

RICHARD STRAUSS

DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION
Herbert Wernicke

SET, COSTUME, AND LIGHTING
DESIGNER
Herbert Wernicke

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
J. Knighten Smit

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Wednesday, December 4, 2024
7:00–11:10PM

The production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was made possible by a generous gift from a **Managing Director and his wife**

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from Robert L. Turner

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2024-25 SEASON

The 67th Metropolitan Opera performance of
RICHARD STRAUSS'S

**DIE FRAU OHNE
SCHATTEN**

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

NURSE
Nina Stemme

SPIRIT MESSENGER
Ryan Speedo Green*

EMPEROR
Russell Thomas*

EMPRESS
Elza van den Heever

FALCON
Jessica Fasel*

HUNCHBACKED BROTHER
Thomas Capobianco

ONE-EYED BROTHER
Aleksy Bogdanov

ONE-ARMED BROTHER
Scott Conner

DYER'S WIFE
Lise Lindstrom

Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 7:00-11:10PM

BARAK, THE DYER

Michael Volle

SERVANTS

Susanne Burgess

Kathryn Henry

Hannah Ludwig

VOICE OF A YOUNG MAN

Ryan Capozzo

VOICES OF THE UNBORN

Meryl Dominguez

Megan Esther Grey*

Hannah Jones**

Leia Lensing

Marielle Murphy

Erin Wagner

WATCHMEN

Jeongcheol Cha

Paul Corona

Brian Major

ALTO VOICE

Ronnita Miller

GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD

Laura Wilde

FALCON MIME

Scott Weber

YOUNG MAN MIME

Alexander Ríos

VIOLIN SOLO

David Chan

CELLO SOLO

Rafael Figueroa

* Graduate of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

** Member of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 7:00–11:10PM

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Musical Preparation Caren Levine,* Bradley Moore,*
Jonathan C. Kelly, Nimrod David Pfeffer,* and
Adam Nielsen

Assistant Stage Directors Dylan Evans and Gina Lapinski

Assistant to the Set Designer Michael Veits

Assistant to the Costume Designer Eva-Mareike Uhlig

Stage Band Conductor Joseph Lawson

Children's Chorus Director Anthony Piccolo

German Diction Coach Marianne Barrett

Prompter Caren Levine*

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Synopsis

The world of the invisible spirit god Keikobad is mysterious and unfathomable and encompasses the past, the present, and the hereafter.

Act I

For the 12th time in one year, a messenger from Keikobad demands information from the Empress's Nurse on the condition of the Empress, who is the daughter of Keikobad and a mortal woman. As a half-spirit, she can neither bear children nor cast a shadow. If she seeks closeness to humans, her father's empire will be threatened. The Empress must acquire a shadow within three days, or she will have to return to her father, and her husband, the Emperor, will be turned into stone. Coming from his wife's chamber, the Emperor tells the Nurse of his plans to go hunting. He reminisces about how he won the Empress: While he was hunting a white gazelle that cast no shadow, the wings of his red hunting falcon blinded the animal. When she fell and he attacked her with a spear, the gazelle changed into a woman. The falcon was wounded and lost. The Empress awakens and mourns the loss of a talisman that gave her the power of transformation. She longs for the body of the white gazelle and for the wings of a bird. The falcon returns, and the Empress detects tears in his eyes. He tells her that she cannot cast a shadow and that the Emperor must turn to stone. Frightened, the Empress begs the Nurse for help. Together, they venture into the abyss of the human world.

In the shabby world of the dyer Barak and his Wife, his three brothers fight over a small piece of bread. Barak comes home and sends away his quarreling brothers. His Wife has lost her patience, but Barak's pity deflects her annoyance. He repeats his wish to have children, but she closes her mind to his entreaties and continues her defensive nagging. Barak, loaded with his goods, leaves the house. Disguised as servants, the Nurse and the Empress appear on the staircase connecting the Empress's realm with the human world. In Barak's home, his frightened Wife is suspicious about the Nurse's flattery. The Empress is enthralled with the human woman. The Nurse awakens the Wife's curiosity with a remark about a secret and entices her to make a bargain for the shadow that she, as a human, can cast. She tempts the hesitating woman with jewelry and transforms her into a princess. Barak's Wife admires herself in the mirror and succumbs to the magic when the Apparition of a Young Man appears. When the Empress urgently questions her about the bargain for the shadow, the Young Man vanishes. As the Wife is about to conclude the agreement, she hears Barak returning. She feels guilty because she has not prepared her husband's evening meal. The Nurse and the Empress promise to return for the next three days. Left alone, Barak's Wife is alarmed by the sound of invisible children's voices. She imagines that they are reproaching her as a cold-hearted mother. Barak returns. The Wife keeps her promise to the Nurse of denying herself to her husband as the two go off to separate beds. The night Watchmen's call extols the glories of marriage and parenting.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:05PM)

