

## **Detailed Staging Notes**

The set remains constant for all acts, with changes of décor to signify the different locations. We are in an old 19<sup>th</sup> century ballroom, which has been converted into a consumption ward. For a more detailed description of the set, please see the Concept document.

*These detailed staging notes are intended as a guide to the staging concept only, and of course are subject to conversation with the performers and Maestro, and exact stage positions will be worked out in the rehearsal space.*

*Similarly, musical cuts are to be discussed with Maestro and the singers, but standard cuts to the cabalette would be the first to be considered.*

*For the purposes of set descriptions, we are using the following shorthand:*

*Raised floor = the low-rise floor on stage level*

*Stage level = the most DS part of the floor*

*Upstairs = the space on the balcony at the top of the staircase*

*Downstairs = the space underneath the balcony extending to DS*

## **Act I**

We start the prelude with three beds on the raised floor and two beds on the lower level; Violetta is in one of the beds on the lower level. Several nurses are pre-set in the space and Grenville is pre-set on the stairs with the Barone.

As the curtain rises, the light is very low and we see one of the nurses wheeling in a bed on the raised floor. This bed has a patient in it and a doctor comes over to examine them. The patient is then wheeled out through another one of the downstairs doors. A second bed on the raised floor has a patient sitting on it, being spoken to by nurses. This patient is then helped to stand and is taken out through one of the downstairs doors. Grenville motions for the Barone to remain on the stairs – he does so and covers his mouth with a handkerchief as Grenville comes down the stairs looking at foolscap patient notes. He and a nurse reach the patient next to Violetta and check their vital signs. This patient is dead, and the nurse covers the patient's face with a sheet and then their bed is wheeled away. Grenville makes his way over to Violetta and she sits up to talk to him. He takes her pulse and then the Barone enters. He places a hand on her forehead, then talks to Grenville, who indicates that there's nothing more he can do. The Barone removes his wallet and hands Grenville several notes. Grenville then signals for the nurses to take the bed away into the SL wings. Violetta is wheeled away and the others follow her off. While the focus has been on Violetta, several of the other nurses have stripped the raised floor beds of their blankets and pillows, so they are ready to serve as tables in the party scene to follow. The space is still over the last few chords of the prelude. The Barone, Violetta, Grenville and the doctors and nurses now have a quick change into their Act 1 Party costumes.

The sudden burst of new music to start act one is accompanied by two of the downstairs doors being thrown open by servants; from behind the open doors comes a huge amount of golden light reflecting off both the back cloth and the chandelier US of the doors. The next two downstairs doors are flung open in a similar fashion on the next phrase. The final chord is for one of the upstairs doors to be opened by an unseen hand. As the music begins in earnest, crowds of chorus pour in from the golden-hued ballroom US of the wall, as well as from both wings - there is much laughter and chatter. Along with the chorus, several servants enter and re-establish the 'beds' as tables, placing items of food and drink on them. Leading the chorus in their invasion of the DS space is a little boy and a little girl, dressed in their finery, who chase each other around the space. They run an irregular route around the stairs and pillars and end up disappearing under the tablecloth of one of the tables, having stolen some food from the table above them. On the forte chord, Violetta appears in the upstairs door in her Act 1 Party costume, accompanied by the Barone, and everyone downstairs looks up to her and applauds – this is her grand entrance and the first time she's been seen in society since falling ill. As she makes her way down the stairs with the Barone, Flora enters with Gastone and Alfredo and several chorus basses and altos. They get teased by the tenors already present at the party and as Violetta comes down the staircase on the Barone's arm, they bow to her in apology for being late.

When Violetta arrives at the base of the stairs, she greets Grenville straight away with the warm affection – he has, after all, recently saved her life. The guests are invited to go through to the US room for dinner and dancing, and while some go straight away, others stay to talk in small groups or present themselves to Violetta and other guests.

