

GIACOMO PUCCINI

# LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR  
Carlo Rizzi

PRODUCTION  
Franco Zeffirelli

SET DESIGNER  
Franco Zeffirelli

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Peter J. Hall

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Gil Wechsler

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
Mirabelle Ordinaire

MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and  
Luigi Illica, based on the novel *Scènes  
de la Vie de Bohème* by Henri Murger

Saturday, October 28, 2023  
1:00–4:05 PM

The production of *La Bohème* was made  
possible by a generous gift from  
**Mrs. Donald D. Harrington**

The revival of this production is made possible by a  
gift from The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial  
Foundation and Viking

The Met is grateful to C. Graham Berwind, III for  
sponsoring the refurbishment of the *La Bohème* sets

Throughout the 2023–24 season, the Met  
continues to honor Ukraine and its brave  
citizens as they fight to defend their country  
and its cultural heritage.

# The Metropolitan Opera

2023-24 SEASON

The 1,379th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIACOMO PUCCINI'S

## LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR  
Carlo Rizzi

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARCELLO  
Adam Plachetka

MUSETTA  
Olga Kulchynska

RODOLFO  
Matthew Polenzani

CUSTOMHOUSE SERGEANT  
Tyler Simpson

COLLINE  
Christian Van Horn

CUSTOMHOUSE OFFICER  
Ross Benoiel

SCHAUNARD  
Sean Michael Plumb

BENOIT  
Donald Maxwell

MIMI  
Federica Lombardi

PARPIGNOL  
Bryan Griffin

ALCINDORO  
Donald Maxwell

Today's performances  
of the roles of Mimì  
and Rodolfo are  
underwritten by the  
Jan Shrem and Maria  
Manetti Shrem Great  
Singers Fund.

Saturday, October 28, 2023, 1:00-4:05PM

This performance is dedicated to Michael Knott and Giovanna, Laura, and Anthony Sessi-Knott in grateful recognition of Dr. David G. Knott and Ms. Françoise Girard's generosity to the Metropolitan Opera as members of the Council for Artistic Excellence.

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Yelena Kurdina, Gareth Morrell, Liora Maurer, and Israel Gursky**  
Assistant Stage Director **Sara Erde**  
Associate Designer **David Reppa**  
Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**  
Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**  
Italian Diction Coach **Hemdi Kfir**  
Prompter **Yelena Kurdina**  
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**  
Additional costumes by **Sky NYC; Madison Avenue Furs, New York City; and Pink Passion, Berlin**  
Ladies millinery by **Reggie G. Augustine**  
Men's hats by **Richard Tautkus**  
Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**  
Animals supervised by **All-Tame Animals, Inc.**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

#### **Met Titles**

To activate, press the red button to the right of the screen in front of your seat and follow the instructions provided. To turn off the display, press the red button once again. If you have questions, please ask an usher at intermission.

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The Metropolitan  
Opera

2023-24 SEASON



A scene from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*

The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute  
Rolex in recognition of its generous support  
during the 2023-24 season.



# Synopsis

## Act I

*Paris, in the 1830s.* In their Latin Quarter garret, the near-destitute artist Marcello and poet Rodolfo try to keep warm on Christmas Eve by feeding the stove with pages from Rodolfo's latest drama. Soon, their roommates—Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician—return. Schaunard brings food, fuel, and funds that he has collected from an eccentric nobleman. While they celebrate their unexpected fortune, the landlord, Benoit, comes to collect the rent. After getting the older man drunk, the friends urge him to tell of his flirtations, then throw him out in mock indignation at his infidelity to his wife. As the others depart to revel at the Café Momus, Rodolfo remains behind to finish an article, promising to join them later. There is another knock at the door: It is Mimì, a pretty neighbor whose candle has gone out in the stairwell. As she enters the room, she suddenly feels faint. Rodolfo gives her a sip of wine, then helps her to the door and relights her candle. Mimì realizes that she lost her key when she fainted, and as the two search for it, both candles go out. Rodolfo finds the key and slips it into his pocket. In the moonlight, he takes Mimì's hand and tells her about his dreams. She recounts her life alone in a lofty garret, embroidering flowers and waiting for the spring. Rodolfo's friends call from outside, telling him to join them. He responds that he is not alone and will be along shortly. Happy to have found each other, Mimì and Rodolfo leave, arm in arm, for the café.

