MUSIC
Giuseppe Verdi

LIBRETTO
Francesco Maria Piave after Victor Hugo’s Le roi s’amuse

WORLD PREMIERE
Teatro la Fenice - Venice, Italy
March 11, 1851

CONDUCTOR
Stephen Lord

ORIGINAL STAGE DIRECTOR
Jonathan Miller

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
Elaine Tyler-Hall

CHORUS MASTER
Suzanne Mallare Acton

SET/COSTUME DESIGN
Patrick Robertson

LIGHTING DESIGN
Kevin Sleep

REVIVAL LIGHTING DESIGNER
Martin Doone

WIG & MAKEUP DESIGN
Joanne Middleton Weaver

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Rebecca Herman

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Daniel Black

SUPERTITLES
Dee Dorsey

STAGE MANAGER
Ken Saltzman

*Scenery and costumes were created for English National Opera and are owned by English National Opera.
SYNOPSIS

Act 1

Scene 1

The Duke of Mantua is in his club, boasting to one of his followers about his success with women. He proceeds to flirt with the Countess Ceprano, while Rigoletto cruelly mocks her husband. Meanwhile, another acquaintance, Marullo, tells his friends of a surprising discovery: he has heard that Rigoletto has a mistress hidden away at home.

Rigoletto continues to taunt the Count who retaliates by arranging a midnight meeting with some of the other members present where he will extract his revenge.

An elderly nobleman, Count Monterone, enters and denounces the Duke for seducing his daughter. He curses the Duke and when mocked by Rigoletto, Monterone turns on him and curses him as well. The curse strikes terror in Rigoletto, for the woman he lives with is not his mistress, but his daughter.

Scene 2

Brooding over Monterone’s curse, Rigoletto returns to the home he shares with his daughter, Gilda, hiding her away from the licentiousness that takes place at the Duke’s club.

On his way home, he is confronted by Sparafucile, a professional assassin, who offers him his services. Rigoletto sends him away, but then muses on the parallels between their professions.

Gilda greets her father, and begins to ask him questions about their family and background, which he refuses to answer. Determined to protect Gilda he forbids her to leave their home, except to attend church. He also warns Gilda’s companion, Giovanna, not to allow anyone to enter the house while he is out. However, the Duke steals in and hides. While in hiding, he is astonished to hear Rigoletto call Gilda his daughter as he bids her farewell.

Gilda confides to Giovanna that she is in love with a young man who has been following her home every day after church. On hearing this, the Duke appears and declares his love for Gilda, identifying himself as Gualtier Maldé, a penniless student. Hearing footsteps, he rushes off, leaving Gilda thinking lovingly of his name.

The club members appear, masked and ready to abduct Rigoletto’s supposed mistress. He surprises them by returning, but Marullo convinces him that they are planning to abduct the wife of Count Ceprano who lives nearby. Rigoletto falls into their trap, permitting himself to be blindfolded and masked. Unknowingly, he assists the conspirators in their abduction of his daughter. Gilda cries out to her father as she is carried off. Becoming suspicious, Rigoletto tears off the blindfold, realises Gilda is gone and cries, ‘Ah, the curse’!

Act 2

The Duke laments the loss of Gilda but when he is told of the abduction, he rejoices that she is now at his club.

When Rigoletto appears, he feigns nonchalance. Once it becomes clear to him that Gilda must be with the Duke, he tries to reach her, but the club members hold him back. His denunciation of their treachery dissolves into a bereft father’s pleading.

Left alone with Rigoletto, Gilda confesses that she is in love with the Duke and begs her father to forgive him. As Monterone is led to his execution, Rigoletto swears that they both will be avenged.

Act 3

Rigoletto has brought Gilda to Sparafucile to prove her lover’s faithlessness. As they lurk in the darkness, the Duke enters. After proclaiming the fickleness of women, he showers attentions on Maddalena, the assassin’s sister, as Rigoletto tries to comfort his despairing daughter. He orders her to disguise herself as a boy and leave town. After striking a bargain with Sparafucile for the Duke’s murder, Rigoletto departs.

Gilda returns in her disguise in time to overhear Maddalena begging her brother to spare the handsome stranger’s life. Sparafucile agrees to deceive Rigoletto by substituting the corpse of the next person who appears. Having returned determined to sacrifice herself so the Duke may live, Gilda becomes Sparafucile’s next victim.