Gastone introduces Alfredo and Violetta takes advantage of a passing servant with a tray to take a glass of champagne '*Sarò l'Ebe che versa*'. The Brindisi takes place with Alfredo forced to mount the staircase while everyone else gathers downstairs to look at him. The little children lift up the tablecloth to watch the brindisi. There is polite applause at the end of his toast (which Alfredo is very grateful for) and then Violetta pushes her way through the crowd to add her own verse to the toast. Alfredo sits on the stairs and watched her as she stands on the first couple of stairs to deliver her verse. They finish the toast by clinking their glasses together, maintaining eye contact.

Renewed light from the US ballroom captures everyone's attention and people start to go through into the ballroom. The two little children emerge from underneath the tablecloth and the boy bows to the girl, she curtseys in return, and then they run off into the ballroom.

Violetta falls at the base of the stairs, clutching the banister as she does so. Alfredo makes a start towards her, and when she falls a second time he rushes down to her but is pushed out of the way by Grenville, who is greatly concerned. As Alfredo starts

to make a second attempt to reach Violetta, the Barone brushes him aside and stands behind Grenville observing his actions. Gastone pulls Alfredo back and waits for the chorus to enter the ballroom. Eventually, Grenville and the Barone leave Violetta and walk off together into the ballroom talking quietly. The scene in the ballroom is one of dancing and moving light as people either dance together or stand in groups talking and watching the dancers.

Violetta notices how pale she is by the colour of her hands as she sits on the stairs, and it is there that Alfredo joins her. He serenades her from beneath the stairs, which she finds both touching and amusing. She attempts to leave the staircase, but Alfredo moves in quickly to block her escape '*Croce e delizia / dimenticarmi*'. Violetta crosses to the centre of the room, but is then met by Alfredo for their cadenze. They are almost about to kiss when Gastone interrupts from the ballroom. Violetta takes a red flower from the vase on the staircase and Alfredo proclaims his love once more, which both amuses and embarrasses Violetta as guests start to come from the ballroom to see where she is. After their last '*addio*', Flora rushes into the space to get Violetta to say that the Barone is looking for her and Alfredo quickly distances himself down the stairs; the Barone re-enters the main space from the ballroom and Violetta and Flora pretend that they have been talking and laughing the whole time. Gastone takes Alfredo to one side and asks him questions about what he's been up to while trying to avoid the looks of the Marchese and the Barone.

Just as the Barone is about to voice his concerns, the chorus rush out of the ballroom and address Violetta. She and the Barone mount the stairs to accept everyone's thanks and Alfredo, trying hard not to be seen, slips quietly into the ballroom. The chorus leave up the staircase and out through the upstairs door and the little children – carried by their mother and father respectively, wave goodbye to Violetta and the other guests, who think them very sweet. The Barone turns back to Violetta to have severe words when Gastone, pretending to be drunk in an attempt to divert him, grasps the Barone around the shoulders and starts to lead him off with the rest of the chorus. The Barone, enraged at being touched, brushes Gastone off and, with a curt bow to Violetta and Flora, follows the chorus off. Flora and Violetta exchange a look and start to laugh at the Barone's jealousy; Grenville comes up to see how Violetta is feeling, but she reassures him that she is well and Flora escorts him out. The servants wait by the doors and, when everyone is through, they close the downstairs doors from US on the last chord of the music.

Suddenly left alone on the balcony, Violetta feels the moment of silence before beginning '*E strano, e strano*'. She starts to come down the stairs when Alfredo sings his first vocal line from the ballroom, which Violetta hears. She drops to the bottom of the staircase to listen to his serenading. As she begins her cabaletta, Alfredo emerges from the ballroom and watches on. He sneaks around to the staircase for the second vocal entry and they come together to kiss before the lights snap out at the end of the act.

### Act II sc i

The structure of the space remains the same, but we are now in a sunroom with plants growing along the pillars and greenery everywhere. Nature is where Violetta feels most at home, and the doors along the back are completely open to allow a view through the room and out to a blue expanse of painted sky beyond. There is some furniture in the DS-SL corner – a table and two chairs with a decanter of chilled absinthe (as was the fashion then) with a tall glass and a small bell. Alfredo is preset on the raised floor, leaning against the banister and reading, while Violetta is below.

