

GIUSEPPE VERDI

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

CONDUCTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION

Mariusz Trelński

SET DESIGNER

Boris Kudlička

COSTUME DESIGNER

Moritz Junge

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Marc Heinz

PROJECTION DESIGNER

Bartek Macias

CHOREOGRAPHER

Maćko Prusak

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER

Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, based on the play *Don Álvaro o La Fuerza del Sino* by Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas, with a scene from the play *Wallensteins Lager* by Friedrich von Schiller, translated by Andrea Maffei, and additional text by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Sunday, March 24, 2024

2:00–5:50PM

New Production

The Met gratefully acknowledges the support of the **Gramma Fisher Foundation, Marshalltown, Iowa; Lynne and Richard Pasculano;** and the **Rosalie J. Coe Weir Endowment Fund**

Additional support was received from the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Endowment Fund

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The Metropolitan Opera

2023–24 SEASON

The 237th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARQUIS OF CALATRAVA
Soloman Howard

PREZIOSILLA
Maria Barakova

DONNA LEONORA
Elena Stikhina

FRA MELITONE
Patrick Carfizzi

CURRA
Stephanie Lauricella

PADRE GUARDIANO
Soloman Howard

DON ALVARO
Brian Jagde

SURGEON
Paul Corona

ALCALDE
Christopher Job

VENDORS
Patrick Miller
Jeremy Little
Ned Hanlon

DON CARLO DI VARGAS
Igor Golovatenko

TRABUCO
Carlo Bosi

Sunday, March 24, 2024, 2:00–5:50PM



A scene from Verdi's
La Forza del Destino

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**

Musical Preparation **John Keenan, Howard Watkins,***

Jonathan C. Kelly, Israel Gursky, and Katelan Trần Terrell*

Assistant Stage Directors **Jonathon Loy, Louisa Muller,**

Mirabelle Ordinaire, Rory Pelsue, and Paula Williams

Dramaturg **Marcin Cecko**

Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**

Fight Director **Chris Dumont**

Italian Diction Coach **Hemdi Kfir**

Prompter **Jonathan C. Kelly**

Met Titles **Sonya Haddad**

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and

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Costumes constructed by **Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera,**

Warsaw, and Metropolitan Opera Costume Department

Additional costumes by **Antkowiak Szaty Liturgiczne, Poznań;**

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The Metropolitan
Opera

2023-24 SEASON

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ROLEX

OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE

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Synopsis

Act I

A contemporary city. At the heavily guarded Calatrava Hotel, a ball celebrating the birthday of Leonora—daughter of a powerful general—and attended by the elite, government officials, and high-ranking military officers is concluding. Leonora's lover, Alvaro, a self-conscious, poor young man, meets her clandestinely then rushes off.

Leonora's father enters to drunkenly bid her goodnight and disparages Alvaro, saying that he is unworthy of his daughter. He leaves, and Leonora, torn between her devotion to her father and her love for Alvaro, tells her maid that Alvaro will return later that night and they will elope. When he arrives, she asks him for more time, and he accuses her of no longer loving him. She agrees to leave, but her father suddenly appears, berating Leonora and ridiculing Alvaro for his lower-class upbringing. He condemns Leonora for bringing shame to the family and threatens Alvaro with arrest. Alvaro insists that he loves Leonora and that she is unsullied. To prove that he is not a threat, Alvaro throws down his gun. It accidentally fires, fatally wounding the general, who dies cursing his daughter. The lovers are separated as Alvaro escapes.

Act II

At an officers' club, Leonora's brother, Carlo, assuming the identity of a military cadet, is hunting for his sister and her lover to avenge his father's murder. Leonora, disguised as a man, enters. Separated from Alvaro, she is traveling with a driver, Trabuco, who endures jibes as to the identity of his passenger. Leonora recognizes her brother, but seeing him in his drunken state, she withdraws. Preziosilla, a mysterious entertainer, performs for the crowd of soldiers, telling fortunes and encouraging them to seek glory in battle. Carlo watches, not realizing that his father's death has triggered a chain reaction that is about to spark a devastating war. Preziosilla tells Carlo's fortune and sees through his disguise. Meanwhile, Leonora wonders how she can escape from her vengeful brother. Pilgrims en route to Holy Week celebrations pass by, and everyone joins in prayer. Alcalde, the bartender, urges Carlo to tell the gathering what brought him there. Carlo obscures his identity, claiming to be "Pereda" and speaking of his friend, who is bent on avenging his father's death at the hands of his sister's lover. As the others in the club pass out, Carlo falls asleep, exhausted.