## Act II

Amid the shouts of street hawkers near the Café Momus, Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet and introduces her to his friends. They all sit down and order supper. Marcello's former sweetheart Musetta makes a noisy entrance on the arm of the elderly, but wealthy, Alcindoro. The ensuing tumult reaches its peak when, trying to gain Marcello's attention, she loudly sings the praises of her own popularity. Sending Alcindoro away to buy her a new pair of shoes, Musetta finally falls into Marcello's arms. A parade of soldiers passes by the café as the friends join the crowd of revelers.

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:05PM)

## Act III

At dawn at the Barrière d'Enfer, a toll gate on the edge of Paris, a customs official admits farm women to the city. Mimì arrives, searching for the place where Marcello and Musetta now live. When the painter appears, she tells him of her distress over Rodolfo's incessant jealousy. She says that she believes it is best

that they part. As Rodolfo emerges from the tavern, Mimì hides nearby. Rodolfo tells Marcello that he wants to separate from Mimì, blaming her flirtatiousness. Pressed for the real reason, he breaks down, saying that her illness can only grow worse in the poverty that they share. Overcome with emotion, Mimì comes forward to say goodbye to her lover. Upon hearing Musetta's laughter, Marcello runs back into the tavern. While Mimì and Rodolfo recall past happiness, Marcello returns with Musetta, quarreling about her flirting with a customer. They hurl insults at each other and part, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until springtime.

### *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:05PM)

## Act IV

Months later in the garret, Rodolfo and Marcello, now separated from their lovers, reflect on their loneliness. Colline and Schaunard bring a meager meal. To lighten their spirits, the four stage a dance, which turns into a mock duel. At the height of the hilarity, Musetta bursts in with news that Mimì is outside, too weak to come upstairs. As Rodolfo runs to her aid, Musetta relates how Mimì begged to be taken to Rodolfo to die. She is made as comfortable as possible, while Musetta asks Marcello to sell her earrings for medicine and Colline goes off to pawn his overcoat. Left alone, Mimì and Rodolfo recall their meeting and their first happy days, but she is seized with violent coughing. When the others return, Musetta gives Mimì a muff to warm her hands, and Mimì slowly drifts into unconsciousness. Musetta prays for Mimì, but it is too late. The friends realize that she is dead, and Rodolfo collapses in despair.



### *La Bohème* on Demand

Looking for more *La Bohème*? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons: from a classic 1977 telecast starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto—the first in the historic *Live from the Met* series—to the 2018 *Live in HD* transmission, featuring Sonya Yoncheva and Michael Fabiano. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of nearly 850 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](http://metoperaondemand.org).

Support for Met Opera on Demand is provided by the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation and Dorothy and Charles H. Jenkins, Jr.

*Giacomo Puccini*

# La Bohème

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*Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin, 1896*

*La Bohème*—the passionate, timeless, indelible story of love among young artists in Paris—can stake its claim as the world’s most popular opera. It has a marvelous ability to make a powerful first impression (even to those new to opera) and to reveal previously unnoticed treasures after dozens of hearings. At first glance, *La Bohème* is the definitive depiction of the joys and sorrows of love and loss; on closer inspection, it explores the deep emotional significance hidden in the trivial things—a bonnet, an old overcoat, a chance meeting with a neighbor—that make up our everyday lives. Following the breakthrough success of *Manon Lescaut* three years earlier, *La Bohème* established Puccini as the leading Italian opera composer of his generation.

### *The Creators*

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world’s opera companies. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, sensitivity to everyday subjects, copious melody, and economy of expression. Puccini’s librettists for *La Bohème*, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his next two operas, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories, and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. The French author Henri Murger (1822–61) drew on his own early experiences as a poor writer in Paris to pen an episodic prose novel, *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, which became the basis for the opera.

### *The Setting*

The libretto sets the action in Paris, circa 1830. This is not a random setting but rather reflects the issues and concerns of a particular time and place. After the upheavals of revolution and war, French artists had lost their traditional support base of aristocracy and Church, and they were desperate for new sources of income. The rising bourgeoisie took up the burden of patronizing artists and earned their contempt in return. The story, then, centers on self-conscious youths at odds with mainstream society, feeling themselves morally superior to the rules of the bourgeoisie (specifically regarding sexual mores) and expressing their independence with affectations of speech and dress. The bohemian

ambience of this opera is clearly recognizable in any modern urban center. *La Bohème* captures this ethos in its earliest days.

