

EVOCATION:

The Story of Pauline Viardot

A low-angle shot of a grand, ornate chandelier with multiple glowing light bulbs, set against a highly decorated, vaulted ceiling with intricate carvings and painted details. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the chandelier itself, creating a warm, golden glow.

A FEATURE FILM

- ▶ **LOGLINE:** Based in the 1800s, Pauline Viardot rebels against her family and pushes the limits of her relationships, only to become one of the greatest opera singers and composers of all time.
- ▶ **GENRE:** Operatic romantic biopic
- ▶ **BUDGET:** \$5-15 million
- ▶ **LOCATION:** France, Russia, England

MAIN CHARACTERS

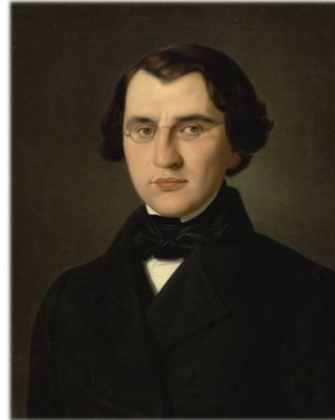
PAULINE VIARDOT



IVAN TURGENEV

Examples:

Jeremy Strong
Adam Driver
Morgan Spector
Danila Kozlovsky



GEORGE SAND

Examples:

Rebecca Hall
Marion Cotillard
Carrie Coon
Charlize Theron



LOUIS VIARDOT

Examples:

Ralph Fiennes
Ewan McGregor
Javier Bardem
Daniel Day-Lewis

SYNOPSIS

As a child, Pauline is forced to live in the shadow of her older sister, opera singer Maria Malibran – the family's golden child and light of Pauline's life. After Maria's tragic death, young Pauline develops her own musical talent with the encouragement of Franz Liszt, and her voice begins to flourish.

Pauline's debut performance of Otello in London catches the attention of Louis Viardot, a charming writer who arranges for her Paris performance. Once in Paris, Pauline meets George Sand, a woman beyond her time, and their relationship blossoms into a deep lifelong friendship. George introduces Pauline to Alfred de Musset, a stunning Parisian man who serenades Pauline into a night of lovemaking. Pauline is quick to realize that Alfred was never in love with her, and Louis comforts Pauline, offering an everlasting proposal of marriage.

Back in London, Pauline's career flourishes with her new accompanist, Frederic Chopin, and traveling rival, Giulia Grisi. Despite her marriage, Pauline takes a new lover, Ary, who Louis accepts. In a letter to George, Pauline reveals she is with child. Once Louise is born, Pauline feels restless and longs to perform. She sets off on tour, leaving Louise behind.

In St. Petersburg, Pauline sings Rossini's aria, and captivates Ivan Turgenev. Eager to meet Pauline, he rushes backstage, only to realize he is not the only admirer. It is the beginning of Turgenev's journey to win Pauline's heart. Upon Pauline's return to London, Charles Gounod becomes Pauline's new seduction. Louis still attends to their child as Ivan continues to send love letters to Pauline, pregnant once again.

Pauline is asked to perform in St. Petersburg, which allows her to reunite with Turgenev, and together they return to London. Pauline prepares to leave Louis, but he makes a proposition: stay with me and you may continue to love Ivan as you desire.

Years pass and Pauline continues to live her chosen life, outliving her great loves. She influences many other young women, composing her own music and teaching. Towards the end of her life, she finds peace in the discovery that her older sister Maria had held her in heart forever.



Tatyana Yassukovich - Writer, Producer

Tatyana is an accomplished actor, voice-over artist (*Chocolat*), member of the prestigious Actors Studio, and adjunct professor of filmmaking at Drexel University. She wrote and directed the series *The Fourth Wall* (2019) which received strong reviews on Amazon Prime. Her short film *Baby Grief* is currently making a festival run, and her feature film *Careless* is in development. Tatyana was born in England and speaks French and German.

