

*Gioachino Rossini*

# Armida

CONDUCTOR

**Riccardo Frizza**

PRODUCTION

**Mary Zimmerman**

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

**Richard Hudson**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Brian MacDevitt**

CHOREOGRAPHER

**Graciela Daniele**

ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER

**Daniel Pelzig**

GENERAL MANAGER

**Peter Gelb**

MUSIC DIRECTOR

**James Levine**

## **Dramma per musica in three acts**

Libretto by Giovanni Schmidt, based on the epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 1:00–4:50 pm

## **New production**

This production of *Armida* was made possible by a generous gift from The Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund.

# The Metropolitan Opera

2009–10 Season

The 6th Metropolitan Opera performance of

*Gioachino Rossini's*

## Armida

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This performance is also being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SIRIUS channel 78 and XM channel 79.

CONDUCTOR

**Riccardo Frizza**

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Goffredo, commander of the combined Christian forces

**John Osborn\***

Eustazio, Goffredo's brother  
**Yeghishe Manucharyan**

Armida, princess of Damascus, a sorceress  
**Renée Fleming**

Idraote, king of Damascus and Armida's uncle  
**Peter Volpe**

Gernando, a paladin  
**José Manuel Zapata**

Rinaldo, a paladin  
**Lawrence Brownlee**

Astarotte, leader of Armida's spirits  
**Keith Miller**

Ubaldo, a paladin  
**Kobie van Rensburg**

Carlo, a paladin  
**Barry Banks**

Love  
**Teele Ude**

Revenge  
**Isaac Scranton**

Ballet Rinaldo  
**Aaron Loux**

Violin solo  
**David Chan**

Cello solo  
**Rafael Figueroa**

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 1:00–4:50 pm

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Aerials by **Christopher Harrison, AntiGravity®**  
Fight Director **Andrew Kenneth Moss**  
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Justin Arienti**  
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, John Churchwell, Dan Saunders, Bradley Moore, J. David Jackson, and Hemdi Kfir**  
Assistant Stage Directors **Gina Lapinski and Daniel Rigazzi**  
Prompter **Donna Racik**  
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**  
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# The Metropolitan Opera

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# Synopsis

## Act I

An oasis in the desert outside Jerusalem

### *Intermission*

## Act II

SCENE 1 A ghastly forest

SCENE 2 Armida's pleasure palace

### *Intermission*

## Act III

SCENE 1 Armida's enchanted garden

SCENE 2 On the shore outside Armida's palace

## Act I

Outside Jerusalem, during the Crusades. The paladins (knights of the Crusades) are eager to take to the battlefield. Their commander, Goffredo, arrives and reminds them they must first perform the funeral rites for Dudone, their recently deceased leader. A noblewoman appears and introduces herself as the rightful ruler of Damascus. She claims that her throne has been usurped by her evil uncle Idraote and asks for help and protection. In fact she is the sorceress Armida and in league with Idraote, who has entered with her, disguised as her attendant. Their plan is to weaken the Crusaders by enslaving some of their best soldiers. The men are so dazzled by Armida's beauty that they convince Goffredo to help her. Goffredo decides that the paladins must choose a new leader, who will then pick ten soldiers to go with Armida. They elect Rinaldo, much to the jealousy of the knight Gernando ("Non soffrirò l'offesa"). Armida and Rinaldo, who is the Crusaders' best soldier, have met once before and she is secretly in love with him. She now confronts him and reminds him how she saved his life on that occasion. When she accuses him of ingratitude, he admits that he's in love with her (Duet: "Amor... possente nome!"). Gernando sees them together and insults Rinaldo as a womanizer in front of the other men. They duel and Rinaldo kills Gernando. Horrified by what he has done and yet convinced his comrades will see that he was only protecting his honor, he decides to stand his ground. But when the soldiers turn against him, he escapes with Armida, who conjures up a storm to distract the Crusaders.

