

Giuseppe Verdi

Rigoletto

CONDUCTOR
Michele Mariotti

PRODUCTION
Michael Mayer

SET DESIGNER
Christine Jones

COSTUME DESIGNER
Susan Hilferty

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Kevin Adams

CHOREOGRAPHER
Steven Hoggett

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, based
on the play *Le Roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo

Saturday, February 16, 2013, 1:00–4:05 pm

New production

The production of *Rigoletto* was
made possible by a generous gift from
the **Hermione Foundation, Laura Sloate,**
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The Metropolitan Opera

2012–13 Season

The 847th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Giuseppe Verdi's

Rigoletto

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This performance is also being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 74.

Conductor
Michele Mariotti

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

The Duke
Piotr Beczala

Giovanna
Maria Zifchak

Borsa
Alexander Lewis*

A Page
Catherine Choi

Countess Ceprano
Emalie Savoy*

Guard
Earle Patriarco

Rigoletto
Željko Lučić

Maddalena
Oksana Volkova

Marullo
Jeff Mattsey

Count Ceprano
David Crawford

Monterone
Robert Pomakov

Sparafucile
Štefan Kocán

Gilda
Diana Damrau

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Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Assistant to the Set Designer **Brett Banakis**
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Marina Reti**
Assistant Choreographer **Lorin Latarro**
Musical Preparation **Dennis Giauque, Jane Klaviter, Liora Maurer, and Steven Osgood**
Assistant Stage Directors **Eric Einhorn, Gregory Keller, and Kathleen Smith Belcher**
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**, revised for this production by **Michael Panayos and Paul Cremo**
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Rigoletto

FEB 12, 16 mat, 19, 23

In Michael Mayer's bold new production, Željko Lučić sings the title role and Diana Damrau is his beautiful daughter, Gilda, who falls under the spell of Piotr Beczala's womanizing Duke.

VERDI

Don Carlo

FEB 22, 25, 28 **MAR** 6, 9 mat, 13, 16

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Synopsis

Las Vegas, 1960

Act I

SCENE 1 The Duke's casino

SCENE 2 Outside Rigoletto's apartment

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:05 PM)

Act II

The Duke's penthouse at the casino

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:05 PM)

Act III

A seedy club on the outskirts of Las Vegas

Act I

At his casino, the Duke boasts of his way with women. He flirts with the Countess Ceprano, while Rigoletto, the Duke's hunchbacked sidekick and comedian, mocks Count Ceprano, her enraged husband. Marullo, one of the Duke's entourage, bursts in with the latest gossip: Rigoletto is keeping a young mistress at his place. Unaware of this, Rigoletto continues to taunt Ceprano, who plots with the others to punish Rigoletto for his insults. Monterone, an Arab tycoon, forces his way into the crowd to denounce the Duke for seducing his daughter and is viciously ridiculed by Rigoletto. Monterone is arrested and puts a curse on Rigoletto.

Rigoletto is disturbed by Monterone's curse. He encounters Sparafucile, a hitman, who offers his services. Rigoletto reflects that his own tongue is as sharp as the murderer's knife. Arriving at home, he warmly greets his daughter, Gilda. Fearing for the girl's safety, he warns the housekeeper, Giovanna, not to let anyone into the apartment. When Rigoletto leaves, the Duke appears and bribes Giovanna, who lets him see Gilda whom he's seen in church. He declares his love for her and tells her he is a poor student. After he has left, Gilda tenderly reflects on her newfound love. The Duke's entourage gathers nearby, intending to abduct Rigoletto's "mistress." When Rigoletto arrives, surprising them, they convince him they are abducting the Countess Ceprano, and enlist his aid in their scheme. Successfully deceiving Rigoletto, they kidnap Gilda. When Rigoletto discovers that his daughter has been taken, he collapses as he remembers Monterone's curse.

Act II

Arriving at his penthouse apartment in the casino, the Duke is distraught, having immediately gone back to see Gilda only to find her missing. When his entourage returns and tells him the story of how they abducted a girl from Rigoletto's apartment and left her in the Duke's bedroom, he realizes it is Gilda and hurries off to her. Rigoletto enters, looking for Gilda. The entourage is astonished to find out that she is his daughter rather than his mistress, but they prevent him from storming into the Duke's bedroom. Rigoletto violently denounces them for their cruelty, then asks for compassion. Gilda returns from the Duke's room. She tells Rigoletto of the Duke's courtship, her abduction, and her deflowering by the Duke. Monterone is brought in to be killed by the Duke's men, and Rigoletto swears that both he and the Arab will be avenged. Gilda begs her father to forgive the Duke.