As the curtain rises, we see Giuseppe and some others bringing in boxes from US of the wall – these are some things that have arrived from Paris. As they reach Violetta, she points to either of the DS wings to indicate where she would like them put away. Playing on the ground near her is Giuseppe's son with a small puppy (the dog should be either a hunting dog or a retriever). As Giuseppe is sent off, he notices that his son is getting the ground muddy and starts to haul him off. Violetta intercedes and sends Giuseppe's son and his dog out through the wall to play in the sunshine. The boy is excited to do so, and Violetta exits with Giuseppe explaining that it's perfectly fine for children to play. Alfredo sees all of this and Violetta's kindness prompts his aria. During the aria, Giuseppe and the others return and go out again to fetch more boxes.

Annina arrives US and attempts to sneak into the house by entering with one of the servants carrying a box, but Alfredo catches sight of her from the staircase and stops her. They talk and then he takes his coat from the banister and exits US through the doors. Violetta re-enters with a pile of papers which she places on the table DS-SL and then encounters Annina. Giuseppe, on his way back into the house with another box, stops and gives Violetta a letter that he has been given on the way and then continues his journey to exit DS-SR. Germont enters US with his daughter Blanche and encounters Giuseppe and the other servants on their way back for a third trip. Germont turns to tell Blanche to wait outside the house until he comes to collect her, and then follows Giuseppe to the doors. When he is announced, Germont enters the house and Giuseppe exits US-SR in the direction of the other servants when he notices Blanche standing there. He greets her and she explains that she is with the gentleman who has just arrived. Violetta sits down at the table on DS-SR and starts to open her pile of papers when Germont places his hat on the table and reveals his identity.

He is rude to Violetta and as she retorts, she stands and makes as though to leave via the staircase but Germont moves quickly to take her by the arm to stop her leaving. Violetta tears her arm away angrily – she is not to be treated in such a way now that she is a lady of her own destiny. Goaded by Germont's accusation '*pur tanto lusso*', she defiantly picks up one of the papers '*A tutti è mistero quest'atto*' and thrusts it at him. As Germont starts to read the document, Violetta turns to leave again, when she half-catches sight of Blanche in the US area. Blanche tries to hide

and Violetta is about to go and investigate when Germont speaks again '*Ciel! Che discopro!*', which brings her back to him. She speaks honestly of her love for Alfredo, and reacts more warmly when Germont seems to compliment her '*Nobili sensi invero!*'.

Violetta sinks to the chair when Germont talks of a sacrifice to be made. When Germont says '*due figli*', Giuseppe's son who has been out playing with his dog starts to return into the main space, but discovers Blanche who is still trying to hide and eavesdrop on her father's conversation. Giuseppe's son introduces his dog to her and she steps out from her hiding place to pat the dog. Violetta listens to Germont's speech and turns away from him '*Ah comprendo*'. On this line, Giuseppe's son motions for Blanche to follow him and he leads through the far-SR door to hide under the stairs and watch the scene between Violetta and Germont.

Violetta stands when Germont tells her he needs her to sacrifice more than just a few days '*Volete che per sempre a lui rinunzi?*' and then backs away over '*Non sapete qual affetto*' to slump down on the stairs '*che a morir preferirò*'. Blanche and Giuseppe's son shrink away as Violetta approaches. Germont approaches from SL of Violetta to try to comfort her, leaning over the banister as she cries on the steps. Violetta gathers herself and stands '*Ah, più non dite*' before starting to mount the stairs to escape Germont on '*Lui solo amar vogliò*'. She pauses for a moment on the stairs '*Gran Dio!*' and then starts to turn back to Germont after '*Pensate*'. Germont starts to move DS back towards the furniture, Violetta follows him a short way down a couple of stairs after her first '*E vero! E vero!*'. Germont starts to pour himself a drink from the decanter on the table. Violetta sinks to the stairs again on her second '*E vero! E vero!*' and Germont takes a drink once he finishes singing '*tai detti a un genitor*'.