## Act II

Astarotte, one of the princes of hell, has led a group of demons from the underworld to a ghastly forest. He instructs them to respond to a sign from

Armida by building an illusory pleasure palace. Armida arrives with Rinaldo, who's completely enthralled by her (Duet: "Dove son io!"). Even when she tells him about Idraote's plot, he doesn't turn against her. To Rinaldo's amazement, Armida then seems to turn the forest into a vast palace. Various entertainments are offered to Rinaldo: songs and dances of nymphs, Armida's own song on the power of love ("D'Amore al dolce impero"), and a ballet that reflects Armida and Rinaldo's own story and her hopes for its outcome. Rinaldo, losing all thoughts of military honor, gives himself over to Armida's enchantment.

### Act III

Two of Rinaldo's fellow knights, Ubaldo and Carlo, have been sent on a mission to rescue him. When they arrive in Armida's enchanted gardens, they are overwhelmed by the gardens' beauty, even though they know it's all an illusion. With the help of a magical golden staff, they ward off the nymphs that try to seduce them, then hide when Rinaldo and Armida appear. Rinaldo is still captivated by the sorceress, but once he is alone, Ubaldo and Carlo confront him. When they show him his reflection in a shield, he's horrified to realize that he no longer recognizes himself as the honorable warrior he once was (Trio: "In quale aspetto imbelle"). Still torn by his love for Armida, Rinaldo prays for strength. He imagines seeing a celestial light, confirming his decision to escape. When Armida discovers his absence, she calls upon the powers of hell to bring her lover back but her spell doesn't work. She rushes off in pursuit of the men.

Armida reaches the three soldiers before they can sail away. She begs Rinaldo not to desert her and even offers to go into battle with him. Ubaldo and Carlo restrain Rinaldo, trying to bolster his strength, and ultimately drag him away from her. Two figures, Love and Revenge, appear before Armida, and she struggles to decide what to do ("Dove son io?... Fuggi!"). She chooses Revenge, destroying the pleasure palace and flying away in a rage.

*Gioachino Rossini*

# Armida

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*Premiere: Teatro San Carlo, Naples, 1817*

*Armida* holds a unique place among the operas of Rossini. At once romance, fantasy, and pseudo-history, it is based on an episode from Torquato Tasso's Renaissance epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* ("Jerusalem Delivered"), a monumental tale of the First Crusade. The story begins in the "real world" of soldiers and battles and then moves into a realm of magic that has no parallel in the composer's other works. The sorceress Armida, in league with an army of diabolical forces, sets out to cause mayhem within the Christian forces by sowing jealousy and weakening them with a taste for the debilitating pleasures of love. The title character is an archetype of an operatic femme fatale—and one of Rossini's most significant female roles. Opposite her, there is an actual squadron of men in various stages of enchantment by this siren: the opera famously contains no fewer than six tenor roles. *Armida* was created for the reopening of Naples's San Carlo opera house after a disastrous fire. The opera was intended to display both the theater's new stage machinery and the vocal abilities of its resident prima donna, Isabella Colbran (who eventually became Rossini's wife). *Armida* then fell out of the repertoire for decades (even though it premiered just a year after the wildly successful *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*). It slowly reemerged with the general revival of interest in Rossini's neglected works in the mid-20th century, but this great prima donna vehicle is still only rarely performed today. Its otherworldly atmosphere and spectacular title role, which requires exceptional vocal abilities, make this opera a fascinating rediscovery.

### *The Creators*

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) was the leading creator of Italian opera in his day. While his comedies have long been appreciated for their marvelous buoyancy and wit, it has only been within the last few decades that his serious operas have been rediscovered. Giovanni Schmidt (born around 1775, died after 1840) wrote some 45 libretti, mostly for the Teatro San Carlo, where he held the position of "official poet". Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), whose *Gerusalemme Liberata* was first published in 1581, was a poet and playwright whose career was centered around the court of the Este family at Ferrara, Italy. *Gerusalemme Liberata* was regarded as the equal of the greatest European literary masterpieces until its reputation faded considerably around the middle of the 19th century. The poem provided inspiration for countless artists. Dozens of operas based on

the character of Armida alone have been created by such composers as Lully, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Salieri, Cherubini, and Dvořák.