### *The Music*

Lyrical and touchingly beautiful, the score of *La Bohème* exerts a powerfully immediate emotional pull. Many of its most memorable melodies are built incrementally, with small intervals between the notes that carry the listener with them on their lyrical path. This is a distinct contrast to the grand leaps and dives on which earlier operas often depended for emotional effect. *La Bohème*'s melodic structure perfectly captures the "small people" (as Puccini called them) of the drama and the details of everyday life. The two great love arias in Act I—the tenor's "Che gelida manina" and the soprano's "Sì, mi chiamano Mimì"—seduce the listener, beginning conversationally, with great rushes of emotion seamlessly woven into more trivial expressions. In other places, small alterations to a melody can morph the meaning of a thought or an emotion. A change of tempo or orchestration transforms Musetta's famous, exuberant Act II waltz into the nostalgic, bittersweet tenor-baritone duet in Act IV, as the bohemians remember happier times. Similarly, the "Streets of Paris" theme first appears as a foreshadowing in Act I, when one of the bohemians suggests going out on the town; hits full flower in Act II, when they (and we) are actually there; and becomes a bitter, chilling memory at the beginning of Act III, when it is slowed down and re-orchestrated.

### *Met History*

*La Bohème* had its Met premiere while the company was on tour in Los Angeles in 1900. Nellie Melba sang Mimì and improbably added the mad scene from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* as an encore after the final curtain (a practice that she maintained for several other performances). This production lasted until 1952, when one designed by Rolf Gerard and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who insisted that his name be removed after a disagreement with some of the singers, replaced it. In 1977, *La Bohème* served as the first opera telecast as part of the *Live from the Met* series, starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scottò in a new production directed by Fabrizio Melano. The spectacular current production by Franco Zeffirelli premiered on December 14, 1981, with James Levine leading an impressive cast that included Teresa Stratas, Scottò (as Musetta), José Carreras, Richard Stilwell, and James Morris. *La Bohème* was presented at the Met in 59 consecutive seasons after its first appearance and has appeared in all but nine seasons since 1900, making it the most performed opera in company history. Having been presented more than 500 times since its premiere, Zeffirelli's staging is the most performed production in Met history.



## Program Note

When Giacomo Puccini decided—in the wake of his first major success, *Manon Lescaut* (1893)—to write *La Bohème*, he did so against a fascinating historical backdrop stretching back four decades. The French writer Henri Murger's 1849 drama and 1851 novel about the poor, young, artistic “bohemians” of Paris owed their popularity in part to Europe's roiling Revolutions of 1848; tales of idealistic, nonconformist youths with social reform on their minds attracted new interest in revolutionary times. Puccini might well have seen some of his own youthful Milanese days in this story as well, a reminder of the Scapigliati (“the scruffy or disheveled ones”)—an important group of convention-defying painters, writers (including Verdi's collaborator Arrigo Boito), and musicians active in salon circles in the 1860s and 1870s. The story that Puccini and his librettists, Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, fashioned from Murger might seem laughably simple at first—boy meets girl, they break up, she dies—but it is made more profound by its realism, a trend of the times for which the influential Austrian critic Eduard Hanslick sharply criticized *La Bohème*. The realistic depiction of poverty, artistic striving with little chance of success, and the destruction of love by disease and lack of means: All of this puts a different sociopolitical frame around the love story. “Non basta amor!,” cries Rodolfo, and lamentably, he is right. Love is not enough.

The creation of *La Bohème* began with a highly public controversy between two of the foremost opera composers of the day: Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo, fresh off the colossal success of *Pagliacci* (1892). In circumstances that are still mysterious, Leoncavallo was furious to discover that Puccini was working on *La Bohème*, as he too was developing an opera on the same subject. The imbroglione hit the newspapers, with Puccini writing to Milan's *Corriere della Sera* (*The Evening Courier*) on March 21, 1893, “Let him compose, and I will compose, and the public will judge.” And they have: Leoncavallo's version may have been more successful at the outset, but Puccini's opera has long since outstripped that of his rival. And no wonder: It was a considerable feat to compose an opera in the wake of Wagner and late Verdi, all the more so since Puccini carefully devised his own method of composing acts in which the music never stops, as well as his own fast-paced conversational style, learning the lessons of those two giants without resorting to imitation.