At the stroke of midnight, Rigoletto pays the assassin and reserves for himself the satisfaction of throwing the sack containing his enemy’s corpse into the river. When he hears the Duke’s voice in the distance, he opens the sack and finds his daughter instead of the Duke. Begging her father’s forgiveness, she dies. The despairing Rigoletto cries out once more, ‘Ah, the curse!’

Courtesy of English National Opera
Suzanne Mallare Acton
Chorus Master
Suzanne Mallare Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages. Conducting credits include *West Side Story*, *The Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *Carmina Burana* with *The Medium* for MOT; *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera; *Merry Widow* and *Madame Butterfly* for Artpark; and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. As founding Director of the MOT Children’s Chorus, Ms. Acton was instrumental in developing the inaugural season. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit’s Rackham Choir.

John Bellemer
Possessed of a voice the New York Times described as “clarion-toned”, John Bellemer continues to appear in leading roles at opera houses across North America and Europe. He has previously sung with Michigan Opera Theatre as Don José in *Carmen* in 2009. Throughout his extensive career, Mr. Bellemer has performed as Faust (Austin Lyric Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre), Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Boston Lyric Opera), Der Steuermann in *Der fliegende Holländer* (Austin Lyric Opera), Rodolfo in *La bohème* (Arizona Opera), Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles* (North Carolina Opera), Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Hawaii Opera Theatre), Alfredo in *La traviata* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), and Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (Maggio Musicale, Florence). Mr. Bellemer holds a bachelor’s degree from James Madison University and a master’s degree from the University of Illinois. He lives in New York with his wife, Sarah Blaze, and their Parson Russell Terrier, Scout.

Matthew DiBattista
Recently described as “brilliant” and “mega-talented” by *Opera News*, tenor Matthew DiBattista makes his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre as Matteo Borsa in *Rigoletto*. He has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Florida Grand Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as other major orchestras, festivals, and conductors across the U.S. and abroad. An alumnus of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Mr. DiBattista has recently performed Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Boston Lyric Opera, the First Jew in *Salome* with Minnesota Orchestra, and he can be heard in recording as the title role in Kamran Ince’s *Judgment of Midas* with Albany Records. In the 2017-18 season, Mr. DiBattista debuts with the Santa Fe Opera as Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and as Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in the summer of 2018.

Harry Greenleaf
Wixom, Michigan native Harry Greenleaf is Michigan Opera Theatre Studio’s resident baritone. He made his debut with Michigan Opera Theatre in 2016 in the role of Top in *The Tender Land*. His credits with MOT also include Le Bret in *Cyrano*, Jake Wallace in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Morales in *Carmen*. He has been a Studio Artist with the Wolf Trap Opera Company, an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera and a Young Artist with the Glimmerglass Festival. He holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and is an alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music. Future performances include working as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival this summer. This season, Harry will perform with MOT as Marullo in *Rigoletto*, Sciarrone in *Tosca* and the roles of Leo Stein and Man Ray in Ricky Ian Gordon’s 27.

Joshua Guerrero
Tenor Joshua Guerrero makes his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as the Duke in *Rigoletto*. Recently Mr. Guerrero was seen at Los Angeles Opera and Zurich Opera in *Macbeth*. He also made his London debut at the English National Opera in *Rigoletto*. In concert, he toured Europe with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolivar Orchestra singing Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and was a featured soloist at the Richard Tucker Music Foundation Gala at Carnegie Hall. Future engagements include debuts with Glyndebourne Festival in *Madama Butterfly*, Florida Grand Opera in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Canadian Opera Company in *Rigoletto* and a return to Santa Fe Opera for *Madama Butterfly*. He will also be heard in a concert of opera arias and duets with soprano Joyce El-Khoury and the NDR Radiophilharmonie, which will be broadcast on television throughout Germany.
Briana Elyse Hunter
Joyce Cohn Young Artist

Briana Elyse Hunter returns for her second year as Michigan Opera Theatre Studio’s resident mezzo-soprano. Her MOT credits include Wowkle in The Girl of the Golden West, Jo March in Little Women, Madeleine Audebert in Silent Night and Mercedes in Carmen. She has been on the rosters of Santa Fe Opera, Knoxville Opera, American Opera Projects, Opera in the Heights, the SING BEIJING festival, Sarasota Opera, El Paso Opera and Music Academy of the West. She most recently performed at The Cimmerglass Festival as Annie in Porgy and Bess and covered Arsamenes in Xerxes. She holds a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music in vocal performance and a bachelor’s degree in theater from Davidson College. This season, she will perform Giovanna and cover Maddalena in Rigoletto and star as Gertrude Stein in Ricky Ian Gordon’s 27 with MOT.