### *The Setting*

The opera takes place in and outside of Jerusalem during the time of the First Crusade (1095–99) and on Armida's enchanted island. The clash of cultures embodied in the Crusades assumed new relevance when Tasso was writing in the 16th century, as conflicts erupted once again between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire. By the 18th and early 19th centuries, those conflicts had subsided and Tasso's epic was cherished more for its lyrical qualities and fantasy elements than for its epic features.

### *The Music*

*Armida* is instantly recognizable as Rossini to anyone familiar with his more famous operas thanks to its masterful vocal writing and effervescent flow of melody. At the same time, some of the opera's individual characteristics are unique within the composer's oeuvre. The element of fantasy creates extraordinary musical opportunities: a large amount of Act II is dedicated to a ballet, with exotic musical touches (such as a harp-accompanied nymphs' chorus) that evoke both distant lands and an erotic ambience. Part of this atmosphere is Armida's big solo, "D'Amore al dolce impero," in which she demonstrates her seductive powers. Among the most difficult arias Rossini ever composed, it is dramatically insightful as well as alluringly beautiful and technically dazzling. Instead of following the era's traditional slow-to-fast structure, the aria is a vocal example of "theme and variations" that always returns to the original melody. A chorus of demons opens this act, followed by a love duet (with the two voices echoing each other and connected by a languid cello solo), a chorus of nymphs, and Armida's aria, and ends with a ballet. The first act, set in the Crusaders' camp, is more firmly rooted in reality: the warriors Goffredo and Gernando, both tenors, have solos expressing the martial spirit. The two worlds collide in Act III: the warriors' attempt to lure Rinaldo away from Armida's paradise sets up the famous trio for tenors, a unique moment in opera.

### *Armida at the Met*

Mary Zimmerman's production, with Renée Fleming in the virtuosic title role, marks *Armida*'s company premiere.



## Program Note

Between 1815 and 1822, Gioachino Rossini composed nine serious operas for the Teatro San Carlo and Teatro del Fondo in Naples. Essentially unknown and unperformed during most of the 20th century, these Neapolitan operas—including *Otello*, *Armida*, *Ermione*, and *Maometto II*—have recently forced a reassessment of the composer's career. During most of this period, Rossini served as musical director of the Neapolitan theaters, a position that gave him the stability to develop his artistic ideas with great freedom. And the quality of the orchestra, chorus, and singers assembled by impresario Domenico Barbaja assured Rossini of performing forces capable of meeting the unusual demands he placed on them. Only in Naples was he consistently guaranteed outstanding soloists: the soprano Isabella Colbran (who soon became his lover and subsequently his first wife), the tenors Andrea Nozzari and Giovanni David, the bass Filippo Galli. Only in Naples did he have greater control over the performance calendar, and therefore a more leisurely period for composition. Only in Naples could he be assured of sufficient time for rehearsals.

These factors allowed the composer to lavish more attention on the serious operas he wrote for Naples than was possible elsewhere in Italy. As a whole, these works represent the most innovative group of Italian operas created during the first half of the 19th century. While many stylistic elements link them together, it is the individuality of the musical style of each that ultimately seems most important. That individuality reflects diverse literary sources: Renaissance epic poetry (Tasso), Shakespeare, French Classicism (Racine) and Neo-Classicism, Biblical tragedy, Italian Romantic drama, and English Romantic poetry (Sir Walter Scott). Yet it was Rossini himself who sought and achieved an inspired, individual musical language for most of these works.

Nowhere is this more striking than in the case of *Armida*, an opera in three acts to a libretto by Giovanni Schmidt, based on episodes from Tasso's always popular narrative poem about the Crusades, *Gerusalemme Liberata*. First heard at the Teatro San Carlo on November 11, 1817, the opera contrasts two starkly different worlds: that of the Crusaders seeking to liberate Jerusalem and that of the two "magicians"—Idraote, King of Damascus, and his niece, Armida—who employ their wiles to weaken the Crusaders. Armida claims that her kingdom has been usurped by the "evil" Idraote and implores the Crusaders to lend her ten of their bravest knights so that she can reclaim her rightful throne.

