



FEBRUARY 22, 25, 27, MARCH 2 MATINEE, 5, 9 MATINEE, 14, 21, 27 MATINEE, 29

Scene from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Color lithograph of the 19th century
Fototeca Gilardi / Bridgeman Images

Il barbiere di Siviglia

Comedy in two acts sung in Italian

Poetry by Cesare Sterbini

Based on the play by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais

Music by Gioachino Rossini

First performed by Sarasota Opera on February 15, 1963

2008 production created by Sarasota Opera

Conductor

Stage Director

Scenic Designer

Costume Designer

Lighting Designer

Hair and Makeup Designer

Chorus Master

Assistant Conductors

Surtitle Suppliers

Surtitle Translator

Marcello Cormio

Marco Nisticò

Jeffrey W. Dean

Howard Tsvi Kaplan

Ken Yunker

Sue Schaefer

Arthur Bosarge

Deniz Uz, Chloe Jihee Kim

Words for Music

Victor DeRenzi

CAST

The Count Almaviva

Bartolo, a medical doctor, Rosina's guardian

Rosina, a rich ward of Bartolo

Figaro, a barber

Basilio, Rosina's music teacher and a hypocrite

Berta, an old housekeeper in Bartolo's house

Fiorello, Count Almaviva's servant

Ambrogio, Bartolo's servant

An official

Hak Soo Kim

Andrew Gilstrap

Lisa Marie Rogali

Filippo Fontana

Young Bok Kim

Alexandra Kzeski**

John Potvin*

Collin LaHood**

Zeky Nadji**

Sarasota Opera Orchestra

Chorus: Sarasota Opera Apprentice Artists

**Studio Artist*

***Apprentice Artist*

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA **SYNOPSIS**

The action takes place in Seville, Spain, in the 18th Century.

ACT I

Scene 1 A square in the city of Seville

The Count Almaviva, aided by his servant Fiorello and a band of musicians, sings under a balcony. Figaro enters, declaring that everyone in the city depends on him as barber and general factotum. Recognizing Figaro, the count confides to him that he has fallen in love with a young woman who stays in this house. The barber tells the count that the woman, Rosina, is Dr. Bartolo's ward, and the old man plans to marry her for her dowry. The balcony door opens, and Rosina comes out with a letter she would like to give to her unknown suitor. She is interrupted by Bartolo who wants to know the contents of the letter. Rosina lets it drop to the street. As Dr. Bartolo goes down to get the letter, the count retrieves it. He sings to Rosina again, telling her that he is a poor student named Lindoro. The count and Figaro plot how to further the count's cause.

PAUSE

Scene II A room in Dr. Bartolo's house

Rosina's heart has been touched by her suitor Lindoro (the count in disguise), and she is determined to be with him and outwit Dr. Bartolo. Figaro enters but his conversation with Rosina is interrupted by Bartolo. Don Basilio, Rosina's music teacher, informs Bartolo that Rosina's secret lover, Count Almaviva, has arrived in Seville. Basilio suggests that they slander the count as a way of getting rid of him, but Bartolo thinks it would be better for him to marry Rosina as quickly as possible. Figaro has overheard this scheme, and he informs Rosina, but she is more interested in learning about her unknown suitor. Figaro tells her that the poor student is his cousin who has fallen hopelessly in love with her.

There is a loud knock on the door. It is Count Almaviva, disguised as a drunken soldier. He claims that he has been assigned to billet in Bartolo's house. Figaro attempts to quiet things down, but the Count becomes increasingly raucous. The police enter and are about to arrest the Count when he quietly signals his true identity to them. All are confused by the sudden turn of events.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Having found no one in the regiment who knows the drunken soldier, Dr. Bartolo's suspicions have been aroused. A knock on the door reveals Count Almaviva, this time disguised as a music teacher named Don Alonso. He claims to have been sent to give Rosina her singing lesson because Don Basilio is ill. Bartolo is uneasy until the count gives him the letter he had received from Rosina, saying he will use it to convince the girl that he'd gotten it from another of the count's lovers. Bartolo summons Rosina who immediately recognizes



Lithograph of the storm scene by Alexandre Fragonard (1830).

the count (as Lindoro). Bartolo falls asleep and the young couple plot to elope that evening. Figaro comes to give Bartolo his shave and uses the opportunity to steal the key to the balcony. They are suddenly interrupted by Basilio. Count Almaviva thinks quickly, convincing Bartolo that since the real music instructor doesn't know anything about Rosina's letter, Basilio might ruin the plan. The best thing to do is to get Basilio back home and to bed. They all persuade Basilio that he is deathly ill (aided by a purse full of money from the count). The count tries to warn Rosina about the letter he has given Bartolo, but before he can, the doctor overhears him and chases the count and Figaro out.

