



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

New York City Opera
National Company

BEVERLY SILLS, *General Director*

NANCY KELLY, *Administrative Director*

GEORGE MANAHAN, *Music Director*

TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 5, 1985, AT 8:00
POWER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Rigoletto

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
after Victor Hugo's play, "Le roi s'amuse"

Conducted by George Manahan
Production conceived and directed by David Hicks
Scenery design and supervision by Allison Ford
Costumes by Malabar, Limited
Lighting design by Mark Stanley
Choreography by Jessica Redel
Musical preparation by Ted Taylor
English subtitles by Sonya Friedman

Act I A hall in the Duke's palace

Act II The courtyard of Rigoletto's house

Intermission

Act III A room in the Duke's palace

Intermission

Act IV Sparafucile's inn

Time: c. 1520

Place: Mantua, Italy

Rigoletto

Verdi's *Rigoletto* is a fascinating exploration of complex characters and intense emotions. Its central figure, the hunchbacked jester Rigoletto, leads a mysterious double life. At the court of his master, the Duke of Mantua, he plays the cynical, insensitive buffoon; at home, however, he keeps his innocent daughter Gilda in close seclusion, tenderly shielding her from the depravities of the world outside. Terrified when an old man curses him for mocking a father's grief, Rigoletto is tortured by the premonition that some evil will befall Gilda, his only joy in life. The jester's ominous forebodings find a vivid contrast in the devil-may-care profligacy of the Duke. Verdi's celebrated aria, "La donna e mobile," captures both the charismatic appeal and deplorable decadence of this rakish nobleman.

Caught between her father's fanatical possessiveness and the Duke's indiscriminate lust is Gilda, who ultimately pays with her life for the sins of these two men. Verdi describes her character in music of unsurpassed delicacy and pathos, from the ingenuous "Caro nome" to the heartbreaking final duet with her father. She shines forth as the very image of unselfish devotion. Sparafucile, a paid assassin, represents the dark side of human existence, with music that is deep, sinister, and sinuous, while his sister Maddalena emerges as the embodiment of earthy sensuality.

These deftly-drawn musical portraits find their culmination in the famous Quartet, perhaps the supreme achievement in operatic ensemble writing: four distinct emotions are expressed simultaneously in a piece that is by turns seductive, flirtatious, despairing, and vengeful. The Quartet is just one of many magnificent moments of music-drama to be found in *Rigoletto*, Verdi's mesmerizing tale of love and revenge.

Rigoletto premiered in Venice in 1851 and is the first in the celebrated trio of Verdi operas that also includes *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*, both from 1853. All three works were revolutionary in depicting characters from the lower and middle classes of society as sympathetic figures. Conservatives were shocked and offended by what they perceived as the composer's immoral lack of taste. The general public, however, was quick to recognize *Rigoletto* as a brilliant operatic achievement. More than one hundred years after its first performance, its power to move and captivate an audience remains undiminished, and it is now universally acclaimed as Verdi's first masterpiece.

This tour of the New York City Opera National Company marks the first use of English subtitles in live opera "on the road." Already a success at the New York City Opera, this innovation, long familiar to audiences of opera on television, clarifies the action onstage while preserving the integrity of the original-language libretto. Miss Sills was introduced to the live titling process while attending a performance at the Peking Opera, where vertical columns of Chinese characters were flashed onto screens at the side of the stage. She introduced the technique in 1983 at New York City Opera, to such acclaim that she announced all foreign-language operas would be presented with English subtitles in future City Opera seasons. Other major opera companies across the nation — including Houston and Tulsa — have followed suit in instituting their own subtitle programs. In Miss Sills' words, "We've broken the biggest obstacle to enjoying opera: the language barrier."

Cast

(in order of vocal appearance)

Duke of Mantua	William Livingston
Borsa	Dennis Petersen
Countess Ceprano	Margaret Anne Davis
Rigoletto	Mark Rucker
Count Ceprano	Gregory Powell
Marullo	Darren Nimnicht
Monterone	Craig Heath Nim
Sparafucile	Gregory Stapp
Gilda	Candace Goetz
Giovanna	Cynthia Rose
Page	Margaret Anne Davis
Maddalena	Cynthia Rose
Courtiers, servants, guards	Larry Clark, Frank Curtis, William Dyszel, Neil Eddinger, Jonathan Guss, Frank Nemhauser, Louis Perry, Frank Ream, Alan Seale, Thomas Tomasiewicz, George Wyman

Act I

A hall in the Duke's palace, Mantua, Italy, 1520

Into the midst of the court revelry strolls the libertine Duke of Mantua, who describes his latest amorous adventures to his companion, Borsa. In a carefree aria, "Questa o quella" (This one or that one), the Duke expresses his philosophy of seducing any woman that strikes his fancy. He leaves with the Countess Ceprano, much to the chagrin of her husband.