Before that plan can be effected, Armida encounters again the bravest of the Crusaders, Rinaldo, who has just been elected their leader. This is the only place in which Schmidt differs significantly from Tasso. In the poem, Armida falls in love with Rinaldo as we watch; in the opera, Armida previously saved Rinaldo's life and the two fell in love. Seeing each other anew, they admit their passion. But when Gerando, upset about Rinaldo's election as leader, mocks

him as a “conqueror of women,” not heroes, Rinaldo kills him. Threatened by the fury of his fellow soldiers, Rinaldo flees with Armida. She leads him to a dreadful forest, filled with evil demons, but then transforms the woods into a magnificent pleasure palace—the realm of love, complete with nymphs’ chorus and a full ballet, where Rinaldo abandons all accoutrements of war in favor of the flowers of love.

When two Crusaders come to the enchanted garden in search of their leader and reproach Rinaldo for having betrayed his country and valor, he is deeply ashamed and vows to return with his friends. Armida uses all her feminine wiles and magical powers to hold him, but he breaks away. Defeated and furious, she destroys the pleasure palace and enchanted garden.

These two contrasting dramatic worlds are represented by Rossini with starkly different musical languages. It would be oversimplifying to assert that the heroic world is represented by the composer’s characteristic operatic vocabulary, while the realm of love draws on new expressive resources. Indeed, there are many extremely attractive and unusual elements in the music surrounding the Crusaders. At the close of the heroic introduction, the alternation of Goffredo (the Crusaders’ elder statesman) and the chorus anticipates similar numbers in early Verdi. The challenge between Rinaldo and his rival Gernando is a tenorial duel typical of similar challenges in *Otello* and *La Donna del Lago*. The first presentation of Armida in the quartet is characteristic of much of the music Rossini would write for Isabella Colbran. Only in *Armida*, however, did Colbran have the stage to herself, one woman surrounded by a range of tenors.

When we reach Armida’s realm in the second act, the music becomes timeless, luxuriant. As they approach, Rinaldo and Armida sing “Dove son io!” A rapturous solo for cello provides melodic material shared by the lovers throughout the piece. As in the seduction scene for Don Giovanni and Zerlina in an opera Rossini knew well, the voices are first heard one at a time, then overlapping; only at the end do they sing together. In their Act III duet a similar instrumental part is given to a solo violin, with the voices together throughout, coaxed by the insinuating instrumental strains.

Already in the first act Rossini unites the lovers in an intimate space reserved for them alone. In their opening duet, “Amor... possente nome!,” the most famous piece in the opera, their slow music is a cantabile within a larger dramatic number. More striking is the finale primo, which lacks a Rossini largo, freezing the action. Instead, there are two contrasting lyrical moments for Armida and Rinaldo. In the first, reacting to the death of Gernando, Rinaldo justifies himself while Armida sings of her sorrow, accompanied by the thunderstruck male chorus. The lovers sing past each other; their music never connects. In the second, however, with the lovers alone on stage, Rossini wrote a brief lyrical section in which they are drawn closer together. It sets the tone of intimacy that will blossom in the pleasure palace and enchanted garden of Acts II and III.

Armida's seduction in Act II is carried out through music and dance. A gentle women's chorus, "Canzoni amorose," is accompanied by harp, with strings and wind solos. A *maestoso* dance in minor leads to Armida's rondo, "D'Amor al dolce impero." Every other Rossinian rondo (such as Cenerentola's "Nacqui all'affanno") is a multipart aria, embracing dramatic events, in which a theme and variations serve as the final section. Not in *Armida*. In the title character's timeless realm, love reigns in perpetuity, and only the theme and variations survive. And what variations she sings!—some of the most difficult vocal passages in all of Rossini. (If anyone tells you that singers cannot perform ascending scales to high notes, have them listen to *Armida*.) The extensive ballet is unique among Rossini's Italian operas.

In Act III the worlds must clash. The duet of the two Crusaders first imitates the "Armida" style, but they break away: "No! These are the tricks of deception." Their task in the trio is to bring Rinaldo back to his senses. The emotional heart of the composition, and indeed the entire opera, is its middle, where Rinaldo casts aside enchantment: "Io vile?... No: rammento che son Rinaldo ancor" ("I debased?... No: I remember that I am still Rinaldo").

