

Jules Massenet - Don Quichotte (Paris, 2000)

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1. *Don Quichotte* 2:01:02 Don Quichotte - Samuel Ramey Sancho Panza - Jean-Philippe Lafont Dulcinée - Carmen Oprisanu Pedro - Jaël Azzaretti Garcias - Allison Cook Rodriguez - Jean-Pierre Trévisani Juan - Kevin Greenlaw L'Opéra Comique de Paris Chorus L'Opéra National de Paris Orchestra James Conlon – conductor

Jules Massenet was 67, a mere two years before his death, when he composed *Don Quichotte* (calling it a *comédie-heroïque*); he produced one of his most lyrical and delightful works. The first performance was in 1910 in Monte Carlo and Feodor Chaliapin was noted for playing the Don.

The opera is in five short acts. The action introduces Don Quichotte and Sancho Panza to Dulcinee with the Don immediately falling in love with her (act one); followed by the Don Quichotte practicing a serenade for his new love and his combat with the windmills which the Don takes to be giants (act 2). Act 3 recounts the Don's capture by bandits and his being freed by them when they have pity on the old man, moved by his "final" prayer. In act 4, the action returns to Dulcinee's house where another fiesta is taking place and the Don proposed marriage to his love and is affectionately refused. In the final act, the Don realizes that he has lost touch with his purpose for living and that his death is near; he sees an image of Dulcinee before he quietly slips away. ---D. A Wend, amazon.com

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