

CHARLES GOUNOD

# ROMÉO ET JULIETTE

CONDUCTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION

Bartlett Sher

SET DESIGNER

Michael Yeargan

COSTUME DESIGNER

Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jennifer Tipton

CHOREOGRAPHER

Chase Brock

FIGHT DIRECTOR

B. H. Barry

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR

Gina Lapinski

MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
GENERAL MANAGER

Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in five acts

Libretto by Jules Barbier and  
Michel Carré, based on the play by  
William Shakespeare

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

7:30–10:50PM

The production of *Roméo et Juliette* was  
made possible by a generous gift from  
**The Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund**

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gift from Rolex and Mastercard

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Salzburg Festival

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citizens as they fight to defend their country  
and its cultural heritage.

# The Metropolitan Opera

2023-24 SEASON

The 353rd Metropolitan Opera performance of  
CHARLES GOUNOD'S

## ROMÉO ET JULIETTE

CONDUCTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

TYBALT  
Frederick Ballentine

GRÉGORIO  
Jeongcheol Cha

PÂRIS  
Daniel Rich\*\*

FRÈRE LAURENT  
Alfred Walker\*

CAPULET  
Nathan Berg

STÉPHANO  
Samantha Hankey

JULIETTE  
Nadine Sierra

BENVOLIO  
Thomas Capobianco

MERCUTIO  
Will Liverman

DUKE OF VERONA  
Richard Bernstein

ROMÉO  
Benjamin Bernheim

GERTRUDE  
Eve Gigliotti

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 7:30-10:50PM



Nadine Sierra and Benjamin Bernheim in the title roles of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master Donald Palumbo  
Musical Preparation Pierre Vallet, Marie-France Lefebvre,  
Bryan Wagorn,\* Dimitri Dover,\* and Matthew Piatt

Assistant Stage Director Daniel Rigazzi

Revival Fight Director Brad Lemons

Associate Fight Director Chris Dumont

Prompter Matthew Piatt

Met Titles Cori Ellison

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted by Teatro alla Scala, Milan; Salzburg Festival; and Metropolitan Opera Shops

Costumes constructed by Salzburg Festival; Teatro alla Scala, Milan; and Metropolitan Opera Costume Department

Additional costumes by Dawson Tailors, Baltimore; Penn & Fletcher, Inc., New York; and Seams Unlimited, Racine

Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department

The Met's Æolian-Skinner pipe organ used in this performance was renovated thanks to a Wyncote Foundation grant from Frederick R. Haas.

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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

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2023-24 SEASON



A scene from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*

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during the 2023-24 season.



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OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE

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# Synopsis

## Prologue

*Verona, 18th century.* A chorus tells of the endless feud between the Montaignu and Capulet families, and of the love of their children, Roméo and Juliette.

## Act I

At a masked ball in the courtyard of the Capulet palace, Juliette's cousin Tybalt assures Count Pâris that Juliette, who has been promised to him, will enchant him. Capulet presents his daughter to the guests and invites them to dance. Mercutio and Roméo, a Montaignu, have donned masks to sneak into the ball, together with other friends. Roméo tells them about a strange dream that he has had, but Mercutio dismisses it as the work of the fairy Queen Mab. Roméo watches Juliette dance and instantly falls in love with her. Juliette explains to her nurse, Gertrude, that she has no interest in marriage, but when Roméo approaches her in a quiet moment, both feel that they are meant for each other. Just as they discover each other's identities, Tybalt happens upon them and recognizes Roméo. Capulet prevents him from attacking Roméo, who, with his friends, beats a hasty retreat.

## Act II

Later that night, Roméo enters the Capulets' garden, looking for Juliette. When she steps out onto her balcony, he declares his love. Servants briefly interrupt their encounter. When they are alone once again, Juliette assures Roméo that she will be his forever.

## Act III

Roméo visits Frère Laurent and confesses his love for Juliette. Shortly thereafter, she also appears with Gertrude. Hoping that their love might reconcile their families, Frère Laurent marries them.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:50PM)

## Act III (CONTINUED)

Outside the Capulet palace, Roméo's page, Stéphano, sings a song about a turtledove imprisoned in a nest of vultures. This angers several of the Capulets. Mercutio comes to Stéphano's aid, but soon Tybalt challenges him to fight. Roméo steps between them and asks Tybalt to forget the hatred between their families. Tybalt has nothing but scorn for him, and when he kills Mercutio in their duel, Roméo stabs Tybalt to death. The Duke of Verona appears and, after partisans of both families demand justice, exiles Roméo.