Leonora flees the city in a rainstorm and skids off the road, crashing her car. She makes her way to a monastery, where Fra Melitone tries to send her away until the next morning. She begs to see Guardiano, the Father Superior. When he appears, she is stunned by his resemblance to her father. She asks him to allow her to live in the monastery's hermitage, devoting herself to God. When

Guardiano understands who she is and learns that her brother has vowed to kill her, he agrees to let her stay, ordering the friars to prepare for her initiation. Meanwhile, Carlo, mourns over his father's grave.

Leonora's initiation rite begins. She cuts her hair and passes among the friars to the hermitage, where she will spend the rest of her life in solitude. As she does, she sees an apparition of the Virgin Mary above her.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:25PM)

Act III

Alvaro has been conscripted into the army and sent to the front. Bitter and broken, he laments his outcast state, mourning Leonora, whom he believes is dead. He prays to her to have pity on him. Hearing a brawl nearby, Alvaro drives away a pack of thieves attacking a newly arrived soldier. It is Carlo, but neither is aware of the other's identity, as both are using assumed names. Carlo thanks Alvaro for saving his life, and the two swear friendship in life and death, then run off to battle.

Alvaro is carried back to camp, seriously wounded. He asks Carlo to promise to safeguard his private papers and, in the event of his death, to burn them. Carlo agrees, but when his friend is removed for surgery, he wonders if Alvaro might be the man who killed his father and dishonored his sister. Looking among Alvaro's belongings, he finds a portrait of Leonora. When word arrives that Alvaro will live, Carlo exults that he will be able to exact his revenge on his enemy.

A group of entertainers begins a performance for the wounded soldiers, led by Preziosilla and her dancers, and joined by a peddler selling cheap merchandise. Preziosilla tells their fortunes and leads a marching chorus to raise Alvaro's spirits. Carlo appears, bearing a cake for Alvaro, pretending to be his friend.

A few months later, Carlo confronts a recovered Alvaro, confessing that he has found out Alvaro's true identity, and challenges him to fight. Alvaro tries to pacify him, saying that if Leonora is still alive, as Carlo says, they should join forces to search for her. Carlo insists that he will kill both Alvaro and Leonora to obtain revenge, driving Alvaro into a rage. They fight, but Alvaro stops himself from delivering the deadly blow and instead turns his knife on himself, cutting his own face. Repenting his violent anger, he resolves to enter a monastery.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 4:45PM)

Act IV

Though the war is over, the world is on the verge of apocalypse, with hunger and poverty widespread. A group of refugees waits at a subway station for a complaining Melitone to hand out food, while Father Guardiano chastises Melitone for being impatient with the poor. Carlo, having searched for Alvaro for five years, arrives and demands to see Father Raffaele, the name that Alvaro has taken after joining Guardiano and Melitone's order. As Carlo waits, he vows to kill his enemy. Alvaro appears and pleads for peace between them, but again Carlo goads him, and they rush off to fight as the ghost of the general appears above them.

Leonora emerges in a state of distress and prays for the peace that continues to elude her; in her heart, she still loves Alvaro. Hearing a commotion nearby, she retreats, only to be called from her hiding place by Alvaro himself. Having mortally wounded Carlo, he has come to ask the hermit to give absolution to the dying man. They recognize each other, and Alvaro cries that once again he has the blood of her family on his hands. Leonora goes to her brother, who deals her a mortal blow. Alvaro and Leonora say farewell, and Alvaro hears the voice of the ghost of Leonora's father admonishing him to humble himself and accept the will of God. As Leonora dies, she forgives Alvaro and, with her last gasp, proclaims that she will await Alvaro in heaven.



La Forza del Destino on Demand

Looking for more *La Forza del Destino*? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding presentations from past Met seasons—including a classic 1984 telecast starring Leontyne Price and a collection of historic radio broadcasts featuring Zinka Milanov, Renata Tebaldi, Richard Tucker, Cesare Siepi, Ezio Pinza, and many more Met legends. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 850 complete performances at metoperaondemand.org.

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Giuseppe Verdi

La Forza del Destino

Premiere: Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, 1862 (original version); Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1869 (revised version)

A powerfully driving work encapsulating the wild spirit of the Romantic movement, *La Forza del Destino* is a grand and tragic opera depicting characters who—despite their vaunted declarations of love, honor, piety, and vengeance—are mere pawns in the winds of fate. It contains not only a treasury of peak Verdian music but also an all-encompassing dramaturgical style that runs the gamut from high tragedy to common comedy. Verdi and librettist Francesco Maria Piave adapted Ángel de Saavedra's play *Don Álvaro o la Fuerza del Sino*, which, in keeping with the ideals of the Romantic movement, revels in the wildness of its antiheroes, shows an affinity for untamed nature, and rejects the old-fashioned virtues of order and symmetry. Verdi's score augments every aspect of the drama with an intensity that stands out even among his other mature works. The vocal challenges for the lead singers and the demands on the chorus and orchestra, combined with its complex and serpentine plot, have kept it outside the circle of the repertory's most performed pieces, but its unique (yet distinctly Verdian) brand of lyric excitement makes it an essential operatic experience.

