera Victoria, including Die Walküre and The Birds (2023). She was also the dramaturg and director for The Flight of the Hummingbird, which premièred in 2020 and toured BC in 2024, and is looking forward to directing 1979 at Belfry Theatre next season. This production of Rigoletto is co-produced with Vancouver Opera, and will be staged in Vancouver this October.



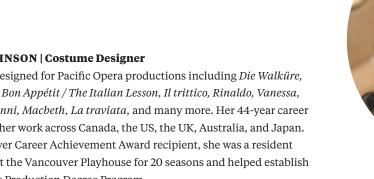
JAMES ROTONDO | Set Designer

James Rotondo (he/him) is excited to return to Pacific Opera Victoria after making his début with The Little Prince. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, James is a set designer for opera and theatre. He and his team won the 2022 Opera America Tobin Director-Designer Prize for their design of Fellow Travelers. Recent productions include Pagliacci (Glimmerglass Festival), Songbird (Washington National Opera), and Into the Woods (Manhattan School of Music). www.jamesrotondo.design



PAM JOHNSON | Costume Designer

Pam has designed for Pacific Opera productions including *Die Walküre*, The Birds, Bon Appétit / The Italian Lesson, Il trittico, Rinaldo, Vanessa, Don Giovanni, Macbeth, La traviata, and many more. Her 44-year career has taken her work across Canada, the US, the UK, Australia, and Japan. A Vancouver Career Achievement Award recipient, she was a resident designer at the Vancouver Playhouse for 20 seasons and helped establish Studio 58's Production Degree Program.





GERALD KING | Lighting Designer

Gerald King has a rich history at Pacific Opera Victoria, including Carmen (2022), Vanessa (2011), Tosca (2013), and The Rake's Progress (2009). He also frequently designs for Vancouver Opera, Bard on the Beach, the Arts Club Theatre, and Citadel Theatre. His work spans opera, theatre, dance, and musical productions, with recent credits including The Flying Dutchman (2023) with Vancouver Opera, and Matilda the Musical (2019) with Citadel Theatre.



GIUSEPPE PIETRAROIA | Chorus Director & Assistant Conductor

Principal Conductor for Pacific Opera Victoria and Associate Conductor for the Victoria Symphony, Giuseppe Pietraroia has guest conducted at l'Orchestre Métropolitain, Orchestra London, Calgary Philharmonic, Hamilton Philharmonic, and the Vancouver, Toronto, Okanagan, Regina, Kingston and Thunder Bay symphony orchestras. He has also conducted productions for l'Opéra de Montréal, l'Opéra de Québec, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Edmonton Opera, Opera New Brunswick, Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Program, and the Institut Canadien d'Art Vocal.



JACQUES LEMAY | Fight Director

Mr. Lemay has directed and/or choreographed hundreds of theatre, opera and dance productions across Canada for stage, film and television including 30 productions for Pacific Opera Victoria. A former Artistic Director of the Charlottetown Festival, he is a founder of three performing arts programs across Canada, including the Canadian College of Performing Arts. He has directed and staged numerous national and international large scale events, including Olympic Games and Royal Visits. An award-winning choreographer, he is a recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal and a member of the Order of Canada.











Read extended bios and meet our artists online.

TREENA STUBEL | Intimacy Director

Treena's past Pacific Opera Victoria appearances include *The Rake's Progress* and *Vanessa*. She is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist and has worked as a dancer, actor, choreographer, intimacy director, artistic director, producer, and instructor. She holds an MFA in Lecoq Theatre from LISPA in London, UK. Next, she will direct *The Swan Song* for Runaway Moon Theatre.

CHRISTOPHER SIBBALD | Stage Manager

Working closely with production and artistic staff to support the creation and execution of Pacific Opera productions, Christopher has worked with the company in carious capacities for over a decade. A graduate of UVic's Department of Theatre (BFA 2010) he has worked in theatres across Canada, including the Belfry Theatre, and both the Stratford Festival and Charlottetown Festival. Favourite credits include *The Little Prince, Flight* (Pacific Opera), *4000 Miles, Griffin & Sabine* (Belfry Theatre); and *Christina, the Girl King* (Stratford Festival).

GISELLE CLARKE-TRENAMAN | Assistant Stage Manager

Recent Stage Management credits include working with Presentation House Theatre in North Vancouver on *The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe,* and *Where the Wild Things Are.* Her program Black History Matters, has reached over 8,000 students with presentations on Black Canadian History. She currently sits on the Board for ASSITEJ Canada and is a member of the Black Pledge Collective.

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Ron Skelton

Supernumeraries Dale Friesen Geoff Malcolm Frank Morin David Radford Treena Stubel

*Appearing with permission of Canadian Actors Equity Association



KATERINA SOKYRKO | Assistant Stage Manager

Katerina is thrilled to be returning to Pacific Opera, where she's worked on *The Little Prince, La clemenza di Tito, Ainadamar, Die Walküre, Cosi fan tutte, The Birds, Don Giovanni, Flight, Il trittico, La traviata, La bohème, Les Feluettes, The Magic Flute, and Missing.* Elsewhere, recent shows include *Jersey Boys, Anne of Green Gables* (Charlottetown Festival); *Hamlet-911* (Stratford Festival); *Hurry Hard* (Chemainus Theatre Festival); and five seasons at the Blyth Festival.

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A distinguished academic and scholar, David was a **steadfast supporter and volunteer** with numerous arts organizations, leaving an indelible mark on Pacific Opera Victoria. Joining the Board in 2008, he served as **President from 2010 to 2014** and later chaired the **Pacific Opera Victoria Foundation from 2017 to 2022**. His philanthropic leadership was widely recognized, including receiving the **Generosity of Spirit Award** from the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Vancouver Island in 2012, the Chancellor's Community Recognition Award from Royal Roads University in 2015, and an **Honorary Doctor of Laws** from the University of Victoria in 2017.

David's passion for opera and dedication to Pacific Opera Victoria will continue to inspire for years to come. In tribute to his generosity and vision, the **David H. Flaherty Fund** at the Pacific Opera Victoria Foundation has been established. Donations to this fund are gratefully accepted in his memory.

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FROM LEFT: Heather Fisher, Paula Bosenberg, Mark Horne K.C., Fiona Hunter, Caroline Deane, John F. Coupar

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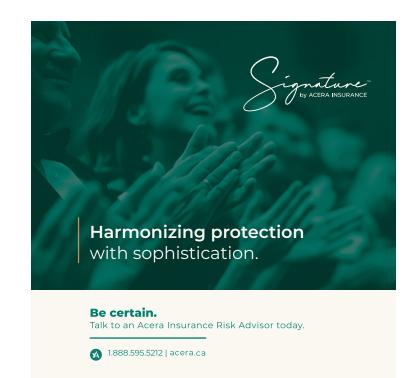
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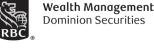


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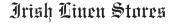




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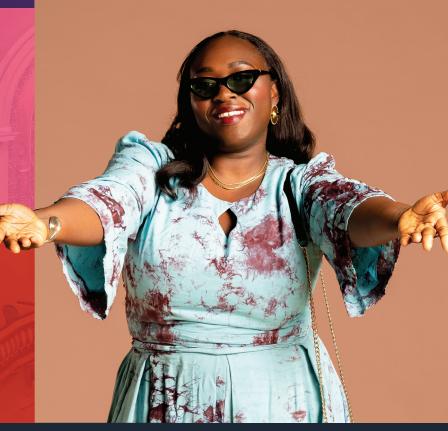
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