

GIUSEPPE VERDI

# NABUCCO

CONDUCTOR  
Daniele Callegari

PRODUCTION  
Elijah Moshinsky

SET DESIGNER  
John Napier

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Andreane Neofitou

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Howard Harrison

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
J. Knighten Smit

MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

## Opera in four acts

Libretto by Temistocle Solera, based on the ballet *Nabuccodonosor* by Antonio Cortesi and the play *Nabuchodonosor* by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu

Saturday, October 14, 2023  
8:00–10:40PM

The production of *Nabucco* was made possible by a generous gift from **Bill Rollnick and Nancy Ellison Rollnick**

Major support was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Ezra K. Zilkha, Mercedes and Sid Bass, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. Montrone

Additional support was received from Gilbert S. Kahn and John J. Noffo Kahn, The Eleanor Naylor Dana Charitable Trust, and the National Endowment for the Arts

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from C. Graham Berwind, III

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

# The Metropolitan Opera

2023-24 SEASON

The 71st Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

## NABUCCO

CONDUCTOR  
Daniele Callegari

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

ZACCARIA  
Dmitry Belosselskiy

ISMAELE  
SeokJong Baek

FENENA  
Maria Barakova

ABIGAILLE  
Liudmyla Monastyrska

ANNA  
Brittany Olivia Logan\*\*

NABUCCO  
George Gagnidze

ABDALLO  
Scott Scully

HIGH PRIEST OF BAAL  
Le Bu\*\*

Tonight's performances of the roles of Abigaille and Ismaele are underwritten by the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Great Singers Fund.

Saturday, October 14, 2023, 8:00-10:40PM

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, John Keenan,**  
**Howard Watkins,\*** and **Joseph Lawson**  
Assistant Stage Director **Daniel Rigazzi**  
Assistants to the Set Designer **Sue Jenkinson DiAmico,**  
**Alan Bain,** and **Derek Norman**  
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Elise Napier**  
Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**  
Italian Diction Coach **Hemdi Kfir**  
Prompter **Donna Racik**  
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and  
painted by **Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
Costumes constructed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume**  
**Department** and **Eric Winterling, Inc.**  
Armor and helmets constructed by **Robert Allsopp and**  
**Associates** and **David Samuel Menkes Leatherwear**  
Footwear constructed by **Center Shoes**  
Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by  
**Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

**This production uses flame and lightning effects.**

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Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

\*\* Member of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

**Met Titles**

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press the red button once again. If you have questions, please ask an  
usher at intermission.

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# Synopsis

## Act I: *Jerusalem*

*Sixth century B.C.E.* Inside their temple, the Israelites are praying for help against Nabucco (Nebuchadnezzar), King of Babylon, who has attacked them and is vandalizing the city. Zaccaria, their high priest, reassures his people that the Lord will not forsake them. As the Israelites leave, Ismaele, nephew of the King of Jerusalem, is left alone with Nabucco's daughter Fenena, whom the Hebrews hold hostage. The two fell in love during Ismaele's imprisonment in Babylon, and Fenena helped him escape and followed him to Jerusalem. Suddenly, Fenena's half-sister, Abigaille, arrives with a band of disguised Babylonian soldiers. Abigaille, who is also in love with Ismaele, tells him that she can save his people if he will return her love, but he refuses. The Israelites rush back into the temple in a panic. When Nabucco enters with his warriors, Zaccaria confronts him, threatening to kill Fenena. Ismaele disarms the priest and delivers Fenena to her father. Nabucco orders the destruction of the temple.

## Act II: *The Impious One*

Nabucco has appointed Fenena regent while he is away leading his campaign. Abigaille, back in the royal palace in Babylon, has found a document saying that she is not the king's daughter but the child of slaves. Foreseeing a future in which Fenena and Ismaele will rule together over Babylon, she swears vengeance on Nabucco and Fenena. The high priest of Baal arrives with news that Fenena has betrayed them and freed the Israelite prisoners. He offers the throne to Abigaille and proposes to spread the rumor that Nabucco has fallen in battle.