The courtier Marullo enters, disclosing that the hunchbacked jester, Rigoletto, is keeping a mistress. The Duke returns, followed by Rigoletto. The fool hurls barbed jests at Ceprano, and does not notice that the courtiers are plotting to pay him back for past insults. The music reaches a fever pitch of excitement as everyone calls for a celebration.

The arrival of the imperious Count Monterone brings the festivities to a sudden halt. He has come to regain his daughter, who has been seduced by the Duke, but Rigoletto interrupts, mockingly imitating the elderly nobleman's solemn speeches. Enraged by these insults, Monterone turns first upon the Duke, then to Rigoletto: "You who have laughed at a father's grief — may you be cursed!" After the offended nobleman storms off, Rigoletto and his companions return to their drunken debauchery as the scene comes to an end.

Act II

The courtyard of Rigoletto's house, later that evening

Late at night, Rigoletto turns his steps homeward, contemplating Monterone's curse in fearful uneasiness. A sinister figure steps from the shadows and introduces himself as Sparafucile, a paid assassin. Rigoletto, making certain he knows where to find Sparafucile in the future, sends him away. "Pari siamo" (We are the same), declares the cripple in a bitter monologue, comparing himself to the murderer: one slays with his tongue, the other with his knife.

Upon entering the courtyard, Rigoletto is greeted by Gilda, his daughter. She urges him to tell her about his past life, but he sternly refuses. "Deh non parlare al misero" (Ah, do not speak of the misery), pleads the hunchback, evoking the memory of his dead wife. During this scene, the Duke enters and secretly obtains a key to the house from Giovanna, Gilda's servant. Rigoletto makes Gilda swear that she has not left the house. In the duet "Veglia, o donna" (Guard, o woman), he enjoins Giovanna to protect Gilda with the utmost vigilance. The Duke enters the house. Hearing the noise, Rigoletto runs through the courtyard gate into the street, but by then the Duke is out of sight. The hunchback reluctantly says goodbye to his daughter, then departs.

Gilda is stricken with remorse at concealing from her father that a young man has been following her home from church. The Duke, disguised as a poor student, arrives to disturb her reverie and pours forth his passion in the scene which begins "E' il sol dell'anima" (It is the sunshine of the soul). While the lovers exchange sweet sentiments, Ceprano, Borsa, and several courtiers enter the street. Fearing that her father has returned, Gilda urges the young man to leave, prompting a whirlwind duet, "Addio, addio, speranza ed anima" (Farewell, farewell, my hope and spirit). The Duke rushes out.

Gilda muses on the name of her beloved — Gualtier Maldè, he told her — in the familiar aria, "Caro nome" (Dear name), then goes inside. Rigoletto, his head clouded with wine, reappears outside the courtyard, where he is accosted by Marullo, who hands the jester a mask and enlists him in a plot to kidnap the Countess Ceprano. The mask, however, turns out to be a blindfold, and Rigoletto does not see that he is assisting in the abduction of his own daughter. After Gilda has been carried off, Rigoletto, growing impatient, rips off the blindfold, then realizes that this time he is the victim of a cruel jest. "Ah, la maledizione!" (Ah, the curse!), he shouts, falling to his knees in despair.

Act III

A room in the Duke's palace, several hours later

In the plaintive aria, "Parmi veder le lagrime" (I seem to see the tears), the Duke laments that Gilda has been stolen from him. The courtiers arrive, revealing that they have brought Rigoletto's mistress to the palace. Realizing that they mean none other than Gilda, the Duke eagerly rushes off to "comfort" her in his own fashion.

Rigoletto enters, feigning nonchalance, and vainly searches the room for his daughter while the courtiers laugh at his plight. He finally realizes that Gilda is with the Duke, but the courtiers prevent him from going to her. "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (Courtiers, damned, vile race), sings the jester, hurling a bitter invective at his adversaries. When Gilda suddenly appears, the fool drives everyone from the room and, in a poignant duet, "Tutte le feste al tempio" (Every Sunday at church), Gilda confesses the entire story of the Duke's deception. The unfortunate cripple resolves to go away with his daughter as soon as possible.

