

Il Trovatore

GIUSEPPE VERDI | 1853

SUNG IN ITALIAN
APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 143 minutes

Disrespectful of how used we are to the magnificence of Verdi's compositions, *Il Trovatore* can still certainly surprise the audience with its arias, regarded as the best ever written by the Italian composers. An amazing opera packed with all manners of unforgettable characters fluttering about between daring tenor compositions and elegiac soprano arias.

Before dying, Salvatore Cammarano wrote most of the libretto basing it on the famous Spanish drama by Antonio Garcia Gutiérrez. The Opera, in four acts, was first staged at the Teatro Apollo di Roma on the 19th of January 1853 and rapidly made its way to the worldwide success. The opera was so successful that Paris Opera director commissioned Verdi to put up a French version of the opera. This new production premiered at Brussels' La Monnaie and was later staged at Paris's Le Peletier on 12 January 1857. However, the opera is nowadays usually staged in its Italian version. Being this masterpiece full of peculiar characters, complex and contrasting at the same time, it necessarily needs to be performed by a-list singers.



MAIN CHARACTERS

Count di Luna, a noble man in the service of the Prince of Aragon (Baritone)

Manrico, a troubadour (Tenor)

Azucena, a gipsy, supposedly Manrico's mother (Mezzo-soprano)

Leonora, Noble lady in love with Manrico and courted by di Luna (Soprano)

THE PLOT

The action takes place in a 15 century Aragon, ripped apart by the civil war. Gipsy Azucena is plotting her revenge against Count di Luna who previously accused her mother of witchcraft and had her executed at the stake. She has secretly reared up, after stealing it, one of di Luna's children. Manrico, instead, is a troubadour noble lady Leonora is in love with. However, Leonora is courted by Count di Luna who does his best to get rid of his rival Manrico. The young lady risks her life in order to save Manrico, who unfortunately falls prey of the count's rage which eventually leads him to be executed under the eyes of his mother who rejoices for the achieved vengeance; Manrico was, in fact, the di Luna's child she stole years before.

Act 1

Count di Luna is in love with Leonora and tries to sabotage the troubadour's attempt to court the woman. While enjoying him serenading her, Leonora discloses her feelings for Manrico to one of her servant. Later, she wanders around her garden and believes to see Manrico, she runs to him only to actually find him duelling with di Luna.

Act 2

Back at the gipsy camp, Azucena tells his son Manrico the story of di Luna having her mother burnt to the stake and of how she got back at him. She intended to throw di Luna's child in the fire that was killing her mother; however, the gipsy got confused by the vision of her mother burning and eventually threw her own child to the fire, instead. Consequently, Manrico learns Azucena is not her biological mother but loves her all the same and cover her with questions trying to find out his real origins. They suddenly receive a message from Leonora; thinking Manrico had died, she has decided to take the veil and is soon meant to enter a monastery. The troubadour rushes to save his beloved.

Act 3

Leonora is saved by Manrico, but meanwhile, Azucena gets arrested. Di Luna thinks he has put his hands on both the mother of his archrival and the responsible of his younger brother's death and therefore demands her immediate execution. When Manrico learns what is about to happen he promptly runs to his mother in an attempt to save her.

Act 4

Manrico gets arrested and imprisoned with his mother. In order to save him, Leonora makes a deal with di Luna promising the count to give herself to him in exchange for Manrico and his mother's lives, however, in order to avoid being possessed by di Luna, she swallows some poison and eventually dies under di Luna's powerless eyes. Furious for the incident, the evil Count manages to have Manrico executed. While seeing her son dying Azucena informs the Count he has just killed his little brother; the revenge is achieved.

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