Act II

The next morning, once Barak has left, the Nurse calls again upon the Apparition of a Young Man. Barak's Wife believes she hates her husband and thinks it would be easy to deceive him. When Barak returns, he interrupts the encounter between the woman and the Young Man. For the first time, the Empress shows her compassion for the dyer and her doubts about the machinations of the Nurse. Barak is accompanied by his brothers and a throng of beggar children. He generously invites the children and the people from the street to dine at his house, but his Wife refuses all food.

Searching for the Empress, the Emperor roams through the dreary forest and finds his red falcon, who guides him to her house. He finds the house empty. The Emperor's suspicions flare up, and he hides and watches the furtive return of the Nurse and the Empress. The Emperor erupts with jealousy and wants to kill his wife. He embarks on a path of trial and suffering with the falcon as his guide.

Barak is working, and his Wife and the Nurse impatiently wait for him to depart. He is tired and wants a drink. The Nurse drugs his drink, and he falls asleep. Again, the Nurse summons the Apparition of a Young Man. The Dyer's Wife is at first reluctant, but finally, she approaches the Apparition. At the last moment, she becomes aware of her guilt, recoils, and calls out to Barak for help, awakening the drugged man, who looks around bewildered. The gloating Nurse makes the Apparition of a Young Man vanish. Barak's Wife believes herself free and leaves, accompanied by the Nurse. The Empress is filled with compassion and affection for Barak.

The Empress is entwined in the Nurse's evil game. She is increasingly attracted to the human world, while the demonic Nurse detests anything human. The Empress hears Barak's soul speak to her in a nightmarish vision. His essence moves her. She feels guilty because, for her benefit, he will be deprived of his life's happiness. She senses that everything human is dying under her touch. The call of the falcon echoes in her. In a dream, she sees herself in the greatest torment and anguish, and her husband already turned to stone. She feels for Barak. She cannot help the one, and she is bringing doom to the other. Only her death seems to be a solution.

The third night has fallen. The Nurse fears that she has aroused Keikobad's anger with her wicked intrigue. The demonic evil drives her on her path to perdition. The Empress has matured through her insights. She wants to stay among the humans. The Dyer's Wife pounces on Barak with false confessions of her own unfaithfulness. Barak and his brothers discern that the woman is no longer the same: She has sold her soul, her shadow. Angered, the dyer wants to kill her, but his brothers restrain him.

The Nurse encourages the Empress to steal the ownerless shadow, but the Empress refuses to commit the robbery. Her newly acquired human emotion, compassion, drives her to self-sacrifice. The pact is foiled. The deal has failed. The Nurse leads the Empress back to the spirit world. Barak and his Wife remain behind, bewildered.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:35PM)

Act III

Later that night, Barak and his Wife find themselves mired in a deep emotional conflict. They must pass the last great test separated from each other. They now realize the inseparability of their love. A Voice shows them the steps that will lead them upward to freedom from this labyrinth of guilt, despair, and unfulfilled longing.

A boat without a pilot approaches. It brings the Empress and the Nurse to the gates of the spirit world. The Empress remembers the mysterious gate from her dream—she recognizes the pre-ordained path and parts forever from the Nurse, who desperately attempts to hold her back. The Empress is admitted through the gate and enters the spirit world. The Nurse is damned and expelled from the spirit life. The boat carries her back to the human world as Barak and his Wife appear, seeking one another.

The Empress wants to submit to her father's judgment. On her way to him, she happens upon a body of gleaming golden water. The Guardian of the Threshold extols Barak's Wife's shadow and exhorts the Empress to drink from the water of life. Guilt-ridden, the Empress recalls her attempt at defrauding Barak and retreats from the beckoning water. The Empress continues searching for her invisible father.

When the hall opens, the Emperor is visible, rigid and stony. Only his eyes seem to live. The Empress shrinks back in horror. Once again, the Guardian of the Threshold calls out to encourage her to accept Barak's Wife's shadow and to drink of the water. After a harrowing inner fight, the Empress refuses. With this, she has won. Keikobad pronounces his verdict: The Emperor is released from his suffering.

