ACT I  The embittered, hunchbacked Rigoletto serves as court jester to the womanizing Duke of Mantua. His sole joy in life is his daughter, Gilda, whom he has raised in seclusion from the world. When Rigoletto mocks Count Monterone, whose daughter has been seduced by the duke, the old man curses the jester. The duke, incognito, has flirted with Gilda at church. During a visit he pays her at night outside Rigoletto’s home, she confesses her love. The courtiers, thinking Gilda is the jester’s mistress, decide to play a prank on him and trick Rigoletto into assisting in the abduction of his own daughter.

INTERMISSION

ACT II  Gilda has been brought to the duke’s palace, where she becomes another of his conquests. When Monterone passes by on his way to execution, Rigoletto swears that both he and Monterone will be avenged. Gilda begs her father to forgive the duke.

ACT III  Rigoletto hires the assassin Sparafucile to kill the duke, using Sparafucile’s sister, Maddalena, to lure him to an inn on the outskirts of town. Gilda, still in love with the duke, overhears the plan and decides to sacrifice herself to save the duke’s life. When Rigoletto comes to collect the victim’s body, he finds not the duke but his dying daughter. Horrified, he remembers Monterone’s curse.

In cooperation with Staatsoper Berlin

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