Germont refills his glass and takes it to Violetta while she sings '*Così alla misera ch'è un dì caduta*' and offers it to her at the end of this section of the duet. Violetta takes the glass and sips to calm herself down before agreeing to Germont's proposal '*Ah! dite alla giovine*'. She stands after her agreement, attempting to hide her tears from Germont. She takes a few steps DS to hide her head in her hands, before gathering herself and moving to the table DS-SL. Germont watches her go and speaks comforting words to her. Violetta sits in the chair for her repeat of '*Ah! dite alla giovine*' and Germont slowly comes to stand behind her. While the focus on the DS-SL corner, Blanche and Giuseppe's son emerge from their hiding place and move to sit on the stairs. Giuseppe's son is initially interested in the drink that Violetta has left on the stairs, but quickly moves to sit next to Blanche once he tastes it and doesn't like it. Blanche sits on the stairs and is obsessed by the misery she sees in Violetta.

Germont sits at the other chair to plan with Violetta what to do, and then stands as Violetta searches among her papers for a blank sheet and a pen with which to write. He embraces her after '*O generosa!*', as she had requested earlier, and it is in his arms that Violetta says '*Morrò!*' – something that she knows to be true but which

Germont believes is mere exaggeration. Still, he holds her and tries to comfort her as she says it. Blanche on the stairs has a very strong reaction to Violetta's statement and rises and slowly descends the stairs to the bottom banister.

Violetta sits to write at the table during Germont's singing and he joins her at the table to commend her actions. They both stand and embrace to end the duet. Blanche steps down from the top of the stairs towards her father and Violetta, which is something Violetta half-sees through her tears and pulls away from Germont '*Qui giunge alcun! Partite!*'. Germont looks to see who it is, but Blanche has quickly hidden herself by the banister and all Germont sees is Giuseppe's son.

Violetta recovers herself and picks up Germont's hat which, even though it is not Alfredo's, carries something of Alfredo about it. She turns to Germont '*Non ci vedrem più fors*' and gives it back to him on her '*Addio*'. Germont turns to leave and as he does so, Blanche steps out from the banister – it is clear that she has heard everything. Germont is shocked into stillness. Violetta directs her second '*Conosca il sacrificio*' for Blanche. At the very end of the duet, Germont turns to Blanche who runs off. Germont watches her for a moment and then follows. Giuseppe's son watches from the staircase as Blanche runs off.

Violetta sits down at the table to write and then rings the bell for Annina, who enters from DS-SL. She casts a look at Giuseppe's son before she turns to Violetta. Violetta gives her the letter and then Annina exits US, shooing Giuseppe's son out in front of her. Violetta turns and sits at the table to write. Alfredo enters from US-SR and watches Violetta darkly from the doors before interrupting her. He joins her at the table as she hides the letter she was writing. Violetta stands as Alfredo wrests his hands on his hands on the table so that she manages to hide her hysteria for a moment before she falls to her knees to put her head on Alfredo's lap to cry and then she backs away to centre stage. He rises and moves towards her and she runs to embrace him so she's facing DS for '*Amami, Alfredo, quant'io t'amo*'. She kisses him once more before her final '*Addio*' and then runs out US with her letter. Alfredo watches her go, then turns back to lean on the back of the chair. He is restless waiting for his father to arrive.

Giuseppe arrives from US at a run to report from the wall what he has just seen, but Alfredo sits in his chair and doesn't bother to turn around. The Messenger arrives on a bicycle and leans it against one of the pillars. He addresses Giuseppe first '*Il signor Germont?*' and then enters the house with the letter. Alfredo takes the letter and immediately turns away from the messenger, who has to go to Giuseppe for his payment. Giuseppe pays him and the man rides off. Giuseppe's son meanwhile enters from US-SR and runs to Giuseppe, who picks him up and exits off DS-SL with his son in his arms, still looking back at Alfredo.

