

**OPERA BOSTON** 2009/2010 Season  
Study Guide

**OPERA BOSTON**



*Tancredi*



Study Guide to:

# Tancredi

Opera in two acts with a libretto by Gaetano Rossi (1774-1855), based on Voltaire's play of 1760, *Tanocrède*.

*Guide by Adrienne Boris, Administrative & Artistic Associate*

Rossini's *Tancredi* received its premiere at the *Teatro La Fenice* on February 6, 1813, only one month after the premiere of the composer's first opera of note, *Il Signor Bruschino*, and one year before *The Italian in Algiers*. It was Rossini's tenth opera, but only his second full-length commercial success. Many consider *Tancredi* to be the composer's greatest masterpiece, despite the fact that it precedes by many years the composer's most recognizable pieces, *La Cenerentola* (1817), *The Barber of Seville* (1825), and *Guillaume Tell* (1829). This guide will explore how this *opera seria* so captured the hearts and minds of hungry Italian opera fanatics, opening the door to the successful career of one of the greatest (and most enigmatic) opera composers of all time. We look forward to seeing you at the opera!

## *The Opera*

## **Cast of Characters**

Tancredi, an exiled nobleman (contralto, breeches role [male role played by mezzo])

Argirio, a nobleman in joint municipal power with Orbazzano (tenor)

Orbazzano, a nobleman sharing power with Argirio, betrothed to Amenaide (bass)

Amenaide, daughter to Argirio (soprano)

Isaura, friend to Amenaide (mezzo-soprano)

Roggiero, page to Tancredi (mezzo-soprano, breeches role)

# Synopsis

## Act One

The curtain rises on a municipal celebration. Argirio and Orbazzano, the heads of two warring noble families, have declared civil peace in the face of a dangerous external threat. As a conciliatory offering, Argirio has promised his daughter, Amenaide, to Orbazzano in marriage. The men summon Amenaide and pronounce her fate, insensitive to the fact that she loves Tancredi, who has not only been exiled on pain of death, but whose lands and titles have also been unfairly distributed to Orbazzano. Meanwhile, from Amenaide's close friend Isaura, we learn that Amenaide has sent a messenger with a love letter intended for Tancredi, whom she has heard is near the city walls. In an effort to protect her beloved's identity, however, she did not directly address the letter. Amenaide dutifully consents to her father's decision and leaves, accompanied by Isaura.

Tancredi and his page Roggiero arrive in disguise. After Tancredi sings of the love he still feels for the country that wronged him, he sends Roggiero to scout the territory while he conceals himself in a garden near Amenaide's home. Amenaide appears with Argirio. He informs her that Solamir now wishes to marry her in order to force an alliance, and that she must therefore marry Orbazzano immediately. Argirio leaves and Tancredi approaches Amenaide. She pleads with him to flee and save his life, even though she is overjoyed to see him. Once she leaves, the heartbroken Tancredi overhears news of her impending wedding and swears vengeance on Orbazzano and curses Amenaide. The city assembles for the wedding, where Tancredi presents himself to Argirio as an unknown soldier who wishes to join the fight against the enemy. Argirio does not recognize Tancredi and accepts the offer, just as Orbazzano bursts in with Amenaide's unaddressed letter to Tancredi, announcing that, because it was intercepted at enemy gates, it must have been intended for Solamir. Furious, Argirio disowns his daughter and Tancredi renounces his former love. Orbazzano sentences Amenaide to death.

## Act Two

Isaura pleads with Orbazzano to pardon Amenaide, but he informs her that Amenaide has been sentenced to death almost unanimously — only her father's name remains unsigned. Argirio arrives and almost succumbs to his conscience, but finally signs the document. Isaura lashes out at Orbazzano and prays to God to protect Amenaide in the hour of her death.

Amenaide is praying in prison when her father and Orbazzano arrive. Argirio confesses that he still loves Amenaide and plans to comfort her in death, and Tancredi bursts through the prison gates and declares his intention to duel Orbazzano and defend the accused. Orbazzano accepts his challenge. Once the men leave, Isaura arrives to comfort her friend and the two women pray for divine protection. Soon after, Argirio

and soldiers return with news that Tancredi has killed Orbazzano; Amenaide will be set free.

