

GIACOMO PUCCINI

TURANDOT

CONDUCTOR

Marco Armiliato

PRODUCTION

Franco Zeffirelli

SET DESIGNER

Franco Zeffirelli

COSTUME DESIGNERS

Anna Anni

Dada Saligeri

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gil Wechsler

CHOREOGRAPHER

Chiang Ching

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR

J. Knighten Smit

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Adami and
Renato Simoni, based on the dramatic
fairy tale by Carlo Gozzi

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

7:30–10:50PM

The production of *Turandot* was made
possible by a generous gift from
Mrs. Donald D. Harrington

The revival of this production is made possible by a
gift from C. Graham Berwind, III and The Joseph
and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation

The Met is grateful to C. Graham Berwind, III for
sponsoring the refurbishment of the *Turandot* sets

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The Metropolitan Opera

2023–24 SEASON

The 365th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIACOMO PUCCINI'S

TURANDOT

CONDUCTOR
Marco Armiliato

TURANDOT
Elena Pankratova

CALÀF
SeokJong Baek

LIÙ
Olga Kulchynska

TIMUR
Soloman Howard

PING
Joo Won Kang

PANG
Tony Stevenson*

PONG
Andrew Stenson*

EMPEROR ALTOUM
Thomas Capobianco

MANDARIN
Jeongcheol Cha

HANDMAIDENS
Anne Nonnemacher
Mary K. Hughes

THREE MASKS
Elliott Reiland
Ilia Pankratov
Amir Levy

EXECUTIONER
Arthur Lazalde

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Jonathan Burwell

TEMPTRESSES
Natalia Alonso
Laura Katherine
Kaufman
Réka Echerer
Katherine Hozier

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Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 7:30–10:50PM



MARTY SOHLMET OPERA

A scene from
Puccini's *Turandot*

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Steven White, and
Katelan Tràn Terrell***

Assistant Stage Director **Christina Franklin**

Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**

Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**

Italian Diction Coach **Stefano Baldasseroni**

Prompter **Donna Racik**

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Costumes constructed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume
Department** and **Totalinter, Rome**

Headdresses executed by **Gaelle Allen**

Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by **Metropolitan
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Costumes based on original designs by **Anna Anni** and
Dada Saligeri for **La Scala, Milan**

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2023-24 SEASON



A scene from Puccini's *Turandot*

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Synopsis

Act I

Peking, in the mythic past. Outside the Imperial Palace, a mandarin reads an edict to the crowd: Any prince seeking to marry Princess Turandot must answer three riddles. If he fails, he will die. The most recent suitor, the Prince of Persia, is to be executed at the moon's rising. Among the onlookers are the slave girl Liù, her aged master, and the young Calàf, who recognizes the old man as his long-lost father, Timur, vanquished King of Tartary. Only Liù has remained faithful to the king, and when Calàf asks her why, she replies that once, long ago, Calàf smiled at her. The mob cries for blood but greets the rising moon with a sudden fearful reverence. As the Prince of Persia goes to his death, the crowd calls upon the princess to spare him. Turandot appears in her palace and wordlessly orders the execution to proceed. Transfixed by the beauty of the unattainable princess, Calàf decides to win her, to the horror of Liù and Timur. The three ministers of state, Ping, Pang, and Pong, appear and also try to discourage him, but Calàf is unmoved. He reassures Liù, then strikes the gong that announces a new suitor.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:05PM)

Act II

Within their private apartments, Ping, Pang, and Pong lament Turandot's bloody reign, hoping that love will conquer her and restore peace. Their thoughts wander to their peaceful country homes, but the noise of the crowd gathering to witness the riddle challenge calls them back to reality.

In the royal throne room, the old emperor asks Calàf to reconsider, but the young man will not be dissuaded. Turandot arrives. She recounts the story of her beautiful ancestress Princess Lou-Ling, who was abducted and killed by a conquering prince. In revenge, Turandot has turned against men and determined that none shall ever possess her. Trumpets then herald the beginning of the riddles. Turandot poses her first question to Calàf: What is born each night and dies each dawn? "Hope," Calàf answers correctly. Turandot continues: What flickers red and warm like a flame, yet is not a flame? "Blood," Calàf replies after a moment's thought. Shaken, Turandot delivers the third riddle: What is like ice but burns, and if it accepts you as a slave, makes you a king? Tense silence prevails until Calàf victoriously cries "Turandot!" The crowd erupts in joy, and the princess vainly begs her father not to give her to the stranger. Hoping to win her love, Calàf offers Turandot a challenge of his own: If she can learn his name by dawn, he will forfeit his life.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:35PM)