Barak finds his Wife. Both rapturous couples are reunited. The power of self-sacrificing love, the awareness of the responsibility toward the present and the future of humanity, and the willingness to suffer and even to face death have helped them pass the tests.

—Herbert Wernicke

Richard Strauss

Die Frau ohne Schatten

Premiere: Staatsoper, Vienna, 1919

The fourth collaboration of Richard Strauss and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal was in many ways their most ambitious: a heavily symbolic morality tale about love and marriage that unfolds in a fairy-tale world of multiple dimensions, from the gritty and earthy to the ethereal. The authors saw their work as a thematic heir to Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, but the two operas—separated by 130 years of music history—present radically different profiles. *Die Frau ohne Schatten* ("The Woman Without a Shadow") is a highly poetic fantasy replete with the psychoanalytical asides typical of the Viennese milieu in which it was created. Its five lead roles are daunting even by Strauss's demanding standards, while the orchestral requirements and staging challenges alone assure this opera a unique spot in the repertory. The story concerns two couples: the Emperor and Empress—he a mortal human, she the daughter of the spirit god Keikobad—and Barak the Dyer (the only character who has a name), a poor but decent man, and his dissatisfied Wife. Between them stands the Empress's Nurse, a diabolical woman of the spirit world who hates anything human. After a year of marriage, the Empress is still without a shadow—Hofmannsthal's symbol for motherhood. If she does not acquire one within three days, she will return to her father, and the Emperor will be turned to stone. In order to prevent this, the Nurse plots to steal a shadow from the Dyer's Wife, and the Empress must confront the implications of her choices and the challenge of becoming a complete human being. Strauss and Hofmannsthal's creation of such a grand tale of husbands, wives, and children was informed by the trauma of World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. The resulting opera is unique: a colossal structure of lofty fantasy that glorifies the simple pleasures of family life and love over exotic illusions of happiness.

The Creators

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, *Salome* (1905) caused a theatrical sensation, and the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to the stage. His next opera, *Elektra* (1909), was his first collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), a partnership that became one of the most remarkable in theater history. Hofmannsthal emerged as an author and poet within the fervent intellectual atmosphere of Vienna at the turn of the last century. The two artists' personalities were very different—Hofmannsthal enjoyed the world of abstract ideas, while Strauss was famously simple in his tastes—which makes their collaboration all the more remarkable.

The Setting

The opera takes place in the mythical Empire of the South Eastern Islands. The story moves between the humble dwelling of the Dyer and his Wife, in and around the palace of the Emperor and the Empress, in the forest, and in a grotto beneath the realm of the spirit god Keikobad.

The Music

Strauss's score calls for extraordinarily large musical forces, including an onstage orchestra of winds and brass (plus thunder machine and organ), in addition to a large pit orchestra with such augmentations as glass harmonica, two celestas, and an extravagant percussion section that features a slapstick, castanets, and Chinese gongs. The opera begins without a prelude; orchestral interludes throughout the three acts convincingly facilitate the transitions between the levels of existence. The vocal writing is remarkable, including such unusual touches as the six female voices that represent the Dyer and his Wife's unborn children. The Emperor's heroic solo scene (Act II, Scene 2) is a notable and rare example of Strauss's extended writing for tenor. All five lead roles require great strength, stamina, and musicality: Beyond penetrating the dense orchestration, the singers are also expected to produce elegant and even delicate passages (the Empress's entrance aria includes coloratura and trills). The final moments of Act I offer a good example of some of Strauss's surprising musical effects: While much of the opera's otherworldly music is assigned to the spirit world, one of the score's most ravishing sequences is sung by three offstage baritones who wander through the dirty town as Watchmen, urging husbands and wives to love and cherish each other throughout the dark hours.

Met History

The Met premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was a memorable event: a spectacular staging directed and designed by Nathaniel Merrill and Robert O'Hearn, unveiled on October 2, 1966, as the fourth of nine new productions during the company's inaugural season at Lincoln Center. Karl Böhm conducted a cast led by Leonie Rysanek, Christa Ludwig, Irene Dalis, James King, and Walter Berry in his Met debut. Other artists who appeared in this production include Inge Borkh, Helga Dernesch, and Bernd Weikl. Erich Leinsdorf led five memorable performances in 1981 with singers including Eva Marton, Mignon Dunn, and Birgit Nilsson in her final staged Met performance. The current production by Herbert Wernicke premiered in 2001, with Christian Thielemann conducting Deborah Voigt, Gabriele Schnaut, Reinhild Runkel, Thomas Moser, and Wolfgang Brendel. It was revived in the 2003–04 and 2013–14 seasons.

