

# Our story...



Here comes a theatrical company, always travelling from theatre to theatre with chests full of colourful costumes, tools and bric-a-bracs. "The Duke's Company" is how it's called. It puts on stage a wonderful story, Rigoletto, although every member knows that every time, telling the story, they will have to feel joy and pain, to swear revenge, forgive, even find themselves in front of Mrs Death, and perish.

Every day, this group of actors carrying only their few tools, arrives at a different theatre to stage the same show, discovering new spaces each time, playing with theatrical machines, creating magic with the nothing but great secret the theatrical world hides. Once ready, they begin the show, opening to a great celebration at the Palace.

The Duke of Mantua is enjoying himself with his courtiers, dancing and drinking, eating and admiring all the beautiful ladies at his party, particularly Count Ceprano's wife. The court jester Rigoletto supports his frenzy, piling it on and making Ceprano furious. The party is interrupted by Count Monterone, mad himself for the Duke has made fun of his daughter. When he gets arrested, he curses the Duke and his jester before being brought to prison.

Rigoletto takes off his jester costume and runs home to his dear daughter Gilda to keep her safe, far from the court's follies at all cost. He is unaware that the Duke has already laid eyes on her and is just outside the window, waiting for the right moment to come in and pursue her.

When Rigoletto leaves, the Duke, pretending to be Gualtier Maldè, a poor student, seduces the beautiful Gilda. The Duke is scared off by some noise and flees: it's the courtiers who, convinced that Gilda is Rigoletto's lover, want to kidnap her to poke fun at him. Just like comical acrobats, they climb on the stairs, kidnap and bring her to the Palace. When Rigoletto returns home, he is desperate, because he is not able to find his treasured daughter. Rigoletto meets a shady bandit, Sparafucile, who says himself willing to serve him at his best, before disappearing in the darkness.

At the palace, the Duke hears the night-time adventures of his courtiers and understands that the kidnapped woman brought to his room is none other than Gilda, so he joins her. Rigoletto arrives at the palace just moments after. He's wary, in search for proof, until, desperate, he reveals the truth: Gilda is his daughter! And there she is, crying. She admits everything to her father, who collecting all his strength, swears revenge on the Duke.

A few days pass, but Gilda's love for the Duke doesn't fade. Rigoletto decides to show her the insincerity of his love and takes her to a tavern on the bank of the river Mincio. Once there, they glimpse the Duke in the arms of Sparafucile's beautiful sister Maddalena. Gilda finally has proof of his cheating. Her father sends her home, as he still has something to take care of. He plans to have the Duke killed by the bandit to complete his revenge, ignoring that Sparafucile and Maddalena have resolved to kill Rigoletto himself, rob him and save the Duke, with whom Maddalena is in love.

Unbeknown to her father, Gilda returns to discover the siblings' plan and, in a great love gesture, decides to sacrifice herself for the Duke and her father. A stormy night of thunders, lightning and gale covers that sad moment's suffering. Rigoletto comes back, takes the trunk from Sparafucile, certain it contains the Duke's body. But opening it, he makes the saddest discovery: inside is Gilda, who with her last words, says goodbye to her father. Rigoletto is left bereft and returns home.

The actors wrap up and head to the next theatre, well aware that all they have shown is false, as all theatre plays are bound to be, but nonetheless expresses true and deep feelings, as true as real life.