Zaccaria hopes to persuade the Babylonians to give up their false idols. The Levites accuse Ismaele of treachery, but Zaccaria announces that he has been pardoned for saving a fellow Israelite—the newly converted Fenena. A messenger warns Fenena that the king is dead and her life is in danger. Before she can escape, the high priest of Baal arrives with Abigaille and the Babylonians, who proclaim Abigaille ruler. She is about to crown herself when, to the astonishment of all, Nabucco appears. He takes the crown from her and declares himself not only king but a god. At this, a thunderbolt strikes him down. Abigaille, triumphant, retrieves the crown for herself.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:15PM)

## Act III: *The Prophecy*

The Babylonians hail Abigaille as their ruler. The high priest urges her to have the Israelites killed, but before she can give the order, Nabucco appears in a state of half-madness. Alone with him, Abigaille tricks him into signing the death warrant for the captive Israelites. Fenena, she says, must also die. When Nabucco starts

to look for the document proving Abigail's ancestry, she produces it and tears it to pieces. He pleads in vain for Fenena's life.

On the banks of the Euphrates, the Israelites remember their lost homeland. Zaccaria tells them that they will overcome captivity and obliterate Babylon with God's help.

### **Act IV: *The Broken Idol***

Nabucco, locked in his apartments on Abigail's orders, watches Fenena and the Israelites being led to execution. He prays to the god of Israel for forgiveness, pledging to convert himself and his people. His sanity restored, he summons his soldiers to regain the throne and save his daughter.

The Israelites are about to be executed. Fenena prays to be received into heaven when Nabucco rushes in and stops the sacrifice. Nabucco announces his conversion and frees the Israelites, telling them to return to their native land and rebuild their temple. Israelites and Babylonians unite in praise of God. Abigail, full of remorse, has taken poison and dies, confessing her crimes and praying to the god of Israel to pardon her.

## **Bravo, Maestro!**

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

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



*Giuseppe Verdi*

# Nabucco

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*Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1842*

Verdi's third opera, a stirring drama about the fall of ancient Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Nabucco) and the Hebrews' subsequent exile in Babylon, was a spectacular hit at its premiere and catapulted the 28-year-old composer to international fame. The story of the premiere is famous: Following the death of his first wife and the disastrous reception of his previous work, the comedy *Un Giorno di Regno*, a disillusioned Verdi had decided to quit composing. He is said to have changed his mind when he saw Temistocle Solera's libretto for *Nabucco*. Inspired, he set to work and created an opera that would become a sensation and launch his career. The music and the composer himself were subsumed into a surge of patriotic fervor culminating in the foundation of the modern nation of Italy. Specifically, the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves in Act III ("Va, pensiero"), in which the Israelites express their longing for their homeland, was singled out as the nexus of Verdi's art and the country's aspirations for unity. It has come to stand for that exciting era in Italian history, the Risorgimento, or "Resurgence," and was long considered a sort of unofficial national anthem. Six decades later, Arturo Toscanini conducted the piece at Verdi's state funeral in Milan, leading the vast forces of orchestras and choruses from all over Italy. The stories surrounding the creation of *Nabucco* have sometimes obscured the musical qualities of the opera itself. It faded from the repertoire after its initial success and was little known for decades. But what struck audiences nearly 200 years ago has again impressed contemporary listeners as dynamic and exhilarating.

### *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. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Temistocle Solera (1815–78) was a professional librettist and, early in his career, a composer of moderate success. He also provided Verdi with the libretti for his first opera, *Oberto*, and the subsequent *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *Attila*.

### *The Setting*

Solera's libretto takes some liberties with biblical history, and all of the characters other than the title role are dramatic inventions. But the story as a whole stays close to events as they are related in Jewish scriptures: primarily Jeremiah, as well as 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Daniel, and the Psalms (the words to "Va, pensiero" are a paraphrase of Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon"). The first act takes place around the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC, with the remainder of the opera set in various locations in the city of Babylon, in present-day Iraq.