2017 Golden Trolley Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement, Media Film Festival, Philadelphia for *The Audition*

Stanislas Yassukovich - Concept, Producer

Stanislas' exploration of the life and work of Ivan Turgenev led him to the discovery of Pauline Viardot. A former Board Member of the Royal National Theatre – then under the directorship of Richard Eyre – Stanislas previously chaired the cable and satellite TV content company Flextech and oversaw a joint venture with the BBC.

Stanislas has authored several published works: *Two Lives*, a Social & Financial Memoir, a double memoir of his father's life and his own; *Lives of the Luberon*, a recollection of the family's life in Provence; *James Grant*, a novel set in America, and *A Collection of Short Stories*. Stanislas was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), and a Freeman of the City of London.



Frederica von Stade - Operatic Consultant

Celebrated mezzo soprano Frederica has enjoyed one of the longest and most distinguished careers in American operatic history, appearing 300 The Metropolitan Opera alone. Her recordings have garnered six Grammy nominations, two Grand Prix du Disc awards, the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, Italy's Premio della Critica Discografica, and "Best of the Year" citations by Stereo Review and Opera News.

Frederica is a leading expert on Viardot's life, career and repertoire. In 2006, she was special advisor to Janet Flannery's TV documentary *Pauline Viardot: the Forgotten Diva*.

Jeremy Silver - Music Director

Jeremy has conducted an extensive repertoire of operatic performances by a variety of composers at venues all over the world. He is known as a particular expert in the Bel Canto tradition of 19th Century opera, writing articles and lecturing widely.

Positions held include: Music Director at English Pocket Opera Co; Music Staff at English National Opera; Principal Conductor at Opera Africa; Music Director at Opera Brava; Asst. Head of Music at National Opera Studio; Associate Artist at Longborough Festival Opera; Director of Cape Town Opera School at Cape Town University.