### Act IV

Roméo and Juliette have spent their secret wedding night in her room. She forgives him for killing Tybalt. The newlyweds passionately declare their love as day is dawning. They can hardly bring themselves to say goodbye. After Roméo has left, Capulet appears, together with Frère Laurent, and announces to his daughter that she is to marry Pâris that same day. Desperate, Juliette turns to Frère Laurent, who gives her a potion that will make her appear to be dead. He promises that she will awaken with Roméo beside her. Love lends Juliette courage: She overcomes her fear and drinks the poison.

On the way to the chapel where her wedding to Pâris is to take place, Juliette collapses. To the guests' horror, Capulet announces that she is dead.

### Act V

Roméo breaks into the Capulets' crypt. Faced with the seemingly dead body of his wife, he takes poison. At that moment, Juliette awakes, and they share a final dream of future happiness. When Juliette realizes that Roméo is about to die, she decides to follow him, so their love can continue in the afterlife. She stabs herself. Before they both die, they ask God for forgiveness.



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Charles Gounod

# Roméo et Juliette

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*Premiere: Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1867*

*Roméo et Juliette*, perhaps the most enduringly successful of the many operatic settings of the world's best-known love story, is sophisticated, intelligently wrought, and utterly ravishing. It is an excellent example of French Romanticism, a tradition that values subtlety, sensuality, and graceful vocal delivery over showy effects, and the music provides a powerful dramatic vehicle worthy of its Shakespearean source. In the opera, there is a slight shift of focus away from the word games of the play and a greater emphasis on the two lovers, who are given four irresistible duets. Some readjustment of plot was necessary to allow for this (the lovers have a brief final reunion in the tomb scene, for example, which does not happen in the play), but audiences have been well compensated for these minor infractions against the Bard.

### *The Creators*

Charles Gounod (1818–93) showed early promise as a musician and achieved commercial success with *Faust* in 1859, followed eight years later by the equally well-received *Roméo et Juliette*. One of his most famous works outside of the opera house is a setting of the “Ave Maria,” which employs a prelude by J. S. Bach as an accompaniment to a vocal line by Gounod. Jules Barbier (1825–1901) and Michel Carré (1822–72) were the leading librettists of their time in France, providing the texts for many other successful operas, including *Faust* for Gounod, *Mignon* and *Hamlet* for Thomas, and *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* (Barbier alone) for Offenbach. The plays of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) have provided an abundance of material for such diverse opera composers as Rossini, Berlioz, Verdi, Britten, Barber, Thomas Adès, and even Wagner (whose youthful work from 1836, *Das Liebesverbot*, is based on *Measure for Measure*).

### *The Setting*

In Shakespeare’s lifetime, Italy was a land of many small city-states in constant conflict with one another. The blood feud between families at the core of this story, set in Verona, was a central feature of Italian political and social life during this era. Yet this same war-scarred land was also the cradle of the Renaissance, with its astounding explosion of art and science. The image that this mythical Verona evokes, then, is an elegant but dangerous world where poetry or violence might erupt at any moment. The Met’s current production maintains this Veronese setting but moves the action to the 18th century.

### *The Music*

Gounod infuses this classic drama with an elegant musical aura that reflects the soaring poetry of the source material. A solo flute, for example, sets a fragile and painfully beautiful mood in the prelude to the bedroom scene in Act IV. When Gounod explores the darker and more violent side of the story, his music creates drama without resorting to bombast. A reserved melancholy creates all the necessary tension. This is apparent in the striking opening chorus and especially in the arresting ensemble “Ô jour de deuil” in Act III, when the various characters’ destinies intersect in a tragic instant. For the story’s more lighthearted moments, Gounod supplied the sort of buoyant melodies that made his *Faust* a huge hit with audiences. The baritone sets an eerie and frivolous mood with his song about Queen Mab and her fairy world of dreams, “Mab, la reine des mensonges,” early in Act I. Shortly after, the heroine takes the stage with the giddy coloratura gem “Je veux vivre dans ce rêve.” Moments such as these add musical and dramatic texture to the tragedy, admired for its contrast of light and dark. The focus of the story, however, remains firmly on the two lovers.

