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WESTCHESTER JOURNAL; Growth at the Opera

By Ian T. Macauley

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The New Rochelle Opera is a relatively new local institution. Started in 1982 by its artistic director, Camille Coppola, who first brought bits and pieces of operas to schools in the county, the company now has a troupe of 30 and is presenting fully staged productions.

Verdi's three-act opera, "La Traviata," is the current bill, and it can be seen today at 2:30 P.M. in the theater at the New Rochelle Public Library, and again next Saturday at 8 P.M. Ticket donations are \$9 each, or \$6 for students and the elderly.

"We are including a 17-piece orchestra, and are double-casting this season," said Alex Perlov, the opera company's treasurer and creative coordinator. "This means that each performance will have a different cast of singers," he said.

Performing the role of Violetta on Saturday will be Leanne McGiffin, a soprano of Manhattan; the role of Alfredo will be played by Francisco Chahin-Casanova, a tenor of Brooklyn, and the part of Germont will be performed by Winthrop Buswell, a baritone of New Canaan, Conn. Today, Nada Radakovich, a soprano of Brooklyn, will play Violetta; James Landers, a tenor of Greenwich, Conn., will be Alfredo, and Leonard Jay Gould, a baritone of Manhattan, will be Germont.

Mr. Perlov explained that the principal singers were all paid professionals, but that the chorus consisted of volunteers. "We are now incorporated, which means we can attract contributions from various sources," he said. For example, the city of New Rochelle donates \$2,500 a production, and annual funds come from the New Rochelle Friends of the Library and the New York State Council on the Arts. A grant of \$3,500 is also being sought from New York State.

The troupe still takes selections to the schools, Mr. Perlov said, adding that Dr. James R. Gaddy, Superintendent of New Rochelle Schools; the assistant superintendent, John V. Pozzi, and Brother Richard de Maria of Iona College, are on the company board. Judge Adrienne Scancarelli of the Family Court is also a member.

In mid-July, the full production of "La Traviata" will be offered in New Rochelle's Hudson Park.

For ticket reservations, call 632-7878 and for more information, 235-1027.