The characters of Puccini's opera differ in some respects from Murger's originals, especially Mimì, who is flightier and more of a gold digger in the French than in the Italian. Puccini's lovable seamstress is a variation on a turn-of-century literary type known as the “femme fragile,” or “fragile woman”; we identify Mimì as such by her delicacy, refinement, association with flowers and moonlight, pallor, and consumption. Eros and Death join hands in opera yet again. When she introduces herself to Rodolfo in “Sì, mi chiamano Mimì,” she sings ecstatically of the flowers that speak to her of love and springtime, and we hear a brief, poignant emphasis on B minor: the harmony to which she will die three acts later.

The other important female character, Musetta, is what Parisians in 1830 would have called a “lorette,” or a “good-time girl” with a string of protectors, but we are

not invited to scorn or condemn her; she is too high spirited and loyal, too loving, for that. Her celebrated waltz-aria, "Quando m'en vo'," gives us a welcome pause in the helter-skelter action of Act II, and the swirl of her skirts, the waves of sensual delight in the orchestra remind us that Puccini's famous melodies are inseparable from their masterful orchestrations. When Musetta shrieks that her shoes are killing her (what woman would not sympathize?) in order to rid herself of her latest sugar daddy, even as Marcello is declaring his renewed love for her, we can only laugh along with such a spirited and clever creature. Her tenderness to Mimì in the final act confirms her likeability; in fact, the depiction of male and female friendship is one of the opera's most endearing traits. And if orchestration is crucial to Puccinian melody, so too are his trademark harmonies. When he swerves suddenly from G major to A major for "O soave fanciulla" in Act I, the effect is magic, achieved through remarkably economic means.

We meet the male characters first and in a distinctive way; just as Mozart withholds the introduction of the Countess until Act II of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Puccini makes us wait for Mimì's appearance. And just as Verdi catapults the audience into the comic maelstrom of *Falstaff* right at the start, with no orchestral prelude or scene-setting chorus, Puccini dives into Act I without throat-clearing, the four bohemians entering immediately, two by two. (Nor is this Puccini's only reference to Verdi. The quartet at the end of Act III, with Mimì and Rodolfo bidding each other the saddest of farewells and Marcello and Musetta quarreling yet again, is a nod to the design of the Act II quartet in *Otello*.) We encounter the tempestuous painter Marcello first, his music stabbing at dotted rhythms in somewhat the same way that he stabs at his painting of the Red Sea parting, and after him, the young poet Rodolfo, whose very first strains foreshadow the lyrical tenderness of "Che gelida manina" later in the act. It is typical of Puccini to prefigure the "big tunes" to come and then repeat fragments later on to trigger memories and emotions.

The philosopher Colline and the group's ironist-in-chief, the composer Schaunard, enter next, and it is telling that Marcello's assertive melody comes to characterize all of the bohemians together, hippie-like in their lack of discipline, their rejection of social conventions, their hedonistic ethos, their espousal of free love, their ironic twitting of the comfortable bourgeoisie. The conversational style of this music, the declamatory chatter above a lively orchestra, the colloquialisms: This is something new on the operatic scene. We hear this sort of hectic activity again in Act II, when the string of rule-breaking parallel chords for three trumpets in the Café Momus theme anticipate Stravinsky's Shrovetide Fair music in *Petrushka* and as the toymaker Papignol sells his wares to music of staccato, childlike charm. Puccini makes a practice in *La Bohème* of contrasting this sort of crowd music and boisterous male banter with his distinctive, expansive lyricism, which slows time and tries, however unsuccessfully, to make love last forever. Indeed, time is of the essence in this opera, as the sands of Mimì's life and of the bohemians' youth are running out. In Act IV, Puccini underscores the gravity, the inevitability, of time's passage, and the powerlessness of memory to bring what

was beautiful and bygone back, by weaving a tapestry of musical reminiscences. Here, death is not transcendence. Unlike with Violetta's otherwise similar death scene in Verdi's *La Traviata*, there is no heaven, only loss.