The Creators

In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 26 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–76), the librettist for *La Forza del Destino*, provided texts for a number of operas in the first half of Verdi's career, including *Ernani*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and the original versions of *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*. Verdi and Piave based the opera on an 1835 play by Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas (1791–1865), a Spanish nobleman who was at various times a seminarian, soldier, painter, poet, and politician. They also incorporated added color by including a scene from *Wallensteins Lager* by eminent German dramatist and poet Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), to whom Verdi would turn for inspiration for his next opera, *Don Carlos*. For the revised version of *Forza*, which premiered six and a half years after the initial premiere, Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824–93), the future librettist of *Aida*, provided additional text.

The Setting

The opera is set in various locations in Spain and Italy around the time of the War of the Austrian Succession in the mid-18th century. The rapid progression of scenes takes place across private quarters, public gatherings, and religious sites, and the boundaries between these settings blur as the actions associated with one spill over into the others. There is always a battlefield (symbolic or actual) nearby. This season's new production moves the story to the present day and examines the drama's themes through a contemporary lens.

The Music

The score of *La Forza del Destino* demands attention from the first measures of its famous overture: two sets of insistent chords from the brass and bassoons followed by relentlessly forward-moving figures signifying the unyielding force of destiny. All of life's extremes are depicted in vivid colors in Verdi's palette—from the meditative solace of spiritual life, typified by the ensemble "La Vergine degli angeli" at the close of Act II, to raucous crowd scenes, to Preziosilla's military anthems and the broad comic grumblings of Fra Melitone, whose music presages Verdi's style in his final masterpiece, *Falstaff*. These segments provide context for the thrilling vocal displays of the principal characters: three remarkable baritone-tenor duets (of which the shortest, "Solenne in quest'ora" in Act III, Scene 2, ranks among Verdi's most ravishingly beautiful achievements); Leonora's two great arias, the prayer in Act II, Scene 2, "Madre, pietosa vergine," and "Pace, pace, mio Dio" in the final act; her scene with Padre Guardiano in Act II; Don Carlo's aria "Urna fatale" in Act III; and the tenor's Act III opener, "La vita è inferno all'infelice ... Oh, tu che in seno agli angeli," with its extended clarinet introduction.

Met History

La Forza del Destino had its Met premiere in 1918, with the 21-year-old Rosa Ponselle making her company debut as Leonora. The impressive cast also featured Enrico Caruso as Don Alvaro, Giuseppe De Luca as Don Carlo, and José Mardones as Padre Guardiano, conducted by Gennaro Papi. Leading interpreters of the principal roles throughout the 20th century included Zinka Milanov, Renata Tebaldi, Martina Arroyo, and Leona Mitchell as Leonora; Giovanni Martinelli, Carlo Bergonzi, Franco Corelli, Richard Tucker, and Jon Vickers as Don Alvaro; Lawrence Tibbett (who later appeared as Fra Melitone), Robert Merrill, and Sherrill Milnes as Don Carlo; Ezio Pinza, Cesare Siepi, and Jerome Hines as Padre Guardiano; and Fernando Corena and Gabriel Bacquier as Fra Melitone. In one of the most famous and tragic moments in company history, magnificent baritone Leonard Warren, just 48 years old, died on stage during the March 4, 1960, performance of *Forza*, immediately after singing Don Carlo's Act III aria "Morir, tremenda cosa ... Urna fatale del mio destino" ("To die, a tremendous thing ... Fatal vessel of my destiny"). The 1952–53 season opened with the premiere of a new production directed by Herbert Graf and designed by Eugene Berman. In 1975, then-Director of Production John Dexter unveiled a revised version of this staging, which was later telecast in 1984 featuring Leontyne Price, Isola Jones, Giuseppe Giacomini, Leo Nucci, and Bonaldo Giaiotti, conducted by James Levine. Levine took the podium to lead Giancarlo Del Monaco's 1996 new production, starring Sharon Sweet, Plácido Domingo, and Vladimir Chernov as the principal trio. This season, Mariusz Trelński directs a new staging, with Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting a cast headlined by Lise Davidsen, Judit Kutasi, Brian Jagde, Igor Golovatenko, Patrick Carfizzi, and Soloman Howard.