Act III

At night in the Imperial Gardens, Calàf hears a proclamation: On pain of death, no one in Peking shall sleep until Turandot learns the stranger's name. Calàf is certain of his victory, but Ping, Pang, and Pong try to bribe him to leave the city. As the fearful mob threatens him to learn his name, soldiers drag in Liù and Timur. Calàf tries to convince the crowd that neither of them knows his secret. When Turandot appears, commanding Timur to speak, Liù replies that she alone knows the stranger's identity and will never reveal it. Soldiers torture her, but she remains silent. Impressed by her fortitude, Turandot asks what gives Liù the strength to resist. It is love, she replies. When the torture intensifies, Liù tells Turandot that she, too, will know the joys of love. Then the girl snatches a dagger and kills herself. The crowd forms a funeral procession, and Timur follows as they take away her body. Turandot remains alone to confront Calàf, who impetuously kisses her. Knowing emotion for the first time, Turandot weeps. Calàf, now sure of winning her, reveals his identity.

Once again before the emperor's throne, Turandot declares that she knows the stranger's name: It is Love.



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Giacomo Puccini

Turandot

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1926

Puccini's final opera is a huge and melodious fairy tale set in a China of legend. It has its roots in various folk tales about a princess who tests the worthiness of her suitors by posing a series of riddles and has those who answer incorrectly killed. Puccini's art soars in this most unusual score, which features an astounding and innovative use of chorus and orchestra that stands with any achievement in opera. Yet for all this, *Turandot* is recognizably Puccini, bursting with the instantly appealing melodies that are at the core of his universal popularity. The unenviable task of completing *Turandot's* final scene upon Puccini's death fell to the composer Franco Alfano. Conductor Arturo Toscanini oversaw Alfano's contribution and led the world premiere. The opening night performance omitted the Alfano finale, with Toscanini ending the opera where Puccini had left the score when he died.

The Creators

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world's opera companies. Franco Alfano (1875–1954) was recommended by Arturo Toscanini to complete *Turandot* based on the success of his 1921 opera *La Leggenda di Sakùntala*. His works are rarely performed today, though his *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1936) appeared at the Met as recently as 2017. The librettists for *Turandot* were the playwright and journalist Giuseppe Adami (1878–1946), who had previously worked with Puccini on *Il Tabarro* and *La Rondine*, and Renato Simoni (1875–1952), who had written libretti for other composers. The play *Turandot* (1762) by Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806) served as the source material for their libretto. Gozzi wrote satirical fantasies and tragedies for the Venetian stage at a time of intense debate about the relative merits of realism and fantasy in dramatic art.

The Setting

Instead of the Chinese ministers Ping, Pang, and Pong, Gozzi's play used commedia dell'arte characters in their original form—they wandered from Italy to China, becoming members of the Imperial Court of Peking. Their comments satirized Venetian politics and mores of the times. Puccini and his librettists dispensed with any such relevance. The China of this opera, set in "legendary times," is a mythic realm viewed from the exoticizing perspective of 20th-century Europeans.

The Music

Drawing upon the innovative techniques being employed by a number of composers in the early decades of the 20th century, the opera's sprawling orchestration calls for a wide variety of instruments, including alto saxophones, celesta, bass xylophone, harps (originally designated to be muffled with pieces of paper between the strings), and an organ. Puccini uses the chorus to great effect, from the bloodthirsty rabble urging on the executioner in Act I to the sublime invocation to the moon immediately following. There are several genuine Chinese themes used in *Turandot* that are integrated into the score in a suave and brilliantly original manner. The big imperial anthem in Act II is based on a Chinese melody, but the orchestra plays harmonies derived from medieval European religious music, and the remarkable resulting sound is not specific to any single culture. The title character's commanding Act II aria, "In questa reggia," and her succeeding confrontation with Calàf create an effect of Wagnerian proportions while still remaining in a firmly Italian style. The opera also contains moments of sheer melodic beauty in Puccini's most lyrical vein, notably in Liù's plaintive aria from Act I, "Signore, ascolta," and the tenor's unforgettable hymn of triumph, "Nessun dorma," which opens Act III.