As Alfredo starts to read the letter, Germont reappears from US-SR and walks to the downstairs doors in time for Alfredo to see him silhouetted in the doorway. Alfredo sinks to the table in despair and cries gently into his hands. Germont approaches his son carefully. During Germont's aria, Alfredo suddenly jumps up from the table and runs up the stairs to look out of the upstairs windows as if trying to see Violetta off in the distance. As he does so, Germont sits at the table and continues to speak. Unable to see anything, Alfredo leans heavily on the upstairs banister and then slowly descends the stairs. He huddles against the banister as his father comes around to comfort him. Suddenly, Alfredo jumps up from his spot '*Mille serpi divoranmi il petto*' and paces across the stage getting more and more agitated until finally he picks up the glass that was on the staircase and throws it upstage to the ground, smashing it. The exact staging of '*No, non udrai rimprove*' will depend on whether the cabaletta is performed or not, but it will end with Alfredo sitting down in despair at the table, which is where he sees the invitation from Flora. He takes it with him as he runs out of the house through the US doors while his father attempts to stop him. On Germont's final line '*Ferma!*' the household staff will enter from the DS wings to watch Germont wrestle with his father and then exit US-SR.

### **Act II sc ii**

The space is cleared of the plants that were in the previous scene and all the doors are closed except for the upstairs SR door. A large chandelier is hanging over the centre of the space slightly above the level of the top banister. A large green card table occupies the majority of the space underneath the balcony. Guests are pre-set on all levels and draped over the staircase and occupy the downstage space as well, where there are several chairs. The ladies of the chorus are gathered around Flora DS-SL while the gentlemen, including the Marchese, are around the card table smoking. There are several couples spread across the staircase and raised floor involved in the kind of physicality that only strikes one as acceptable towards the end of an inebriated evening. Dr Grenville is wandering the staircase, taking photographs of the various couples with a period handheld camera. The atmosphere is dark and smoky.

The curtain rises to lots of laughter and noise with much movement as people stagger from one area to another. Flora is talking to her bevy of girls DS-SL '*Avrem lieta di maschere la notte*' who are all excited both at the prospect of the masked entertainment and that Gastone will be there. The Marchese at the card table delivers his lines loudly enough to carry to everyone else '*La novità ignorate?*' Flora looks over her shoulder and Grenville turns from his position on the stairs.

Gastone appears upstairs and signals for Flora to quieten the crowd. The gypsy girls enter from the upstairs door and the chorus singers make their way down the stairs to drape themselves against the banisters while the dancers parade on the top level. The little girl from Act I is there, also dressed as a gypsy, and Gastone picks her up and takes her down the stairs while she continues to make 'gypsy' gestures. Gastone makes his way down the stairs and sets down the little girl before kissing Flora's hand. He then spins her out SR to the first group of gypsies who hold her fast and examine her hands, her arms, her hair all while she giggles at the attention. After they have 'read' her palm, the Marchese stands and moves DS to object and the second group of gypsies pounces on him and holds him fast while they do the same to him. While he is being 'read', Gastone steals around the other side of Flora and gives her a quick kiss. Flora recovers in time to hear the 'reading' of the Marchese and starts a mock fight with him. Everyone is much amused at the fight and Gastone especially enjoys it. While the chorus girls press in and Grenville tries to photograph it, Gastone readies all the gentlemen of the chorus upstage and they remove their suit jackets to put on matador outfits. The chorus clear to make way for the gentlemen who occupy centre stage and preen as Matadors, while Gastone mounts the table at the back. In the centre of the DS line of gentlemen is the little boy, also dressed as a Matador. The Matadors circle back around the table and narrate the action while Gastone pulls Flora up onto the table and dances with her. Towards the end of the song, Gastone picks up the little boy and puts him on his shoulders, Flora picks up the little girl and does the same thing, and at the very end as Flora and Gastone hold each other and look into each others' eyes, the little boy and little girl on top of their shoulders share a kiss. Much applause.

Alfredo makes his entrance through the upstairs door and slowly makes his way down the stairs, looking with derision on the happy scene he's interrupted. He goes straight to the card table. As the music for the gambling begins, the chandelier is lowered until it sits above the table. The gentlemen all gather around the table to smoke and gamble while the ladies mingle. They gamble using chips as currency and several packs of cards are being handled by Gastone, who serves as dealer and bank.

Violetta enters with the Barone through the upstairs door and Flora races to greet her trying to warn her about Alfredo, but the Barone pushes past her and then stops when he sees Alfredo at the gambling table. He turns accusingly to Violetta, fearing that he is to be made fun of again. He leads Violetta to the DS-SR chairs where the other ladies are gathered and warns her not to speak to Alfredo and then forces her to sit down. He then joins the card table.