### *The Music*

The score, with its contrasts of the dynamic and the serene, provides an ideal frame for the personal and communal aspects of the drama. The chorus is assigned a major role, giving voice to a wide spectrum of feelings, from terror at the beginning to despair, faith, and finally bright hope. It also interacts superbly with the soloists: the Act II, Scene 2 ensemble, "S'appressan gl'istanti," is a masterful depiction of the counterpoint of private and public emotion. Abigail's wild character is sharply drawn from her first entrance: a recitative covering a range of two octaves, with a pair of high Cs in the subsequent trio. Rather than depicting a character that goes mad, as in so many other operas, Abigail's music reflects a personality that embodies madness through sheer malice. The opera contains a brief mad scene for the title character, but Verdi gives more emphasis to Nabucco's return to sanity in his poignant Act IV aria "Dio di Giuda." The aria is a prayer, one of a number in the opera: Fenena sings a serene one in Act IV, while the Hebrew priest Zaccaria has several of varying moods—including a rousing opening-scene solo and a stately one full of faith and grandeur in Act II, Scene 2. The supreme example of operatic prayer, of course, is found in "Va, pensiero." The simplicity of the choral melody and the unity of the vocal line (there is no harmonization until about halfway through) perfectly encapsulate the communal sentiment.

### *Met History*

*Nabucco* did not appear at the Met until a production by Günther Rennert opened the 1960–61 season. Thomas Schippers conducted Cornell MacNeil, Leonie Rysanek, and Cesare Siepi in the leading roles. Despite a popularity surge at the time in what were then the lesser-known works of Verdi (with *Macbeth* receiving its Met premiere in 1959 and *Ernani* and *Simon Boccanegra* returning in new productions around the same time), *Nabucco* again fell from the repertory for several more decades. The current production by Elijah Moshinsky is only the second in Met history. It was unveiled in 2001, with James Levine conducting a cast led by Juan Pons, Maria Guleghina, and Samuel Ramey.

ALSO ON STAGE



PAOLA KUDACKI/MET OPERA

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# DEAD MAN WALKING

METROPOLITAN OPERA PREMIERE

Jake Heggie's soul-stirring adaptation of Sister Helen Prejean's memoir about her ministry on death row has its company premiere, starring mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and bass-baritone Ryan McKinny. Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts a haunting new production by director Ivo van Hove.

**SEP** 26, 30mat **OCT** 3, 6, 8mat, 12, 15mat, 18, 21mat

Tickets from \$25 | [metopera.org](https://metopera.org)



## Program Note

*Nabucco* is known as Verdi's first hit, but it also is a great deal more than that. Often, early works by great composers—Wagner's *Symphony in C*, Puccini's *Le Villi*, Debussy's *Printemps*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*—offer glimpses of the artist to come, but *Nabucco* already has many of Verdi's signatures: soaring melody, monumental choruses, treacherous arias, and relentless narrative drive. The intimacy and musical unity of *Aida*, Verdi's later depiction of an enslaved people, are not yet present, but Verdi's mastery of choruses decidedly is, so much so that *Aida*'s choruses are modeled on those in *Nabucco*. The swaying, mysteriously inspirational "Va, pensiero" quickly became one of the most popular choruses in the repertory, so enduringly associated with Verdi that it was played at his funeral in 1901 with thousands of people singing.

*Nabucco* also announced Verdi's skill with instrumental color, even if his orchestration had not attained the individuality of his mature works: the sonorous trombones and exquisite oboe solo in the overture, the haunting wind-band funeral march for Fenena, the chamber-like string ensemble for Zaccaria's "Vieni, o Levita!," and the imposing brass chorale announcing the last scene of Act II are just a few examples. Elegant woodwind figurations, especially for flute, caress nearly every aria. The sizzling strings and rattling percussion have a Rossini-like frisson. In his early period, Verdi was as afflicted with Rossini-fever as anyone; indeed, Rossini's oratorio-like opera *Mosè in Egitto* from 1818 was one of his models for *Nabucco*. Verdi also knew when to make the orchestra vanish, as in the rapt a cappella chorus at the end of the opera, "Immenso Jehova."