Program Note

In 1859, writing to his longtime collaborator librettist Francesco Maria Piave from his estate in the provincial village of Sant'Agata, Giuseppe Verdi insisted, "I am now the complete countryman. I hope I have bidden farewell to the muses and that I shall never again feel the temptation to take up my pen." At the time of this letter, the 45-year-old Verdi was exhausted following his "galley years," a period of intense productivity that saw him compose 19 operas in less than 17 years and become a national icon. Fortunately, it turned out that the maestro wasn't quite ready for an early retirement, which would have deprived posterity of the great masterpieces to come in his later years. Now a wealthy landowner, though, Verdi no longer needed to chase commission after commission and could instead compose at his leisure. So, when the Imperial Theatre of St. Petersburg approached him two years later to write a new opera on any subject of his choosing, he seized the opportunity to create his most ambitious—and bewildering—work to date.

Verdi initially settled upon Hugo's *Ruy Blas* as a source, but the Russian censors rejected the play for its depiction of a lowly valet becoming the queen's lover. When Verdi threatened to back out of the agreement, they relented, only for the composer to then lose interest. "Verdi scratched his head, pointing out that for *Ruy Blas* there was such and such a difficulty; that in the other dramas he had skimmed through there was some other; that a certain play he had once read and liked could not be found," Verdi's wife Giuseppina Strepponi recounted to theater agent Mauro Corticelli. "There we were hunting round the bookshops and secondhand dealers of Turin, leaving no corner unexplored. Nothing! Nowhere to be found!" The work in question was *Don Álvaro o la Fuerza del Sino* by Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas, and as Giuseppina was glad to report, "In the end ... [Verdi] seized by the scruff of the neck a certain person who was going to Milan, the only place it would be possible to find the play and from which he did in fact get it after 24 hours."

Saavedra's play, Verdi told his French publisher, Léon Escudier, was "powerful, singular, and truly vast ... certainly something quite out of the ordinary." In this sweeping five-act drama, the half-Spanish, half-Incan title character unintentionally kills his lover's father, only to be pursued by her vengeful brothers and ultimately take their lives—and his own—before the final curtain falls. In translating the melodramatic material to the operatic stage, Verdi and Piave tightened the action and condensed the two brothers into the single Don Carlo di Vargas. The composer hounded his librettist with demands for concision: "For God's sake, my dear Piave, let's think about this carefully. ... The poetry can and must say all that the prose says, and in half the words. So far, you're not doing that." At the same time, he wanted to retain Saavedra's colorful secondary characters, whose quotidian lives provided a stark contrast to the aristocrats' life-or-death struggles. To this end, Verdi and Piave even incorporated an unrelated scene from Schiller's depiction of military life during the Thirty Years War, *Wallensteins Lager*. As eminent Verdi scholar Julian Budden explains,

the opera became a kind of stylistic synthesis of the composer's three most important literary idols: "Hugo is present in the dramatic conception; Schiller is drawn upon directly for one of the encampment scenes; while in the portrayal of humanity on a vast canvas ranging from the highest to the lowest in the land, there is the unmistakable sense of a Shakespearean chronicle play."

Verdi and Giuseppina set out for Russia in December 1861—bringing along copious quantities of wine, pasta, cheese, and salami, not to mention furs—only for the premiere to be postponed due to the prima donna's ill health. When *Forza* finally did take the stage in November 1862, it was generally praised, with the *Journal de St.-Pétersbourg* lauding it "of all Verdi's works ... the most complete both in terms of its inspiration and the rich abundance of its melodic invention" and reporting that the cast "had on several occasions to drag the celebrated composer onto the stage, to the sound of wild cheering and prolonged applause." But as the opera continued its Grand Tour through Europe, it was received less favorably. Audiences were especially horrified by the gruesome final scene, which saw Alvaro dispatch his foe on stage, only for Carlo to stab Leonora with his dying breath. Confronted by the lifeless bodies of both his lover and her brother, Alvaro hurled himself forthwith off a cliff, blasphemously cursing mankind. Reviewing the opera's premiere in Rome, *Il Sistro* bemoaned that, "there would have been more applause had the public not been so displeased by the sight of so many dead on stage—a true slaughter"; in Trieste, the *Gazzetta dei Teatri* decried the libretto as "a real monstrosity."