TONAL COMPARISONS

THE GILDED AGE

LA VIE EN ROSE

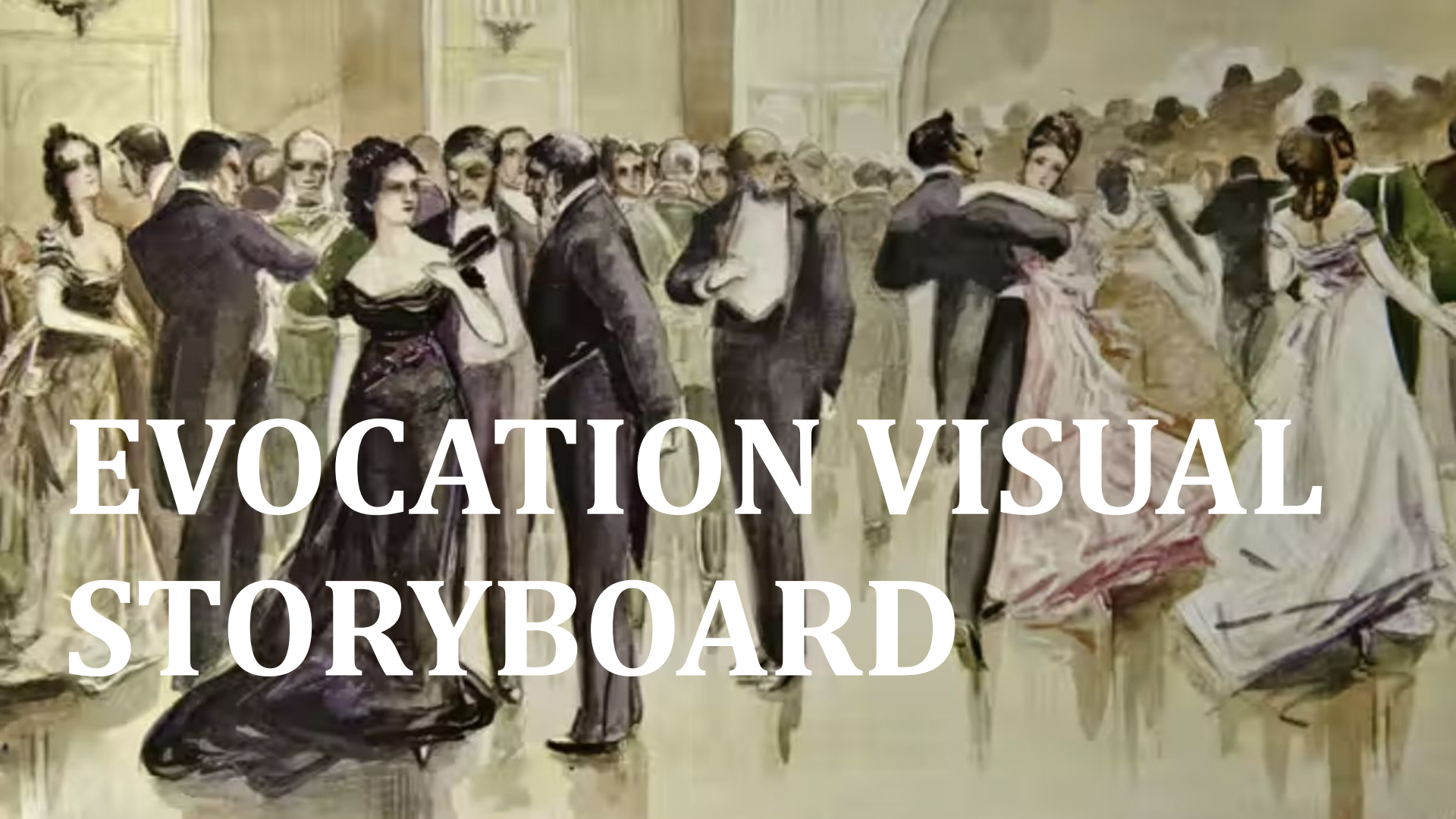
AMADEUS

ANNA KARENINA

THE FAVOURITE

BRIDGERTON





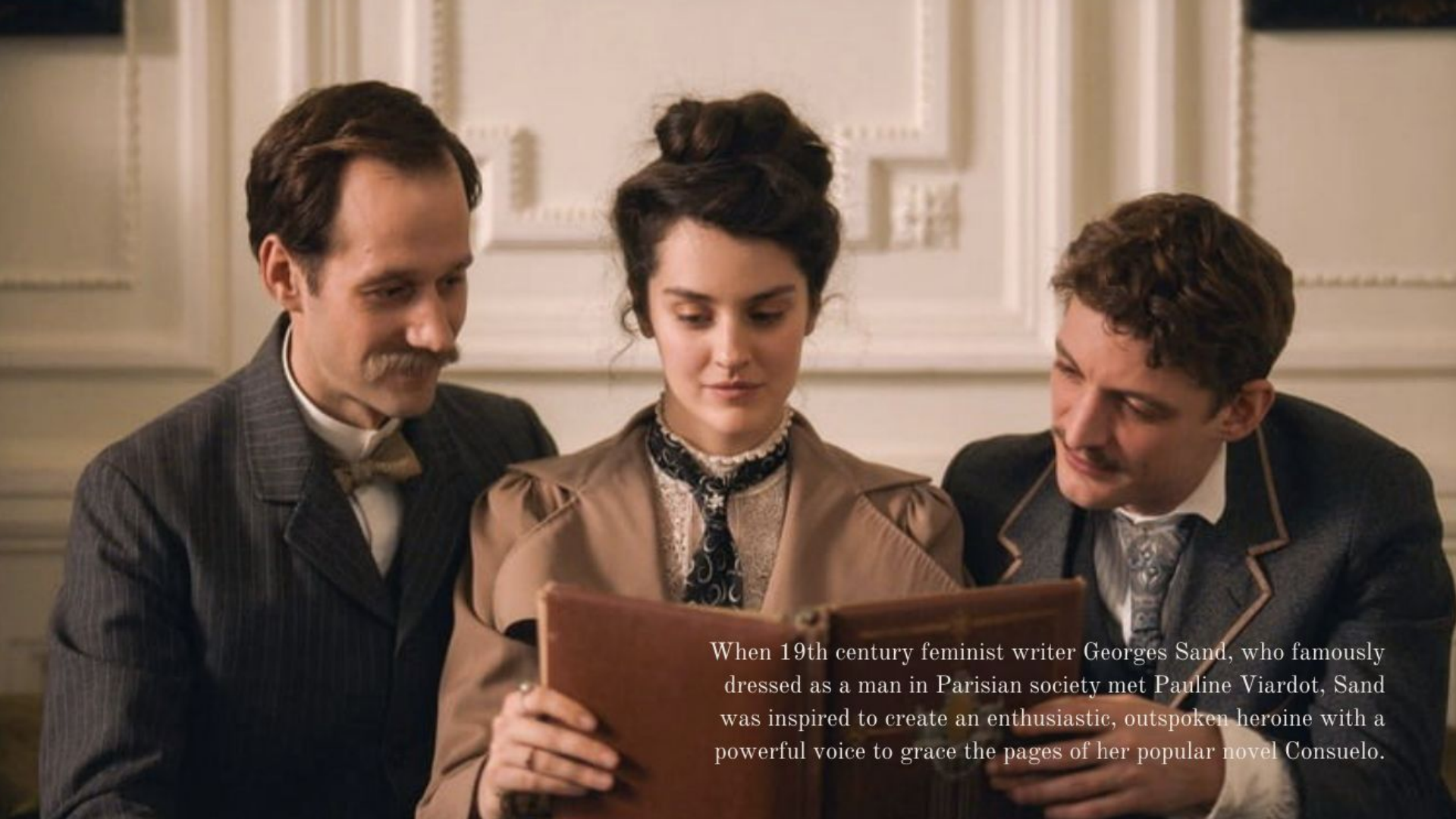
EVOCATION VISUAL STORYBOARD

This powerful and emotive contemporary cinematic telling of the story of Pauline Viardot unlocks heightened contemporary themes of race, creativity, genre roles and polyamory that traverse the operatic traditions of two centuries and created an opportunity for a one of a kind cinematic exploration of performance, music, choreography and design.




In ancient Homeric tales the hypnotic voices of quasi-human females dangerously lured men to their fate.






