



Review of La Traviata



"Cast varies night to night"
by Aline Waites for remotegoat on 15/02/12

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Upstairs at the Gatehouse has just had an overwhelming success with their superlative production of "Guys and Dolls" and to follow that they are currently hosting the Merry Opera's Production of La Traviata with new libretto by Kit Hesketh-Harvey and a multinational company of young singers.

Traviata is of course one of the world's favourite operas. The story of [Violetta](#) - the doomed fallen woman who makes a supreme sacrifice - was introduced first of all by Dumas (fils) in his esteemed novel 'La Dame Aux Camellias' and was made even more famous by Giuseppe Verdi in his opera. This updated production is set in a burlesque pub in the East End of London, Violetta is a sexy dance hostess and her Alfredo is a young city gent on a slumming expedition to the East End. It is religious differences - not reasons of class - that keep them apart - differences epitomised by Al's father Jerman who manages to persuade Violetta to end the affair.

On the night I went, the part of Violetta was sung by Anna Jweruc-Kopec - a gorgeous Polish soprano of enormous sexual energy and a wonderful soaring soprano who made the difficult arias seem to happen without effort. This is a truly [remarkable voice](#) - slightly marred by the Polish accent which made some of the lyrics unintelligible, but the voice made up for everything. Her sophistication is perfectly matched by the boyishness and innocence of her lover Alfredo - again effortlessly sung by Joseph Morgan. My only slight quibble with these two performers is that they both lack definition with the English words libretto - never as easy to sing in English as it is to sing in Italian. There are no such problems for Swedish Stephen John Svanholm whose every word is carefully articulated.

The cast varies from night to night and it is especially interesting that the chorus is mainly made up from the alternative cast- a jolly band of [cabaret performers](#) including a man in a ballet dress - led by Oliver Brignall as Gaston. The Baron - who owns the club is played with distinction and a subtle sense of danger by Marcin Gesla.

Musical Director Stephen Hose leads the onstage orchestra of five who are centre stage shielded from the action by a circle of naked shop window mannequins each bearing the name of the club - 'LA TRAVIATA' An inventive idea by set designer James Perkins and there is an exceptionally versatile lighting design by Derek Carlyle. Fun costumes are by Fiona Russell and the play is directed by the [Author](#).

Event Venues & Times

finished [Upstairs at the Gatehouse](#) | [Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate Village, London, N6 4BD](#)

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