Tancredi receives a grand municipal celebration, but he remains heartbroken and intends to leave as soon as possible. Amenaide intercepts him, only to learn that, despite the fact that he fought for her honor, he still considers her a traitor and cannot love her. Distraught, she pursues him as he leaves. Left alone with Roggiero, Isaura confides in him: She alone knows that Amenaide has been faithful to Tancredi, and that she alone can reverse the lovers' fate. As Isaura goes out, a doubtful Roggiero sings of the happiness Tancredi might feel if Amenaide is proven innocent.

The city is under attack, but Tancredi has already travelled far outside its borders. Argirio, Amenaide, Isaura and the soldiers, having learned his true identity, find him at last. Tancredi agrees to return with them, determined to die in service to his country. Argirio soon comes back with cold comfort for Amenaide: Tancredi has defeated the enemy, but has incurred fatal wounds in doing so. Amenaide rushes to his side and begs for absolution. Too late, Argirio reveals the truth: The letter was written to Tancredi, and Amenaide is innocent of all charges. In accordance with Tancredi's final wishes, Argirio marries the lovers and Tancredi dies in his wife's arms.

## **About the *Rossini of Tancredi***

"Give me a laundry list and I'll set it to music." - Gioacchino Rossini



Rossini in his early 20s

## An Inventory of Rossini's Operas

<b>Title</b>	<b>Genre, acts</b>	<b>City, Date of Premiere</b>
<i>Demetrio e Polibio</i>	Dramma serio, 2	Rome, 1812
<i>La Cambiale di matrimonio</i>	Farsa comica, 1	Venice, 1810
<i>L'equivoco stravagante</i>	Dramma giocoso, 2	Bologna, 1811
<i>L'inganno felice</i>	Farsa, 1	Venice, 1812
<i>Ciro in Babilonia</i>	Dramma con cori, 2	Ferrara, 1812
<i>La scala di seta</i>	Farsa comica	Venice, 1812
<i>La pietra del paragone</i>	Melodramma giocoso	Milan, 1812
<i>L'occasione fa il ladro</i>	Burletta per musica, 1	Venice, 1812
<i>Il signore Bruschino</i>	Farsa giocosa, 1	Venice, 1813
<i>Tancredi</i>	Melodramma eroica, 2	Venice, 1813
<i>L'italiana in Algeri</i>	Dramma giocoso	Venice, 1813
<i>Aureliano in Palmira</i>	Dramma serio, 2	Milan, 1813
<i>Il turco in Italia</i>	Dramma buffo, 2	Milan, 1814
<i>Sigismondo</i>	Dramma, 2	Venice, 1814
<i>Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra</i>	Dramma, 2	Naples, 1815
<i>Torvaldo e Dorliksa</i>	<i>Dramma semiserio</i> , 2	Rome, 1815
<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	Commedia, 2	Rome, 1816
<i>La gazzaetta</i>	Dramma, 2	Naples, 1816
<i>Otello</i>	Dramma, 3	Naples, 1816
<i>La Cenerentola</i>	Dramma giocoso	Rome, 1817
<i>La gazza ladra</i>	Melodramma, 2	Milan, 1817
<i>Armida</i>	Dramma, 3	Naples, 1817
<i>Adelaide di Borgogna</i>	Dramma, 2	Rome, 1817
<i>Mose in Egitto</i>	Azione tragico-sacra, 3	Naples, 1818
<i>Adina, o Il califfo di Bagdad</i>	Farsa, 1	Lisbon, 1826
<i>Ricciardo e Zoraide</i>	Dramma, 2	Naples, 1818
<i>Ermione</i>	Azione tragica, 2	Naples, 1819
<i>Eduardo e Cristina</i>	Dramma, 2	Naples, 1819
<i>Bianca e Falliero</i>	Melodramma, 2	Naples, 1819
<i>Maometto II</i>	Dramma, 2	Naples, 1820
<i>Matilde di Shabran</i>	Melodramma giocosa, 2	Rome, 1821
<i>Zelmira</i>	Dramma, 2	Venice, 1823
<i>Semiramide</i>	Melodramma tragico, 2	Venice, 1823
<i>Il viaggio a Reims</i>	Dramma, giocoso, 1	Paris, 1825
<i>Le Siège de Corinthe</i>	Tragedie lyrique	Paris, 1826
<i>Moïse et Pharaon</i>	Opera, 4	Paris, 1827
<i>Le Comte Ory</i>	Opera, 2	Paris, 1828
<i>Guillaume Tell</i>	Opera, 4	Paris, 1829

Rossini wrote almost forty operas -- over half of which were well-received -- a significant achievement in comparison to Mozart's 22, Wagner's 15, Verdi's 28, and Puccini's 10!