Met History

The Met gave the U.S. premiere of *Turandot* in 1926, shortly after the world premiere in Milan. Tullio Serafin conducted a cast featuring one of Puccini's favorite sopranos, Maria Jeritza, in the title role, paired with Giacomo Lauri-Volpi as Calàf. This impressive duo led most of the subsequent revivals through the 1929–30 season, after which the opera (which had been considered a stylistic departure for Puccini) disappeared from the Met stage for several decades. It returned with the legendary 1961 production designed by Cecil Beaton, featuring conductor Leopold Stokowski in his company debut and starring Birgit Nilsson, Franco Corelli, and Anna Moffo. The current production by Franco Zeffirelli had its premiere in 1987, starring Eva Marton, Plácido Domingo, and Leona Mitchell, conducted by James Levine. Other notable artists who have since taken on the leading roles include Gwyneth Jones, Jane Eaglen, Maria Guleghina, Nina Stemme, and Christine Goerke (*Turandot*); Aprile Millo, Teresa Stratas, Ruth Ann Swenson, Angela Gheorghiu, Anita Hartig, and Ermonela Jaho (*Liù*); and Luciano Pavarotti, Johan Botha, Salvatore Licitra, and Marcello Giordani (*Calàf*).

Program Note

With his death on November 29, 1924, Giacomo Puccini not only left his latest and most ambitious project unfinished but also left the world without a clear successor to carry on the grand tradition of Italian opera—a tradition that extended all the way back to the art form's genesis in Renaissance Florence. But while *Turandot* can be considered “the last great Italian opera,” this designation fails to account for how much of the work *isn't* Italian. From its setting to its plot and, most significantly, much of its music, *Turandot* draws on other cultures—as Puccini had done throughout much of his career—and represents a distinct evolution from the preceding three centuries of Italian opera. Yet it is in no way authentically Chinese either. A Western projection of the East, it is rife with contradictions, distortions, and racial stereotypes—and yet is also one of the most exhilarating and impressive works ever to take the operatic stage.

Not long after the high-profile world premiere of *Il Trittico* at the Met in 1918, Puccini was already searching for material for his next opera. At first, he landed on *Cristoforo Sly* by Gioacchino Forzano, who had provided the libretti for *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*, but eventually abandoned the idea (though *Sly* would later be set by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari). Then, critic, writer, and librettist Renato Simoni slipped him a copy of Carlo Gozzi's *Turandot*. Premiered in Venice in 1762, the play was inspired by an episode from François Pétis de la Croix's collection of Persian fairy tales, *Les Mille et un Jours*, and concerned a ruthless Chinese princess who sets a fatal challenge to any would-be suitor: In order to win her hand, he must correctly answer three riddles, but if he fails, he will forfeit his head. With his penchant for exotic subjects, Puccini's interest was piqued.

Depicting distant lands and peoples was already a centuries-old musical tradition by the time that Puccini considered bringing mythical China to the stage. From Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, with its percussion-heavy vision of a Turkish harem, to the Gypsies of Bizet's *Carmen*, Verdi's faux ancient Egypt in *Aida*, and Debussy's “Pagodes,” which took inspiration from Indonesian gamelan music, foreign sound worlds had long exerted a fascination on Western composers. Puccini seems to have had a particular attraction—even obsession—with the Other, traveling as far as Buenos Aires, Cairo, and New York in search of fresh sources to set. After the breakout success of his 1893 *Manon Lescaut*, he even briefly toyed with the idea of composing an opera about the life of Buddha that would incorporate a collection of East Indian melodies.

Of Puccini's 12 operas (when one considers the three components of *Il Trittico* separately) only three take place in his native Italy, while both *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot* are set in the Far East and *La Fanciulla del West* plays out in the equally remote American West. And in the cases of the latter three, the settings are not the only markers of the works' foreignness; in crafting each

opera, Puccini steeped himself in the music of each locale and incorporated existing melodies into the scores. For *Butterfly*, he even consulted with native Japanese speakers, including actress Sada Jacco, to gain a better sense of the timbre and range of their natural speaking voices.