Act III

Rigoletto brings Gilda to a seedy club on the outskirts of town where Sparafucile and his sister Maddalena live. The Duke appears, and Gilda and Rigoletto watch him through the window as he amuses himself with Maddalena. Rigoletto tells his distraught daughter to leave town disguised as a man and, after she leaves, pays Sparafucile to murder the Duke. Gilda returns to overhear Maddalena urge her brother to spare the Duke and kill Rigoletto instead. Sparafucile refuses but agrees to kill the next person to arrive at the club, so that he will be able to produce a dead body for Rigoletto. Gilda decides to sacrifice herself for the Duke. Her plan succeeds and Sparafucile and Maddalena put her body in the trunk of a car. Rigoletto returns, and assuming the body is the corpse of the Duke, gloats over his revenge. But when he hears the Duke singing inside the club, he realizes he has been duped. He quickly removes the hood covering the head of the body in the car and is horrified to find it has been masking the identity of his dying daughter. Gilda dies asking her father's forgiveness and Rigoletto realizes Monterone's curse has been fulfilled.

Giuseppe Verdi

Rigoletto

Premiere: Teatro la Fenice, Venice, 1851

Rigoletto is a journey of undeniable force that commands the respect of critics, performers, and audiences alike. It was immensely popular from its premiere—from even before its premiere, if we credit accounts of the buzz that surrounded the initial rehearsals—and remains fresh and powerful to this day. The story is one of the most accessible in opera, based on a controversial Victor Hugo drama whose full dramatic implications only became apparent when transformed by Verdi's musical genius. *Rigoletto* is the tale of an outsider—a hunchbacked jester—who struggles to balance the dueling elements of beauty and evil that exist in his life. Written during the most fertile period of Verdi's remarkable career, the opera resonates with a universality that is frequently called Shakespearean.

The Creators

In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876), his librettist for *Rigoletto*, collaborated with him on ten works, including *Ernani*, *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino*, and the original versions of *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*.

The Setting

Victor Hugo's 1832 play *Le Roi s'amuse*, set at the court of King François I of France (circa 1520), is a blatant depiction of depraved authority. In adapting it, Verdi and Piave fought incessantly with the Italian censors in a well-documented battle. It makes for interesting reading, particularly in revealing what Verdi found important in the story and what he considered superfluous. Though Verdi had no love of royalty and favored a republic, he was not a proletarian ideologue like Hugo, and he tended to view people more as individuals than as representatives of classes. He was content, with Piave's deft juggling, to set the opera at the non-royal Renaissance court of Mantua and to change all the names, but held firm on other issues in the story, such as Rigoletto's physical deformity and the curse that is the catalyst of the drama. Although the Duke remains unnamed, he was modeled on history's Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612). The Gonzaga family motto—*Forse che sì, forse che non* ("Maybe yes, maybe no")—provides an interesting insight into some of the duke's cavalier pronouncements. In



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Jonas Kaufmann as Parsifal,
photographed by Micaela Rossato

Michael Mayer's new production, the action unfolds in Las Vegas in 1960, a time and place with surprising parallels to the decadent world of Verdi's original setting.

The Music

Rigoletto contains a wealth of melody, including one that is among the world's most famous: "La donna è mobile." The opera's super-familiar arias—"Questa o quella" and "Caro nome," for example—are also rich with character insight and dramatic development. The heart of the score, though, lies in its fast-moving subtleties and apt dramatic touches. The baritone's solo narratives "Pari siamo!" (Act I, Scene 2) and "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (Act II) are epic scenes telescoped to less than four minutes each. Not even Wagner's great monologues cover more territory than these, and certainly not within Verdi's economy of means. The celebrated father-daughter duets also reflect Verdi's overall design. Rigoletto sings of his protective love for Gilda in Act I, Scene 2 in a spun-out phrase of simple, honest melody, while her music decorates his. In their subsequent scene in Act II, Gilda's music (and, by implication, her life) is similarly intertwined with that of Rigoletto, until finally her melody breaks away as she strives to declare her adolescent independence. The famous quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore" (Act III) is an ingenious musical analysis of the diverging reactions of four characters in the same moment: the Duke's music rises with urgency and impatience, Gilda's droops with disappointment, Rigoletto's remains measured and paternal, while the promiscuous Maddalena is literally all over the place. In the context of the opera, the merely lovely music becomes inspired drama.