Puccini's score was finally completed at midnight on December 10, 1895. In the autograph manuscript, the composer wrote "lunga" ("long") with an exaggerated fermata (pause symbol) at the moment of Mimi's death and sketched a skull-and-crossbones in the left-hand margin. Whether he meant it ironically, as a tiny dash of cynicism to obviate sentimentality, we cannot know. But when Puccini tells us, the listeners, of her death—with a single eloquent B-minor chord in the orchestra, followed by the massive orchestral recurrence of Mimi's deathbed greeting to Rodolfo ("Sono andati?"), and the solemn "Addio" cadence of Colline's farewell to his overcoat—the characters', and composer's, grief becomes ours. Distance from what we see and hear is impossible to maintain. Puccini's publisher Giulio Ricordi was overjoyed when he received Puccini's masterpiece, swearing that it would make the orchestra dissolve in tears. "If this time you have not succeeded in hitting the nail squarely on the head," he wrote to the composer, "I will give up my profession and sell salami."

—Susan Youens

*Susan Youens is the J. W. Van Gorkom Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame and has written eight books on the music of Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf.*

## Bravo, Maestro!

The Met recently announced that its esteemed Chorus Master, Donald Palumbo, will step down with the close of the 2023–24 season. Maestro Palumbo joined the Met in 2006 and, in the 17 years since, has elevated the ensemble's musicmaking to new heights, preparing them for nearly 25 productions each season. As a testament to his achievement, the Met Chorus was also named Best Chorus at the 2021 International Opera Awards. And while he will conclude his full-time duties in the spring, Palumbo still plans to return in future seasons to work on select operas.

In honor of Palumbo's illustrious Met career, Board Vice President and Chairman of the Executive Committee C. Graham Berwind, III has made a generous donation to name the Chorus Master position, which will now be known as the C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master. "Donald's contribution to the Met has been truly extraordinary," says Berwind. "His musical leadership and dedication has resulted in the world-class opera chorus we are privileged to hear night after night. I am delighted to honor him as he embarks on his last season as Chorus Master."



# NEW PERSPECTIVE

The September 26 Met premiere of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* marked not only the start of the 2023–24 Met season but also the launch of the Neubauer Family

Foundation New Works Initiative, a crucial funding effort in support of the Met's plan to bring 15 to 20 new operas to its stage over the next five seasons. It's just the latest contribution by Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer and Joseph Neubauer, who have underwritten some of the company's most consequential projects of the last 20 years, including the *Live in HD* cinema transmissions, Yannick Nézet-Séguin's musical leadership of the company, and the introduction of Sunday matinee performances.

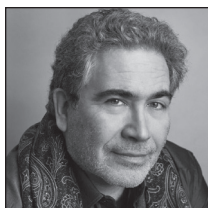
For Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer, Opening Night of the 2021–22 season epitomized what the Met can and should be. That evening, she says, as Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* had its Met premiere, she looked around and saw the auditorium filled by an audience that looked more like New York than any she'd ever experienced: more young people, more people of color, and many people, from all walks of life, who had never set foot in the Met before. What's more, everyone was engaged and looking to actively participate. "People had such a good time," she says, "and I saw so many spontaneous conversations erupt among strangers."

Of course, there were many ingredients to that magical occasion. "We had all come through a very hard time with the isolation of Covid, an explosion of anxiety and depression, relentless political strife—there was no comfort anywhere," Lerman-Neubauer says. "*Fire* was the first time we got back into the opera house, and it was like the epiphany at the end of a tragedy. It showed us that life was going to continue, that culture was going to continue." *Fire* also marked the first opera by a Black composer to be presented by the Met, and it told a captivating and immediately resonant modern story. Both of those facts undeniably added to the palpable impression of artistic rebirth and to the diversity of the audience. "It all created the feeling that opera could be even better than before," Lerman-Neubauer says.

When the Neubauers made their generous gift in support of the Met's efforts to nurture and present new operas, it was to ensure that there are many more nights at the Met just as inspirational, just as cathartic, and just as communal as the premiere of *Fire* was. "In opera, you squeeze into a few hours an emotional arc that is the lived experience of months if not years," Lerman-Neubauer says—an emotional journey that is shared, in real time, by the entire audience. That shared experience, she emphasizes, can be enriched by new repertoire that is free from old habits, and by new audience members who bring different perspectives with them. And the payoff of this broadening of vision is not restricted to new work; it also reveals new depth when revisiting familiar repertoire afterward. "So the message is not about how great new opera is or isn't, or how great old opera is or isn't," she says. "But these new works are an impetus to think about things in a different way, and can be the catalyst for new relationships among thinking people who are engaged with the issues of our time, issues that are being explored artistically on the Met stage."

