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978-1-107-00901-1 - The Sounds of Paris in Verdi's *La Traviata*
Emilio Sala, Translated by Delia Casadei
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| THE SOUNDS OF PARIS IN VERDI'S *LA TRAVIATA*

How did Paris and its musical landscape influence Verdi's *La traviata*? In this book, Emilio Sala re-examines *La traviata* in the cultural context of the French capital in the mid nineteenth century. Verdi arrived in Paris in 1847 and stayed for almost two years: there, he began his relationship with Giuseppina Strepponi and assiduously attended performances at the popular theatres, whose plays made frequent use of incidental music to intensify emotion and render certain dramatic moments memorable to the audience. It was in one of these popular theatres that Verdi probably witnessed one of the first performances of Dumas fils's *La Dame aux camélias*, which became hugely successful in 1852. Making use of primary source material, including unpublished musical works, journal articles and rare documents and images, Sala's close examination of the incidental music for *La Dame aux camélias* – and its musical context – offers an invaluable interpretation of *La traviata*'s modernity.

EMILIO SALA is Associate Professor of Musical Dramaturgy at the University of Milan. His research focuses on the musical dramaturgy of opera, melodrama and film music, and his publications include *L'opera senza canto: Il mélo romantico e l'invenzione della colonna sonora* (1995) and *Il valzer delle camélie: Echi di Parigi nella Traviata* (2008). He has published articles and reviews in *Cambridge Opera Journal*, *Musica e storia*, *Musica/Realtà*, *Musicalia*, *Opera Quarterly*, *Orages*, *Revue de musicologie*, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, *Il saggiautore musicale*, *Studi verdiani* and elsewhere.

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*Paris was a perpetual hurly-burly; the men and women in it
were whirled away by a tempestuous waltz.*

Balzac, Le Cousin Pons

Qu'est-ce que l'art? Prostitution.

Baudelaire, Fusées

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The challenge of this book for the translator lies in the rendition of the author's virtuosic handling of primary sources in both French and Italian, particularly in Chapter 2. In order to avoid an excessively glossed translation, I have decided to relay primary sources in translation in the main text. The translations are my own, unless otherwise specified. A word of explanation is in order with regard to the play and novel versions of *La Dame aux camélias*, since both works are key reference sources throughout the book. The novel has been given an authoritative translation by David Coward for Oxford University Press, and this translation will be employed throughout the book. No such indisputably reliable translation exists for the play, which has been adapted into English with the famous title of *Camille* and exists in countless English versions, all of which, however, are stage adaptations rather than sources suited to any kind of scholarly purpose. Indeed, there is no English edition of the collected works of Dumas *fils*, nor any translation of Janin's preface to the second edition of the novel, which is also a key source in the book. With regard to the play and to Janin's preface, then, I will adopt my own translation of the texts as they appear in Alexandre Dumas *fils*, *La Dame aux camélias: Le roman, le drame, 'La traviata'*, ed. Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer and Gilbert Sigaux (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), pp. 481–94.