Rigoletto at the Met

Rigoletto was first heard at the Met within a month of the company's inaugural performance, on November 16, 1883. The 1903–04 season opened with the company debut of Enrico Caruso as the Duke—a role he returned to sing 37 more times before his death in 1921. The monumental title role was owned for many years by Italian sensation Giuseppe De Luca, who sang it 96 times between 1916 and 1940. This was surpassed in more recent times by the great baritone Cornell MacNeil, who gave 102 performances between 1959 and 1980. Bronx native and audience favorite Roberta Peters sang Gilda 88 times between 1961 and 1985. The previous Met staging, by Otto Schenk, premiered in 1989 with June Anderson in her company debut as Gilda, Luciano Pavarotti as the Duke, and Leo Nucci as Rigoletto. The current production, which serves as the debut of director Michael Mayer and the entire creative team, opens on January 28, 2013, with Michele Mariotti conducting Diana Damrau, Piotr Beczala, and Željko Lučić.

Program Note

As with Beethoven, Verdi's body of work is often divided by contemporary commentators into three artistic periods. In the first, stretching from 1839 to 1850, Verdi was at his most prolific, quickly completing 15 operas that established him with audiences of the time as one of the world's leading opera composers and the successor to Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, all of whom had recently died or retired. The towering masterpieces that guaranteed Verdi's position alongside opera's few all-time great composers, however, did not appear until the second and third periods of his career, marked by a significant break away from, or at least a highly innovative re-interpretation of, the traditional forms and expectations of Italian opera, to which his early works had mostly adhered. Keeping with the Beethoven analogy, *Rigoletto* was Verdi's "Eroica," marking the beginning of the composer's middle period and clearly surpassing in originality and achievement all of his previous work. At its 1851 premiere and throughout the ensuing 13-performance run at Venice's Teatro de Fenice, *Rigoletto* was an enormous success, and it traveled quickly after that. By 1855, the opera had been produced throughout Italy, across Europe, and as far afield as New York, Havana, and Montevideo, Uruguay. This international success, combined with the premieres of *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*—which followed close on *Rigoletto*'s heels in 1853—put to rest any remaining doubt regarding Verdi's operatic primacy.

But despite *Rigoletto*'s eventual success, it was very nearly killed before its birth, needing something of a political miracle just to see the light of day. After receiving the commission from La Fenice, Verdi—an ardent humanist, democrat, and patriot who longed for Italy to be free from the autocratic rule of France and Austria—turned to an uncomfortable source of inspiration: a play by Victor Hugo called *Le Roi s'amuse* ("The King Amuses Himself"). Scathing and bleak, it centers on the amorous exploits of the historical French king François I and the downfall of his physically deformed and morally corrupt jester Triboulet, who encourages and makes light of the king's lechery. The hunchbacked antihero ultimately reaps the poisonous crop he has sown when François discovers and rapes his sheltered daughter, whom he has hidden away from the corruption of the court. Worse yet, in a botched attempt to arrange the king's murder in revenge, Triboulet causes instead the death of his own daughter.

Naturally, Austrian censors (who had jurisdiction over northern Italy, most of which was a province of the Habsburg Empire at the time) were not impressed with Verdi and librettist Francesco Maria Piave's work. Three months before the scheduled premiere, the administration of La Fenice received a letter from the authorities expressing the regional governor's disappointment that Verdi and Piave "should not have chosen a more worthy vehicle to display their talents than the revolting immorality and obscene triviality of *La Maledizione* [*The Curse*, *Rigoletto*'s original title]." The letter communicated that any performance of the opera was absolutely forbidden, and instructed that no one's time be wasted



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A scene from *Parsifal*

PHOTO: JEAN-LOUIS FERNAND/LYON OPERA

with protestations or appeals. Luckily this last directive was ignored, and after extensive revisions to the work's setting and its characters' identities—the scene moved from the French court to Mantua, King François became the local duke, Triboulet became Rigoletto, and so on—the newly titled *Rigoletto* won its approval for performance from a censor who, by a crucial twist of fate, was an opera lover and an admirer of Verdi's work.