Rossini was born in the small town of Pesaro, Italy, on February 29, 1792. Unlike some parents of the great composers who fought tooth and nail to keep their children from the life of a rootless musician, Rossini's parents were rootless musicians themselves and encouraged creativity in their son. By the time the boy was fourteen, he was a veritable one-man band. He had already cultivated a beautiful singing voice, mastered the basics of composition, and dabbled in the harpsichord, piano, horn, violin and cello.

Entirely focused on music, the young Rossini entered the Bologna Conservatory in 1806, and within three years he had composed his first opera. He immediately impressed his tutors and inspired his parents to use their music-business connections to secure their son commissions from various northern Italian theatres. By the time Rossini was 21, he had composed ten entire operas on a wide range of themes and subjects. Although each of these had moments which foretold the wit and genius of the work to come, scholars agree that Rossini did not hit his stride until *La scala di seta* in 1812, and *Tancredi* in 1813. After *Tancredi's* wild success, the composer devoted himself to comic operas until 1817.

In 1824, he continued on to Paris where Napoleon had mandated the development of three separate opera houses: The Opera (for serious operas in the French language featuring sung recitative), the Opéra-Comique (for comic operas with spoken dialogue in French), and the Théâtre-Italien (reserved for imported Italian smash hits). Rossini, hired to manage the Théâtre-Italien, proceeded to translate nearly all of his Italian works into French and produced them to great acclaim. Immensely popular in France, his work quickly spread to the other two opera houses and spread itself across genres culminating in the massive, sprawling *Guillaume Tell* -- which was greeted with mixed reviews. Similar to the 1990s film adaptation of *Titanic*, the scale and pomp of *Guillaume Tell* was at once awe-inspiring and off-putting. Despite the innovations it brought forth in French opera -- and despite its undeniable entertainment value -- its reception was decidedly mixed.

*Tell* was Rossini's final opera. He retired at the age of 37, and scholars have ruminated on a variety of causes for his sudden withdrawal from the field. However, we know for sure that his mother was on her deathbed, his own health and stamina were also fading and, in France, Italy and Germany, operagoers were beginning to crave unadulterated heroic, epic tales from the likes of Verdi, Berlioz, Bellini and Wagner. Exhausted by his attempt at as much, perhaps he wished to retire while still relatively at the top of his own game.

Rossini spent the next several years traveling between Paris and Bologna, where he served as the director of his alma mater the Bologna conservatory. In 1855 he settled once again in Paris, where he established himself as the country's toughest musical pedagogue, particularly vocal in his opinions about Richard Wagner -- whom he met

several times -- once writing that, "Wagner has lovely moments, but awful quarters of an hour." Although he continued to compose liturgical music and miscellaneous songs, particularly during his tenure at Bologna, Rossini devoted most of his later life to criticism and leisure.

The composer died in Paris on November 13, 1868, during the heyday of Richard Wagner and the nascence of Puccini. In 1887, his operas began to undergo the inevitable posthumous comeback, and his body was dis-interred and sent back to Florence, where he was re-buried and attended to by a crowd of 6,000 mourners from all over Europe.

## *The music of Tancredi*

From *Life of Rossini* by Stendhal, Rossini's contemporary biographer:

"Since this delightful opera has already been completely round Europe within the space of four years, what is there to be gained by submitting it to a process of analysis and criticism? Every reader of this book, I fancy, is, and has long been, perfectly well acquainted with everything that he is supposed to think about *Tancredi*; the probability is, therefore, that he will flatly refuse to accept criticism of *Tancredi* in any terms which I might propose, preferring rather to criticize *me* in terms of *Tancredi*. Nevertheless, to be faithful to my obligations as an historian, and to escape any accusation of incompleteness, I must attempt a sketch of *Tancredi*. The opening bars of the overture are both charming and dignified; but I hold that the first real breath of genius is felt in the *allegro*. It is fashioned with an originality and boldness, which, at the premiere in Venice, captured every heart in the audience. Rossini had not dared to take his seat at the piano, as it was customary, and as indeed his contract obliged him to do. He was scared of being greeted with an outburst of derisive whistling, for the national honor of the Venetian audiences was still tingling with reverberations of the obbligato accompaniment upon the tin reflectors which had graced his previous opera. In childish apprehension, the composer had hidden away beneath the theater in the passage leading to the orchestra pit. The leader of the violins searched high and low for him; but at last, seeing that it was already late, and that the audience was beginning to show those signs of impatience, which, except at premieres, always seem so absurd to the actors themselves, resolved to the begin the performance. The first *allegro* of the overture, however, was so well received that, while every corner of the house echoed with clapping and cheering, Rossini crept out from his hiding-place and screwed up sufficient courage to edge into his seat at the piano" (52).