The criticism weighed on Verdi, who, as early as October 1863, exhorted Piave that "something must be done to *Forza del Destino*; but first of all one must think of the ending and find a way to avoid so many dead bodies." But at a loss for a less bloody resolution and distracted by other projects, most notably *Don Carlos* for Paris, the composer dithered, and a revised version wouldn't reach the stage of Milan's Teatro alla Scala until February 1869—a delay that was further exacerbated when Piave suffered a debilitating stroke in 1867. In the intervening years, Verdi fielded a number of suggested fixes for the "infernale scioglimento" ("infernal dénouement"), with the most incongruous coming from Achille de Lauzières, *Don Carlos's* Italian translator. In Lauzières's proposed ending, a bolt of lightning set Leonora's hermitage ablaze just as Alvaro was to deal his fatal blow. This stroke of divine intervention so shocked Carlo that he ceded to blessing the lovers' union, proclaiming "Lottammo invano; ha vinto la forza del destin!" ("We fought in vain; the force of destiny has won!"). Unsurprisingly, Verdi dismissed this scenario out of hand, explaining, "the 'power of fate,' 'the fatality,' cannot lead to a reconciliation of the two families; the brother, after having made all that fuss, must avenge his father's death (remember, too, that he's a Spaniard)."

Ultimately, it was Antonio Ghislanzoni, *Aida's* librettist-to-be, who supplied an acceptable conclusion for the drama, moving Carlo's death and his sister's stabbing off stage and having Padre Guardiano and the dying Leonora urge

Alvaro to find consolation in prayer rather than suicide. Verdi reworked not only the finale but made small enhancements throughout the score—tinkering with keys and orchestration, extending some of the ensembles, slightly adjusting vocal lines—and significantly reordered the scenes of Act III. Originally, the Schiller-derived encampment scene separated Alvaro and Carlo's duets, and the act ended with the first of two duels between the rivals, followed by a rather unremarkable aria and cabaletta for the tenor. In revising the score, Verdi and Ghislanzoni repositioned the duets back-to-back (separated by a brief choral interlude), inserted a patrol of soldiers to preempt the duel, and excised Alvaro's scena entirely, instead giving him a brief recitative in which he resolves to seek the peace of a monastery. The act then closed with the encampment scene. (Following longstanding Met tradition, this season's performances restore Verdi's original order, with the encampment scene once again falling between the duets, though Alvaro's act-ending declamation comes from the 1869 version.) Verdi also expanded the original prelude into *Forza's* now-famous overture, which immediately grabs the listener with its insistent opening chords from the brass and bassoons. From there, the strings trace a seething, circular theme that snakes its way around a series of melodies associated with Alvaro, Leonora, and Guardiano—and like a Wagnerian leitmotif, this musical embodiment of destiny pervades the score, incessantly pursuing the heroine as she attempts in vain to escape her fate.

In his seminal analysis of Verdi's canon, Budden remarks, "The most bewildering aspect of Verdi's genius remains that unending capacity to take in fresh experience and in each successive work present something new yet deeply rooted in the past ... like a world seen through an ever-stronger lens." This assessment is particularly true of *La Forza del Destino*, in which one hears clear echoes of Verdi's bel canto roots alongside vivid glimpses of the larger-scale masterworks still to come. While the composer supplies stunning arias for his principal trio—including three for the leading lady—the true dramatic heavy lifting is left to the duets, which reject rigid formal structures and rather take their cues from the natural contours of the story. And Verdi never loses sight of the supporting characters—a cast of peasants, soldiers, friars, muleteers, friars, servants, pilgrims, and vivandières whose scenes find him at his most experimental. Preziosilla's "Al suon del tamburo" is a not-so-distant relative of Marie's regimental song "Chacun le sait" in Donizetti's *La Fille di Régiment*, while Fra Melitone's ranting and ravings both pay homage to the basso buffos of Rossini and pave the way for the fluid, conversational comedy of *Falstaff*. Likewise, the final scene of Act II, in which the friars call down a curse on anyone who would violate the sacred hermitage, harkens back to the rousing men's choruses of *Ernani* and *Il Trovatore* but also anticipates the priests of *Aida* and some of the most thunderous passages in the Requiem.

More than any of Verdi's works, *La Forza del Destino* is defined by its extreme, often sudden, contrasts. In the first scene of Act II, a group of passing pilgrims

brings the frenzy of the inn to a standstill—though only momentarily—whereas in the final act, the convincingly woebegone chorus of starving peasants abruptly devolves into broad comedy upon Melitone’s entrance. Perhaps the most striking instance of musical whiplash is the Act III encampment scene: A triumphant chorus reveling in the joys of war gives way to Preziosilla and her chirpy fortune telling, followed in rapid succession by a round of toasts, Trabuco’s bleating arioso, the cries of beggars (comprising just 13 bars of music!) and young recruits (again, only 13 bars), the sweet-talking of the vivandières, a gay tarantella, and Melitone’s haranguing, pun-filled sermon. The scene finally culminates in one of Verdi’s most unusual creations, the “Rataplan” chorus, as Preziosilla leads the entire assembly in an onomatopoetic imitation of the sounds of battle, sparsely accompanied by side drum and pizzicato strings.