Though the play's political bent surely played its part in attracting Verdi's attention, it was *Le Roi s'amuse*'s emotional, psychological, and narrative power and the depth and inherent contradiction of Triboulet's character that most appealed to Verdi, an intensely intellectual and extremely well-read man for whom literature, poetry, and drama held as much significance as music. (The collection of authors on whose work he based his operas reads like a cross-section of history's great writers: Hugo, Byron, Schiller, Voltaire, Dumas, and most of all, Shakespeare, a formative influence and continual source of inspiration for Verdi, who claimed to have read and re-read the playwright's works since childhood.) It is therefore hard to overestimate the composer's level of admiration for Hugo's play, which he described in a letter to Piave as "one of the greatest creations of modern theatre. The story is great, immense, and includes a character who is one of the greatest creations that the theatres of all nations and all times will boast... Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare."

The genius of Verdi's transformation of Hugo's spoken drama into *Rigoletto*—and indeed of the stylistic step forward represented by this first work of Verdi's second creative period—is the closeness of music, text, and action. Form and content are streamlined and treated fluidly, so that neither the drama nor the music is distorted to fit the other, but rather the two are woven into a single organic whole. In the case of *Rigoletto*, this makes for a grim, vicious, and powerfully effective work, an opera noir in which the tension never flags and no respite is provided from the disturbing arc of the plot. Verdi and Piave have stripped Hugo's story and characters down to their bare essentials. From the opening scene—in which Monterone spits out his curse at a man so depraved that he would taunt an anguished father unable to protect his daughter—to the final scenes—in which Rigoletto himself tastes the impotence and torment of that very same situation and worse—not a single word of text or note of music is wasted. This is not a cathartic tragedy or a tale of noble sacrifice. There are no admirable characters here, no moral lesson, no redemption, and no silver lining. There is only a merciless depiction of the dark side of society and the price that must be paid for it.

With his music, Verdi takes all of this and makes it human, creating the psychological and emotional dimension that is mostly absent from the minimalist, clear-eyed text. Largely abandoning the predictable alternating structure of recitative, aria, and ensemble numbers, Verdi instead drives constantly forward

in an arioso-like mixture of the three, relying mostly on passages for two or more characters that flow seamlessly together. Trimming the fat of virtuoso vocal display, he strives for naturalness of expression. Consequently, what solo numbers there are must be handled by the performers with tasteful understatement to avoid seeming out of place and stalling the crucial momentum. As Verdi himself explained in response to a request for an additional showpiece aria for the soprano who first sang Gilda, “any new number would be superfluous... [and] would make no effect without the right time and place.... My intention was that *Rigoletto* should be one long series of duets, without arias and finales, because that is how I felt it. If anyone replies, ‘But you could have done this or that or the other,’ I can only say ‘That may be, but I did not know how to do any better.’” It comes as no surprise, therefore, that *Rigoletto*’s finest moment is the ingenious Act III quartet, combining the work’s emotional high point with its musical one and achieving a level of perfection matched by few other passages in all of opera. Perhaps the easiest way to put the effect of this compositional strategy in context is to think of it as a fictional blend of Wagner and Mozart—it looks forward to the former’s ideal of endless melody while simultaneously looking back toward Mozart’s breathless pacing.

One is also constantly amazed by Verdi’s inventiveness and ability to unmistakably conjure his desired emotions and impressions while leaving them unspoken. Through evocative scoring (the chorus’s imitation of wind during the storm in Act III), thematic manipulation (the curse leitmotif that is established in the opera’s very first measures and lurks beneath each of its character’s realizations of their fate), and pitch-perfect character painting (the very nature of each personality revealed by their music), Verdi’s score communicates subliminally with the listener. In Act II, for example, “while [Rigoletto] sings and moves us to pity,” musicologist Vincent Godefroy observes, “the orchestra is commenting on his daughter’s experience behind the locked door. ... Concentrate on the orchestra and you will hear the rape of Gilda.” Of similar genius is the treatment of “La donna è mobile,” by far the most frequently excerpted bit of *Rigoletto*. So carefree and charmingly tongue-in-cheek on its own, Verdi’s jaunty little tune is positively slimy in context, and when its distant strains return in the final scene to transform Rigoletto’s bloodthirsty gloating to horrible dread, the effect is viscerally sickening. These musical masterstrokes, resonating with the listener on a subconscious and primal level, ensure that even in our desensitized modern world, *Rigoletto* will never lose its power to send audiences home feeling profoundly impressed, mentally unsettled, and most likely a bit queasy.