How *Nabucco* came to exist is a story that sounds—and in some of its details, almost surely is—too good to be true. Verdi's second opera, *Un Giorno di Regno*, premiered at La Scala in 1840 and was such a miserable flop that Verdi, already traumatized over the deaths of his wife, Margherita, and their two children, vowed to abandon his musical career. Then, a chance street encounter with La Scala's impresario, Bartolomeo Merelli, changed his life. Merelli had a new libretto called *Nabucco* and convinced Verdi to peek at it. Troubled with insomnia, Verdi read it late at night, randomly opening the pages to the text of "Va, pensiero"—"Go, thoughts, on wings of gold." Like the thunderbolt in Act II of the opera, it struck him instantly: "*Nabucco* was racing though my head!" he wrote. "I could not sleep: I got up and read the libretto, not once, not twice, but three times, so that in the morning, you might say, I knew Solera's whole libretto from memory." Even so, Verdi's depression was so profound that he had to force himself to write the piece: "One day, one line; one day, another; now one note, now a phrase ... little by little, the opera was composed."

The libretto by Temistocle Solera—whose career included stints as circus performer, advisor to Queen Isabella of Spain, and personal courier for both Napoleon III and the Khedive of Egypt—is based loosely on the Old Testament

and primarily on *Nabuchodonosor*, a French play from 1836 that was the basis for an Italian pantomime ballet, the costumes and sets of which were reused by Merelli in *Nabucco* to save money. Solera had assisted Verdi with the libretto for his first opera, *Oberto*, and later wrote the libretti for *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *Attila*.

The instant success of *Nabucco*, performed 67 times in its debut year of 1842 alone, made Verdi a force to be reckoned with, both artistically and politically. The impact of *Nabucco* on its early audiences is hard to exaggerate. Still occupied by the Austrian army, the Milanese were deeply moved by the struggle for liberation at the heart of the story. It is easy to forget that opera was once intimately engaged with the causes and controversies of the day. *Nabucco's* narrative involves Babylonians and Hebrews, but the allegorical transfer to Austrians and Italians was not difficult to make. As Verdi biographer George Martin puts it, "Va, pensiero" was "the perfect expression of a people's longing for freedom." Verdi became indelibly associated with the Risorgimento movement and gradually became a political as well as musical hero.

The *Nabucco* commission went to Verdi only because German composer Otto Nicolai had turned down what he thought was excessively violent material. Verdi mitigated the grimness and raised the inspirational ante by creating a startling counterpoint between the violence of the narrative and the high spirits of the music, especially in the big choral numbers. Examples include the final scene in Act I and the opening of Act III, in which the destruction of the temple and the installation of a murderous ruler are set against some of Verdi's most scintillating numbers. Even the dark moment when Nabucco signs a death warrant for the Hebrews is given an ingratiating tune colored by bright woodwinds.

Also softening the harsh material is a surprise happy ending, accomplished mainly by having everyone on the Babylonian side convert to Judaism: first Fenena, then her father, and finally the villain, Abigaille—just in time, after poisoning herself. These conversions get the narrative out of the bind it finds itself in after a series of seemingly intractable betrayals and blasphemies: Ismaele and Fenena betray their respective religions by becoming lovers, and continue to do so through much of the opera; Abigaille imprisons her father, tries to murder her sister, and attempts to wipe out the Hebrews after promising to spare them. But it is Nabucco, suffering from intense hubris, who digs himself into the deepest hole, not only by acting like a god, but declaring he *is* a god—never a good idea, especially when God can smite you with lightning, which He immediately does to Nabucco by way of Verdi's chromatic bolt. Nabucco's decision to embrace Jehova and renounce the God of Baal not only restores his sanity after he has wandered mad, Lear-like, about the stage, but saves the Israelites and returns them to Judah, their homeland.

Converting to the Hebrew God brings musical rewards as well as political

ones. Nabucco finally gets to sing a proper aria, his deranged mind cured along with his scrambled melodic line. Fenena, after nearly being martyred, delivers a final aria of fitting heavenliness. And Abigaille, with a sensuous cello-harp underpinning, sings her most lyrical aria just before dying.

Verdi follows the rule practiced by dramatists from Shakespeare to Hitchcock: make the villain at least as compelling and complex as the hero, if not more so. Abigaille is an arch-villain who tries to steal her sister's lover, destroy her family, and wipe out an entire people, but her horrified discovery that she is a slave rather than a child of royalty creates an intense internal struggle matched by what Verdi gives her to sing—the most treacherous and virtuosic vocal passages in the opera. Her aria at the beginning of Act II moves compellingly from self-abnegation (“I’m worse than a slave”) toward a fierce resoluteness to attain the throne, vowing that royalty will someday take orders “from a humble slave.”