### *Met History*

*Roméo et Juliette* received a single performance in the Met’s first season, sung in Italian. The brothers Jean and Édouard de Reszke and the American soprano Emma Eames performed the work in 1891, which was the first performance of a French opera given in French at the Met. It proved so popular that the work opened the Met season six times between 1891 and 1906. Eames shared performances with the Australian soprano Nellie Melba, who sang Juliette 33 times between 1894 and 1901. Swedish tenor Jussi Björling and Brazilian soprano Bidu Sayão teamed up for only two performances of this opera, yet a recording of the 1947 broadcast continues to impress listeners today as one of the most memorable performances in this repertory at the Met. A new production in 1967 featured Franco Corelli and Mirella Freni as the young lovers. Roméos appearing in this production in later seasons included Nicolai Gedda, Plácido Domingo, Neil Shicoff, Alfredo Kraus, and Roberto Alagna, opposite such Juliettes as Anna Moffo, Judith Blegen, Catherine Malfitano, Ruth Ann Swenson, and Angela Gheorghiu. In 2005, a production by Guy Joosten premiered with Ramón Vargas and Maureen O’Flynn as the lead couple. In subsequent performances, Natalie Dessay, Anna Netrebko, and Hei-Kyung Hong sang the title heroine. Diana Damrau and Vittorio Grigolo starred in the premiere of the current production, by Bartlett Sher, which opened on New Year’s Eve in 2016, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda.



## Program Note

“God! What a fine subject! How it lends itself to music!” French composer Hector Berlioz wrote these words as he contemplated turning Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* into an opera; instead, he made his own *Roméo et Juliette* a unique hybrid of dramatic symphony and cantata in 1839. His younger colleague Charles Gounod chose the more conventional path and with his *Roméo et Juliette* of 1867 created one of the most beautiful and compelling treatments of this now more than 400-year-old romantic tragedy.

At the time he wrote the opera, Gounod was in extreme need of a success. Having chosen to ally himself with Paris’s recently formed and innovative Théâtre Lyrique rather than the long-established Opéra, he had become one of France’s leading opera composers in 1859 with his *Faust*, suavely adapted from Goethe’s epic verse drama. But since then, he had suffered three disastrous premieres, including his Provençal pastoral tragedy *Mireille*, one of his personal favorites among his works. Yet Léon Carvalho, the energetic manager of the Théâtre Lyrique, had not lost faith in him, and French opera lovers still eagerly looked to him to produce another hit like *Faust*.

One of the most successful moments in that opera was the sensuous love scene between Faust and Marguerite in her garden. Though he once flirted with studying for the priesthood, Gounod was a man who easily succumbed to romantic temptations—a weakness that tormented his wife. As biographer Steven Huebner put it, “tension between the bon vivant and the ascetic would remain an integral part of his character.” So it is not surprising that, by 1865, he had become captivated with the possibilities of *Romeo and Juliet*, although, pessimistically, he told colleagues that it would be his last work for the stage.

Carvalho chose a seasoned team to create the libretto: Jules Barbier and Michel Carré. They had scripted many successful French operas, including *Faust* and Thomas’s *Mignon*; Barbier alone would go on to write the libretto for Offenbach’s *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*. Unlike the librettist for Bellini’s 1830 *Romeo and Juliet*-based opera, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, they were reasonably faithful to Shakespeare’s original, even translating many lines directly into French. Their major change was to allow Roméo to live long enough to enable a heartbreaking final duet with Juliette. The need for embellishment was minimal, as Shakespeare had given operatic adaptors much to work with. “The play is itself notably rich in lyrical ‘set pieces,’” writes Huebner, “including Mercutio’s burlesque Queen Mab speech, Friar Lawrence’s sermons, Juliet’s soliloquy with the vial, the sonnet of the two lovers at their first meeting, and their later dawn poem about the nightingale and the lark.”