It's no surprise then that Puccini gravitated toward *Turandot*, and he pressed his librettists—Giuseppe Adami, who outlined the dramatic structure, and Simoni, who furnished the poetic verses—to create a text that was authentically Chinese. He requested numerous changes to Gozzi's play, asking them to "find a Chinese element to enrich the drama and relieve the artificiality of it" and to make use of what he called "Chinese syllables" and "assonances that would give it a Chinese flavor."

This focus on "Chinese" sounds also extended to some of the characters' names. The stock commedia dell'arte types—Brighella, Truffaldino, Pantalone, etc.—that acted as visitors to the Chinese court in Gozzi became the ministers Ping, Pang, and Pong, while Puccini also introduced a new ancestress for *Turandot*, Lou-Ling. More drastically, he urged Adami and Simoni to refashion Gozzi's headstrong Tartar princess Adelma into Liù (another name of Puccini's invention), the meek but noble slave girl who could easily stand alongside the composer's other simultaneously vulnerable and dignified "little women"—Mimi, Cio-Cio-San, Lauretta, and others.

Even more than the libretto, though, Puccini sought a sense of authenticity in his musical characterization of legendary China. In August 1920, just months after Simoni first suggested *Turandot*, the composer famously paid a visit to Baron Edoardo Fassini-Camossi, a former diplomat in China, who owned a music box of genuine Chinese tunes. Three melodies from this music box ultimately found their way into the opera's score, while others came from phonograph recordings and Jules A. van Aalst's 1884 chronicle of Chinese music.

It was from Fassini's music box that Puccini discovered the folk song "Mo Li Hua," or "Jasmine Flower," which was already familiar to European ears and had been included in travel guides as early as the end of the 18th century. In his hands, "Mo Li Hua" became the main theme used to represent Princess *Turandot*, first intoned by an offstage children's choir in Act I before recurring many times throughout the opera in different guises and orchestrations. The music box also featured the traditional "Imperial Hymn," which can be heard during the opera's throne-room scenes as the people hail Emperor Altoum and wish him 10,000 years of life.

In these two cases, the Chinese melodies appear with few alterations, but as prominent Puccini biographer Mosco Carner points out, more often the composer's incorporation of existing tunes takes the form of "freely varying certain exotic melodies ... using them as models in the invention of similarly constructed melodies, or ... lifting characteristic motives out of them in order

to mold therefrom new melodic curves.” This occurs notably in the entrance of Ping, Pang, and Pong in Act I, as they attempt to dissuade Calàf from pursuing Turandot. Their opening melody (“Fermo! Che fai? T’arresta”) is drawn verbatim from another of the music box’s folk songs, but soon thereafter, Puccini weaves together bits and pieces of other authentic Chinese melodies as well as some of his own creation. According to Carner, “various motives become joined with one another in a kaleidoscopic way, [and] the whole passage ... creates the impression of an underived, logically developed idea.”

The result is rather unlike any of the composer’s previous compositions. Gone are the intimate dramas and relatable passions of everyday people. These are instead replaced with dazzling spectacle, archetypal protagonists, and musical passages clearly influenced by innovative contemporaries such as Debussy, Stravinsky, and Wagner. A glance into the orchestra pit reveals a robust percussion section, encompassing not only xylophones, glockenspiel, and drums but also bells, celesta, tambourine, Japanese tam-tam, and a Chinese gong. And Puccini includes a number of musical “sound effects” to further heighten the feeling of foreignness, such as offstage brass and organ, harps muted with paper inserted between their strings, and saxophones to accompany the Act I children’s choir.

It’s not that *Turandot*’s score bears none of the hallmarks of Puccini’s lushly romantic style. Liù, the most (possibly only) sympathetic character in the piece, pours her heart out in Act I’s “Signore, ascolta”—an adaption of the pentatonic-based song “Sian Chok” that, in Puccini’s handling, becomes far more Italianate than Chinese—as well as in a compelling pair of arias in Act III. Not to mention the opera’s most recognizable selection, Calàf’s heroic Act III aria, “Nessun dorma,” which has become an anthem of hope and resilience far beyond the confines of the opera house. But according to musicologist Harold Powers, this “Romantic-diatonic Puccinian norm,” is just one of four primary “colors” in *Turandot*, the others being Chinese, Middle Eastern, and Dissonance.

