

TYPICAL TWO-PART STRUCTURE OF A BEL-CANTO ARIA
(CAN ALSO APPLY TO A DUET OR CHORUS SCENE)

Alfredo's Aria in Act II of *La Traviata* is a typical example of Bel-Canto aria structure.

1. SLOW PORTION: (usually called the "aria")
 - Introduction (orchestra)
 - Recitative (accompanied and punctuated by the orchestra)
 - **"Cantabile" (slow aria) often ends with:
 - "Cadenza" (seemingly improvised flourish, sung without orchestra)

 - Transition (interruption to change the mood: accomplished by arrival of message, entrance of chorus with news, brief conversation, sounds heard from offstage, etc.)
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2. FAST PORTION: (called the "Cabaletta")
 - Orchestral introduction (sometimes omitted or very brief)
 - First verse of the Cabaletta
 - Short transition
 - Second verse of the Cabaletta (frequently cut)
 - Coda (concluding material, often quick repeated phrases, leading to an interpolated final or penultimate high note (usually written as a lower note).
 - Orchestral conclusion

**If this is the first time we meet the character, his or her slow aria ("cantabile") is often called a "Cavatina." In such cases there is often no cabaletta following.

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