Premiering on April 27, 1867, only a month after Verdi’s *Don Carlos* debuted at the Opéra, *Roméo et Juliette* was the spectacular success for which everyone was longing. Audiences packed the Théâtre Lyrique night after night to see

it. Its immense popularity was amplified by the Exposition Universelle, which had opened on April 1; this gigantic world's fair—celebrating all things French and the glories of Haussmann's recently rebuilt Paris—drew national and international visitors to the capital in numbers never seen before.

By July, *Roméo et Juliette* had opened at London's Covent Garden, and before the year was out, it had reached Belgium and Germany. With this opera, Gounod was at the summit of his career: a peak that he would never again achieve. In the words of Camille Saint-Saëns, "all women sang his melodies, all young composers [in France] imitated his style." He would hold an enduring influence over such composers as Georges Bizet and Jules Massenet; his lyrical style would inspire Gabriel Fauré's early songs; and even artists like Debussy and Ravel, who took very different paths, would feel his sway. When, in 1869, the impresario Auguste Mariette began to search for a composer to write the opera to open the new opera house in Cairo—what would eventually become *Aida*—his stated candidates were Verdi, Wagner, and Gounod.

*Roméo et Juliette* triumphed in spite of the fact that it did not follow in the French grand opera tradition that had dominated Parisian opera houses—a style that favored dazzling stage effects, massive choral scenes, and interpolated ballets. Despite the chorus that opens the opera and foretells Roméo and Juliette's fate, the jubilant crowd at the Capulet ball, and the heroically tragic choral finale of Act III, this is predominantly a very intimate opera that focuses on the four glorious duet scenes for the two lovers.

Gounod was also generous in providing stunning moments for each of his lovers to shine on his and her own. For his first Juliette, he had Marie Miolan-Carvalho, the wife of Léon Carvalho and the undisputed star of the Théâtre Lyrique, who had earlier created the roles of Marguerite and Mireille. Because she had a brilliant coloratura technique and an effortless upper range, she prevailed upon the composer to add the exuberant waltz aria at the ball, "Je veux vivre dans ce rêve" (Gounod instead had wanted to concentrate his energies on her second aria as she takes the potion). We can be very grateful to Miolan-Carvalho for insisting on this scintillating showpiece, with its exacting chromatic scales and thrilling roulades cresting at a high D.

The aria about which the composer cared most for his heroine was the so-called Poison Aria—"Amour, ranime mon courage"—of Act IV, in which Juliette contemplates taking the potion that Frère Laurent has prepared for her. A demanding scena combining sections of recitative and aria and expressing a wide range of emotion, it is more suited to a dramatic soprano than a lyric coloratura. Here, Gounod takes Shakespeare's extended soliloquy for Juliet in the play and sets it to music of electrifying sweep and power.

Roméo's two arias are also strongly contrasted: the first more conventional, the second a tragic scene in a strikingly innovative style and form. "Ah! lève-toi,

soleil" is his Act II showpiece, sung as he arrives below Juliette's balcony. Solo clarinet and harp color this beautiful display of legato ardor, topped by golden B-flats. In Act V, Roméo's second aria, "Salut! tombeau sombre et silencieux!," is something quite different: a tissue of musical reminiscences of happier times carried by the orchestra as melodic leader, with the singer given a flexible mixture of recitative and arioso molded to the text. At the words, "Ô ma femme," we hear the cellos reprise their unforgettable melody from the wedding night, now transformed from sensuality to aching loss.

Gounod gives two secondary characters arias that bring touches of lightness to relieve the drama's shadows. In Act I, Mercutio's famous Queen Mab speech, about the diminutive fairy who torments the dreams of all sleepers, is turned into a quicksilver scherzo. The page Stéphano's equally mocking "Que fais-tu, blanche tourterelle?" instigates the series of fatal duels. This is the obligatory aria for the dugazon: the traditional second-soprano role in French operas of the day, like Siébel in *Faust*.