When 19th century feminist writer Georges Sand, who famously dressed as a man in Parisian society met Pauline Viardot, Sand was inspired to create an enthusiastic, outspoken heroine with a powerful voice to grace the pages of her popular novel Consuelo.



Here was a heroine who could both gain a respected position in society, enjoy lasting personal happiness, maintain social and financial independence yet simultaneously lay legitimate claim to emotional and sexual fulfillment and the right to speak out with a magnificent voice that men would love and respond to. Needless to say the novel both scandalized (male) and enchanted (female)

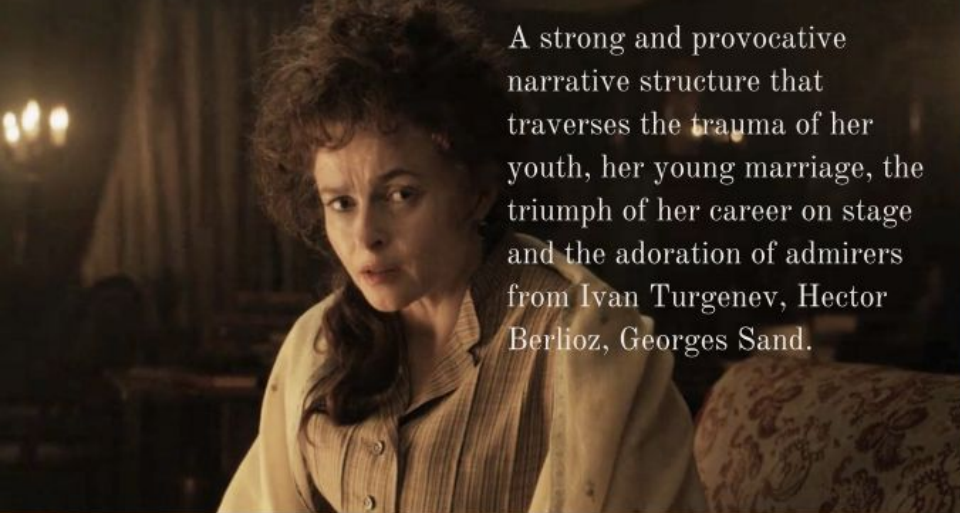
Parisian society of the time. Consuelo stands as a permanent record of Pauline Viardot's impact as a woman on the role of women and the potential of their voice in society.