It's that exchange of ideas and the resulting revelations that Lerman-Neubauer sees as the ultimate goal of the New Works Initiative. "The magic of the Met attracts smart and interesting people, and my greatest hope is that they will turn to someone they didn't know before the performance and talk about the things that moved them," she says. "Opera still serves to reveal the human spirit and the human psyche—under duress, when impassioned, when inspired. Telling these stories helps individuals resolve these kinds of issues in their own lives and build a healthier society." **M**

# The Cast



**Carlo Rizzi**

CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *La Bohème* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met, *I Vespri Siciliani* at the Vienna State Opera, *Otello* in Seoul, *Il Trittico* at Welsh National Opera, and a gala with Opera Rara.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 1993 debut leading *La Bohème*, he has conducted more than 250 performances of 18 operas, including *Don Carlo*, *Tosca*, *Medea*, *Mefistofele*, *Turandot*, *Norma*, *La Traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Il Trovatore*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In 2019, he became music director of Opera Rara, and since 2015, he has served as conductor laureate of Welsh National Opera, where he held two tenures as music director, 1992–2001 and 2004–08. Since launching his conducting career in 1982 with Donizetti's *L'Ajo nell'Imbarazzo*, he has led more than 100 different operas, a repertoire rich in both Italian works and the music of Wagner, Strauss, Britten, and Janáček. He has also conducted performances at the Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Dutch National Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Deutsche Oper Berlin, among others.



**Olga Kulchynska**

SOPRANO (RIVNE, UKRAINE)

**THIS SEASON** Musetta in *La Bohème* and Liù in *Turandot* at the Met, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Tsarevna Lyebyed in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tale of Tsar Sultan* in Brussels, Micaëla in *Carmen* at Covent Garden, Ilia in *Idomeneo* at the Bavarian State Opera, and the title role of *Iolanta* in concert with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Musetta (debut, 2019).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 2018 and 2020, she was a member of the ensemble at the Zurich Opera, where her roles have included Mimì in *La Bohème*, Blanche de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs des Perles*, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Recent performances include Micaëla in Verona, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* in Rouen, Ginevra in *Ariodante* at the Paris Opera, Natasha Rostova in *War and Peace* and Pamina at the Bavarian State Opera, Cio-Cio-San in Marina Abramović's *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* in Amsterdam, the Goosegirl in Humperdinck's *Königskinder* at Dutch National Opera, and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Micaëla at the Vienna State Opera.

## The Cast CONTINUED



### Federica Lombardi

SOPRANO (CESENA, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** Mimi in *La Bohème* at the Met; Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Amelia Grimaldi in *Simon Boccanegra*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* at the Vienna State Opera; Verdi's Requiem in Parma; the title role of *Anna Bolena* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in concert at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; and Elettra in *Idomeneo* in Geneva.

**MET APPEARANCES** Donna Anna and Donna Elvira (debut, 2019), Elettra, the Countess, and Musetta in *La Bohème*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Mimi in Valencia; Amelia Grimaldi in Liège; the Countess at Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera, and in Madrid; Fiordiligi and the Countess at Staatsoper Berlin; and Donna Elvira at the Salzburg Festival. She has also sung Fiordiligi in Valencia, Turin, Rome, and at the Bavarian State Opera; Donna Elvira in Hamburg, Wiesbaden, and in concert at Lucerne Festival; Elettra, Musetta, and Anna Bolena at La Scala; Donna Anna in Bologna, Cologne, and Nancy; the Countess in Rome; and Donna Anna, Fiordiligi, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and the Countess at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.



### Donald Maxwell

BARITONE (PERTH, SCOTLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Benoit/Alcindoro in *La Bohème* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Hortensius in *La Fille du Régiment* (debut, 2008) and Benoit/Alcindoro.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the Second Priest in *Die Zauberflöte*, Hortensius, and Alcindoro at Covent Garden; the Notary in *Don Pasquale* with Random Opera Company; the Sacristan in *Tosca* and Fra Melitone in *La Forza del Destino* at Welsh National Opera, and Hanezò in Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* in concert at Scottish Opera. He has also sung Dai Greatcoat in the world premiere of Iain Bell's *In Parenthesis* at Welsh National Opera, the Sacristan at Covent Garden, Alfred Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* in Paris, Swallow in *Peter Grimes* in Zurich, Sancho Panza in Massenet's *Don Quichotte* with Chelsea Opera Group, Pooh-Bah in *The Mikado* at English National Opera, and Dr. Bloom in Olga Neuwirth's *American Lulu* at the Bregenz Festival and Edinburgh International Festival. He has appeared at La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the Wexford Festival, and the Glyndebourne Festival, among others.