An important—but often overlooked—aspect of Gounod's operatic innovation is his use of the orchestra. "According to Gounod," writes Huebner, "the voice must be assisted by the orchestra in its mission to communicate 'truth.' ... At Gounod's best moments, voice and instrumental strain enter into a symbiotic relationship where each is given nearly equal importance in the lyrical whole." We hear this in several extraordinary passages. The Act II balcony scene begins with an orchestral prelude of mysterious beauty for strings and harp. It then returns at the end of the act with Roméo's exquisite countermelody "Va! repose en paix" floating above it. In Act IV, the wedding-night scene opens with perhaps the most magnificent melody in the entire opera and, remarkably, one that will never be sung. Four cellos launch it in their richest, most sensuous tones; Verdi may have been inspired by this to use the same scoring in his Act I love scene in *Otello*. Huebner calls it "a small, but graphic, tone-poem about the night that has just passed."

As Frère Laurent instructs Juliette to take his potion, Gounod provides an equally potent brew in his blending of bass voice with the orchestra to create an uncannily chilling atmosphere. In this unusual replacement for an aria, the flutes and other woodwinds sing the melody while the singer chants in a near monotone below.

The four love duets are among the greatest music that Gounod ever wrote. The lovers' first meeting at the ball in Act I is the most formally structured, as they express their mutual attraction in metaphorical language. Gounod gives it a charmingly old-fashioned quality, like a court minuet of a century earlier.

Gounod's great gift for rendering intimate conversations in music, using an exceptional plasticity of vocal style, gives them a naturalness and truthfulness that his French predecessors had never achieved. We hear this especially in the

balcony scene, which is divided in two by a comic interlude when some of the Capulet men come to investigate and banter with Gertrude. Having individually declared their love, only in the duet's second portion do the lovers blend their voices together in rapturous close harmony.

In the wedding night scene's "Nuit d'hyménée ... Il faut partir," this lush, unified duet style is enhanced by sensual contrapuntal lines between the two lovers. This scene is structured around three repetitions of the words "Non! non, ce n'est pas le jour" as the lovers resist the idea of parting—each sung a step higher as the tension builds.

Act V's final duet is the duet of death as the lovers succumb to the cruelty of fate. The anguish of this scene is made virtually unbearable by the many reminiscences, in both the orchestra and the lovers' lines, of music from their most joyful moments: their joint prayer at their wedding, the ecstasy of the wedding night, Roméo's delirious reprise of "Non! non, ce n'est pas le jour." Gounod's last and most poignant musical transformation is his recasting of Act IV's passionate orchestral interlude as the lovers embraced into a heartrending farewell as Juliette sings her dying words.

—Janet E. Bedell

*Janet E. Bedell is a frequent program annotator for Carnegie Hall, specializing in vocal repertoire, and for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and many other institutions.*

## The Cast



### Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

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

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

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



### Samantha Hankey

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MARSHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS)

**THIS SEASON** Stéphano in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Dresden, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* in Zurich and at Covent Garden, the Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Detroit Opera, and recitals with the Lancaster Art Song Society and San Francisco's Schwabacher Recital Series.

**MET APPEARANCES** Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Prince Charming in *Cinderella*, Wellgunde in the *Ring* cycle, Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, Mlle. Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and Pantalís in *Mefistofele* (debut, 2018).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 2019 and 2021, she was a member of the ensemble at the Bavarian State Opera, where her roles have included Octavian, Cherubino, Carmen in Marina Abramović's *7 Deaths of Maria Callas*, Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*, the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*. Recent performances elsewhere include Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Santa Fe Opera, Dorabella at Palm Beach Opera, Hänsel at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Federico García Lorca in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* at Scottish Opera.



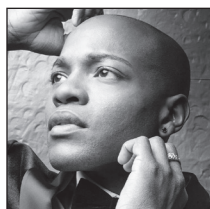
## Nadine Sierra

SOPRANO (FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA)

**THIS SEASON** Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met and in Bilbao, a concert with the Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Covent Garden, Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Paris Opera and Greek National Opera, the title role of *Luisa Miller* in Naples, and concerts in Barcelona, Naples, Madrid, and Dortmund.

**MET APPEARANCES** Violetta, Lucia, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Gilda in *Rigoletto* (debut, 2015), Ilia in *Idomeneo*, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Violetta and Gilda in Verona; Gilda at Staatsoper Berlin, La Scala, and in Naples; the title role of *Manon* in Barcelona; Amina in *La Sonnambula* in Madrid; Adina in Buenos Aires; and Lucia at the Bavarian State Opera and in Naples. She has also sung Gilda at the Paris Opera, Violetta in Florence, Elvira in *I Puritani* in concert in A Coruña, Lucia in Barcelona, Musetta in *La Bohème* in Las Palmas, and Juliette in Bordeaux and at San Francisco Opera. She was the 2018 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leightman.



