

Giuseppe Verdi

ERNANI

February 25, 2012

Conductor **Marco Armiliato**
Production **Pier Luigi Samaritani**
Staged by **Peter McClintock**
Set Designer **Pier Luigi Samaritani**
Costume Designer **Peter J. Hall**
Lighting Designer **Gil Wechsler**

Live in HD Host **Joyce DiDonato**

Elvira **Angela Meade**
Ernani **Marcello Giordani**
Don Carlo **Dmitri Hvorostovsky**
De Silva **Ferruccio Furlanetto**

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ACT I Spain, 1519. Don Juan of Aragon, a banished nobleman turned outlaw who has taken the name Ernani, is in love with Elvira. He tells his men of his daring plan to rescue her from an impending forced marriage to her elderly uncle, Don Ruy Gómez de Silva. The men set out with Ernani for Silva's castle.

Elvira is visited secretly by Don Carlo, the king of Spain. He declares his love and when he tries to abduct her, she grabs a knife in self-defense. Ernani bursts in. The king recognizes him as the outlaw and the men are about to duel when Silva appears. He is shocked to discover Elvira with two strangers and threatens them both. When he realizes the king's true identity, he asks for forgiveness, which Carlo grants, since he needs Silva's support in the election for the new Holy Roman Emperor. Ernani leaves, vowing revenge.

INTERMISSION

ACT II Preparations are in progress for the marriage of Elvira and Silva. Ernani arrives in disguise but reveals his presence to Elvira, who assures him that she would rather kill herself than marry someone else. Silva is furious to find the couple embracing but hides Ernani when the king arrives, in order to take revenge on the outlaw later. Carlo accuses Silva of concealing a criminal, but the older man refuses to turn Ernani in. When Elvira asks the king for mercy, he takes her away as a hostage. Silva challenges Ernani to a duel and is astonished to learn from him that Carlo is also a suitor for Elvira's hand. They agree to suspend their quarrel to take vengeance against the king. Once they have done so, Ernani says, his life will be in Silva's hands. To pledge their agreement, Ernani gives Silva a hunting horn: when it is sounded, Ernani will kill himself.

INTERMISSION

ACT III At the tomb of Charlemagne in Aachen, Carlo is waiting for the electors' choice of the next Holy Roman Emperor. He reflects on the futility of wealth and power and vows to rule wisely if chosen. He hides as a group of conspirators, led by Ernani and Silva, gathers to plot his assassination. Ernani is chosen as the one to kill the king, and the men look forward to a better future for Spain. When cannon shots announce that Carlo has been elected

emperor, he emerges from his hiding place and orders the conspirators to be punished. The nobles are to be executed, the commoners imprisoned. Ernani reveals his true identity and demands to share the fate of the other noblemen. Elvira again pleads for his life. Addressing himself to the spirit of Charlemagne, the new emperor pardons the conspirators and agrees to the marriage of Ernani and Elvira.

ACT IV Back in Spain, Ernani is celebrating his upcoming marriage to Elvira. A horn sounds in the distance, announcing Silva, who demands that Ernani fulfill his oath. Sending the terrified Elvira away, Ernani asks his rival to grant him a moment of happiness at the end of his miserable life. Elvira returns as Silva hands Ernani a knife and demands the life that has been promised to him. Ernani stabs himself and dies in Elvira's arms.

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