

Gaetano Donizetti

# ANNA BOLENA

Live Broadcast: OCTOBER 15, 2011

Encore Broadcast: NOVEMBER 12, 2011 & NOVEMBER 21, 2011

The Met  
ropolitan  
Opera **HD**  
LIVE

CONDUCTOR  
**Marco Armiliato**

PRODUCTION  
**David McVicar**

SET DESIGNER  
**Robert Jones**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**Jenny Tiramani**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**Paule Constable**

CHOREOGRAPHER  
**Andrew George**

ANNA BOLENA  
**Anna Netrebko**

GIOVANNA SEYMOUR  
**Ekaterina Gubanova**

SMETON  
**Tamara Mumford**

LORD RICCARDO PERCY  
**Stephen Costello**

ENRICO VIII  
**Ildar Abdrazakov**

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## ACT I

England, 1536. At Richmond Castle, courtiers discuss the state of royal affairs: Queen Anne's star is sinking since King Henry VIII has fallen in love with another woman. Jane Seymour, Anne's confidante and lady-in-waiting, appears, followed by the queen, who admits to Jane that she is troubled. Anne asks her page Smeton to sing a song to cheer everyone. His words remind her of the happiness of her first love, which she gave up to marry the king.

Alone in her bedchamber, Jane—who is in fact the king's new lover—is consciousness-stricken about her betrayal. Henry appears and passionately declares his love, promising Jane marriage and glory. She is disturbed by his threats about Anne's future but realizes that it is too late for her to turn back.

Anne's brother, Lord Rochefort, is surprised to meet Lord Richard Percy, the queen's former lover, in Richmond Park. Percy, who has been called back from exile by the king, has heard of Anne's distress and asks about her. Rochefort answers evasively. Percy admits that his own life has been miserable since he and Anne have been apart. The king arrives with a hunting party, followed by Anne and her ladies-in-waiting. He coolly greets his wife, then tells Percy that he has the queen to thank for his pardon. In fact, he has arranged Percy's return as a trap for Anne and is grimly amused at their emotion and embarrassment as they greet each other. He orders one of his officers to spy on the couple.

Smeton, who is in love with the queen, is on his way to her apartments to return a miniature portrait of her that he had stolen. He hides when Anne appears with Rochefort, who persuades his sister to admit Percy. Percy enters and declares his continuing love. Anne admits that the king hates her, but she remains firm and pleads with Percy to find another woman worthy of his affection. Just as he draws his sword and threatens to kill himself, Henry bursts in. Smeton proclaims the queen's innocence and in the process the furious king seizes the miniature, providing him with welcome proof of his wife's seeming infidelity. Anne, Percy, and Smeton are arrested.

## Intermission

## ACT II

Anne has been imprisoned in her London apartments. Jane arrives to tell her that she can avoid execution by pleading guilty and confessing her love for Percy, thereby allowing the king to remarry. Anne refuses, cursing the woman who will be her successor. Jane admits that she is that woman. Shocked, Anne dismisses her, but then gives in to Jane's desperate pleading, insisting that it is the king, not her, who is to blame.

Smeton has falsely testified to being the queen's lover, believing that his confession would save Anne's life, but in fact he has sealed her fate. Anne and Percy are brought before the council. Anne tells the king that she is ready to die but begs him to spare her the humiliation of a trial. In the following confrontation, Percy claims that he and Anne were married before she became the king's wife. Even though he thinks this is a lie, Henry triumphantly replies that another, worthier woman will ascend the throne. Percy and Anne are led away. Jane pleads with Henry for Anne's life, but he dismisses her. News arrives of the council's verdict: The royal marriage is dissolved and Anne and her accomplices are to be executed.

Anne is in a state of delirium. She imagines herself on her wedding day, then recalls her girlhood love for Percy. Her fellow prisoners are brought in and Smeton blames himself for having caused Anne's impending death. When bells and cannon fire are heard, announcing the king's new marriage, Anne suddenly comes to her senses. She furiously curses the royal couple and goes off to face her execution.

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