The peculiarities of *Forza*’s plot and the sheer musical variety of its score have often overwhelmed audiences (and opera companies, who have felt it necessary to endlessly chop up and rearrange the scenes). As Verdi biographer Francis Toye wryly reflected, “If *La Forza del Destino* inspires love at all, it is perhaps the instinctive tenderness and worship given by a lover to his mistress rather than the reasoned affections of friend for friend or husband for wife.” Yet the passions kindled by a top-notch performance are indeed palpable—something Verdi understood when he commented, “It is certain that in *La Forza del Destino* the singers do not necessarily have to know how to manage solfeggio [technical singing exercises], but they must have soul and understand the words and express their meaning.” Consider just one illustrative example: Leonora’s “Madre, pietosa vergine,” which opens Act II, Scene 2. First singing in halting phrases as she pleads to the Madonna, Leonora’s voice soon takes flight on one of Verdi’s trademark long rising lines, a breathtaking effect made that much more powerful when the melody is repeated “con più forza” and buoyed by offstage chorus and full orchestra. It is just one of a number of moments in *Forza* when an artist, who has soul and understands the words and their meaning, can seem to halt destiny in its tracks—if only for an instant.

—Christopher Browner

Christopher Browner is the Met’s Senior Editor.

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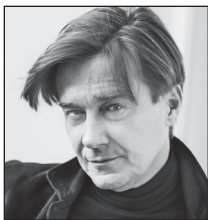
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino*, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, Verdi's *Requiem*, *Florença en el Amazonas*, and *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met; *Die Walküre* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra; and concerts with the Met Orchestra, Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble, Orchestre Métropolitain, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America, and Berlin Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2009 debut leading *Carmen*, he has conducted 20 operas, including *La Bohème*, Terence Blanchard's *Champion* and *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, *Lohengrin*, Kevin Puts's *The Hours*, *Don Carlos*, and Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is in his fifth season as the Met's Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music Director. He has served as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012 and artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2018, he became honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director for ten seasons, and in 2016, he was named an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Between 2008 and 2014, he was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He has won four Grammy Awards.



Mariusz Treliński

DIRECTOR (WARSAW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* at the Met and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Lyon.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015) and *Tristan und Isolde*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2008, he has served as artistic director of the Polish National Opera, where he has directed *Peter Grimes*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Cardillac*, *Halka*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Die Tote Stadt*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*, *Salome*, *La Traviata*, *The Queen of Spades*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Boris Godunov*, *Król Roger* (for which he received the Karol Szymanowski Award), *Madama Butterfly*, and *Orfeo ed Euridice*, among many others. His productions have also appeared at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Staatsoper Berlin, Israeli Opera, St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Lithuanian National Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, Welsh National Opera, Washington National Opera, Detroit Opera, and in Madrid, Brussels, Vienna, Baden-Baden, Beijing, Florence, Oman, Valencia, and Cagliari, among others. In 2018, he was honored as Best Director at the 2018 International Opera Awards, having previously been nominated in 2016. His work also includes the films *Farewell to Autumn*, *Lagodna*, and *Egoisci*.

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



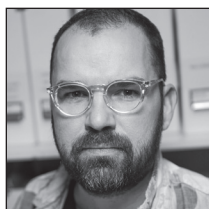
Boris Kudlička

SET DESIGNER (RUŽOMBEROK, SLOVAKIA)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* at the Met and the world premiere of Mikael Karlsson's *Melancholia* at the Royal Swedish Opera.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015) and *Tristan und Isolde*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 1999, he has collaborated with Mariusz Trelieński on numerous productions, including *Madama Butterfly*, *Król Roger*, *Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Andrea Chénier*, *La Bohème*, *Boris Godunov*, *Aleko*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *Salome*, Thomas Adès's *Powder Her Face*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Cardillac*, and *Halka*. His designs have appeared at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Staatsoper Berlin, Royal Danish Opera, St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, Welsh National Opera, Washington National Opera, LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, and in Brussels, Vienna, Tokyo, Strasbourg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Baden-Baden, and Prague. In 2019, he directed *Carmina Burana* at the Polish National Opera. He co-designed Polish pavilions for Expos in Hannover and Shanghai, and designed exhibitions for Warsaw's National Museum and Museum of Polish History. His latest project, Boris Kudlička with Partners, focuses on architecture and interior design for residential and commercial projects in Poland, Switzerland, Malta, and France.



