

Umberto Giordano's
FEDORA

CONDUCTOR:

Marco Armiliato

DIRECTOR: David McVicar

ESTIMATED HD RUN TIME:

2 hrs 45 min

WORLD PREMIERE:

Teatro Lirico, Milan, 1898

CAST:

Fedora

Count Loris

Countess Olga

De Siriex

Sonya Yoncheva

Piotr Beczała

Rosa Feola

Lucas Meachem

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

In the salon of the apartment of Count Vladimiro Andrejevich in St. Petersburg, the 1880s. While their master is out on the night before his wedding, Count Vladimiro's servants gossip about his bride-to-be, the widowed Princess Fedora Romazoff. Vladimiro is deep in debt, and the marriage will repair his fortunes. The princess arrives, eager to see her fiancé. Suddenly, Gretch, a police officer accompanied by the French diplomat Giovanni De Siriex, bursts in with policemen and porters carrying the count, who has been shot. Doctors rush into the bedroom to try to save the count's life, while Gretch interrogates the household staff. The pageboy Dimitri was with Vladimiro earlier but was sent home hours ago, leaving the coachman Cirillo as the only witness to the shooting. Cirillo relates how he dropped Vladimiro at his club and then heard two shots fired in the grounds. He saw a man rush away, cried for help, and was assisted by De Siriex, who discovered the count lying in a pool of blood inside a nearby pavilion. The valet Desiré confirms that the firearm found at the scene belongs to Vladimiro and that the count never left the house without it. Vladimiro is the son of Count Jariskin, the chief of police, and Gretch suspects a political motive for an assassination attempt by the Russian Nihilist movement. Clues connect the pavilion to an old woman who delivered a letter to Vladimiro the previous day, but the letter itself is nowhere to be found. Dimitri remembers a stranger who called earlier in the day and was left alone in the salon before abruptly leaving. Fedora is convinced that this must have been the perpetrator and swears to exact vengeance. The porter who admitted the stranger remembers his name: "Ipanoff." Loris Ipanoff lives in the house opposite, and Gretch rushes away to arrest him. The doctor emerges from the bedroom to tell Fedora that Vladimiro has died. As Gretch returns empty-handed, Fedora collapses in despair.

ACT II

The ballroom of Fedora's mansion in Paris, several months later. A soirée is in progress. Fedora's cousin Countess Olga Sukarev introduces the guests to her latest flame and protégé,

the pianist Boleslao Lazinski. De Siriex is shocked to find Fedora accompanied by Loris Ipanoff, now an exile from Russia. She pulls him aside to explain that Loris, unaware of her relationship to Vladimiro, is falling in love with her, and she means to extract a confession from him. Loris tells Dr. Boroff that he is hopelessly in love with Fedora. Baron Rouvel admires the cross around Fedora's neck, and she tells the company that it contains a potion that ends all life's ills. Olga introduces Lazinski, who is about to play for the guests, but then declines the proffered arm of De Siriex. Intrigued by Olga, he gallantly praises the inscrutable nature of Russian women. She replies with a flirtatious assessment of French men. As Lazinski plays, Loris and Fedora remain alone. She tries to draw a confession from him. Loris eventually admits to killing Vladimiro but is unwilling to tell her why. He leaves as the concert ends, Fedora wiping his kiss from her lips. News arrives of a Nihilist attempt on the life of the tsar, and the party breaks up. Fedora begins to write a letter to Vladimiro's father, accusing Loris of murder. Gretch and his men enter, and he tells her that Loris is under surveillance and has recently heard from his brother, Valeriano, who is also under suspicion of political activity. She adds his name to her letter as a possible accomplice and hands it to Gretch, who has planned Loris's arrest and abduction. Loris returns, and she accuses him of murder and sedition. He responds that Vladimiro was his wife's lover. He had visited Vladimiro's home on the day of the murder and found the letter arranging an assignation between them that evening. When he confronted them, Vladimiro had fired first, and in self-defense Loris shot back. His wife ran from the scene to go into hiding, where she later died. He throws Vladimiro's love letters down as proof. Fedora reads them and is devastated to be confronted with the truth. She realizes that she is in love with Loris but also that she has laid a trap for him. To stop him from leaving the mansion, she asks him to stay the night with her.

ACT III

A villa in the Swiss Alps, several weeks later. Fedora and Loris are living happily as lovers far from Paris, and Olga has accompanied them. She has broken off her affair with Lazinski, but she is bored and irritable. As Loris leaves to see if there are any letters at the post office, De Siriex arrives. He teases Olga about her failed relationship, but she agrees when he suggests that she join him on a bicycle ride in the mountains. She runs off to change. Suddenly serious, De Siriex tells Fedora that Count Jariskin has seized on the information in her letter and imprisoned Loris's brother on charges of sedition. In the summer storms, the river Neva rose and flooded the cells below ground, drowning him. On hearing the news, his mother has died of a stroke. Fedora begins to confess her guilt, but before she can say any more, Olga returns. She and De Siriex leave, and Fedora prays for guidance. Loris returns, concerned that he has received no letters from his mother and brother. But a telegram arrives from Boroff, sent from Paris containing news of his pardon from the tsar. There is another, previously dated letter from Boroff that contains the news of the deaths of his family. Boroff also writes that he knows the identity of the woman in Paris who accused him and will shortly travel to Switzerland with her letter as proof. Loris is devastated and longs to expose and punish this woman. Fedora begs him to have mercy on the guilty woman until Loris realizes that she is asking forgiveness for herself. Boroff arrives, and Fedora, in despair, drinks the poison from the cross around her neck. She asks Loris to forgive her and dies.