

SIMON BOCCANEGRA

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901)

PROLOGUE

“Kingmakers” Pietro and Paolo are out to promote their candidate in the election for the new doge of Genoa. Their man is named Simon Boccanegra, a former pirate captain. Boccanegra himself is not overly enthusiastic at the prospect, but sees it as a way to gain access to his beloved Maria. She is the daughter of the patrician Fiesco, who has tried to steer her away from a relationship with the captain. Boccanegra is confronted with the news that his beloved has died and that the daughter they had together has vanished. The tensions between Fiesco and Boccanegra continue to mount.

ACT ONE

Twenty-five years later, Boccanegra is still in power as doge. Fiesco has gone into hiding. The missing daughter, now living under the name Amelia, warns her lover Gabriele Adorno of the dangers of plotting against the doge. For the time being, love triumphs over politics and the couple decide to quickly marry. This foils the doge’s plan to have her marry Paolo as a reward for his support. However, during a conversation with Amelia, Boccanegra realises that she is his daughter. He decides to withdraw his promise to Paolo, who then swears revenge. Paolo turns against the doge and kidnaps Amelia.

During a Council meeting, Boccanegra tries to reconcile the parties, but unrest from the streets spills into the council chamber. Adorno wants to kill Boccanegra because of his presumed role in the kidnapping of Amelia, but she stops him because she knows who is really behind it. Boccanegra needs to quiet the mob and is able to identify the real culprit, Paolo.

ACT TWO

Paolo takes revenge on Boccanegra by poisoning his glass. He also insinuates to Adorno, who is still unaware of their father-daughter relationship, that Boccanegra is having an affair with Amelia, which provokes him to a new attempt at murdering the doge. Amelia confesses to her father that she is in love with one of his opponents and Boccanegra is prepared to forgive her. Unknowingly, he drinks from the poisoned glass. Amelia confesses to Adorno that she is the doge’s daughter and Adorno decides to change sides and fight for the doge. Out in the streets, the revolution has erupted.

ACT THREE

The revolt has been suppressed, and Paolo condemned to death. But before his execution, he reveals all. Boccanegra is prepared to reconcile with Fiesco. Now that Amelia has been found, they can bury the hatchet. But it is too late for Boccanegra and as he is dying, he appoints Adorno as his successor.