Program Note

After the sensationally successful *Salome* (1905), Richard Strauss wanted to write "a new *Figaro*" and then "a new *Die Zauberflöte*." But before his *Figaro* material could be found, he saw Hugo von Hofmannsthal's play *Elektra*, set it to music, and thereby inaugurated one of the most celebrated librettist-composer partnerships of operatic history. Hofmannsthal gave Strauss the material for his "new *Figaro*" in the form of *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), and the ink was scarcely dry on its pages when plans for another project were being discussed. Hofmannsthal proposed *Das Steinerne Herz*, about a poor charcoal burner who achieves power at the price of a heart turned to stone; but then, in March 1911, he suggested two other subjects: a chamber opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*, mingling commedia dell'arte with opera seria, and "Something which fascinates me very much... a magic fairy tale with two men confronting two women, and for one of the women your wife might well, in all discretion, be taken as a model... anyway, she is a bizarre woman with a very beautiful soul, au fond—strange, moody, domineering, and yet at the same time likable. She would in fact be the principal character, and the whole thing would be a many-colored spectacle with palace and hut, priests, boats, torches, tunnels through rock, choruses, children ... It stands in the same relationship to *Die Zauberflöte* that *Der Rosenkavalier* does to *Figaro*."

Strauss leapt at it, with even more alacrity than Hofmannsthal liked. Hofmannsthal replied: "With so fine a subject as *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, the gift of a happy hour, with a subject so fit to become the vehicle of beautiful poetry and beautiful music [note the order!], any haste and hurry would be a crime. Quietly, beyond the threshold of consciousness, the relationships between the characters must take shape." And so he directed Strauss toward *Ariadne*, which reached the stage in its first version in 1912, and in its second, with the operatic prologue, in 1916. By then, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* had been composed, but it was too elaborate, too scenically demanding an opera to be worthily produced in wartime. After the war, Strauss became director of the Vienna Opera, and it was there, on October 10, 1919, that *Die Frau ohne Schatten* had its premiere. Maria Jeritza was the Empress, Lotte Lehmann the Dyer's Wife, and Richard Mayr the Dyer.

Hofmannsthal and Strauss's collaboration has been likened to a Siamese cat working out a modus vivendi with a Labrador retriever. The poet was fastidious, elegant, dainty; the composer boisterous, robust, direct. Time and again in their letters we find Hofmannsthal flinching at Strauss's bluntness, and Strauss baffled by Hofmannsthal's highfalutin ideas (and then cutting through them with some stroke of theatrical common sense). Hofmannsthal persevered with the partnership because he knew that by Strauss's music his texts could be carried to greatness; Strauss persevered because he knew that Hofmannsthal's delicate, discriminatory intelligence supplied qualities he lacked. Moreover, it seems plain that through the early years of their collaboration, Hofmannsthal was grooming Strauss to be the composer of the "great German opera" he had in mind. He confessed that

Der Rosenkavalier had come out heavier than he had intended. *Ariadne* was in some sense set as an exercise in lightness, fancy, and grace: And when Strauss passed the test, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* could safely be entrusted to him.

That Hofmannsthal intended *Die Frau ohne Schatten* to be the great German opera of the 20th century—encompassing heroic decisions in extreme plights, larger-than-life characters and common people, actions both naturalistic and enchanted—is clear. He would draw on all the resources of the lyric theater through the ages, and do so with aristocratic deftness and grace. The central theme is transcendence; Hofmannsthal summed it up in a couplet from Goethe: “From the power that binds all beings, / The man sets himself free who overcomes himself.” The locale is the world of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The poet specifies “the South Eastern Islands,” but Persia and Arabia are there as well. Keikobad, who in the opera rules the spirit world, is the name of a 13th-century Turkish ruler. Another source is commedia dell’arte. In his very first jottings for the piece, Hofmannsthal wrote: “Fantastic opera. The one pair, Esmeralda and Harlequin. She wishes to remain beautiful forever. He is clumsy and good-natured. She gives her child away to a wicked fairy dressed as a fishwife (the shadow is thrown in as a bonus). The Empress, a fairy’s daughter, has lost her child. She is provided with the changeling. In the end, she gives it back to its true mother.”