Clearly, *Tancredi* hit it big in Venice. Its clear harmonies supported the sung melody subtly and skillfully, it had rhythmic variety, and the premiere production featured an excellent cast, including the decade's preeminent contralto, Adelaide Malanotte in the title role. It impressed Italians with its formal purity and clean, youthful approach to storytelling and musicality.

The golden age of Italian *opera seria* (opera within specific musical forms set to strictly heroic librettos) had passed with the turn of the 19th century. Rossini, still finding his voice, had given a gentle nod to the *opera serie* of the glorious Italian past with the operas attention to form, heroic subject and "Greek" chorus, but the freshness of his melodic structure and form played a large part in shaking Italian opera free from the well-worn bounds of Gluck and Salieri. At last, Italy had its own Mozart.

*Cabaletta*: The preferred aria form of 19th century Italian opera, "cabaletta" is often used to refer to the aria form as a whole, but more correctly refers to the fast-paced, *allegro* section of a two-part aria which comes after the *cavatina* (the opening, *legato* section of the aria). The *cabaletta* also features a heavily-ornamented coda.

Tancredi's opening *cabaletta*, "Di tanti palpiti" was so immensely popular that, not only was it adopted as the perennial favorite of the Venetian gondoliers, but the city of Venice was actually forced to pass municipal laws against the incessant public whistling of its catchy *cabaletta*. For twenty-first century listeners, listening to the spirited coda of "Di tanti palpiti" sung by a skilled contralto is exciting, but may call to mind the finales of other, more well-known arias from *Barbiere* or *Cenerentola*. Imagine hearing it for the very first time at the turn of a century of incredible potential for Italian opera!

In her essay, "Tancredi and Semiramide" musicologist Heather Hadlock puts it well: "Tancredi thus seemed to restore an Arcadian past, a golden age of Italian song and musical spontaneity. The hero's entrance scene, with its pastoral orchestral introduction and unforgettable *cabaletta* 'Di tanti palpiti' was most frequently involved as proof of this freshness and vigor, but examples occur throughout the score. The eight-bar melody for strings and winds that conveys Amenaide's mute distress to her father, lover and accuser in the Act I Finale, for example, inspired Stendhal to declare Rossini 'completely the master of those charming phrases of shapely and entrancing melody. In *Tancredi* Italian opera seemed rejuvenated, bubbling up again from its original springs of inspiration".

*What Makes Tancredi a "Bel Canto" Opera?*

Today, "*bel canto*" has a wide range of definitions and associations in addition to its literal translation, "beautiful singing". However, in the context of Rossini, it refers to not only Rossini's style of vocal writing, but also to the vocal technique and tone quality with which the music should be sung. 19th century *bel canto* opera roles usually feature a demand for fluid, light, *legato* production throughout a singer's range, while at the same time featuring distinct sections of *coloratura* and ornamentation. Apart from Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti were the major champions of *bel canto* repertoire. When Verdi became popular decades later, Italian opera began to sport a heavier and more dramatic sound.

Listen also for Rossini's intelligently psychological duet writing throughout. Duets were infrequently used in 18th century *opera serie*, but became more common with Rossini's rise to fame, and the growing emphasis on dramatic content in Italian opera. It was in *Tancredi* that Rossini first developed his signature duet style: Arioso (lively, staccato) passages of dramatic interaction between characters, alternated with more private, lyrical passage of individual contemplation -- all while the two characters sing the exact same words. For an example, see *Tancredi* and Argirio's Act 2 duet, "Ah, se de' mali miei ... Il vivo lampo". Although, throughout, the two men sing the same words, they are not talking to each other. The audience enjoys a bit of dramatic irony, watching two men obsessed with the same woman, each convinced that his emotions are unique to himself, while the other man echoes his very thoughts, barely feet away from him.