—Jay Goodwin

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Frieda Hempel as Adina in Donizetti's
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Anna Nerebko as Adina, 2012-13 season
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The Cast and Creative Team



Michele Mariotti

CONDUCTOR (PESARO, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* (debut) and *Rigoletto* at the Met, *La Traviata* at Naples's Teatro San Carlo, and *La Donna del Lago* at Covent Garden.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include *La Traviata* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Bologna, *Norma* at Turin's Teatro Regio, *Matilde di Shabran* at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival, and his United States symphonic debut with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra. He made his operatic conducting debut in 2005 leading *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Salerno's Teatro Verdi and has since led *Simon Boccanegra*, *I Puritani*, Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra*, and Donizetti's *Don Gregorio* in Bologna, *Rigoletto* in Lima, *Nabucco* in Reggio Emilia, and numerous concerts with the Toscanini Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana, Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale, and the National Orchestra of the Ukraine. He was appointed principal conductor of Bologna's Teatro Comunale in 2007.



Michael Mayer

DIRECTOR (BETHESDA, MARYLAND)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* for his debut at the Met.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He was most recently represented on Broadway with *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* and *American Idiot* (for which he won a Drama Desk Award). He received a 2007 Tony Award, as well as Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards, for his production of *Spring Awakening*, which also played in London, Vienna, Tokyo, and Seoul. Other Broadway credits include *Everyday Rapture*; *Side Man* (Tony Award/Best Play); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Tony Award/Best Musical); *A View from the Bridge* (Tony Award/Best Revival); *Uncle Vanya*; *'night Mother*; *After the Fall*; *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; and *Triumph of Love*. Off-Broadway credits include *The Illusion*, *Our House*, *10 Million Miles*, *Antigone in New York*, *Baby Angel*, *The Credeaux Canvas*, and *Stupid Kids*. Regional work includes plays at Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, McCarter Theatre, Center Stage, and Yale Rep. He also directed the films *A Home at the End of the World* and *Flicka*, and directed pilot shows for NBC's *Do No Harm* and *Smash*.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Christine Jones

SET DESIGNER (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* for her debut at the Met and *Hands on a Hardbody* on Broadway.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Broadway credits include: *Spring Awakening*, *American Idiot* (Tony Award), *The Green Bird*, *Everyday Rapture*, and a revival of *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*. Other credits include *Coraline*, adapted from Neil Gaiman's book, with music by Stephin Merritt; *The Book of Longing*, music by Philip Glass, based on poems by Leonard Cohen (Lincoln Center Festival); *The Onion Cellar*, which she co-created with director Marcus Stern and The Dresden Dolls, and for which she won Boston's Elliot Norton Award; *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare in the Park); *Nocturne* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Burn This* (Signature Theatre); *Debbie Does Dallas* (Jane Street Theatre); and *True Love*. Opera credits include *The Elephant Man* (Minnesota Opera), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (New York City Opera), and *Giulio Cesare* (Houston Grand Opera). She is Artistic Director of Theatre for One and is a member of the faculty of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.



Susan Hilferty

COSTUME DESIGNER (ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* for her debut at the Met and *Hands on a Hardbody* on Broadway.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has designed over 300 productions in the U.S. from Broadway to the Bay Area, and internationally, including in London, Japan, Australia, Germany, and South Africa. Opera designs include *Manon* for the Los Angeles Opera and Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, *Kát'a Kabanová* for St. Louis Opera, and *La Finta Giardiniera* for Washington National Opera and Glimmerglass Opera. Stage designs include *Wicked* (Tony, Outer Critics Circle, and Drama Desk awards; Olivier nomination); *Spring Awakening* (Tony nomination); *Annie*; August Wilson's *Jitney*; *Assassins*; and *Into the Woods* (Tony and Drama Desk nominations, Hewes Award). She works with such well-known directors as Athol Fugard (set/costume designer and often as co-director since 1980), Joe Mantello, James Lapine, Walter Bobbie, Robert Falls, Tony Kushner, Robert Woodruff, JoAnne Akalaitis, Bartlett Sher, Mark Lamos, Frank Galati, Des McAnuff, Laurie Anderson, Richard Nelson, and the late Garland Wright. She also designs for film and dance and chairs the Department of Design at NYU/Tisch.