Kenneth Kellogg

Washington D.C. bass Kenneth Kellogg makes his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Count Monterone in Rigoletto. He will reprise the role of Sam Bankhead in Daniel Sonenberg’s The Summer King, which he originated with Pittsburgh Opera in 2017. Performance highlights include Zuniga in Carmen and Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte with Washington National Opera; Mefistofele in Faust and Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte with Opera de Lausanne; Gremin in Eugene Onegin with North Carolina Opera and Young Emile Griffith in Terence Blanchard’s Champion with Opera Parallèle. He holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Music degree from Ohio University. He has also served as a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia and is an alumnus of Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. Future performances include Handel’s Messiah with the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra and Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte with the National Philharmonic at Strathmore.

Matthew Konopacki

Baritone Matthew Konopacki, a native of Livonia Michigan, is an active performer of both classical and contemporary works. Equally comfortable on both the operatic and the concert stage, his repertoire ranges from the cantatas of J.S. Bach to the contemporary operatic music of Kevin Puts. With Michigan Opera Theatre, he has performed the roles of 1st Scottish Soldier in Puts’ Silent Night, Servo in Macbeth, and was a part of the featured ensembles in both David DiChiera’s Cyrano and The Magic Flute. He is also a featured singer on the recent release of DiChiera’s legacy album, Letters & Fantasies. Matthew holds a master’s degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Houston and has appeared as a young artist with Pensacola Opera and the Janiec Opera Company. He will sing the usher role in Rigoletto and perform in the ensemble of MOT’s 2017-18 season.

Stephen Lord

Stephen Lord joined Michigan Opera Theatre as Principal Conductor in November 2016, and he will lead the company’s artistic activities through the 2018-19 season.

Opera News named Lord one of the “25 Most Powerful Names in U.S. Opera” (one of four conductors), and he is continually praised for conducting both traditional and contemporary operatic works. For his debut with San Francisco Opera, conducting Rigoletto, one critic observed, “He partnered his singers perfectly and gave everything its proper weight – he was master of the score’s details and the orchestra played superbly for him.” He is currently Music Director Emeritus for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and was formerly the music director of Boston Lyric Opera.

In addition to this work in Saint Louis and Detroit, he has been a frequent guest conductor at the Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera and the English National Opera, returning there for four consecutive seasons.

An outstanding mentor and discoverer of young talent, he has been directly responsible for the initial work of Lawrence Brownlee, Russell Thomas, Morris Robinson, Susan Graham, Christine Goerke, Patricia Racette and literally scores more of today’s best singers.

Kara Mulder

Kara Mulder, a soprano from Philadelphia, is making her debut with Michigan Opera Theatre as Countess Ceprano in Rigoletto. After achieving her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, she immediately began her Master of Music in Voice at the University of Michigan. Some of Kara’s past roles include Concepção in L’heure Espagnole, Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte, and Juliette in Romeo et Juliette.

Nicholas Pallesen

Baritone Nicholas Pallesen returns to the title role in Michigan Opera Theatre’s Rigoletto having sung in this same production at the English National Opera earlier this year. Later this season, he sings both Rigoletto and Cermont in La Traviata with Oper Köln and Sharpless in Madama Butterfly at the Santa Fe Opera. Nicholas has performed with the Metropolitan Opera and is a former Met National Council Auditions Finalist, where he was featured in the documentary, The Audition. Concurrent to his performing career, Nicholas is also a Board Certified Hypnotist and Transformational Coach who...
specializes in assisting artists in career and life. In addition to a full schedule of clients, he speaks regularly on mental wellness at conservatories and young artist programs and is a guest faculty member at Wolf Trap Opera and the New World Symphony. Following this season, Nicholas will retire from performing in order to focus on his private practice.

So Young Park
After performing as the Queen of the Night in Michigan Opera Theatre’s 2016 production of The Magic Flute, soprano So Young Park returns to MOT as Gilda in Rigoletto. A native of Pusan, South Korea, she is a graduate of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist program with the Los Angeles Opera, where she performed the role of Queen of the Night, Gossip in The Ghosts of Versailles and Barbarina in Le Nozze di Figaro, as well as Pat Nixon in the Music Center’s 50th Anniversary Concert. She recently made her Los Angeles Philharmonic debut as a Soprano Soloist in Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy. She has performed the Queen of the Night with Boston Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera (Miller Theater), the Glimmerglass Festival, Hawaii Opera Theatre, and Opera Colorado. Most recently, she returned to Los Angeles as Blonde in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Top Daughter in Akhnaten and Olympia in The Tales of Hoffmann. This season she is a member of the Metropolitan Opera.