She also sings nostalgically about the past, recalling better days and a “lost enchantment,” creating an ironic parallel to the Hebrews she means to destroy. *Nabucco* is about redemption and conversion, but also about memory and the limits of nostalgia. “Va, pensiero,” a soulful plea to remember the homeland, is the first in a pair of dueling choruses. Immediately after its inspiring appearance, Zaccaria bursts in and demands that the Hebrews break out of their chains and look to the future, calling down a gruesome prophecy on Babylon replete with hyenas and serpents perching “upon skulls and bones.” Here, in “Oh, chi piange? ... Del futuro nel buio discerno,” the chorus rises to a crescendo as aggressive as “Va, pensiero” is gentle. Gentleness and militancy both play an integral part in the fight against hatred.

In its depiction of hate, oppression, and liberation, *Nabucco* gradually became known as the “Jewish opera,” an antidote to the anti-semitism of Wagner and Wagnerism. Verdi, of course, was not Jewish, but he was not tied to Catholicism either. Like Berlioz, Brahms, and Fauré, he was an agnostic (in 19th-century parlance, a “freethinker”) who wrote great religious music; his Requiem is as fervent as the hymns in *Nabucco*. We might recall T. S. Eliot’s statement that in literature, one should be able to feel what it is like to have a religious experience even if one is not religious, an insight that clearly holds true in music as well, for composers as well as audiences.

—Jack Sullivan

*A specialist in 19th- and 20th-century American literature, music, and film, Jack Sullivan has published six books and is chair of the English department at Rider University.*

# NEW PERSPECTIVE

The Met premiere of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* marks not only the start of the 2023–24 Met season but also the launch of the Neubauer Family Foundation New Works Initiative, a crucial funding effort in support of the Met's plan to bring 15 to 20 new operas to its stage over the next five seasons. It's just the latest contribution by Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer and Joseph Neubauer, who have underwritten some of the company's most consequential projects of the last 20 years, including the *Live in HD* cinema transmissions, Yannick Nézet-Séguin's musical leadership of the company, and the introduction of Sunday matinee performances.

For Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer, Opening Night of the 2021–22 season epitomized what the Met can and should be. That evening, she says, as Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* had its Met premiere, she looked around and saw the auditorium filled by an audience that looked more like New York than any she'd ever experienced: more




Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer  
and Joseph Neubauer

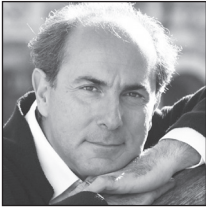
young people, more people of color, and many people, from all walks of life, who had never set foot in the Met before. What's more, everyone was engaged and looking to actively participate. "People had such a good time," she says, "and I saw so many spontaneous conversations erupt among strangers."

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

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

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

## The Cast



### Daniele Callegari

CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *Nabucco* at the Met, Beijing's Winland Christmas Gala Concert, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Israeli Opera, *Madama Butterfly* in Nice and Antibes, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Hamburg, and *Luisa Miller* in Naples.

**MET APPEARANCES** *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Gioconda* (debut, 2008).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is music director of the Opéra de Nice and served as chief conductor of the Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra between 2002 and 2008 and principal conductor of Wexford Festival Opera from 1998 to 2001. He has conducted productions at the Royal Swedish Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, La Scala, Dutch National Opera, Paris Opera, Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Vienna State Opera, and in Oviedo, Toulouse, Brussels, Dresden, Barcelona, Venice, Florence, Palermo, Bologna, Rome, Turin, Monte Carlo, and Tokyo. He has also led concerts with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Ireland's RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, and Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, among others.



### Maria Barakova

MEZZO-SOPRANO (KEMEROVO, RUSSIA)

**THIS SEASON** Fenena in *Nabucco* and Preziosilla in *La Forza de Destino* 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.