It was Cultural historian Betsey Prioleau who notably lists Pauline Viardot, 19th-century opera star with a hypnotic voice, as her Parisian 'favorite' above strong and accomplished Parisian contenders that included seductive, provocative Georges Sand, emotional powerhouse Edith Piaf etc, in her historic analytic tome, **Seductress: Women Who Ravished the World.**

EVOCATION, the title of one of songstress Pauline Viardot's compositions is the title of this ravishing cinematic exploration visualized within a decidedly contemporary thematic framing.





A strong and provocative narrative structure that traverses the trauma of her youth, her young marriage, the triumph of her career on stage and the adoration of admirers from Ivan Turgenev, Hector Berlioz, Georges Sand.





With Pauline increasingly perceived and worshipped as the exotic and talented daughter of an exceptionally talented Spanish family of gypsies, when Russian literary giant Ivan Turgenev first sees Pauline in 1843 she is well on her way to becoming the reigning mezzo-soprano diva of European opera. Turgenev sees her during a tour in St. Petersburg and falls immediately and everlastingly in love with Pauline, with her remarkable voice , and with her superb skills as an actress.



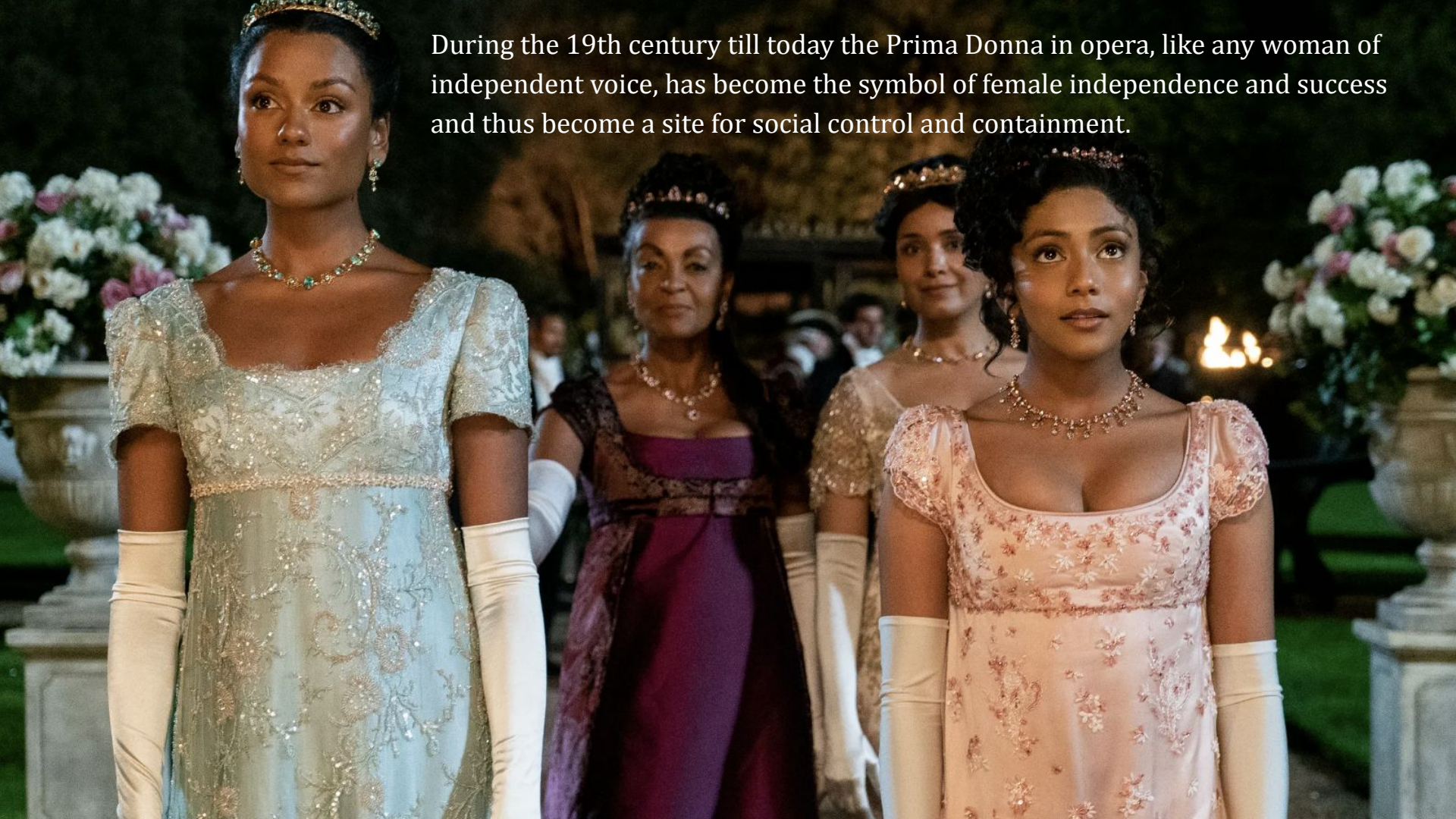
Turgenev will struggle with this passion for the rest of his life as a curious and often tempestuous but tender relationship follows, fostered in part by the nature of Pauline's relationship with her permissive husband Louis Viardot. The love of Ivan for Pauline would begin with Turgenev's first sighting of Pauline and end only with Turgenev's death in her arms a half century later.