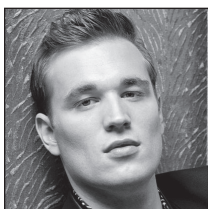
## Adam Plachetka

BASS-BARITONE (PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC)

**THIS SEASON** Marcello in *La Bohème* at the Met, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Vienna State Opera, Kalina in Smetana's *Tajemství* and a concert at Prague's National Theater, and concerts with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala.

**MET APPEARANCES** Leporello and Masetto (debut, 2015) in *Don Giovanni*, Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes*, Garibaldo in *Rodelinda*, the Count and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, and Sgt. Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Přemysl ze Stadic in Smetana's *Libuše*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Count, and Vladislav in Smetana's *Dalibor* in Prague; Valens in Handel's *Theodora* in concert at London's Barbican Centre; the Count at Houston Grand Opera; and Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri* at La Scala. He has also sung Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, Leporello, Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Chorèbe in *Les Troyens*, and Riccardo in *I Puritani* at the Vienna State Opera; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Alidoro at the Paris Opera; and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Salzburg Festival.



## Sean Michael Plumb

BARITONE (BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** Schaunard in *La Bohème* at the Met; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Shchelkalov in *Boris Godunov*, a Student in *The Nose*, and Jake Wallace in *La Fanciulla del West* at the Bavarian State Opera; Figaro at Seattle Opera; Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Hong Kong; and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Harlekin (debut, 2022).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since 2016, he has been a member of the Bavarian State Opera, where his roles have included Prince Henri de Condé in Penderecki's *Die Teufel von Loudun*, Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*, Ottokar in *Der Freischütz*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Schaunard, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Prosdócimo in *Il Turco in Italia*, Harlekin, and Olav Bjaaland in the world premiere of Miroslav Srnka's *South Pole*, among many others. He has also sung Albert in *Werther* at Houston Grand Opera; Maximilian in *Candide* in Lyon; Count Dominik in *Arabella* in concert at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; Papageno at Kentucky Opera, the Dallas Opera, and with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra; and Schaunard at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

## The Cast CONTINUED



### Matthew Polenzani

TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

**THIS SEASON** Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Verdi's Requiem, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at the Met; Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Vienna State Opera; Orombello in Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* in concert in Naples; Florestan in *Fidelio* in Hamburg; Handel's *Messiah* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Giasone in *Medea* at the Canadian Opera Company; the title role of *Werther* in concert at the Klangvokal Musikfestival Dortmund; and Pinkerton in Madrid.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 1997 debut as Boyar Khrushchov in *Boris Godunov*, he has sung more than 400 performances of 43 roles, including Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Giasone, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Rodolfo, Macduff in *Macbeth*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Tito, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and the title roles of *Don Carlos*, *Idomeneo*, and *Roberto Devereux*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has appeared at many of the world's greatest opera houses, including the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Salzburg Festival, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among others. He was the 2008 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



### Christian Van Horn

BASS-BARITONE (ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** Colline in *La Bohème* at the Met and in concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Bluebeard in *Bluebeard's Castle* in concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Jacopo Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* at Opera Philadelphia, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Paris Opera, the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Vienna State Opera and in concert at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Bavarian State Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Colline, Ramfis in *Aida*, Oroveso in *Norma*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Raimondo, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Doctor in *Wozzeck*, Publio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, the title role of *Mefistofele*, Julio in Thomas Adès's *The Exterminating Angel*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pistola in *Falstaff* (debut, 2013).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Bluebeard at Des Moines Metro Opera; Ramfis in Verona; de Silva in *Ernani*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, and Walter in *Luisa Miller* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Don Giovanni, and Publio at the Paris Opera; and Claggart in *Billy Budd* and Zoroastro in Handel's *Orlando* at San Francisco Opera.