We must also consider the criticisms that *Turandot*—and Puccini’s appropriation, reconfiguration, and reharmonization of Chinese music—has received in recent years. As Ping-hui Liao, a professor of literary and critical studies at the University of California, San Diego, argues, despite the composer’s attempts at authenticity, “when the material is drawn from another culture, as in the case of *Madama Butterfly* or *Turandot*, it is integrated and ordered so that it becomes intelligible, controlled, and agreeable ... the melodies are so well integrated that they lose their own autonomy and become part of a larger whole. In distinguishing between East and West, [Puccini] makes the former subservient to the latter.” Or, as Carner wryly suggests, while the Chinese characters don “national musical costume throughout ... this costume may bear the trademark ‘Made in Italy.’” It shouldn’t be surprising then that many audience members

of Chinese descent find it difficult to watch as their own heritage is co-opted, fetishized, or painted as savage, bloodthirsty, or backward.

The question then becomes how to appreciate *Turandot*—which features some of Puccini’s most ravishing melodies, scenes of truly remarkable musical and theatrical grandeur, and opportunities for the kind of showstopping vocal displays that lie at the core of the art form’s appeal—in a way that both celebrates its achievements and acknowledges the problems inherent in it. As we raise our collective consciousness of its faults, it is essential that, rather than shying away from the less-savory aspects of the opera, with each subsequent revival, audiences recognize and grapple with their implications. For only through awareness and conversation, which must increasingly expand to include a wider array of voices and points of view, can the world truly understand *Turandot* as the thrilling yet problematic masterpiece that it is.

—Christopher Browner

Christopher Browner is the Met’s Senior Editor.

Honoring Elaine Douvas

This week’s operas mark the last performances by Elaine Douvas, principal oboe of the Met Orchestra since 1977. Ms. Douvas joined the Met when she was 25 years old, following four years as principal oboe of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under Robert Shaw, and she is proud to have been a part of the transformative years when the Met Orchestra became recognized as a world-class ensemble.

She has served as oboe instructor at the Juilliard School since 1982 and is also chairman of the woodwind department. Among her career highlights are Leontyne Price’s farewell performance of *Aida* for live television in 1985 and her 2004 performance of Strauss’s Oboe Concerto with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. “I want to thank the Met audience for their love and support of classical music,” says Douvas. “It has been my great pleasure to sound the tuning A and to play in this glorious hall for the past 47 years.”



TATIANA DAUBEK

The Cast



Marco Armiliato

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Turandot* and *La Bohème* at the Met; *Don Pasquale*, *La Bohème*, and *Simon Boccanegra* at the Vienna State Opera; *La Rondine*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and *Andrea Chénier* in Zurich; *Turandot* at the Paris Opera; *Aida* at the Bavarian State Opera; and concerts with the Orchestra del Teatro di San Carlo and Orchestra dell'Accademia Teatro alla Scala.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1998 debut leading *La Bohème*, he has conducted nearly 500 performances of 27 operas, including *Fedora*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *Macbeth*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Trovatore*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Aida*, *Anna Bolena*, *La Sonnambula*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *Ernani*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *La Fille du Régiment*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He appears regularly at the Vienna State Opera, where he has led *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Aida*, *Andrea Chénier*, *La Traviata*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Otello*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Turandot*, and *Manon Lescaut*, among many others. Recent performances also include *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in concert at the Salzburg Festival; *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and *Aida* in Verona; *Andrea Chénier* at La Scala and in Monte Carlo; *Macbeth* in Naples; and *Tosca* at Staatsoper Berlin.