## Frederick Ballentine

TENOR (NORFOLK, VIRGINIA)

**THIS SEASON** Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette* and Le Remendado in *Carmen* at the Met, Loge in *Das Rheingold* at Seattle Opera, the Trainer in the world premiere of Jeanine Tesori's *Grounded* at Washington National Opera, and recitals in Berlin, Paris, and Bristol.

**MET APPEARANCES** Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* (debut, 2019).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Sam Polk in *Susannah* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Valcour in Bologne's *L'Amant Anonyme* at the Atlanta Opera; Loge, George Bailey in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*, and Nick in Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* at English National Opera; Jack O'Brien / Toby Higgins in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at Opera Vlaanderen; and Judah in the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience* at Cincinnati Opera. He has also sung the Drum Major in *Wozzeck* in Kassel; Wiley Stonecrop in a digital presentation of *The Impresario* with Opera San Antonio; Charlie Parker in Daniel Schnyder's *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* and Don José in *Carmen* at Seattle Opera; Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* at LA Opera; Sportin' Life at Cincinnati Opera, Dutch National Opera, and English National Opera; and Don José at Annapolis Opera.



## Benjamin Bernheim

TENOR (PARIS, FRANCE)

**THIS SEASON** Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met, Ruggero in *La Rondine* and the title role of *Werther* in Zurich, Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Paris Opera and Salzburg Festival, Werther and a recital at La Scala, a recital at the Vienna State Opera, and concerts with Lisette Oropesa throughout Europe.

**MET APPEARANCES** The Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* (debut, 2022).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Roméo at the Paris Opera, in Zurich, and in concert with the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève; Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Zurich; Rodolfo, the Duke of Mantua, and Edgardo at the Vienna State Opera; the title role of *Faust* and Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon* at the Paris Opera; and Werther in Bordeaux. He has also sung the Duke of Mantua in Barcelona and at the Bavarian State Opera; Hoffmann in Hamburg; Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Bordeaux, Zurich, and at La Scala; Chevalier des Grieux in Bordeaux; Rodolfo at Staatsoper Berlin; and Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Vienna State Opera.



## Will Liverman

BARITONE (VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA)

**THIS SEASON** Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* and Malcolm in Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at the Met, Josiah Blackwell in the world premiere of Rene Orth's *10 Days in a Madhouse* at Opera Philadelphia, the world premiere of Shawn E. Okpebholo's *Two Black Churches* with the Lexington Philharmonic, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Houston Symphony, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, *Elijah Reimagined* with the Washington Chorus, and recitals at Dayton Opera, Caramoor, and Cincinnati Song Initiative. He also serves as artistic advisor for Renée Fleming's SongStudio at Carnegie Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** Horemhab in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Charles in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and Malcolm Fleet in Nico Muhly's *Marnie* (debut, 2018).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has appeared at LA Opera, Dutch National Opera, the Dallas Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Seattle Opera, Opera Colorado, and the Santa Fe Opera, among many others. Last season, his opera *The Factotum*, composed with DJ King Rico, premiered at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He was the 2022 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



## Alfred Walker

BASS-BARITONE (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)

**THIS SEASON** Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* and Rambaldo in *La Rondine* at the Met, Enobarbus in John Adams's *Antony and Cleopatra* in Barcelona, and Orest in *Elektra* at the Dallas Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 1998 debut as Grégorio in *Roméo et Juliette*, he has sung more than 200 performances of 21 roles, including Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Crown in *Porgy and Bess*, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Titurel in *Parsifal*, Parsi Rustomji in Philip Glass's *Satyagraha*, and Wagner in *Faust*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the title role of Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* at Bard SummerScape, Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Amonasro in *Aida* in concert at Detroit Opera, Enobarbus in the world premiere of *Antony and Cleopatra* and Scarpia in *Tosca* at San Francisco Opera, Samuel in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Nalikantha in *Lakmé* with Washington Concert Opera, Donner in *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and Mtchll in the world premiere of Carlos Simon's *It All Falls Down* at Washington National Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.