

Verdi - Don Carlo (Met 2010)

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Verdi's five-act opera, which clocks in at around four and a half hours, is set in Spain circa 1560 against the dark backdrop of the Inquisition. It tells the story of Carlo, heir to the throne, whose beloved Elisabeth, the daughter of King Henry II, marries Carlo's father, King Phillip II, in order to broker a peace treaty between France and Spain. Based on the play by Friedrich Schiller, the opera cleverly weaves known historical figures and facts with a fictional narrative that involves two love triangles, soap opera-worthy family drama, betrayal, heartbreak, religious oppression, and political rebellion.

Originally written in French but subsequently translated and commonly performed in Italian (as it will be at the Met), "Don Carlo" is the longest of Verdi's 28 operas. It was premiered by the Paris Opera in 1867, though Verdi revised the work numerous times over the course of two decades. It was not performed at the Met until 1920, at which point it was virtually unknown in the United States.

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