

Giuseppe Verdi

# DON CARLO

December 11, 2010

Conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

Production **Nicholas Hytner**

Set and Costume Designer

**Bob Crowley**

Lighting Designer

**Mark Henderson**

Elisabeth de Valois

**Marina Poplavskaya**

Princess Eboli **Anna Smirnova**

Don Carlo

**Roberto Alagna**

Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa

**Simon Keenlyside**

King Philip II **Ferruccio Furlanetto**

The Grand Inquisitor

**Eric Halfvarson**

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**ACT I** France, around 1560. As part of a peace treaty between Spain and France, the Spanish prince Don Carlo is supposed to marry Elisabeth, daughter of the French king. When the two meet for the first time, they fall in love on sight, but their happiness ends with news that Elisabeth is to marry King Philip, Carlo's father, instead.

**ACT II** Carlo visits the tomb of his grandfather, Emperor Charles V, in the monastery of St. Just in Spain. He is confronted by a monk who seems to be the emperor's ghost. His friend Rodrigo, the Marquis of Posa, reminds Carlo of his commitment to the cause of the Flemish people who are oppressed by Spanish rule. The two men swear eternal friendship. Elisabeth—now queen—receives a letter from Carlo, asking for a meeting. Carlo wants her to obtain Philip's permission for him to go to Flanders. When he declares his continuing love, Elisabeth rejects him.

Posa challenges the King to end his oppression of the Flemish people. Philip refuses but is impressed by Posa's courage. He tells him about his suspicions of his wife and Carlo, asking Posa to watch them.

INTERMISSION

**ACT III** Carlo has been summoned to a secret meeting in the queen's gardens. He thinks he is to meet Elisabeth, but it is Princess Eboli who appears, a lady of the court who is in love with Carlo. When he discovers her identity and rejects her, Eboli realizes where the prince's feelings lie and swears to expose him. Posa persuades Carlo that he is now in danger and Carlo hands over secret papers to him for safekeeping.

At a public burning of heretics, Carlo leads a group of Flemish deputies to Philip. The king rejects their pleas for freedom. When he also dismisses Carlo's own request to rule Flanders, the prince draws his sword on his father. He is disarmed by Posa and arrested.

INTERMISSION

**ACT IV** The king reflects on his life with a wife who doesn't love him. He consults with the old and blind Grand Inquisitor, who consents to the death sentence for Carlo and demands that Posa also be handed over to him. Eboli, who knows that Elisabeth keeps a portrait of Carlo in her jewelry box, has given the box to the king. When Elisabeth tells Philip that it has been stolen, he shows her the box and opens it. Taking out the portrait, he accuses her of adultery. Posa is amazed that a king who rules

half the world cannot govern his own emotions, while Eboli feels remorse for her actions. Alone with Elisabeth, she confesses that she not only falsely accused her but that she has been the king's mistress. Elisabeth banishes her from the court.

Posa visits Carlo in prison. As he reminds the prince to take up the cause of liberty for Flanders, he is shot by agents of the Inquisition.

**ACT V** Elisabeth, who wants only her own death, meets Carlo at the monastery of St. Just. She encourages him to continue Posa's quest for Flanders and they hope for happiness in the next world. Philip and the Grand Inquisitor arrive with agents of the Inquisition. As they move in on Carlo, the Emperor Charles V materializes out of the darkness to insist that suffering is unavoidable and ceases only in heaven.

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