

2018 - 2019
RIGOLETTO
BACKSTAGE TOUR INFO

This is the seventh production of *RIGOLETTO* at San Diego Opera. The first production was in the 1968-69 season. (Subsequent productions were performed in the '78-'79; 87-'88; '93-'94; '01-'02; and '08-'09 seasons.)

This season's production of *RIGOLETTO* has us sharing the costumes with Opera de Montreal in exchange for their use of our set for their production also directed by Michael Cavanagh with Lighting Design by Anne Catherine Simard-Deraspe. Both our set and Opera de Montreal's costumes will go on to Calgary Opera immediately after our closing performance.

Staff/Running crew: (51) Stagehands loaded in the set/lighting; (29) Stagehands running the show (carpenters, electricians, AV tech, prop men, fly men)
(21) Wardrobe (wardrobe mistress, dressers, stitchers, launderers; plus (9) Costume crew in shop who do fittings/alterations/builds
(7) Wig and make-up crew plus (1) wig designer
(4) Artistic team (conductor, director, fight instructor, designers)
(18) Music and production staff (incl. asst. designers, asst. director, titles, stage mgrs., dialect coach, music staff, super captain, etc.)

Cast: (14) (8 principals, 6 comprimario);
(16) Chorus (all men);
(9) Supers (7 women, 2 men)

Orchestra: (57) 35 strings, 8 woodwinds, 10 Brass, 1 timpani, 1 percussion.
Plus (1) librarian & (1) personnel manager

Total Budget: \$1,327,434 (for artists, orchestra, crews, building scenery and costumes, everything else).

Vocabulary lesson: COMPRIMARIO

A *COMPRIMARIO* is a small supporting role in an opera (or a singer who sings those roles). The word is derived from the Italian "con primario", or "with the primary". The term usually refers to characters who do not sing any full-length arias or long scenes.

SCENERY:

The scenery was recently purchased from and built by Seattle Opera Scenic Studio and was designed by Robert Dahlstrom. In 2004 he re-designed this production as a Marxist 1930's concept for Seattle Opera - both versions are now owned by SDO. Mr. Dahlstrom designed *BORIS GODUNOV* for SDO in the 2006-2007 season.

RIGOLETTO Scenery in numbers:

- 7 components are shared by reconfiguring RIGOLETTO's house to become the Inn.

CIVIC THEATRE BASIC TECH INFO:

Seats:	2,885	Number of traps:	6 (4'x6' to 4'x18')
Proscenium opening:	56' wide and 29'6" high	Height of grid:	80'
Depth of stage:	56' (86' to back wall)	Number of line sets:	69

PROPS:

The props crew is responsible for the running of the show – making sure props are preset and in place for the start of each scene as well as maintenance if things get damaged or broken. They make sure they know what kind of liquids the singers want when there is wine on stage or if there are any food allergies when there is food to be eaten.

There are often items in a production there can be items that could either be handled by props or by costumes – when something is identified as a “PROPSTUME” we have a discussion about which department will handle those items. Clothes in closets, fans, hankies can often fall into the “propstume” category.

LIGHTING:

The lighting is designed by Anne Catherine Simard-Deraspe. This is Ms. Simard-Deraspe’s first production with SDO; however, she designed the lighting for this production with Mr. Cavanagh at Opera de Montreal. Anne Catherine has been in residence to focus the lights, create the looks of the show, and set cues during the technical rehearsals.

In conceiving this production of *RIGOLETTO* the team wanted to create a world that was not beautiful – so the colors are more saturated, and even the parts that are beautiful – are not beautiful for long. Chaos amplified by color. Anne Catherine and Michael wanted to light a party that was a party that might not be one you were sure you would want to attend – they used post-impressionist artwork and Dadaism as inspiration. Some of the artwork that inspired the lighting is below.

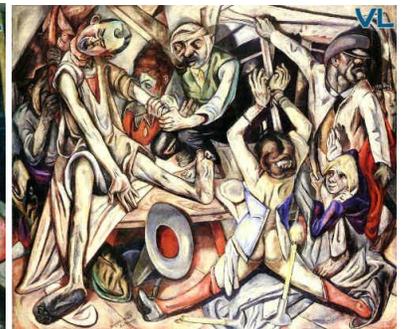
Max Beckmann



Oh, this could be an interesting party.



Oh, this party has taken a turn.



I'm not sure I want to be here.

Image from the Maltese Falcon



RIGOLETTO Lighting by the Numbers:

- 3 Follow spots
- 353 lighting instruments
- 369,840 watts of power - equal to over 147,936 cell phone chargers!
- 15 moving lights
- 6 color changing LED fixtures

Moving lights are flexible, versatile fixtures that have a movable beam. They can be programmed to reposition the beam of light throughout a production and one fixture can be used to create

interesting looks. One moving light can take the place of multiple conventional lights in a lighting rig. They can be programmed in the light board to focus the light like a spot light or to be used as part of the scene to create different moods and textures as well as to create special effects.

Lighting levels (how bright the lights are) are controlled by computer, recorded into lighting states called cues. Once recorded, the cues are played back during performance by pressing a single “go” button. There are 113 light cues recorded in the light console, which were written for the show in Montreal (that’s in Canada), imported into our console, and checked and cleaned up during rehearsals and lighting.