Kevin Adams

LIGHTING DESIGNER (PANHANDLE, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* for his debut at the Met, *Hands on a Hardbody* on Broadway, *Blue Man Group* in Las Vegas and São Paulo, U.S. tours of *American Idiot* and *Hair*, and Korean and Japanese tours of *Next to Normal*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He received Tony Awards for his work on *Spring Awakening*, *American Idiot*, and *The 39 Steps*, and other Broadway productions include *Next to Normal*, *Hair*, *Passing Strange*, *Everyday Rapture*, *Man and Boy*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *Take Me Out*, as well as solo shows for John Leguizamo and Eve Ensler. Off-Broadway includes *The Scottsboro Boys*, *Carrie*, *Rent*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, and new works by Tony Kushner, Edward Albee, Terrence McNally, Christopher Durang, Neil Simon, Richard Greenberg, Eric Bogosian, and Anna Deveare Smith. He has also designed for Glimmerglass Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Washington National Opera, Bard Summerscape, and the HBO film *Mildred Pierce*. He is the recipient of numerous honors including the Obie, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards.



Steven Hoggett

CHOREOGRAPHER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* for his debut at the Met and Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* for American Repertory Theater.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Broadway work includes: *Once*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Lortel Award/ Outstanding Choreography), and *American Idiot*. He was co-founder and co-artistic director of Frantic Assembly, where he has choreographed *Little Dogs* (National Theatre Wales), *Lovesong*, *Beautiful Burnout*, *Stockholm*, and *Othello* (TMA Award/Best Director). His work with London's National Theatre includes *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage*; *The Hothouse*; and *Market Boy*. With the National Theatre of Scotland he has created choreography for *Black Watch* (Olivier Award/Best Theatre Choreographer), *Hunter*, *365*, *The Bacchae*, and *Wolves in the Walls*. Other recent work includes *Dr Dee* (Covent Garden & Manchester International Festival), *Dalston Songs* (ROH2) for the Helen Chadwick Company, and *Frankenstein* for Derngate Theatre. He is co-writer of *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* with Scott Graham and has also provided choreography for Prada, Radio One, Selfridges, the "Harmonious Dance" television commercial for Orange, and as music promos for artists including Goldfrapp, Calvin Harris, Wiley, Bat for Lashes, and Franz Ferdinand.

Rigoletto

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Diana Damrau

SOPRANO (GÜNZBURG, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Gilda in *Rigoletto* and Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Met, Violetta at the Zurich Opera, and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in concert with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Adèle in *Le Comte Ory*, Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*, Pamina and the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (debut, 2005), Aithra in *Die Ägyptische Helena*, and Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the three heroines in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Munich Opera Festival, the title role of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* in Barcelona, Philine in Thomas's *Mignon* in Geneva, and Lucia at the Vienna State Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin. She has also sung Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and Manon at the Vienna State Opera, Marie in San Francisco, Konstanze at the Salzburg Festival and in Munich and Barcelona, Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Gilda in Munich, and the Queen of the Night in Salzburg and at Covent Garden.