## Liudmyla Monastyrska

SOPRANO (KYIV, UKRAINE)

**THIS SEASON** Abigaille in *Nabucco* at the Met, Britten's *War Requiem* with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, and the title role of *Turandot* at Staatsoper Berlin.

**MET APPEARANCES** Abigaille, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and the title roles of *Turandot*, *Aida* (debut, 2012), and *Tosca*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Abigaille, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* at the Bavarian State Opera; Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* in Parma; *Aida* in Verona and Naples; and Abigaille at Covent Garden. She has also sung Elisabetta di Valois in *Don Carlo* and *Tosca* at the National Opera of Ukraine; Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at La Scala; *Tosca* in Rome, Barcelona, and at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Odabella in *Attila* in concert with the Munich Radio Orchestra; Abigaille at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, and in Hamburg; Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Covent Garden; Santuzza in concert with the NDR Radiophilharmonie; Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at Staatsoper Berlin; *Aida* at the National Opera of Ukraine and in Madrid; the title role of *Manon Lescaut* in Barcelona; and the title role of *Norma* at Houston Grand Opera.



## SeokJong Baek

TENOR (JEON-JU, SOUTH KOREA)

**THIS SEASON** Ismaele in *Nabucco* for his debut and Calàf in *Turandot* at the Met, Calàf in Naples, Verdi's *Requiem* with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Covent Garden, and concerts with the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Calàf in Prague; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Arizona Opera and in concert at the Tucson Desert Song Festival; and Radamès in *Aida*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Samson in *Samson et Dalila* at Covent Garden. He previously trained as a baritone and was an Adler Fellow and a member of the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, a former resident artist of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and a member of the Aspen Opera Center. Among his numerous accolades were first prize in the 2021 Vincerò Opera Competition, first prize in the Alan M. and Joan Taub Ades Vocal Competition, and third prize in the Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition, the last two in 2018.

## The Cast CONTINUED



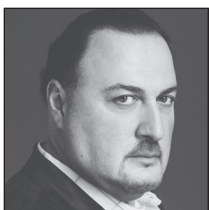
### Dmitry Belosselskiy

BASS (PAVLOHRAD, UKRAINE)

**THIS SEASON** Zaccaria in *Nabucco* and Verdi's *Requiem* at the Met, Filippo II in *Don Carlo* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Verdi's *Requiem* with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Orquesta Sinfónica de Barcelona y de Cataluña, and King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* in Palermo.

**MET APPEARANCES** Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Fafner in the *Ring* cycle, the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Wurm in *Luisa Miller*, Zaccaria (debut, 2011), de Silva in *Ernani*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is a guest soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre, where, between 2010 and 2013, he was a soloist. At the Bolshoi, his roles have included King Heinrich in *Lohengrin*, the title role of *Boris Godunov*, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Zaccaria, King René in *Iolanta*, and Malyuta Skuratov in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*. He has also appeared at the Bayreuth Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, Dutch National Opera, Salzburg Festival, La Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Madrid, Turin, Rome, Verona, Barcelona, Bologna, Florence, Frankfurt, and Orange, among others.



### George Gagnidze

BARITONE (TBILISI, GEORGIA)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Nabucco* at the Met and Savonlinna Opera Festival, the title role of *Rigoletto* at Atlanta Opera, and Scarpia in *Tosca* in Las Palmas.

**MET APPEARANCES** Amonasro in *Aida*, Scarpia, *Rigoletto* (debut, 2009), Michele in *Il Tabarro*, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, the title role of *Macbeth*, and Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *Rigoletto* in Hamburg and at the Dallas Opera; *Macbeth* in concert, Germont in *La Traviata*, and Scarpia in Naples; the High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* at Staatsoper Berlin; Scarpia in Barcelona; *Nabucco* in Madrid, Tbilisi, and Hamburg; Amonasro at LA Opera; *Macbeth* in Valencia and Las Palmas; and Germont at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. He has also sung Germont at Covent Garden, La Scala, and the Paris Opera; Iago in *Otello* at Washington National Opera and the Paris Opera; *Nabucco* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, and in Verona, Orange, and Palermo; Alfio in Naples; Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, Iago, Carlo Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*, and Scarpia at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Amonasro at La Scala and in Madrid; and the title role of *Falstaff* in Tokyo.