Flora shoos one of the other girls off a chair and sits next to Violetta. Violetta can't bear to watch the card game, but hears the results and Flora tries to keep her calm throughout. When it starts to get heated, Flora announces dinner and the downstairs doors are opened, allowing the guests to flow through to the dining room. Violetta asks Flora for help, and Flora sends Gastone after Alfredo to beg him to return to the room.

Alfredo meets Violetta by the gambling table and then menaces her DS to DS-CS. He calls all the others to join him and they emerge from the downstairs doors to fill the space by the card table. The children are with their parents on either side of the card table, in the front row so they are visible. At this point, Germont also enters through the upstairs door and remains on the balcony to watch what unfolds. Alfredo paces as he accuses Violetta, more intent on seeing her reactions than the reactions of the chorus behind him. At the height of his rant, he moves US to the card table and, grabbing a handful of chips, returns to shower Violetta with them. She turns and grasps the DS-SL chair for support as Flora, the ladies chorus and Grenville rush to her aid. Gastone and the Marchese hold the Barone back as he leads the charge of the male chorus driving Alfredo back towards DS-SR.

Several of the chorus manage to grab Alfredo by the arms and drag him backwards to the base of stairs and the Barone is about to lead a lynching when from the raised floor, Germont interjects and everyone turns to look up at him. Alfredo runs to the landing of the staircase both to escape the mob and to be nearer his father, but Germont pushes past him and goes to Violetta, leaving Alfredo isolated by himself on the bottom of the staircase. From her position in one of the chairs DS-SR, Violetta calls out to Alfredo, but the Barone steps DS and blocks his way. The Act ends with the two children, frightened of the emotions of the crowd and worried for Violetta, running towards each other and then being forcibly separated by their parents and taken out through different downstairs doors. Several of the chorus men drag Alfredo to DS-CS where, in front of everyone and despite Gastone's implorations, the Barone removes a glove and strikes him across the face.

### **Act III**

We are in the same space as the start of the Act I prelude. This time, all the upstairs doors are open except for the two most SR and all the downstairs doors closed – there are still beds on upper and lower levels and doctors and nurses wandering around. This time, however, there is no Grenville and no Barone, and the focus starts on the raised floor. On the stairs are Giuseppe and his son with the dog. In a bed on the raised floor is one of the servants from Act II scene i, who is dying. On the lower level are three beds; an empty bed on SR, Violetta in the middle and on SL the young boy who was in the party scenes. Around the young boy is his family and the little girl (dressed in the same white dress as Violetta wore in Act 1) is holding his

hand. By the time the curtain opens he is already dead. Around Violetta's bed and the bed to SR is a curtain screen, which has not been closed. Annina lies asleep in a chair with her head resting on the empty bed to SR of Violetta. There is a small medical cabinet next to Violetta's bed with a drawer, and on which is a decanter of water and a glass of water as well as a medallion on a chain. The table also holds a small oil lamp, which glows dimly.

The curtain rises as the prelude starts and we are in similar low light as we were at the start of the opera. A nurse wheels a bed through on the raised floor exactly as at the start of the opera. The light falls on Giuseppe leading his son and their dog down the stairs when they are stopped by a nurse who takes the dog away so that they can go and visit the servant who is in one of the beds on the raised floor. They gather around the bed and talk with him. Eventually, before the end of the prelude, they will be taken by one of the doctors through the downstairs doors. The servant will remain in his bed for the duration of the act. The focus shifts during the prelude to the bed on SL of Violetta. The little girl holding the little boy's hand is the first to realise that something has happened and she tells her mother who gets a nurse. A doctor comes running over and, when it is clear the boy is dead, the nurse covers the boy's face with his sheet. The little girl has to be forced to stop holding his hand and she starts to cry as the boy's bed is wheeled out SL, followed by his family.

