

LE CID

Jules Massenet

Made for each other: A legendary Spanish hero, an incomparable Spanish tenor. In 11th-century Spain, Rodrigue must fight to save his country -- and his life. To avenge his father, Rodrigue reluctantly duels with and kills the father of his fiancée, Chimène. Grief-stricken, Chimene demands vengeance from the king. But the Moors have declared war and Rodrigue is needed to lead the heavily outnumbered Spanish army. Ever honorable, he pledges that, if he lives, he will return to face whatever punishment Chimene may choose. Torn between her love for Rodrigue and her family's honor, Chimene tells the knight that if he saves Spain she will pardon him. But will she?

A colossal hit when it premiered in Paris in 1885, Le Cid is French grand opera at its most extravagant. The score pulses with stirring choruses, fanfares and marches, passionate duets, entrancing dance music, and two of the most beautiful arias ever written: Chimene's soulful "Pleurez, pleurez mes yeux" and Rodrigue's haunting prayer, "O souverain, o juge, o pere."