Moritz Junge

COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Norma*, *Roberto Devereux*, and *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS His work as both a set and costume designer has appeared internationally across theater, opera, dance, and entertainment. He made his professional debut designing costumes for Tom Cairns's world-premiere production of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest* at Covent Garden in 2004. He has since worked consistently with most of the leading performing arts institutions in the world, including Opera Australia, Lyric Opera Chicago, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, English National Opera, the Glyndebourne Festival, La Scala, San Francisco Opera, Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal Court Theatre, the Donmar Warehouse, London's National Theatre, the Almeida Theatre, the Old Vic, American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, the Royal Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, the Australian Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, among many others. He also designed the costumes for the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

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A scene from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*

PHOTO: KAREN ALMOND / MET OPERA

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Marc Heinz

LIGHTING DESIGNER (AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* at the Met and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Lyon.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015) and *Tristan und Isolde*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He began his career in 1988 as a lighting director for Toneelgroep Amsterdam, and after winning an award for productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *Glenn*, he became a freelance lighting designer in 1993. In the years since, he has worked across opera, television, museum exhibitions, special events, and musicals in countries including China, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Austria, Spain, France, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Japan, Lithuania, Trinidad and Tobago, Russia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, India, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark, Portugal, Iceland, Israel, and Finland. Among the directors with whom he has collaborated are Keith Warner, Andreas Kriegenburg, Herbert Wernicke, Mariusz Treliński, Petrica Ionescu, Pierre Audi, Amon Miyamoto, Guy Cassiers, Alize Zandwijk, Wilfried Minks, Frank van Laecke, Jos Thie, Barbara Wysocka, and Ken Caswell. He has designed for three world tours by Armin van Buuren, and among his numerous honors are a 2020 Global Excellence Award and a 2021 Benelux Award.



Bartek Macias

PROJECTION DESIGNER (KRAKÓW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* at the Met, the world premiere of Mikael Karlsson's *Melancholia* at the Royal Swedish Opera, and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Lyon.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015) and *Tristan und Isolde*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A multimedia video artist, animation director, and visual-effects supervisor, he has worked on numerous films, theater productions, television shows, and commercials. He co-created the installation at the Polish pavilion at Expo 2010 in Shanghai, for which his video mapping earned him a gold award in the design category at the 2011 Advertising Festival. Co-founder of the post-production studio Lunapark, he is also the founder and creative director of the artistic project Yes Eye Do!, focusing on the promotion of contemporary art. He has collaborated with acclaimed directors including Grzegorz Jarzyna, Mariusz Treliński, Keith Warner, and Amon Miyamoto. With Treliński, his work includes productions of *Salome* in Prague, *Boulevard Solitude* and *Manon Lescaut* at Welsh National Opera, and *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and *Turandot* at the Polish National Opera.

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Maćko Prusak

CHOREOGRAPHER (WROCLAW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *La Forza del Destino* for his debut at the Met.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A choreographer, actor, and stage director, he began his career as a performer in the Henryk Tomaszewski Wrocław Mime Theatre and went on to collaborate with a number of Polish and foreign directors. The first play for which he developed stage movement was Gogol's *Revisor*, directed by Jan Klata, with whom he has since worked in theaters throughout Poland, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Sweden, and Lithuania. In 2018, his choreography for Klata's *Wesele* received an award at the Opole Theatre Confrontations. He has collaborated with Mariusz Treliński since 2022, when they created a production of *Boris Godunov* at Tokyo's New National Theatre. In 2010, he made his debut as a stage director, and his first original show, *Klaus der Grosse*, inspired by the life and work of Klaus Nomi, received the Grand Prix of the Nurt OFF 31 Festival in Wrocław. His productions regularly appear at Kraków's Ludowy Theatre, where he stages productions for young and adult audiences, including *Salto w Tył*, Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi*, and *Doktor Dolittle*. In 2019, his staging of *Salto w Tył*, based on Ota Pavel's sports writing, was awarded the Stanisław Wyspiański Theatre Award.



Maria Barakova

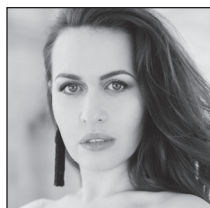
MEZZO-SOPRANO (KEMEROVO, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Preziosilla in *La Forza de Destino* and Fenena in *Nabucco* at the Met, Fenena in Trieste, and Siegrune in *Die Walküre* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Sonyetka in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (debut, 2022).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Sonyetka at the Vienna State Opera, Adalgisa in *Norma* in Palermo, the Hostess of the Inn in *Boris Godunov* at La Scala, Isabella in *L'italiana in Algeri* at the Bregenz Festival, Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Stéphano in *Roméo et Juliette* in Florence, Marchesa Melibea in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, the title role of *Tancredi* in concert at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* in Muscat, Olga in Liège, and Lyubava Buslayevna in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* at the Bolshoi Theatre. She has also sung Maddalena in Padua, a Witch in *Dido and Aeneas* and Petrovna in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride* at the Bolshoi Theatre, and Marchesa Melibea at the Rossini Opera Festival.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Elena Stikhina