There are, roughly speaking, three views about *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. One was that of Hofmannsthal, who wrote, ruefully, that “we have missed lightness of touch.” He meant that Strauss had missed it, had loaded that finely wrought text with music too richly and abundantly poured out. A second view noted in writer Romain Rolland’s diary, is that Hofmannsthal’s “obscurity of thought trails an icy shadow behind it. It weighs heavily on any passion. Strauss suffers from this collaboration.” By this reckoning, Hofmannsthal was Strauss’s evil genius, who in biographer and conductor Norman Del Mar’s words led him “into regions in which he was constitutionally unable to follow the poet at all” and “had the greatest difficulty in summoning up musical ideas of corresponding depth and originality.” Sometimes, Strauss himself felt this:

Characters like the Emperor and the Empress, and also the Nurse, can’t be filled with red corpuscles as a Marschallin, an Octavian, an Ochs were. No matter how I rack my brain—and I’m really toiling hard, sifting and sifting—my heart’s only half in it, and once the head has to do most of the work, you get a breath of academic chill (what my wife quite rightly calls “notespinning”), which no bellows can ever kindle into a real fire. Well, have now sketched out the whole ending of the opera ... and it has verve and a great upward sweep—but my wife finds it cold and misses the heart-touching flame-kindling melodic texture of the *Rosenkavalier* trio. ... Let’s decide that *Die Frau ohne Schatten* will be our last romantic opera.

Hofmannsthal concealed his dismay and tactfully thanked Strauss for “a good and frank letter.” He was reassuring: “In this third act, it is the spiritual element that offers

the solution, that soaring into the regions of light and harmony, the succession of fairy-tale pictures, the intervention of the children's voices—all these varied elements will not fail to engage the public, even if the music were to fall off (which I'm sure it won't)."

The third view of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is the one I share: that it is the most beautiful, the richest, and the greatest of Strauss's operas. The story proves complicated in the telling. It moves between the spirit world of Keikobad, the falcon, and the final scenes, and the earthly world of Barak, his wife, and his brothers. Somewhere between them is the plane inhabited by the Emperor and the shadowless Empress, a kind of temporary, detached existence in which spiritual capital is draining away and renewed sustenance can be drawn only from the world of men. The Empress's great decision, to give, not take, at last reconciles the two worlds. Beneath Hofmannsthal's elaborate imagery there lies a simple natural tale and a simple moral: One person's happiness cannot be bought at the price of another's. Strauss may have been led into symbolic mazes where he felt lost; yet, on one level, he decked the poet's most ambitious flights with music of exquisite grace, charm, and lyricism; and on another even more important level, he made warm and human what might otherwise have seemed artificial and contrived. As William Mann says in his book on Strauss, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* "is the most pretentious of all these Strauss–Hofmannsthal operas; it is perhaps the most pretentious in operatic history. And yet, it is possibly the most moving and beautiful of them all."

—Andrew Porter



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The Cast



Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Jeanine Tesori's *Grounded*, *Tosca*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, and *Salome* at the Met; concerts with the Met Orchestra and Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall; and concerts with the Orchestre Métropolitain, Philadelphia Orchestra, Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, and Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2009 debut conducting *Carmen*, he has led more than 200 performances of 24 operas, as well as numerous galas and concerts with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and on tour in Europe and Asia.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is in his sixth season as the Met's Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music Director and is Artistic Director of the company's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. He has served as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012 and became the orchestra's artistic director in 2023. He has served as artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000; honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director for ten seasons, since 2018; honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe since 2016; and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra between 2008 and 2014. He has won four Grammy Awards, of 13 nominations.



Ryan Speedo Green

BASS-BARITONE (SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA)

THIS SEASON The Spirit Messenger in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, and Queequeg in Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick* at the Met; a recital at Carnegie Hall; Wotan in *Die Walküre* at the Santa Fe Opera; and concerts with the Orchestre Métropolitain, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and at Florida State University.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2012 debut as the Mandarin in *Turandot*, he has sung nearly 150 performances of 15 roles, including Escamillo in *Carmen*, Charles and Uncle Paul in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Young Emile Griffith in Blanchard's *Champion*, Truffaldin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Jake in *Porgy and Bess*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Between 2014 and 2019, he was a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera. He has also appeared at the Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Paris Opera, Theater an der Wien, Washington National Opera, Palm Beach Opera, and Houston Grand Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and in 2021 and 2023, he received the Met's Beverly Sills Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



Lise Lindstrom

SOPRANO (SONORA, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON The Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met, Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle in concert with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the title role of *Elektra* in Verona, and Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* at the Atlanta Opera.