Oksana Volkova

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MINSK, BELARUS)

THIS SEASON Maddalena in *Rigoletto* for her Met debut, Lyubasha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride* and Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, and the title role of *Carmen* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, Buenos Aires's Teatro Colón, and the Latvian National Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has recently sung Laura in *La Gioconda* at Palermo's Teatro Massimo, Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* in Nice, and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Naples's Teatro San Carlo. She is currently a member of the Bolshoi Theatre and, in 2010, sang Olga on tour with that company at Covent Garden and Madrid's Teatro Real.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Piotr Beczala

TENOR (CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE, POLAND)

THIS SEASON The Duke in *Rigoletto* and the title role of *Faust* at the Met, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at La Scala and the Vienna State Opera, the Prince in *Rusalka* in Warsaw, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* with the Vienna State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Des Grieux in *Manon*, Rodolfo, Roméo, Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, and the Duke (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, the Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Vaudémont in *Iolanta*, and the Prince at the Salzburg Festival, the Duke at Covent Garden and La Scala, Alfredo in Munich and Berlin, and Werther in Frankfurt and Munich. He has also sung Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, Jeník in *The Bartered Bride* with the Paris Opera and in Zurich, Rodolfo in Amsterdam, Vaudémont in Vienna and Moscow, and Lenski at Paris's Bastille Opera and for his 2004 United States debut with the San Francisco Opera.



Štefan Kocán

BASS (TRNAVA, SLOVAKIA)

THIS SEASON Ramfis in *Aida* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* at the Met, the title role of *Attila* in Santiago, Banquo in *Macbeth* at La Scala, and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES The Commendatore, the King in *Aida* (debut, 2009), Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, and the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo* (with the company on tour in Japan).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has recently sung Ramfis with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with La Scala and at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, and the Commendatore with Los Angeles Opera. He has also sung Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, the Grand Inquisitor, and Banquo at the Vienna State Opera, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Cologne, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* in Graz, and Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* in Tokyo.



Željko Lučić

BARITONE (ZRENJANIN, SERBIA & MONTENEGRO)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Rigoletto* at the Met, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and La Scala, the title roles of *Simon Boccanegra* and *Macbeth* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at La Scala.

MET APPEARANCES Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Michele in *Il Tabarro*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Barnaba in *La Gioconda* (debut, 2006), and the title roles of *Macbeth* and *Nabucco*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Scarpia in *Tosca* in Frankfurt and at the Vienna State Opera, Macbeth at the Salzburg Festival and with the Bavarian State Opera, Miller in *Luisa Miller* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Germont at the Vienna State Opera and Covent Garden, Rigoletto in Dresden and Madrid, Don Carlo in *Ernani* with the San Francisco Opera and the Bavarian State Opera, Nabucco with the Dallas Opera and Vienna State Opera, Iago in *Otello* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Count di Luna and Rigoletto with the Paris Opera, and Renat, Simon Boccanegra, Michele, and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* in Frankfurt.

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Ben Finane, Editor-in-Chief of *Listen: Life with Classical Music*, shares excerpts from *Listen* magazine's interviews with distinguished artists. Visit ListenMusicMag.com.

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Pierre Boulez, composer and leader of the avant-garde who, for better or worse, molded the shape of music that was to come; former music director of the New York Philharmonic; and conductor emeritus of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, remains the greatest living interpreter of 20th-century music and a man of his convictions.

Ben Finane: When playing Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, what are your musical priorities?

Pierre Boulez: Exactly the same. First, you have to clarify the texture to see what is important, what is less important, how the form of the work goes, to be very clear with yourself about it, and then to understand the style—the style of Mozart is not the style of Wagner, and so forth. To understand that music is not just a line, a historical line—there are conjunctions between composers. And what's interesting, if you make programs, is to make programs that make sense and are not a simple accumulation of pieces, one after another, which have absolutely no relationship. I don't say that you must absolutely make something too rigid—certainly not—but sometimes [you need] a contrast, a contrary conjunction between the works. I find that this is also the conductor's responsibility, that he shows that contemporary music is not something totally separate from the rest, but in continuity with what comes before, a continuity which is not always apparent, but if you think more, you see this type of continuous relationship.

BF: Are there 20th-century works that you believe will remain in the repertoire and others that will not stick around?

PB: I must say that when I was young and made my choices as to what I considered important music of the 20th century, I would make the same choices now. I ask myself, "If this composer hadn't existed, would the musical language be the same?" ... Other composers, maybe they were composing some interesting things, but not so influential in the definition of the musical language of the 20th century. And for me, that's the criterion, the litmus test. But that's my test. I know that I disagree with a lot of people on Shostakovich, whom I don't find terribly important. I don't find him more important than Hindemith or Holliger, where you take the heritage of the Symphony but you don't bring anything which changes. And I find that terribly important, the language as an evolution: you are part of this evolution or not. For me that's really the thing that's yes or no.