Nicole Piccolomini
This season, mezzo-soprano Nicole Piccolomini makes her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Maddalena in Rigoletto. She is a resident concert artist in Kunnersdorf, Germany and will release her first album in collaboration with pianist Christoph Staude featuring songs of Mahler, Wagner, Berg and Brahms. Last season included performances of Quickly in Falstaff with Shanghai Opera, the title role in Maria de Buenos Aires at Theater Bonn, the Page in Salome with Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Erda in Siegfried with Oper Leipzig. Other recent performances include: Das Rheingold and Siegfried (Oper Leipzig); Wesendonck Lieder (Venice Chamber Orchestra); Rigoletto (Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Deutsche Oper Berlin); Cherevichki (Teatro Lirico di Cagliari); Nabucco, Götterdämmerung, Luisa Miller, Das Rheingold, Die Zauberflöte, Elektra, and Die Walküre (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Götterdämmerung and Cavalleria rusticana (Opéra national de Paris). Originally from Long Island, New York, she was a resident artist at the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts and holds a Bachelor of Music from the Juilliard School.

Schyler Sheltrown
Schyler Sheltrown is a soprano hailing from Mattawan, Michigan, where her love for music and opera blossomed, studying with David Hook at Mattawan High School. She is a graduate of Michigan State University, where she received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in vocal performance under the tutelage of Melanie Helton. Since graduation, Ms. Sheltrown has been in hot pursuit of her operatic career, performing across Michigan. In her first year out of school, she received an Encouragement Award in the Michigan District’s Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, performed the role of Princess Yolanda in The Free Lancer with the Comic Opera Guild in Ann Arbor, Michigan and sang her first Beethoven 9th Symphony as the soprano soloist with the Livingston Orchestra in Howell, Michigan. You also may have seen her in the chorus of Carmen last fall. She is thrilled to be back with Michigan Opera Theatre for the full season, especially as the Page in Rigoletto.

Elaine Tyler-Hall
Director, choreographer and former dancer Elaine Tyler-Hall has worked with opera companies worldwide. As a staff director for English National Opera, she has revived ENO productions including Orpheus and Eurydice, Orfeo, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle, The Turn of the Screw and Semele. She has also worked as assistant and staff director for opera companies including the Royal Opera House, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Bayerisches Staatsoper in Munich, Opernhaus Zurich, and the Kammeroper in Vienna and has directed works for the Psappha ensemble, Riverside Opera and Blackheath Halls. Her choreography in opera includes La fedelta premiata (Carnsington Opera), The Jacobin (Scottish Opera), The Greek Passion (Royal Opera House), Benvenuto Cellini (Zurich Opernhaus) and Pelleas et Melisande (Mariinsky Theatre). She has also worked on TV productions and films, including Shakespeare in Love. Revivals of David Pountney’s very popular The Cunning Little Vixen have taken her to London, Venice, Milan, Seville, Tel Aviv, Glasgow, Cardiff and Athens. Earlier this year she revived Peter Sellars’ production of The Gospel According to the Other Mary in Bonn and choreographed and assisted on a new production of Sadko with Daniel Kramer in Antwerp.

Roland Wood
English baritone Roland Wood has performed in prestigious opera houses in the United Kingdom and throughout the world. He was a company principal at the Scottish Opera and has performed with The Royal Opera and the English National Opera. He has also performed at the Glyndebourne Festival, Opera North, the Canadian Opera Company, Santa Fe Opera, the English Touring Opera, Nationale Reisopera, the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Grange
Park Opera. He studied at the Royal Northern College of Music then National Opera Studio in England. Future performances include Rigoletto with the Canadian Opera Company, Renato in Un ballo in maschera with Grand Park Opera and Giorgio Germont in La Traviata with Welsh National Opera in autumn of 2018.

**Erik Van Heyningen**
Bass-baritone Erik Van Heyningen makes his debut at Michigan Opera Theatre as a Studio Artist. He has sung with opera companies across the country, including performing as a Richard Gaddes Festival Artist and a Gerdine Young Artist with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Erik performed as an Apprentice Artist at Santa Fe Opera this summer. An avid recitalist, Erik has appeared in recital in cities such as Toronto, San Diego, Boston, and New York. This season, Erik will perform Count Ceprano in Rigoletto, Figaro in The Marriage of Figaro (cover), Ernest Hemingway in Ricky Ian Gordon’s 27 and Angelotti and the Jailer in Tosca at MOT.