COSTUMES:

The costumes seen this production were built specifically for this production by the Opera de Montreal. The challenge can be that because they had a different cast than the SDO cast you’ll be seeing. Costumes are often built with the understanding that alterations will be necessary. Great care is taken when making alterations and repairs to ensure they hold up not only for our production, but for any future productions as well.

When size differences between casts are so great that they cannot be handled by mere alteration – then that costume may need to be re-built. The Costume Department Supervisor has the responsibility of assessing whether it is more cost effective to actually build a new costume for a singer rather than alter it – surprisingly it can often be less time consuming to build a new costume from scratch than to spend time making alterations and restoring those alterations. The costume shop then refers to the costume “bible” to source the original fabrics and trims to ensure the original vision of the costume design remains true to the designer’s original concept.

Rigoletto’s jester hat was built in the SDO shop for this production by our milliner; and his jester stick puppet got a full make-over for this production so that they would match.

RIGOLETTO Costumes in numbers:

- 64 Looks
- 408 Costume Pieces
- 22 Hats (most have 2 or more feathers)
- 44+ ostrich & pheasant feathers (at \$15-\$18 per feather that’s over \$1,000 in feathers!)
- 41 Pairs of Shoes
- 20 latex pig masks

RIGOLETTO is set during the Renaissance period and the costuming is true to the time when men wore pumpkin pants, doublets and sur coats and hosen (a term for very thick tights). The costumes you’ll see are largely made of velvet, velveteen, and wool (including the hats!). The multicolored piecing of fabric is called “particolored” and was used primarily among entertainers – musicians, minstrels, thespians – and is worn by our jester RIGOLETTO.

There are two quick change booths Stage Right. The stagehands put together these booths based on the unique requirements of the production and the staging. The Wardrobe team and Costume shop supervisor identify locations and the stagehands make sure it happens. This is an illustration of the interdepartmental collaboration and communication required to ensure the production runs smoothly.

WIGS & MAKEUP:

Steven Bryant is the wig and make up designer for this production of *The Marriage of Figaro* and has been with the company since 2005. The run crew for Rigoletto consists of 8 artists, 3 of whom work during the day in between shows to maintain and prep the wigs before each performance.

RIGOLETTO Wigs by the numbers:

- There are 24 human hair wigs
- 1 pair of chops
- 1 beard extension

SPOILER ALERT! Two identical wigs were created for the character of Gilda and her body double.

Principal makeup and wigs are applied in the room at the end of the dressing room hallway or in individual dressing rooms by our crew of Wig and Makeup artists. The chorus and supers have their wigs and makeup applied by additional wig and makeup artists in the rehearsal hall downstairs.

When's the best time to see the dentist?

Tooth Hurty!

The show takes place during the Italian Renaissance (about 1550-1600). During this time period, good hygiene was not a priority. Baths were not taken regularly and teeth often rotted due to not brushing their teeth. This is reflected in makeup design of our male chorus and female supers.

A non-toxic special FX makeup created by theatrical makeup lines, Ben Nye and Mehron, called Tooth Color or Tooth FX is used to create the effect of terrible dental hygiene! The product is painted onto dry teeth so that it may dry and it remains there until removed. It is removed with rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab or by brushing teeth with toothpaste. Tooth FX comes in a variety of colors such as - Natural; Zombie Rot Green and Black for portraying missing teeth - in this production of RIGOLETTO we are using a combination of "Decay Brown" and "Nicotine" - 2 mustardy colors (YUM!).

Because we don't live during the Italian Renaissance, hygiene is a bit more of a priority to us, so for the sake of safety and sanitation procedures, each performer has their very own bottle to be used on only their teeth.

MUSIC - SINGING:

RIGOLETTO is one of the few (and most famous) male only chorus operas in the repertoire. The male voices are used to great effect in creating the "wind" in the Act III storm. Maestro White was strongly against the use of any recorded sound effects because Verdi has composed the storm and has used the human voice and instrumentation to create the imagery and mood to great effect.

It is also a Verdi opera conceived more specifically as an opera of duets (3 in the first act, an extended one in the second act, followed by the "great" quartet of Act III and is without any of his signature "Concertate" finales (la Traviata, Otello, Falstaff). He still manages to include some of the most memorable arias of his entire career – Questa o Quella, Caro Nome, Parmi veder la lagrime, Corteggiani, La Donna é mobile.

MUSIC - INSTRUMENTATION:



The 'cimbasso' is a unique instrument in the trombone family and can be heard in the orchestra for RIGOLETTO. This is a distinctive instrument is not a standard part of a typical orchestral instrumentation, so SDO invested in purchasing a cimbasso several years ago and we are pleased to have you hear it for this opera.

As a term "cimbasso" describes the voice of the instrument as below the trombones and the deepest brass voice. Verdi sometimes preferred blending the timbre of the low trombone over the heavier sounding tuba. This led to the birth of the modern cimbasso in 1881. Giuseppe Verdi inspired the Milanese instrument maker Pelitti to make a valved contrabass trombone with a bell facing forward. Although Verdi only ever wrote two scores specifically for this instrument (*Othello* in 1887 and *Falstaff* in 1893) it nevertheless has become traditional to perform the deepest brass part on the "new cimbasso" most Verdi operas.

The cimbasso is part of the trombone family, but is usually played by the Tuba player because it has the same mouthpiece.

SUPERTITLES:

There are 925 Title Slides (compared to 1,438 for FIGARO) to create the translation – Supertitle Caller and Title Operator work in the title booth in the balcony.