The last word is Armida's. She arrives in fury searching for Rinaldo, who has followed his two friends. Her recitative is the strongest Rossini had yet written. When she finds him, she threatens and cajoles, but to no avail. Her melodic lines dissolve into fragments. When the truth registers, she seeks love no longer, only revenge. Hell has failed her in her efforts to capture Rinaldo's love; now let it destroy everything she has constructed. Rossini allows her no time to sing at leisure, preferring a short, startling conclusion and a rapid curtain. Love is illusion, theater is illusion: art creates them, art destroys them. —*Philip Gossett*

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**Monday–Saturday:** 10 am through the first intermission of the evening performance

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# The Cast and Creative Team



## Riccardo Frizza

CONDUCTOR (BRESCIA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Armida* at the Met, *Il Turco in Italia* at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin (Unter den Linden), and *Falstaff* at the Seattle Opera.

MET APPEARANCES *Rigoletto* (debut, 2009) and *Il Trovatore*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent engagements include *Don Giovanni* with the Vienna State Opera, *Simon Boccanegra* in Hamburg, *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Washington National Opera, *Aida* in Seattle and Tokyo, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Dresden, *Manon Lescaut* in Genoa, and *Tancredi* in Madrid. He has also conducted at the festivals of Pesaro, Spoleto, Wexford, and Aix-en-Provence, as well as at the Lyon Opera, Marseille Opera, and Brussels's La Monnaie, among others. Symphonic engagements include appearances with the Philharmonic Orchestra of St. Petersburg, London Philharmonia Orchestra, the New Tokyo City Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and Kyoto Symphony Orchestra.



## Mary Zimmerman

DIRECTOR (LINCOLN, NEBRASKA)

THIS SEASON *Armida* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *La Sonnambula* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She is the recipient of a 1998 MacArthur Fellowship, the 2002 Tony Award for Best Director of a Play, and ten Joseph Jefferson Awards (including Best Production and Best Direction). She is a member of Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre Company, an artistic associate of the Goodman Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre, and a professor of performance studies at Northwestern University. Works she has adapted and directed include *Argonautika* (Lookingglass, Berkeley Rep, Shakespeare Theatre Co., McCarter Theatre), *Mirror of the Invisible World* (Goodman), *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (Goodman, BAM, Seattle Rep, Second Stage), *The Odyssey* (Lookingglass, Goodman, McCarter, Seattle Rep), *Arabian Nights* (Lookingglass, MTC, BAM), *Journey to the West* (Goodman, Huntington, Berkeley Rep), *Metamorphoses* (Broadway, Lookingglass, Seattle Rep, Berkeley Rep, Mark Taper Forum, Second Stage), *Secret in the Wings* (Lookingglass, Berkeley Rep, McCarter, Seattle Rep), *S/M* (Lookingglass), *Eleven Rooms of Proust* (Lookingglass, About Face), and a new opera with Philip Glass, *Galileo Galilei* (Goodman, London's Barbican Centre, BAM), for which she co-wrote the libretto. Upcoming is Bernstein's *Candide* this fall at the Goodman Theatre.



## Richard Hudson

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER (HARARE, ZIMBABWE)

THIS SEASON *Armida* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Samson et Dalila* (debut, 1998).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has designed operas for Glyndebourne, Covent Garden, La Scala, Florence's Maggio Musicale, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Kent Opera, Opera North, Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, Brussels's La Monnaie, and Barcelona's Liceu, among others. He has also designed for the Aldeburgh Festival, Royal Ballet, Royal Shakespeare Company, London's National Theatre, Royal Court, Almeida, and Young Vic. In 1988 he won an Olivier Award for a season of plays at the Old Vic, and in 1998 he received a Tony Award for the Broadway production of *The Lion King*. In 2003 he won the gold medal for set design at the Prague Quadrenniale. Plans include *Rigoletto* (Vienna Volksoper), *Tamerlano* (Covent Garden), *The Nutcracker* (American Ballet Theatre), and *Romeo and Juliet* (National Ballet of Canada).