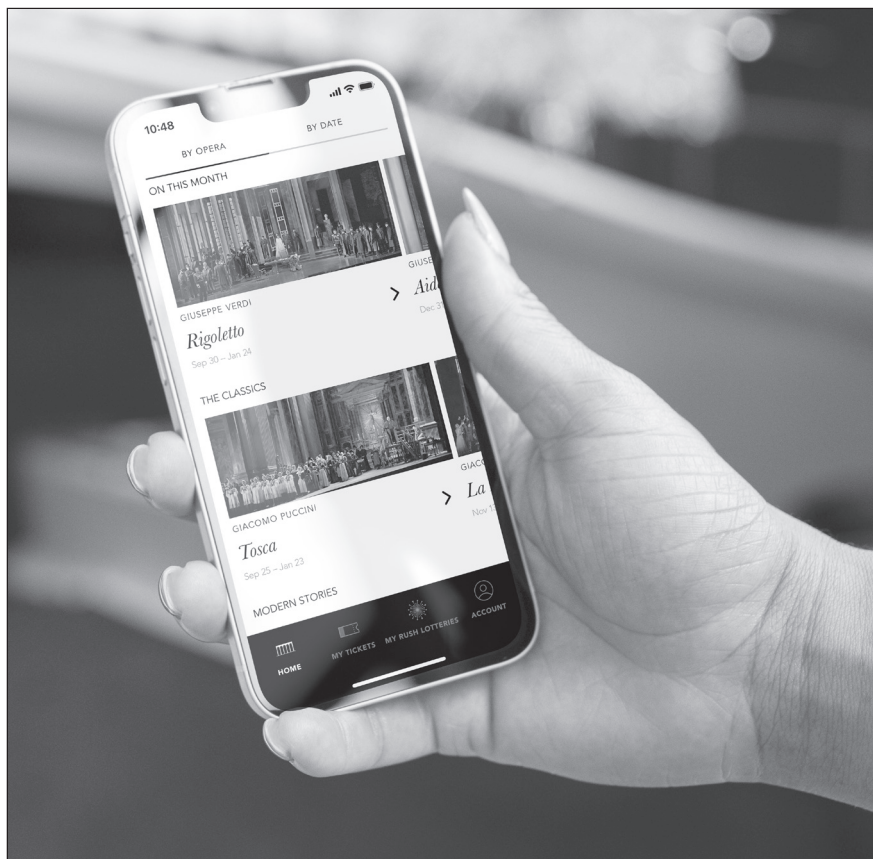
Olga Kulchynska

SOPRANO (RIVNE, UKRAINE)

THIS SEASON *Liù* in *Turandot* and *Musetta* in *La Bohème* at the Met, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, *Tsarevna Lyebved* in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tale of Tsar Sultan* in Brussels, *Micaëla* in *Carmen* at Covent Garden, *Iliia* in *Idomeneo* at the Bavarian State Opera, and the title role of *Iolanta* in concert with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES *Musetta* (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Between 2018 and 2020, she was a member of the ensemble at the Zurich Opera, where her roles have included *Mimi* in *La Bohème*, *Blanche de la Force* in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Giulietta* in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte*, *Gretel* in *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Leïla* in *Les Pêcheurs des Perles*, and *Zerlina* in *Don Giovanni*. Recent performances include *Micaëla* in Verona, *Juliette* in *Roméo et Juliette* in Rouen, *Ginevra* in *Ariodante* at the Paris Opera, *Natasha Rostova* in *War and Peace* and *Pamina* at the Bavarian State Opera, *Cio-Cio-San* in Marina Abramović's *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* in Amsterdam, the *Goosegirl* in Humperdinck's *Königskinder* at Dutch National Opera, and *Adina* in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Micaëla* at the Vienna State Opera.



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*Restrictions may apply. Subject to availability.

The Cast CONTINUED



Elena Pankratova

SOPRANO (YEKATERINBURG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Turandot* at the Met for her debut and in Barcelona, the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Vienna State Opera, Kundry in *Parsifal* at the Houston Grand Opera, and the title role of *Elektra* at the Bavarian State Opera and in concert with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Kundry in Barcelona, Brussels, and Leipzig; the Dyer's Wife in Baden-Baden and at Staatsoper Berlin; Elektra in Hamburg; Turandot at Staatsoper Berlin, the Paris Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, and in Verona; Ortrud in *Lohengrin* at the Salzburg Easter Festival; and Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* and Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the Bavarian State Opera. She has also sung Turandot, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Elektra at the Vienna State Opera; Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* in concert with the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Barcelona; Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* and Elektra in concert with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra; Leonore in *Fidelio* in Dresden and Bilbao; Kundry and Ortrud at the Bayreuth Festival; Kundry at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Elektra in Frankfurt; and Ortrud in Brussels.

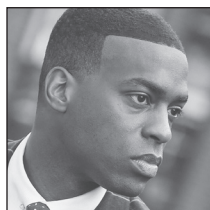


SeokJong Baek

TENOR (JEON-JU, SOUTH KOREA)

THIS SEASON Ismaele in *Nabucco* for his debut and Calaf in *Turandot* at the Met, Calaf 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 Calaf 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.



Soloman Howard

BASS (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

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

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

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