SOPRANO (LESNOY, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* and Mimì in *La Bohème* at the Met; Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; the title roles of *Salome* and *Tosca* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre; Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* in concert with the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra; Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*, the title role of *Suor Angelica*, and *Tosca* at the Vienna State Opera; *Suor Angelica* at Dutch National Opera; *Giorgetta* and *Suor Angelica* in Turin; and concerts with the Athens State Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and at the Salzburg Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Elsa in *Lohengrin*, *Tosca*, and *Suor Angelica* (debut, 2018).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2014, she has been a principal artist of the Mariinsky Theatre's Primorsky Stage, and in 2017, she became a member of the Mariinsky Opera Company, where she has sung Maria in *Mazeppa*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Lisa, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, the title role of *Aida*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, and Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, among many others. She has also appeared at the Paris Opera, Covent Garden, Bavarian State Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, La Scala, and Finnish National Opera, among others.



Patrick Carfizzi

BASS-BARITONE (NEWBURGH, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Fra Melitone in *La Forza del Destino* and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* at the Met, Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at LA Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in concert with Boston Baroque, and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1999 debut as Count Ceperano in *Rigoletto*, he has sung nearly 450 performances of 36 roles, including the Sacristan in *Tosca*, Swallow in *Peter Grimes*, the Speaker, Brander in *La Damnation de Faust*, Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Cecil in *Maria Stuarda*, Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Paolo Albiani in *Simon Boccanegra*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, the Bailiff in *Werther* and Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Houston Grand Opera, Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival and Santa Fe Opera, Major-General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance* at Cincinnati Opera, and Leporello in Wiesbaden.



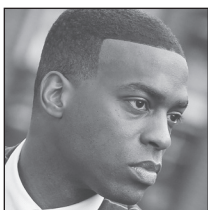
Igor Golovatenko

BARITONE (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Don Carlo di Vargas in *La Forza del Destino* at the Met; Shchelkalov in *Boris Godunov*, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, and Robert in *Iolanta* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre; Iago in *Otello* and Guido di Monforte in *I Vespri Siciliani* at the Vienna State Opera; the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in concert with Opera Rara; Iago in Rome; Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Guido di Monforte in concert at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

MET APPEARANCES The title role of *Eugene Onegin* and Prince Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades* (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Between 2007 and 2014, he was a soloist at the Novaya Opera Theatre of Moscow. In 2014, he became a soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre, where his roles have included Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*, Prince Yeletsky, Eugene Onegin, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, among others. He has also appeared at the Paris Opera, Salzburg Festival, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera, and Washington National Opera, among others.



Soloman Howard

BASS (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

THIS SEASON The Marquis of Calatrava / Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* and Timur in *Turandot* at the Met, Fafner in *Das Rheingold* at Covent Garden, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* in Hamburg, the Lion in Jeanine Tesori's *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* at Washington National Opera, Hunding in *Die Walküre* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Beethoven's Mass in C Major with the National Philharmonic, and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* at the Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* and the King in *Aida* (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Muhammad Ali in D. J. Sparr's *Approaching Ali* at Opera Las Vegas; Fafner at the Dallas Opera; Ramfis in *Aida* at Covent Garden; the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* and Wurm in *Luisa Miller* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; the Commendatore, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and Angelotti in *Tosca* at San Francisco Opera; Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Glyndebourne Festival; Wurm at English National Opera; Colline in *La Bohème* and the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* at the Santa Fe Opera; Cadmus/Somnus in Handel's *Semele* with the English Concert; and Fafner in Montreal.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Brian Jagde

TENOR (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* at the Met and Covent Garden, Calàf in *Turandot* at the Paris Opera, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in concert in Lyon, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at La Scala, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in Parma.

MET APPEARANCES Radamès in *Aida*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Cavaradossi, and Elemer in *Arabella* (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the title role of *Don Carlo* at Covent Garden, Radamès at the Bavarian State Opera, Canio in *Pagliacci* in Rome, Samson in *Samson et Dalila* at Staatsoper Berlin and in Naples, Cavaradossi at the Paris Opera, Don José in *Carmen* in Verona and at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Pinkerton and Cavaradossi at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* at the Vienna State Opera. He has also sung Maurizio at the Vienna State Opera, Calàf at the Bavarian State Opera, Chevalier des Grieux in concert in Hamburg, Don José in Naples, Turiddu in concert at Michigan Opera Theatre, Florestan in *Fidelio* and Chevalier des Grieux at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Pinkerton at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Cavaradossi at the Vienna State Opera.