Evocation beyond fearlessly delivers a powerful emotional blend that harnesses cinematic innovation and re-imagines operatic tradition to deliver a moving testament to one woman's courage, talent and willingness to entertain, fascinate, and outrage society with her passionate desire to live life to the fullest possible extent.



During the 19th century till today the Prima Donna in opera, like any woman of independent voice, has become the symbol of female independence and success and thus become a site for social control and containment.






The prima donna stereotype, opera plot and music, and literature all most often presented the vilified image of the fallen and lost woman as a warning of the disaster awaiting women who overstepped the social boundaries established in the western patriarchal image of ideal womanhood.



A woman's mobility was ever a destabilizing threat to the perceived socio-cultural stability of the status quo.

Pauline Viardot navigated this centuries-old tradition, which demonized publicly vocal women, and created a new image of the woman-artist, subtly subverting norms for female and social behavior.




A woman with a large, ornate white wig is seated on a red upholstered chair with a gold frame. She is wearing a light purple dress with a white lace bodice and a large necklace. The background features a red damask wall, a gold-framed mirror, and a red coat with gold trim hanging on the right.

An accomplished actress among other things, Viardot successfully performed the roles of social woman and was the inspiration of literary heroine and prima donna.




Pauline was a very public friend to powerful and creative male friends who were all in awe of her intellect and talent; a prolific composer whose home became a place for her husband and close friends such as Ivan Turgenev and Hector Berlioz to cohabit in.





She developed and authored hundreds of musical compositions, many of which are re-emerging and being played now as part of the 'recent' 21st century rush to re-discover Pauline Viardot.

A woman with dark hair styled in an updo is seated at a dinner table. She is wearing a white dress with a large feathered collar and a gold chain necklace. Her hands are clasped in her lap. To her left, a tall, ornate glass candle holder with a lit candle stands next to a bouquet of pink flowers. In the foreground, there are several glasses on the table. The background is dark and out of focus, showing a man in a suit standing. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the candle.