The point is... a person feels *good* listening to Rossini. All you feel like listening to Beethoven is going out and invading Poland. Ode to Joy indeed. The man didn't even have a sense of humor. I tell you... there is more of the Sublime in the snare-drum part of the *La Gazza Ladra* than in the whole Ninth Symphony.  
– Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973)

## *About the Contralto Voice*

The contralto voice is not only the lowest of the female voice types, it is also the most rare to hear on the opera stage and the most difficult to correctly diagnose. Although other *fachs* (specific voice types) -- such as the dramatic mezzo-soprano and countertenor -- share in the contralto's range, the contralto voice does not actually distinguish itself through its proclivity to sing extremely low notes. Rather, a true contralto voice makes itself known through a particularly elusive vocal timbre; a distinctly smoky color, and boasts flexibility and intensity in its middle and chest registers.

Because of the rareness and specificity of the contralto voice, many young contraltos often find themselves misdiagnosed as mezzo-sopranos with vocal problems and, likewise, many mezzo-sopranos find themselves diagnosed as contraltos and soon become frustrated with the lack of versatility in their middle registers. However, a true contralto is born with her voice; a mezzo-soprano cannot train to become a contralto in the manner that a baritone might train to become a countertenor. Therefore, there are not many roles in operatic literature written for contraltos, and there are not very many truly great contraltos.

Although composers as early as Monteverdi, Cesti and Scarlatti did write for the contralto voice, these parts were often comical, supporting roles (such as the fussy nursemaid Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), while the showier castrato voice took center stage in the heroic and romantic roles. Handel, who also wrote music for some of the finest castrati of all time, was the first composer to use the

contralto voice to its full potential. However, these roles, in operas like *Partenope* and *Ariodante*, were still male roles whose range Handel adapted from that of a castrato. It is no surprise that the contralto voice found its footing on the opera stage in the first decade of the 18th century just as the practice of castration was on its way out, and just as composers began to write specifically for the female voice.

It is important to know that, although *Tancredi* is a "breeches role", Rossini wrote it specifically for the contralto voice, preferring the large and robust sound of a contralto's lower and middle register to that of a tenor or of the few remaining castrati. Heather Hadlock also speculates, that "the female performer, dressed as warrior in helmet and tunic, evokes the traditional androgynous images of militant saints and angels."

After *Tancredi*, Rossini went on to write Rosina in *Barber* and Angelina in *Cenerentola* and many other contralto roles, becoming the major proponent of the contralto voice in Italian opera. Following on Rossini's heels in France, Meyerbeer began to write roles like Fidès in *Le prophète* for the contralto voice, and Berlioz continued the trend after Rossini's retirement with roles like Dido in *Les Troyens*. In the twentieth century, Gian Carlo Menotti's Madame Flora in *The Medium* and Stravinsky's Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* became stand-out roles for the contralto voice.

Today, however, you might notice that many roles originally written for the contralto voice are being sung by mezzos, and many true contraltos are training their higher registers in order to sing mezzo-soprano repertoire. Perhaps you even saw the great mezzo-soprano Anne Sophie von Otter sing Dido in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* in the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recent season. Artist manager Laurence Wasserman, quoted in Eric Myers' *Opera News* article "Sweet and Low" explains, "The rent is due at the first of the month, and a contralto who says she's a contralto will never be asked to anything except Handel and Mahler." Met Assistant Manager Sarah Billingham adds, "People have to live, and they're probably encouraged to sing a wider repertoire. I think there just isn't enough work otherwise. And perhaps as far as singers are concerned it's more interesting to have a variety of roles."

In this difficult climate, Opera Boston is proud to be able to present a once in a lifetime experience: the world's finest living contralto in one of the best roles ever written for her voice part. Enjoy it!

"Every kind of music is good, except the boring kind." - Gioacchino Rossini

## *From Voltaire to Venice to Ferrara: Tancredi's Dual Ending*

Rossini based *Tancredi* on Voltaire's tragic play *Tanocrède* (1760), which was written at the height of the French Age of Enlightenment and whose hero dies at its conclusion. Voltaire and other philosophers and writers questioned the absolutism of the preceding Grand Siècle. Their criticism of the class system echoed the unrest of the French people, and France's rage against the tyranny of absolute monarchy culminated in the storming of the Bastille (1789), and finally the bloody French Revolution.

Interestingly, Rossini wrote *Tancredi* just before the fall of Napoleon (1814), while Northern Italy was still tightly under his reign. The young composer was obviously attracted to the play and its tragic ending, but he and librettist Gaetano Rossi chose to rewrite the ending as a happy one, sure that it would help the opera's chances of being produced.