## Brian MacDevitt

LIGHTING DESIGNER (LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Armida* at the Met and Broadway productions of David Mamet's *Race*, Martin McDonagh's *A Behanding in Spokane*, and August Wilson's *Fences*.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Doctor Atomic* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent work includes Merce Cunningham's *Nearly Ninety* at BAM and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* for Lincoln Center Theater (Tony Award). He has also received Tony Awards for his lighting designs for Broadway productions of *The Coast of Utopia*, *The Pillowman*, and *Into the Woods*. Additional Broadway credits include *Inherit the Wind*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Color Purple*, *Urinetown*, *Master Class*, and *The Invention of Love*. He designed lighting for the film *The Cradle Will Rock* and for productions at the Abbey Theatre, Lyon Opera Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Tere O'Connor Dance Company, and Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. Currently on the faculty of the University of Maryland, he is the recipient of numerous honors including the Obie, Lucille Lortel, Los Angeles Ovation, Bessie, and Drama Desk awards.



## Graciela Daniele

CHOREOGRAPHER (BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA)

THIS SEASON *Armida* for her Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has earned ten Tony Award nominations and six Drama Desk nominations for her work on Broadway, at Lincoln Center Theater, and at the Public Theater. Broadway directing/choreographing credits include

*Chita Rivera: The Dancer's Life*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Marie Christine*, *Once on this Island*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and *Dangerous Game*. She has staged and choreographed shows including *Ragtime*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *Zorba* (with Anthony Quinn), *The Rink* (starring Liza Minnelli and Chita Rivera), and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. She also choreographed the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *The Pirates of Penzance* on Broadway, in Los Angeles, and in London, as well as the feature film. Work with Woody Allen includes the films *Mighty Aphrodite* and *Everyone Says I Love You*. For Lincoln Center Theater she directed and choreographed William Finn's *A New Brain* and *Elegies: A Song Cycle* and directed Michael John LaChiusa's *Bernarda Alba*, and for Second Stage Theatre she directed and choreographed LaChiusa's *Little Fish*.



## Daniel Pelzig

ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Armida* at the Met, *The Merry Widow* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Into the Woods* at Kansas City Rep, *As You Like It* at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., and *Avenue X* at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Lucia di Lammermoor* (debut, 2007), *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and *La Sonnambula*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Three seasons as resident choreographer for Santa Fe Opera (where he also directed *Countess Maritza*); four years as resident choreographer for the Boston Ballet. Broadway: Moises Kaufman's *33 Variations*, starring Jane Fonda, and *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Opera credits include *Die Fledermaus*, *Regina*, and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), *Salome* and Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Seattle Opera), *Samson et Dalila* (Houston Grand Opera), *Aida* (Los Angeles Opera), *Death in Venice* and *Glass's Akhnaten* (Chicago Opera Theatre), and *West Side Story* (Central City Opera). Recent stage directing credits include *The Bartered Bride* at Opera Boston and *Turandot* at Fort Worth Opera. He also restaged Stephen Wadsworth's Met production of *Iphigénie en Tauride* in Valencia.



## Renée Fleming

SOPRANO (INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA)

**THIS SEASON** The Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the title role of *Armida* at the Met, the Countess in *Capriccio* with the Vienna State Opera, Violetta in *La Traviata* and the Marschallin with the Zurich Opera, and concert engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony

Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Boston Symphony Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Title roles of *Thais*, *Rusalka*, *Manon*, *Rodelinda*, *Arabella*, and *Susannah*; Violetta, Desdemona in *Otello*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 1991), Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Rosina in the world premiere of *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Imogene in *Il Pirata*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Marguerite in *Faust*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses, is the recipient of two Grammy Awards, and was awarded the titles "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" and "Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" by the French government. She was a 1988 winner of the Met's National Council Auditions.



