

Richard Strauss

Capriccio

CONDUCTOR
Andrew Davis

PRODUCTION
John Cox

SET DESIGNER
Mauro Pagano

COSTUME DESIGNER &
INTERIOR DÉCOR
Robert Perdziola

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Duane Schuler

CHOREOGRAPHER
Val Caniparoli

STAGE DIRECTOR
Peter McClintock

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

Conversation piece for music
in one act

Libretto by Clemens Krauss and the composer

Saturday, April 23, 2011, 1:00–3:25 pm

Last time this season

The production of *Capriccio* was made possible
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The Metropolitan Opera

2010–11 Season

The 13th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Richard Strauss's

Capriccio

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Conductor
Andrew Davis

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Flamand, a composer
Joseph Kaiser

Olivier, a poet
Russell Braun

La Roche,
a theater director
Peter Rose

The Countess,
a young widow
Renée Fleming

The Count, her brother
Morten Frank Larsen

Clairon, an actress
Sarah Connolly

Italian Singers
Olga Makarina
Barry Banks

Servants
Ronald Naldi
Paul Corona
Steven Goldstein
Christopher Schaldenbrand*
Grant Youngblood
Scott Scully
Brian Frutiger
Kyle Pfortmiller

Major-Domo
Michael Devlin

Monsieur Taupe, a prompter
Bernard Fitch

SOLO DANCERS

Laura Feig
Eric Otto

MUSICIANS

David Chan, violin
Rafael Figueroa, cello
Dennis Giauque, harpsichord

Saturday, April 23, 2011, 1:00–3:25 pm

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Renée Fleming as the Countess in a scene from Strauss's *Capriccio*

Musical Preparation **Dennis Giauque, Vlad Iftinca, Steven Gathman, Jonathan Kelly, and Patrick Furrer**
Assistant Stage Director **Gregory Anthony Fortner**
Stage Band Conductor **Jeffrey Goldberg**
German Coach **Irene Spiegelman**
Prompter **Steven Gathman**
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Synopsis

Performed without intermission.

A chateau near Paris, 1920s

It is the birthday of the young, widowed Countess Madeleine. The composer Flamand and the poet Olivier are listening to the rehearsal of Flamand's string sextet, written for the occasion, while the theater director La Roche is dozing. Flamand and Olivier realize that they are both in love with the countess. What will impress her more—Flamand's music or Olivier's poetry? La Roche wakes and joins the argument. Neither poetry nor music, he says, is the greatest of the arts. His own, the art of theatrical production, encompasses and overshadows them both. He believes in entertainment—splendid decor, top notes, and beautiful women, such as the famous actress Clairon, who recently had an affair with Olivier. La Roche is to direct the poet's new play, with Clairon and the countess's brother, a talented amateur actor, in the leading roles. As the three men leave to prepare for the rehearsal, the count and countess enter, teasing each other about their artistic opinions.

La Roche and his protégés return and Clairon arrives for the rehearsal. She and the count read a scene from Olivier's play that ends with the count reciting a passionate sonnet. La Roche leads them both off to rehearsal, leaving Flamand and Olivier alone with the countess. Olivier declares that the sonnet was written for her and recites it again, which inspires Flamand to rush off to set it to music. Olivier seizes the opportunity to declare his love to the countess, who still hesitates between poetry and music. Flamand triumphantly returns to sing the sonnet he has just composed. The countess reflects on the synthesis of words and music, while Olivier, though moved, feels that his work has been ruined. The two men argue about the true authorship of the sonnet, and the countess decides the issue: it is now hers.

When La Roche takes Olivier away to rehearsal, Flamand in turn declares his love to the countess. He asks her to decide: music or poetry, him or Olivier? She promises that he shall have the answer the next morning at eleven o'clock. Flamand leaves in great excitement.

The rehearsal over, the participants return. Flamand and Olivier resume their argument of words versus music and the others join in. The count ridicules opera in general. La Roche introduces a pair of Italian singers who perform a duet. Then he announces his plans for an epic, mythological spectacle, to be given for the count's birthday. When the others make fun of his grandiose ideas, La Roche eloquently attacks them, expressing his theatrical creed: instead of the feeble

attempts of modern writers, he wants drama to show human beings in all their complexity, as creatures of flesh and blood. He challenges Flamand and Olivier to create new works that will speak for their time. His listeners are moved and a new plan emerges: Flamand and Olivier are to write an opera together. Possible subjects are discussed, until the count suggests that the events of this very day should be the subject, with the people present as its characters—it is the opera we have been watching. The ending is yet to be decided by the countess.

The company breaks up and the guests leave for Paris, accompanied by the count. Servants enter to tidy up the room, commenting on the events of the afternoon from their point of view—isn't everybody just playing theater? Monsieur Taupe, the prompter, who had fallen asleep during the rehearsal, unexpectedly appears. He explains to the major-domo that, in fact, it is he who is the most important person in the theater because without him the show couldn't go on. The major-domo, after listening patiently, arranges for his transport home.

It is evening. The countess enters and learns from the major-domo that Olivier will call the next morning at eleven to hear from her the ending of the opera. She tells herself that since the reading of the sonnet, the composer and the poet seem inseparable—now they even expect to meet her the following morning at the same time. She begins singing the sonnet to herself, trying to make up her mind: which of the two men does she love? Looking at herself in the mirror, she realizes she can't make a choice. When the major-domo announces that dinner is served, she smiles at her reflection and slowly walks out of the room.