Monterone, passing through the chamber on his way to prison, says that he forgives his sovereign. After the nobleman is taken away, Rigoletto swears to wreak his own justice on the profligate Duke in the duet which begins "Sì, vendetta, tremenda vendetta" (Yes, vengeance, terrible vengeance). Gilda begs her father to forgive the man who dishonored her, for she still loves him, but the jester seizes a dagger and starts toward the door; his daughter throws herself at his feet and embraces him, weeping, as the curtain falls.

Act IV

Sparafucile's inn, one month later

Rigoletto and Gilda appear on the waterfront. The jester forces his daughter to watch as the Duke flirts with Maddalena, Sparafucile's sister. When Maddalena rebuffs his advances, the libertine launches into the celebrated aria, "La donna è mobile" (Woman is fickle).

Sparafucile goes out to confer with Rigoletto about murdering the Duke. When the assassin departs, Rigoletto and Gilda continue to observe the nobleman in his unsuccessful pursuit of Maddalena. Four separate exclamations reach a climax in the brilliant quartet, "Bella figlia dell'amore" (Fair daughter of love). The hunchback instructs Gilda to disguise herself and leave for Verona; he will follow later. She reluctantly departs. Accosting Sparafucile, Rigoletto pays him half the agreed fee and promises to return at midnight.

As a storm breaks, the Duke goes upstairs to sleep. Dressed as a young man, Gilda returns, determined to save her faithless lover. Maddalena, who has fallen in love with the Duke, attempts to dissuade Sparafucile from his task, but the assassin offers a compromise: if anyone else should enter the inn before midnight, that person will be substituted for the intended victim. Gilda, overhearing, resolves to sacrifice her own life to save the Duke. As the clock strikes half-past eleven, she walks resolutely up to the door, knocks, and goes in to meet her fate.

The familiar stooped figure of Rigoletto appears. When the clock strikes midnight, Sparafucile comes out the of the inn, carrying a body over his shoulder in a sack. Rigoletto says that he wants to dispose of the body himself and dismisses the murderer. "Look at me now, o world!" exults the hunchback, observing triumphantly that the mighty ruler now lies at the feet of the fool. Suddenly, in the distance, comes the voice of the Duke, singing the familiar "La donna è mobile." Trembling with fearful speculation, Rigoletto tears open the sack to discover his daughter, barely alive. "Lassù in cielo" (Up in heaven), Gilda sings, beginning a touching duet in which she contentedly anticipates meeting her mother in heaven. Cradled in her father's arms, the girl finally expires. "Ah!" cries the hunchback, mad with grief, "La maledizione!"

New York City Opera National Company Orchestra

<i>Violins</i>	<i>Basses</i>	<i>Bassoon</i>
John Connelly, <i>Concertmaster</i>	Matthew Zory, <i>Principal</i>	Deborah Greitzer
Phillip Coonce, <i>Assistant Concertmaster</i>	Gail Kruvand	
Mary Whitaker, <i>Principal Second</i>		<i>French Horns</i>
Marshall Coid	<i>Flute</i>	Donna Dolson, <i>Principal</i>
Priscilla Eva	Peter Ader	Stuart Butterfield
Robert Gerry		
Susan Lorentsen	<i>Piccolo</i>	<i>Trumpets</i>
Wende Namkung	Peter Ader	Jeffrey Silberschlag, <i>Principal</i>
Karen Turner		Julia Cohen
	<i>Oboe</i>	
<i>Violas</i>	Claudia Coonce	<i>Trombone</i>
Rachel Evans, <i>Principal</i>		James Biddlecome
Katherine Green	<i>English Horn</i>	
	Claudia Coonce	<i>Timpani</i>
<i>Cellos</i>		Daniel Haskins
Ravenna Helson, <i>Principal</i>	<i>Clarinets</i>	
Yari Bond	William Reinert, <i>Principal</i>	<i>Percussion</i>
Sarah Carter	Barbara Koostra	Richard Hilms

About the Company

Founded by Beverly Sills in 1979 as the touring arm of the New York City Opera, the National Company provides talented young artists with valuable performing experience while fulfilling the Company's role as America's National Opera. Each production is designed to show the creativity and energy of America's best new singers, instrumentalists, and designers, many of whom go on to enjoy successful careers with major opera houses around the world. A National Company tour is also the ideal environment for veteran singers who wish to develop a new role, since repeated performances under a wide variety of conditions allow an artist to perfect a characterization. The current six-week tour of *Rigoletto*, covering 22 states and Canada, is both the longest and most expensive undertaking in the Company's history. In addition to the annual opera tour, plans are underway for yearly operetta and musical comedy productions.

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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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