Act 1, “Fuoco di gioia” (“Joyous Bonfire”)

Verdi was a lifelong admirer of Shakespeare’s plays. Early in his career he composed Macbeth, and he struggled for years to write an opera based on King Lear before finally abandoning the project in frustration. In his 70’s he was roused from retirement by his friend and collaborator Arrigo Boito, who presented him with a libretto based on Shakespeare’s great drama Othello. Verdi was inspired to compose the crowning operatic tragedy of his career, Otello.

The opera begins tumultuously on a stormy night in 16th century Cyprus. The Moor Otello, a general in the Venetian army, returns from a victorious sea battle with the Turks. As the storm subsides, the elated, cheering crowd builds a bonfire to celebrate the victory.

The short woodwind passage below represents the flickering and crackling of the fire as it begins to die out. The soft 16th-note runs must be played very evenly in order to maintain proper ensemble with the oboe, clarinet, and piccolo. The piano accompaniment begins right at [Ala], marked $\cdot=120$.

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**FLUTE EXCERPT #1 (Music begins next page)**

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**RIGOLETTO**

“‘A ‘singing hunchback!’ someone may say. Well, why not… I believe, in fact, that it would be very beautiful to depict this character, externally deformed and ridiculous, and inwardly full of passion and love. I chose this subject precisely for these qualities and these original features, and, if they are removed, I cannot write the music…”

— Giuseppe Verdi, in a letter defending his opera to the director of Teatro La Fenice
Act 1, No. 6, “Caro nome” (“Treasured name”)

Rigoletto, Verdi's portrayal of intrigue, treachery, and revenge at the 16th-century Mantuan court, survived initially heavy criticism from the Venetian censors and went on to spectacular success. Verdi's characterizations are unusually multi-faceted and rich in human complexity. The title character is the hunchback court jester of the Duke of Mantua. An outwardly bitter, caustic man, Rigoletto is a loving and protective father to his beautiful daughter Gilda. The Duke, a deceitful man of easy-going morals, decides to seduce Gilda, whom he has spied in church. One evening he steals into the courtyard of her home and declares his love for her. Before leaving, he falsely identifies himself as “Gauitier Maldé, a poor student.” After the Duke has left, Gilda muses ecstatically over his name in an aria that reveals the depth of her newly awakened love for him. Solo and duo flutes play an important role in the famous coloratura display piece, “Caro nome.”

Gilda’s rapturous state of mind is represented by the slowly ascending flute arpeggios of the introduction, which are accompanied by triads in the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. Listen carefully to the woodwinds’ tuning so you can blend your intonation with theirs. The eighth-note articulations should be gentle and legato. Beware of a tendency among sopranos to elongate the phrases of the introduction; the flutist must often stretch the end of the arpeggios in measures 6-9 to accommodate this tendency. The last three notes of measure 9 are almost always significantly held back to match the soprano’s phrasing.

Although today’s conductors often prefer to hear the flute duet that begins the aria proper played in a simple, uninflated manner, “old school” conductors generally modify the rhythm in the following ways: 1) The three dotted-eighth-note upbeats are somewhat sustained, with a short fermata on the highest note at the end of the 4th bar of [A]. 2) The staccato 16th-notes in the penultimate measure are often played with a slight accelerando. 3) A small rallentando on the fourth beat leads to a sudden break before the final note of the measure, which is then played gently into the concluding half note.

The excerpt begins p, marked at J=80 although it’s often played more slowly; the E Major section begins p at J=76-84.

According to the Ricordi score, right at [A], the slur only lasts for 2 notes and the following downbeat is tongued. In the 2nd full bar of [A], the 1st flute part is correct and the 2nd part’s slur should match the 1st, based on Ricordi. The 4th and 6th bars of [A] should also match this based on the score. However, it is traditional for flutists to slur the whole bar in all three occurrences.
LA TRAVIATA

GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813-1901)

The first performance of Verdi’s tragic romance La Traviata was the greatest failure of his career. The role of Alfredo, the sensitive young lover, was premiered by a hoarse tenor far past his prime, while the beautiful, frail heroine Violetta was played by a soprano of such ample proportions that the audience howled with laughter as she lay “dying” of consumption in the opera’s sorrowful final scene. Verdi withdrew the opera, revised and recast it, and presented it again about a year later. The second staging met with tremendous success, and La Traviata went on to become one of his most popular operas.