MET APPEARANCES The title role of *Turandot* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the title role of *Salome* and *Turandot* in Rome; Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Zurich; *Elektra* in Dresden, Karlsruhe, and at the Royal Danish Opera; *Salome* in Valencia; Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle at Opera Australia and in Dresden; and the Dyer's Wife in Cologne. She has also sung Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle in Mannheim and Hamburg; *Salome* at the Vienna State Opera, Opera Australia, and in concert with the Spanish National Orchestra; Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* in Leipzig; *Turandot* at Opera Australia, the Vienna State Opera, San Diego Opera, and in Barcelona; the Dyer's Wife in Hamburg and in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra; Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Naples; Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein; and *Elektra* at the Vienna State Opera.



Nina Stemme

SOPRANO (STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN)

THIS SEASON The Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met, the Kostelnička in *Jenůfa* at the Royal Swedish Opera and in concert with the Cleveland Orchestra, *Isolde* in *Tristan und Isolde* in concert with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, *Ortrud* in *Lohengrin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and concerts and recitals at the Royal Swedish Opera, Carnegie Hall, and in Zurich and Strasbourg.

MET APPEARANCES *Isolde*, *Senta* in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (debut, 2000), and the title roles of *Elektra*, *Turandot*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include *Isolde* in Palermo and at the Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Bavarian State Opera; *Elektra* in Baden-Baden, at Covent Garden, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Vienna State Opera, and in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic; *Kundry* in *Parsifal* at the Bavarian State Opera; the Kostelnička at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Ortrud* at the Paris Opera and Vienna State Opera; and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at San Francisco Opera and the Bavarian State Opera. She has also appeared at the Bayreuth Festival, La Scala, Glyndebourne Festival, and Salzburg Festival, among others.



Russell Thomas

TENOR (MIAMI, FLORIDA)

THIS SEASON The Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met, Florestan in *Fidelio* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, a recital at La Sierra University, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 at San Francisco Opera, Enée in *Les Troyens à Carthage* in concert at Seattle Opera, Don José in *Carmen* in concert with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the title role of *Tannhäuser* at Houston Grand Opera, and Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in concert at the Canadian Opera Company.

MET APPEARANCES The title role and the Royal Herald in *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005), Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Ismaele in *Nabucco*, Andres in *Wozzeck*, Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Uldino and Foresto in *Attila*, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, and the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has appeared at LA Opera, Dutch National Opera, Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, English National Opera, and Washington National Opera, among many others. Between 2021 and 2024, he served as artist-in-residence at LA Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



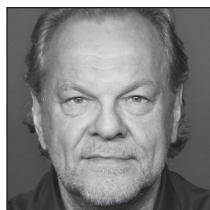
Elza van den Heever

SOPRANO (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

THIS SEASON The Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and the title role of *Salome* at the Met, a concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Leonore in *Fidelio* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at La Scala, a concert with the Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier, and Elettra in *Idomeneo* at San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the title role of *Rodelinda*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, Elettra, Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda* (debut, 2012), and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Julia in *La Vestale* at the Paris Opera, Sieglinde and the Empress in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Chrysothemis and the Empress in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Empress at the Vienna State Opera, and Senta at the Santa Fe Opera. She has also sung the title role of *Salome* and Chrysothemis at the Paris Opera, Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and the title role of *Suor Angelica* in Frankfurt, and Elsa in *Lohengrin* at Staatsoper Berlin. Between 2008 and 2013, she was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt.



Michael Volle

BARITONE (FREUDENSTADT, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met, the Narrator/Peasant in Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* and Wotan in the *Ring* cycle at La Scala, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Orchestre National de France, Mandryka in *Arabella* at the Vienna State Opera, Jochanaan in *Salome* in concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, Amfortas in *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, and recitals and concerts in Prague, Valencia, Vienna, and with the Madrid Symphony Orchestra and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES The title role of *Falstaff*, Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Wotan, Scarpia in *Tosca*, the Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and Mandryka (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the Dutchman in Dresden, Hamburg, and at the Bayreuth Festival, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* and Barak at the Bavarian State Opera; Danilo in *The Merry Widow* in Zurich and at Staatsoper Berlin; Wotan in Wiesbaden and at Staatsoper Berlin; Barak, Michele in *Il Tabarro*, and Hans Sachs at the Vienna State Opera; Falstaff in Florence; Wolfram von Eschenbach in *Tannhäuser* in Hamburg; and Jochanaan at La Scala.