## Barry Banks

TENOR (STOKE-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, a Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Carlo in *Armida* at the Met, Don Narciso in *Il Turco in Italia* for his debut at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with English National Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Elvino in *La Sonnambula*, Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (debut, 1996), Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, the Fisherman in Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, the Shepherd in *Oedipus Rex*, and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Oreste in Rossini's *Ermione* at Carnegie Hall, Don Narciso at Covent Garden, Valletto in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* with the Bastille Opera, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with English National Opera, the title role of Weber's *Oberon* at the Edinburgh Festival, and Truffaldino in *The Love for Three Oranges* with Paris's Bastille Opera.



## Lawrence Brownlee

TENOR (YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO)

**THIS SEASON** Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Rinaldo in *Armida* at the Met, Egeo in Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* with Switzerland's Theater St. Gallen, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* in Pesaro, and Count Almaviva with the Washington National Opera, Deutsche

Oper Berlin, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin (Unter den Linden), and at La Scala.

**MET APPEARANCES** Count Almaviva (debut, 2007) and Don Ramiro.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Count Almaviva at the Vienna State Opera and in San Diego, Hamburg, Dresden, and Baden-Baden; Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Philadelphia, Trieste, and Seattle; Giannetto in *La Gazza Ladra* in Bologna; Libenskof in *Il Viaggio a Reims* in Brussels; and Don Ramiro in Philadelphia, Houston, Dresden, and Trieste. He has also been heard in concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic.



## John Osborn

TENOR (SIOUX CITY, IOWA)

**THIS SEASON** Goffredo in *Armida* at the Met, Arnold in *Guillaume Tell* at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the title role in Rossini's *Otello* in Lausanne, Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Florence, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* for his Houston Grand Opera debut, Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* in Zurich, Léopold

in *La Juive* with the Netherlands Opera, des Grieux in *Manon* for his debut at Buenos Aires's Teatro Colón, Arturo in *I Puritani* in Cagliari, and Pollione in *Norma* in Dortmund.

**MET APPEARANCES** Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Fourth Jew in *Salome* (debut, 1997), Sergio in *Fedora*, and Maintop in *Billy Budd*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has sung Arnold in Rome, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Brussels, Arturo and Léopold in the Netherlands, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Salzburg Festival, and Count Almaviva in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vienna, Dresden, Vancouver, and Lausanne. He is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Kobie van Rensburg

TENOR (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** Ubaldo in *Armida* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Grimoaldo in *Rodelinda* (debut, 2004) and the title role of *Idomeneo*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Idomeneo in Madrid and with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, the title role of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in Stuttgart, Quint in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* in Geneva, the title role in Ferrandini's *Catone in Utica* at Munich's Cuvillies Theatre, the title role of Handel's *Belshazzar* in Brussels, and Loge in *Das Rheingold* with the Seattle Opera. He also appears regularly at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin (Unter den Linden), Paris's Châtelet and Théâtre du Champs-Élysées, Toulouse's Théâtre du Capitole, Strasbourg's Opéra National du Rhin, Lisbon's Teatro São Carlos, and opera houses in Madrid, Montpellier, Basel, Lucerne, Mannheim, Karlsruhe, and Graz, among others. In 2007 he made his debut as a director in Halle with Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and last fall directed Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* in Passau.



## José Manuel Zapata

TENOR (GRANADA, SPAIN)

**THIS SEASON** Gernando in *Armida* at the Met, Don Narciso in *Il Turco in Italia* in Düsseldorf, Argirio in *Tancredi* in Turin, and Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* in Jerez.

**MET APPEARANCES** Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2008).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** A specialist in the roles of Rossini, he has sung Dorvil in *La Scala di Seta* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Palermo; Libenskof and Belfiore in *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Iago in *Otello*, and Alberto in *La Gazzetta* at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival; and Idreno in *Semiramide* at Madrid's Teatro Real and Barcelona's Liceu. Future engagements include his first performances in *Anna Bolena* in Barcelona, and the Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Madrid and at La Scala.



## Christopher Harrison

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He is the founder and artistic director of AntiGravity, America's premier aerial performance brand. In addition to its numerous original productions, the company, based in New York City, lends its aerial design expertise throughout the entertainment industry. Harrison is also the creator of AntiGravity Yoga. This is his tenth season with the Met. anti-gravity.com

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The Queen of Spades  
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Simon Boccanegra  
Tosca  
Il Trovatore  
Wozzeck