**Joanne Middleton Weaver**
Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the United States in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. Ms. Weaver has since designed at many opera companies throughout the U.S., including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable Michigan Opera Theatre credits include The Magic Flute, Macbeth, The Passenger, Frida, The Merry Widow, Faust, Margaret Garner, Cyrano and The Pearl Fishers.

**Christian Zaremba**
Praised by the New York Times as “a stage animal with a big bass voice,” Christian Zaremba makes his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Sparafucile in Rigoletto. He has recently performed as Master Fal in the U.S. premiere of Milhaud’s La mère coupable with On Site Opera; Colline in La Bohème with Portland Opera and Opera Omaha; Collatinus in The Rape of Lucretia, Bartolo in Le Nozze de Figaro, Passagallo in Gassmann’s L’Opéra Seria with Wolf Trap Opera; Jake Wallace in La fanciulla del West with Opera Omaha; and Commendatore in Don Giovanni with New York’s Venture Opera. A graduate of New York University, Mr. Zaremba was previously a stage combat-fighter in multiple productions with the Metropolitan Opera. In the 2017-18 season, Mr. Zaremba will return to the Metropolitan Opera for his stage debut as Angelotti in Tosca and will make his debut with Austin Opera as Zuniga in Carmen.
Some Like It Rethought:
The Artistic Integrity of a Mob Rigoletto

By Michael Yashinsky

In Michigan Opera Theatre’s Rigoletto, the company stays close to the truth of the story while diverging fascinatingly from the piece’s original place and period. So says Principal Conductor Stephen Lord of the Jonathan Miller production, which moves the action from the ducal court of 16th-century Mantua to the mob underground of 1950s New York City. Lord, with great excitement and conviction, chose to bring this production of the Giuseppe Verdi classic to open his first full season as MOT’s artistic leader. He will also conduct the opera as he has done once before with English National Opera in London.

Since the production’s premiere at the ENO in 1982, audiences have taken to the clever temporal shifts in the staging. In Francesco Maria Piave’s libretto, Rigoletto is a miserable jester in the employ of the Duke. Here, he is a bartender working for a mafia don. But the story is the same: the title character’s love for his daughter, his failure to protect her from a world of sinister men, her longing for freedom tragically twinned with her faithfulness.

All of those same values drive the action in this production, says Lord, though the singers may sport fedoras, not farthingales, and crew cuts, not codpieces. To demonstrate the production’s dramatic integrity, Lord borrows a metaphor from outside of opera. He tells the story of the Canadian musician Glenn Gould reviving interest in the music of Bach by playing it on the piano instead of the traditional harpsichord. While in the middle of the last century, it was considered a bold choice, Lord maintains it was not overly bold:

“Glenn Gould was a brilliant musician,” Lord said. “He made this work in a way that was and continues to be a revelation.”

The key, Lord finds, is reinterpreting the opera in a way that is not distracting from its fundamental themes.

“If Glenn Gould came out and played Bach on the piano, wearing a clown costume, where the clown costume distracts from the music and from Bach and from what Mr. Gould is trying to do, then it’s junk!” he said. “We don’t want to wear clown costumes. But we do want to present great works in a way that maybe they’ve not been done before, but also, as Glenn Gould did with Bach, allowing the public to hear and see things in another way—while retaining the essence.”

It is apt that Lord alludes to a master of a different field to explain the company’s choice to present the opera this way. It was said that Verdi himself could hold forth in brilliantly erudite fashion on an altogether different artistic discipline: sculpture. He was deeply interested in the plastic arts and counted many sculptors among his friends. Some have even written that his operas betray a fascination with starkly molded and monumental personalities, grand and terrible, and that the excitement of his signature duets comes from seeing these contrasting types meet
each other face-to-face, notes of music like shards of stone flying as the characters clash.

Opera is, after all, an all-encompassing art form, one in which a variety of disciplines – singing, acting, dancing, painting, carpentry, lighting, bowing the cello and banging the timpani – get to know each other, uniting to create a new whole out of the practiced parts. It is appropriate, then, that a composer for the operatic stage should have diverse interests, extending beyond the orchestra pit. And it is appropriate that a conductor should have them, too, and likewise, a stage director.