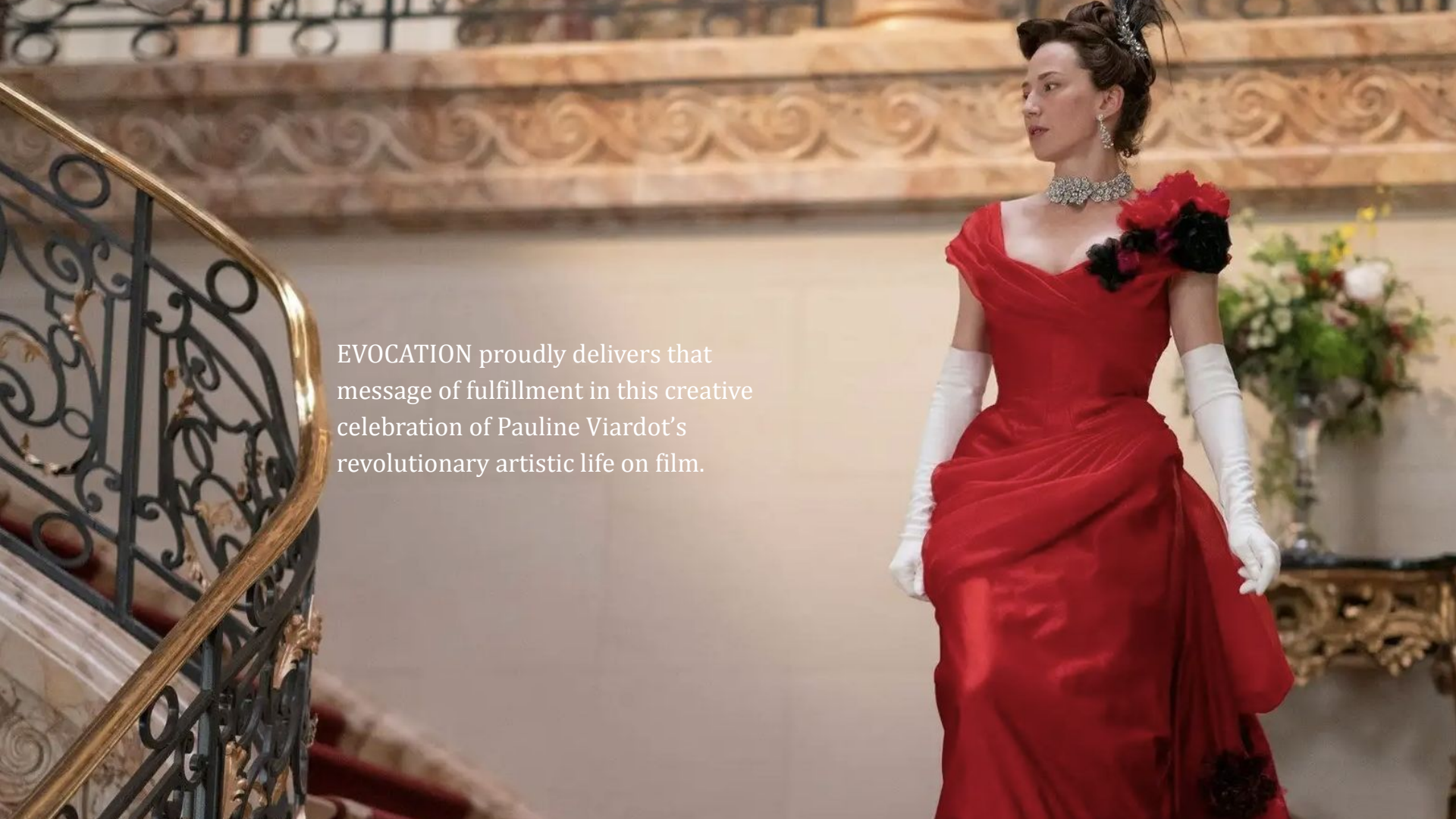
By crafting her own image
rather than allowing society to
stigmatize or vilify her,
Pauline's success was
chronicled in contemporary
literature written by women
who viewed prima donnas as
spokespersons for the female
plight.