Violetta calls out for Annina, who rouses from her sleep and reaches out to Violetta. She gets Violetta some water from the cupboard next to the bed, and Violetta drinks it down, coughing. She pulls out a copy of the letter written to her by Germont, but she can't make it out in the dim light, so she asks Annina for more light to read it by; Annina adjusts the oil lamp and Violetta starts re-reading the letter. Meanwhile, Grenville has entered the space from one of the downstairs doors and is talking to the servant in the bed on the raised floor when Annina spots him and goes to him to bring him to Violetta's bed. Violetta, with effort, sits up in readiness for him and he takes her vital signs when he comes to her bed. They share a smile when they meet, partly because of Violetta's overly formal greeting and partly because there has been affection between them since her first visit to the hospital. They share a further joke '*Oh, la bugia pietosa*' and Grenville, struck with emotion, has to correct himself when he accidentally says '*Addio*' instead of '*A piu tardi*'.

He leaves to go back to the servant on the raised floor, and Annina holds back her tears as she tries to be cheerful for Violetta. Violetta asks about her money, which is kept in the drawer in the cupboard by her bed, and when she commands Annina to go and give money to the poor Annina does so reluctantly, first drawing the curtains around Violetta's bed and then making her way out through the upstairs door.

With the curtains drawn, Violetta struggles to turn up the lamp a little more and again re-reads, this time aloud, the letter from Germont. She exclaims '*E tardi*' and then has a coughing fit. She struggles during her aria to stand and cross to the empty bed on SR of her.

The masquerade chorus lights up the doors on the raised floor, and the servant patient struggles to make it up the stairs to watch and wave from the balcony. Violetta too attempts to go and watch, but her struggles are noticed by several nurses who restrain her and help her back to bed and then go to help the servant back to his bed and to close the doors on the raised floor so that the hospital is once again dark.

Annina re-enters in haste through the upstairs SR Door and races down the staircase to Violetta. She is followed by Alfredo, who takes a moment on the stairs to look at the hospital and then races through the curtain to join Violetta. They embrace and he kisses her passionately. He then he sits on the chair next to Violetta's bed as she sits on the edge of the bed for '*Parigi, o cara*'. She calls him over to the other side of the bed and she repeats his pledge while Annina watches on, wondering if Violetta has been miraculously saved. They end their duet laying on the bed together, the closest we see them to wedded bliss. Violetta tries to get up, but can't – this rouses Alfredo to get up and look to Annina – he hadn't realised she was this ill. Violetta manages to stand, but falls to the empty bed on SR of her, from where she calls angrily at Annina to fetch her dress. Violetta rails on the empty bed, until the brass chord awakes in her a realisation – she is actually going to die, and nothing can be done to stop it. She looks up to the Gods '*Ah! Gran dio!*' and Alfredo slumps back on his side of Violetta's bed in despairing disbelief. Annina helps Violetta back to her bed while Alfredo sings to her of his love.

Germont enters from the upstairs SR door and meets Grenville at the base of the stairs while Alfredo calls out in despair for his father's help to solve the problem. Germont sits on the vacant bed facing Violetta while Alfredo faces away from Violetta trying not to break down. Violetta falls back into her bed, and reaches for the medallion that is on the cupboard next to her bed. She hands it with shaking hands to Alfredo, who would much rather have Violetta than a token to remember her by. He holds her face and tries to convince her not to die '*No, non morrai, non dirmelo*'. He breaks down and starts to cry over her, and she summons the strength to offer him comfort '*Se una pudica vergine*', stroking his head as he weeps in her lap – even at the moment of her death she is caring about him and his feelings.

Germont stands and holds Violetta's hand from the other side '*Finchè avrà il ciglio lagrime*'. Suddenly, Violetta looks up and struggles to stand, moving downstage by the side of her bed. '*E strano!*' The lights take on a lighter aspect and a warm glow starts to appear in the upstairs SR door.

'*Oh gioia!*' - she falls dead into Germont's arms. He holds her close and weeps over as he would his own daughter. Alfredo faces away on the bed unable to look at her. Annina crosses herself and says a prayer. Grenville stands stoically, allowing tears to form in his eyes. We see in the background the little girl, dressed like Violetta was in Act I, slowly start to ascend the stairs towards the warm glow in the upstairs SR door.