Excerpt 1: Act 1, No. 2, Violetta’s Party

The plot centers around the love affair between Violetta Valery, a pleasure-loving Parisian courtesan, and Alfredo Germont, a sincere young man from a respectable provincial family. The opera begins in Violetta’s lavish salon, where she is presenting one of her thrilling, festive parties. Violetta and Alfredo are introduced and fall in love. The party’s exuberant, frenetic energy is conveyed by the brilliant woodwind passage on the following page.

Play the trills as quickly as possible, sustaining them into the staccato eighth notes that follow. The tempo is generally played at $J=176-184$. Some editions don’t use staccato dots in bar 4 (and note that other quarter notes are not staccato). The slur 1 at 3 bars before [1] should only cover the 16ths, and not continue to F#. In the 6th bar before [1], the grace note should be A, not G.
Accurate rhythm and clarity of articulation are the technical requirements of this excerpt. It is equally important to play expressively by playing long, well-shaped phrases, avoiding an accent on the first note of each bar. Maintain a steady tempo by practicing with a metronome to make sure you don’t rush the notes before a breath, or take too much time for the breath. If you have difficulty with the breathing, play with a lighter sound until you feel more comfortable with the long phrases.

In an audition, you should breathe in the 9th and 20th bars after P just after the first eighth note. In an orchestral setting, with a greater need for projection, you can take a quick breath three bars after Q in place of the G, if necessary. Be sure to practice this excerpt in different tempi in preparation for an audition.
Rossini wrote very well for Piccolo! In these two passages, evenness in phrasing is important. Both passages are played in unison with two other instruments. The first is with Bassoon and Clarinet, the second with Oboe and Clarinet. Do not cut off the second note of the triplet. The line should continue for two measures. Crescendo to the quarter-note tied to the sixteenth, and then diminuendo the 16ths in strict rhythm. This applies whenever this figure occurs. Although the passage ends poco crescendo, I have played for conductors who prefer having the phrase end with a diminuendo. Is is difficult to accomplish this, but the effect is wonderful.

The edition shown here originated with Breitkopf and is sometimes called the "German version." There is also an "Italian version" originating from Ricordi which lacks the piccolo solo at measures 345-376.

**EXCERPT 1**

In 217-219, every beat begins with an accent according to the orchestra score, just like 193-195.

*The piano accompaniment begins 8 bars (plus pickup) before your entrance.*

**EXCERPT 2**

At 350-352 and 374-376, the score does lack the accents which appear in Excerpt 1, suggesting the phrase can build more flowing. When playing this with the orchestra, be sure to match articulation style with the other winds.

*The piano accompaniment begins 8 bars (plus pickup) before your entrance.*
EXERPT 2 – from Mvt. IV

Play this passage very evenly and not too fast. The tempo is Largo, \( \text{j} = 50 \). I give a little push on the second pair of tied D♭'s in the 5th bar of the solo to keep the rhythm steady.

Also in the 5th bar after your entrance, on the 2nd beat, the 4th quintuplet note should be C♮ rather than B.

*The piano accompaniment begins at 118.*

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**SYMPHONY NO. 9**

**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, Op. 70**

(1906-1975)

EXERPT 1 – from Mvt. I

The first entrance must be played with a good solid \( f \). Don’t overblow the F’s or they will split. Be sure the C♯’s are in tune in both octaves in the 4th and 5th bars of 9. The descending phrase in the two bars before 10 must crescendo. Don’t play the triplets too fast, so every note will sound.

The tempo is marked Allegro \( (\text{j} = 132) \).

In the 6th bar of 9, the G and C quarter notes should have staccato dots.

*The piano accompaniment begins 4 bars before your entrance, which is at the top of a left-side page.*