



# ***Maria Stuarda:*** **Background and Characters**

The scandalous story based on Friedrich von Schiller's tragedy *Mary Stuart* became even more controversial in its operatic form. Originally written for the Teatro San Carlo of Naples in 1834, the opera was banned by censors because the story ended with the execution of a monarch. Donizetti adapted the score to a different story but with a new libretto and the "new" opera took the name *Buondelmonte (Good of the mountain)*. *Maria Stuarda* in its original form received its premiere in Milan at La Scala in 1835, free from the Neapolitan censors. Chaos, nonetheless, surrounded the premiere of the opera! The soprano singing the role of Elisabetta was replaced by an amateur (at best), and the soprano who played Maria insisted on singing the words "vil bastarda" (vile bastard) even though the censors demanded the words be changed to "vile donna" (vile woman). After opening night, the opera was immediately banned from further performances. *Maria Stuarda* lay dormant, for the most part, after its opening, until it reappeared on stage in Bergamo in 19

This production is a rental from Dallas Opera.

The opera is sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™.

The performances this season will take place on May 1, 4, 10, 13, 22, 26, 28, 30, 2010 at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto.

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## **MAIN CHARACTERS**

In order of vocal appearance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Voice Type</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>
Elisabetta	Queen of England and rival of Maria Stuarda	soprano	eh-lee-zah-BEHT-ta
Roberto	Elisabetta's love interest, who is in love with Maria Stuarda	tenor	roh-BEHR-toh
Maria Stuarda	Queen of Scotland, imprisoned by her rival Elisabetta	soprano	mah-REE-ya stoo-WAHR-dah
Giorgio Talbot	A prison guard who has grown sympathetic to Maria Stuarda	bass	DJOR-joh TAHL-bot
Lord Guglielmo Cecil	Supporter of Elisabetta who rallies for Maria Stuarda's execution	baritone	gool-YEL-moh SESS-ill