Bartolo returns with Basilio, who suspects that Don Alonso was none other than Count Almaviva. Bartolo sends Basilio to make arrangements for an immediate wedding. He calls in Rosina and shows her the letter, telling her that he received it from a lover of Count Almaviva. It is proof that her beloved Lindoro planned to turn her over to the count. Stunned, Rosina agrees to marry Bartolo. He tells her to hide in her room while he goes to fetch the police.

After a storm the count and Figaro use a ladder to climb up to the balcony. Rosina greets them with reproaches. Heartened that Rosina really loves the poor student Lindoro, the count reveals his true identity and Rosina realizes that she has been duped by Bartolo. The three plan to flee but discover that the ladder has been removed. Basilio enters with the notary, and with a purse and gun the count convinces Basilio to facilitate his marriage to Rosina. Bartolo enters with the police, but it is too late. Bartolo finds some consolation in the fact that the count will let him keep Rosina's dowry, and everyone celebrates the marriage of the count and Rosina.

World Premiere: Teatro Argentina, Rome, Italy, February 20, 1816

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA BACKGROUND

Gioachino Rossini was born on leap day 1792 in Pesaro, a small town on Italy's Adriatic coast. His parents – father Giuseppe, a trumpeter and inspector of slaughterhouses, and mother Anna, a singer and baker's daughter – started his musical training early.

While still a young teenager, Rossini began musical studies at the conservatory in Bologna. There he gained the nickname “the little German” for his devotion to Mozart, and he won a prize for a cantata that he composed. In 1810 at the age of 18, Rossini had his first opera, the one-act comedy *La cambiale di matrimonio* (*The Marriage Contract*), produced in Venice. Other operas soon followed, and Rossini achieved a substantial success with *La pietra del paragone* (*The Touchstone*) when it was introduced at La Scala in 1812 and given 50 performances in its first season. The following year brought triumphant premieres of the dramatic *Tancredi* and the comedic *L'italiana in Algeri* (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*) at different theaters in Venice. With these successes, the 21-year-old Rossini became the idol of the Italian opera public.

In 1815, an impresario of opera houses in Naples hired Rossini as music director for the Teatro San Carlo. Rossini's responsibilities included writing operas for this theater. The contract paid well, including a cut from the impresario's popular gaming tables that were operated to help fund theatrical operations. In Naples, older composers such as Giovanni Paisiello were jealous of the young Rossini. However, Rossini scored an enthusiastic public success with his opera, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* (*Elizabeth, Queen of England*).

Rossini's agreement with Naples permitted him to compose operas for other cities, too. *Almaviva, ossia L'inutile precauzione* (*Almaviva, or the Useless Precaution*), based on the French playwright Beaumarchais' play *The Barber of Seville*, premiered on February 20, 1816 at Rome's Teatro Argentina. It proved to be one of the great fiascoes in operatic history.

The Beaumarchais play had already been used several times as the source material for an opera, the most notable being Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*) which had its first performance in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1782. At the time of the premiere of Rossini's version, Paisiello was still alive and his operatic *Barber* was popular in Italy. To assuage those who felt Rossini was an upstart and that his use of the same material was disrespectful to the older composer, he changed the name of his opera to



Portrait of Gioachino Rossini, 1828,
by Hortense Haudebourt-Lescot



Cesare Sterbini, librettist of
Il barbiere di Siviglia

that of the story's male romantic lead, Almaviva. This did not prevent the audience from hissing and jeering throughout the first performance.

Following the dismal first hearing of his opera, Rossini did not attend the next. The second performance reversed the fate of Rossini's new work: it was a notable success. Soon performances of Rossini's opera would eclipse those of Paisiello's version. In Bologna in 1816 Rossini's work would be called *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the first time.

Like many of his other operas, Rossini created *Il barbiere di Siviglia* quickly. Though there is disagreement to the exact length of time it took, it was definitely composed in less than a month. For the overture, Rossini used one that had already served the function for two of his earlier works, *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* and *Aureliano in Palmira*. In spite of the speed at which he wrote, Rossini created an opera filled with grace and wit. Today, it is one of the most performed operas in the world.

Greg Trupiano (1955-2020) joined Sarasota Opera in 1987 and was with the company until his death. He was also founder and artistic director of *The Walt Whitman Project*.