Miller’s inspiration for his staging of Rigoletto came from a Marilyn Monroe movie. A chance conversation with his wife had reminded him of a silly exchange in 1959’s Some Like It Hot. A mob boss, “Spats” Colombo, played by George Raft, is being questioned by one Detective Mulligan about a massacre that took place in Chicago:

MULLIGAN: Say, maestro, where were you at 3 o’clock on St. Valentine’s Day?
SPATS: Me? I was at Rigoletto.
MULLIGAN: What’s his first name? Where’s he live?
SPATS: That’s an opera, you ignoramus.

And so the seed was planted and was watered with a keen sense for the parallels that connect the opera’s plot to the mafia mise-en-scène. In the mad, melodramatic, mighty Rigoletto, we get powerful people considering doing away with rivals by having them imprisoned or bounced out of town. We hear about upholding family honor and insults that cannot be tolerated and a plan to dispose of a corpse in that most stereotypically mafia fashion: tossing it into the river so it can sleep with the fishes. And we are exposed to a horrible cycle of violence and vendettas, of acts of revenge that top the acts that prompted them in horror and severity but that ultimately bring greater ruin still on the avenger’s head.

Lord recognized the resounding power in these dramatic echoes.
“"The story has relevance, and yet is slightly removed from everyday life in our time,” he said. “It is removed just enough so that the way in is fascinating.”

The “way in” to a great work is personal. For Lord, Gould channeling Bach on the piano is his way in to the idea of risk-taking, of pushing the envelope, while adhering to the truth of an original creation. Perhaps Verdi’s way in to writing opera was imagining his characters as sculpture. Miller’s way in for this production was Hollywood gangster movies.

Audiences are now invited to find their own “way in” to Rigoletto, a way in to a new emotional sensation or philosophical rumination as they sit in 2017 Detroit and watch a drama play out in the bars, hotels, and tenements of 1950s New York. Fedoras optional.
Greetings from the MOT Volunteer Association.

I have been an opera lover for many years and Michigan Opera Theatre is very important to me. Our MOTVA volunteers provide the company with a tremendous level of support. We have more than 700 members who serve as ushers, tour guides, and Boutique volunteers. Our Divas and Divos provide artist hospitality, and the Opera League and Dance Council members hold parties to celebrate moments such as opening night performances. Our members logged almost 20,000 volunteer hours last year. Bravi!!

If you are not yet a volunteer please consider joining us! Volunteering is a great way to meet other interesting and involved patrons. For membership information please view the MOTVA web page at michiganopera.org/working-with-us/volunteer or call Christina Wagner at (313) 237-3236.

Christina would be happy to speak with you and connect you with those volunteering in support of Michigan Opera Theatre.

To those who currently support us through the gifts of your time, I offer my sincere thanks. To those reading about our volunteer program for the first time, please consider joining.

Sincerely,

Terry Shea, President, MOTVA

MOTVA Committees, Chair(s)
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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Doctors and parents are advised to leave their seat location (located on ticket) and our emergency number, (313) 237-3257, with their service or sitter in case of an emergency. Please observe the lighted exit signs located throughout the theater. In the event of an emergency, please remain calm and walk - do not run - to the nearest exit. Our ushers are trained to lead you out of the building safely. A trained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) is onsite during most events. Please see an usher or staff member to contact the EMT.

RESTROOMS

Ladies’ restrooms are located off the Ford Lobby (Broadway Street entrance), down the stairs; and on the third floor (Madison Street entrance) - press “3R” on the elevator to reach this facility. Gentlemen’s restrooms are located under the Grand Staircase and also on the third floor (Broadway Street side) - press “3” on the elevator to reach this facility. All third floor restrooms are wheelchair accessible. A unisex, wheelchair accessible restroom is located in the Cadillac Opera Café.

NO SMOKING

The Detroit Opera House is a smoke-free facility.

USHERS

Ushers are stationed at the top of each aisle. If you have a question or concern, please inform an usher, who will contact management. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, please call the House Manager at (313) 237-3252.

LOST & FOUND

Lost and Found is located in the Safety and Security Department. Please see an usher if you have misplaced an article, or call (313) 961-3500 if you have already left the theater. Items will be held in Lost and Found for 30 days.

SERVICES

Concessions stands are located on all levels. Please note that food and drinks are not permitted in the auditorium at any time. Coat Check is located at the Guest Services desk in the Vincent Lobby (Madison Street side). Please note that the Detroit Opera House does not accept responsibility for any personal articles that are not checked at the coat check.

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