The impetus to revise the ending of the opera came both from the lack of success of the original *Gran Scena* (finale aria) for *Tancredi*, and from decision to tour the opera from festive Venice to nearby Ferrara -- during Lent. When Rossini arrived in Ferrara, he met the writer Luigi Lechi, a writer friend of his star contralto's, who suggested that for the Ferrara presentation, he return to Voltaire's tragic ending. Here are the major musical differences between the Venice and Ferrara endings:

In the first act the duet for Amenaide and Tancredi was eliminated; in its place the duet originally in the second act was inserted. At the beginning of the second act two changes were made: Argirio's aria and recitative were eliminated, while Amenaide's Cavatina "No che morir non é" was replaced with a new one. "Ah se pur morir degg'io" (most likely written at the request of the new, Ferrara Amenaide).

Here is an account of the Venetian ending, in stark contrast to the tragic ending outlined in our synopsis and which we will present:

*Tancredi* actually encounters Solamir at the base of the enemy (Saracen) camp, just as Amenaide, Argirio and Isaura find him. Argirio attempts to explain Amenaide's innocence and *Tancredi* almost forgives her. Just then, the Saracens arrive to officially propose the union between Amenaide and Solarmir. Outraged, *Tancredi* challenges Solamir and the rest of the Saracens to battle. Argirio also goes off to fight, while Amenaide and Isaura listen to the combat. *Tancredi* returns, having killed Solamir who, dying, assured him of Amenaide's innocence. A rousing chorus and happy ending close the opera.

Despite its heightened accuracy, the Ferrara ending failed to please, and Rossini went back to the drawing board. As the climate of Italian opera turned more toward the *buffo* bent, so did Rossini, and the tragic ending was largely forgotten. In the mid 1970s, however, a noble Italian family recovered The Ferrara ending in its private archive,

informed the Rossini Foundation in Pesaro, and scholars exuberantly identified it as *Tancredi's* tragic finale. Marilyn Horne, one of the singers principally responsible for the Rossini Renaissance of the late twentieth century was so attracted to the poignancy and simplicity of the Ferrara ending that she strongly preferred to the happier alternative and championed its performance. The same is true of Ewa Podlés.

***From Kristine McIntyre - Director of Opera Boston's Tancredi***

"A society on the edge. Political dissidence. A threat from the outside. A crisis of conscience. A hero in exile, still determined to save his country. And one central question: give in to the invading force, or entrust your fate to a dictator? These are the issues that face the characters of Voltaire's 1760 provocative political drama *Tancredi*, the source for Rossini's opera- which, although originally located in early medieval times, seems an incredibly modern, even 20<sup>th</sup> century story. To that end, we've re-imagined the drama in the context of the wars and political climate of the 1930's and 1940's."

Opera Boston's production team took its dedication to the tragic finale one step further, and transplanted the opera's action into the taut political climate of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, when the fate of Spain hung in the balance between two warring factions and one terrifying dictator.

Please keep an eye Operaboston.org's Special Features page as we draw closer to October for more production-related articles.

Thank you for allowing us to entertain and inspire you!

*"I love Italian opera – it's so reckless. Damn Wagner, and his bellowing of Fate and death ... I like the Italians who run all on impulse, and don't care about their immortal souls, and don't worry about the ultimate." - D.H. Lawrence*

## ***Questions for Discussion***

1. Discuss the role and identity of women in this opera.
2. Discuss the opera's recurring theme of "honor". In what ways does dedication to honor affect the lives of these characters?

3. Tancredi is no stranger to betrayal, but he is very quick to judge Amenaide. What is your opinion of the decisions he makes throughout the opera?
4. Did the tragic ending resonate with you, or would you rather have seen a happy resolution?
5. What characteristically Rossinian musical gestures were you able to pick out of the score?
6. Do you like productions that update or change the time period of an opera? Why or why not? Apart from the Spanish Civil War, in what other timeframe can you see this story taking place?

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## ***Opera Boston' Recommended Recording:***

Claudio Abbado conducts the München Rundfunkorchester, featuring Vesselina Kasarova in the title role. **\*\*This recording features all alternate endings\*\***

[http://www.amazon.com/Rossini-Tancredi-Kasarova-M%C3%BCnchner-Rundfunkorchester/dp/B000003FZL/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1252371244&sr=1-2](http://www.amazon.com/Rossini-Tancredi-Kasarova-M%C3%BCnchner-Rundfunkorchester/dp/B000003FZL/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1252371244&sr=1-2)