Much of this literature explores women's hopelessness and despair in the face of highly restrictive social codes.

Her successful negotiation of these roles allowed her to carve out a unique position in her contemporary society, a position that allowed her to teach at the Paris Conservatory, support the careers of budding male musicians, garner the respect of royalty, publish and perform her own musical compositions, and live a long, fulfilling life-carving out a model for feminist self fulfillment that still applies two centuries later.



A woman with dark hair styled in an updo with a feather, wearing a vibrant red off-the-shoulder gown, a sparkling choker, and long white gloves. She is standing on a grand staircase with an ornate black and gold railing. The background features classical architectural details like a carved frieze and a vase of flowers.

EVOCATION proudly delivers that
message of fulfillment in this creative
celebration of Pauline Viardot's
revolutionary artistic life on film.

Mood

Warm. Sultry. Free. Provocative.



Aesthetic



EVOCATION: Pauline Viardot - The Legacy

This powerful and emotive contemporary cinematic telling of the story of Pauline Viardot unlocks heightened contemporary themes of race, creativity, gender roles and polyamory that traverse the operatic traditions of two centuries and creates an opportunity for a one of a kind cinematic exploration of performance, music, choreography and design.

In ancient Homeric tales the hypnotic voices of quasi-human females dangerously lured men to their fate. Recent 21st century authoritarian tirades raised against ‘troublesome women’ continues to confirm the centuries old tradition of public demonisation that has persisted towards and against women with ‘strong voices.’

When 19th century feminist writer Georges Sand, who famously dressed as a man in Parisian society met Pauline Viardot, Sand was inspired to create an enthusiastic, outspoken heroine with a powerful voice to grace the pages of her popular novel *Consuelo*. Here was a heroine who could both gain a respected position in society, enjoy lasting personal happiness, maintain social and financial independence yet simultaneously lay legitimate claim to emotional and sexual fulfilment and the right to speak out with a magnificent voice that men would love and respond to. Needless to say the novel both scandalised (male) and enchanted (female) Parisian society of the time. *Consuelo* stands as a permanent record of Pauline Viardot's impact as a woman on the role of women and the potential of their voice in society.

It was Cultural historian Betsey Prioleau who notably lists Pauline Viardot, 19th-century opera star with a hypnotic voice, whose lovers included Hector Berlioz and Ivan Turgenev, along with many others, as her Parisian ‘favourite,’ above strong and accomplished Parisian contenders that included seductive, provocative Georges Sand, emotional powerhouse Edith Piaf etc, in her historic analytic tome, **Seductress: Women Who Ravished the World.**

EVOCATION, the title of one of songstress Pauline Viardot's compositions is the title of this ravishing cinematic exploration visualised within a decidedly contemporary thematic framing. A strong and provocative narrative structure that traverses the trauma of her youth, her young marriage, the triumph of her career on stage and the adoration of admirers from Ivan Turgenev, Hector Berlioz, Georges Sand and beyond fearlessly delivers a powerful emotional

blend that harnesses cinematic innovation and re imagines operatic tradition to deliver a moving testament to one woman's courage, talent and willingness to entertain fascinate and outrage society with her passionate desire to live life to the fullest possible extent.

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By crafting her own image rather than allowing society to stigmatize or vilify her, Pauline's success was chronicled in contemporary literature written by women who viewed prima donnas as spokespersons for the female plight. Much of this literature explores women's hopelessness and despair in the face of highly restrictive social codes. Her successful negotiation of these roles allowed her to carve out a unique position in her contemporary society, a position that allowed her to teach at the Paris Conservatory, support the careers of budding male musicians, garner the respect of royalty, publish and perform her own musical compositions, and live a long, fulfilling life- carving out a model for feminist self fulfilment that still applies two centuries later.

EVOCATION proudly delivers that message of fulfilment in this creative celebration of Pauline Viardot's revolutionary artistic life on film.

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