Richard Strauss

Capriccio

Premiere: Munich, National Theater, 1942

Richard Strauss's final opera is a sophisticated "conversation piece for music" (the work's actual subtitle) centering on the age-old question of whether words or music take precedence in theater and in the arts in general. A poet and a musician submit their respective creations to a young countess and ask her to decide. Implicit in her verdict is another issue: which one of them will she take as her lover? Surrounding this triangle are other characters with various degrees of investment in the same question: the countess's brother, an amateur actor who prefers erotic action to romantic theory; a celebrated actress; and a theater director with a strong sense of the practical (a combination of a Straussian alter ego and an affectionate caricature of the great director Max Reinhardt). The conversation moves to opera as the consummation of all the arts, and it is decided that the poet and the musician should write one together—with the day's events as its subject. The ending is unknown: the countess must choose it. This light framework provides many opportunities for witty interactions and virtuoso musical touches. The idea of "words versus music" had served as the basis for a short opera by Antonio Salieri, performed in Vienna in 1786, and a whiff of nostalgia for a lost (if imaginary) era of refinement permeates *Capriccio*. There is little action in any conventional sense, but there is great insight and plenty of beauty. Furthermore, it is impossible to experience this opera without taking into account the circumstances of its composition and premiere in wartime Germany. Considered in this context, its seeming "triviality" assumes a poignant significance (the word "trivial" appears in the countess's last line in the libretto, posed as a question). The opera's steadfast insistence on the importance of aesthetics and courtly love pleads for the continued celebration of beauty itself in a violent, ugly world. While undeniably more subtle than Strauss's earlier operas, that very subtlety becomes *Capriccio*'s most outstanding and powerful feature.

The Setting

Strauss imagined his work set at a chateau near Paris, with its own private theater. (Indeed, the air of luxury is an integral aspect of the story.) The opera was originally set in the second half of the 18th century, a time when debates about the merits of various genres of music theater triggered elaborate wars of words in and around the French capital. However, the issues at hand—the role of music in opera, the need for plausible drama, the function of dance, design,

and stagecraft—are not specific to that era. The present production places the opera within the glamorous ambience of the interwar period of the 1920s.

The Creators

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, *Salome* (1905) caused a theatrical sensation, and the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to the stage, with most of his works through the 1920s written in collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The idea for *Capriccio* originated with Stefan Zweig, an Austrian writer of novels, plays, and non-fiction who had written the libretto to Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau* (1935). Zweig's Jewish background made further collaboration impossible, and the composer turned to his friend and colleague Clemens Krauss (1893–1954), an Austrian impresario and conductor who also led *Capriccio*'s premiere performance.


The Music

In keeping with the general tone of *Capriccio*, the score is refined and more complex than it appears on first hearing. Musical forms from the 18th century are discernible, especially in the brief dance interludes. The large orchestra is used in a very light-handed manner, rarely employing its full force and instead creating the effect of a chamber ensemble. The opera's overture, for example, is a sextet for strings—and, in keeping with the narrative of the story, forms part of the action. The vocal writing mostly keeps a conversational flow (with a few notable exceptions), ranging from actual spoken lines to "Sprechstimme" (a sort of musicalized speech) to several complex ensembles. Vocal and instrumental writing interact playfully throughout the opera. The bass's extended monologue celebrating the art of theater represents one of the few opportunities for solo singing. The apex of the score is the final scene, a combination of a rapturous orchestral passage (the "Moonlight Music") followed by the countess's monologue, widely considered a supreme example of Strauss's many superb showcases for the soprano voice.

Capriccio at the Met

This production of *Capriccio* premiered in 1998, marking the opera's Met premiere. Andrew Davis conducted Kiri Te Kanawa as the countess, with Wolfgang Brendel, Kathryn Harries, Jan-Hendrik Rootering, David Kuebler, and Simon Keenlyside in the cast. This season's run, with Renée Fleming as the countess, is the production's first revival.

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Anna Netrebko as Anna Bolena

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Program Note

Long famous—indeed notorious—as a composer who exploited opera’s full potential for the grandiose and the ferocious, the 78-year-old Richard Strauss said farewell to the public stage in 1942 with *Capriccio*, a serene score of almost anti-operatic intimacy. Labeled variously by the composer as a “conversation piece” or “theatrical fugue,” *Capriccio* is perhaps not so much the last of Strauss’s 15 music-dramas as his loving epilogue to a completed operatic career. It is a dramatized aesthetic debate, warmed by music at once sharp-tongued and humane. Each of its allegorical characters represents one of the many individual elements that combine into the crazy-quilt art form of opera: a composer, a poet, a producer-director, an actress, a would-be actor, an Italian soprano-tenor team, a ballerina, even a prompter—and, above all, a muse, portrayed by Strauss’s leading soprano.

Realizing that he must alert listeners to the work’s abstract design, Strauss discarded two provisional titles connected with the dramatic action (*Words or Notes* and *A Sonnet for the Countess*) and chose the generic musical term *Capriccio* (akin to the abstract “sonata” or “fugue”). In an instrumental capriccio, the composer leavens a strict formal design with quirkiness and fantasy, delighting in the forbidden; Strauss here departs from operatic convention with equal relish.

The composer first planned *Capriccio* while scoring his opera *Die Schweigsame Frau* (1934–35), based on Stefan Zweig’s adaptation of a Ben Jonson comedy. Working with euphoric ease and rapidity, Strauss could scarcely believe his luck in finding Zweig. After the death of his longtime librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1929, the composer had despaired of procuring a successor even remotely as capable; now in Zweig he had a partner whose style and dramaturgy excited him as Hofmannsthal’s had—and who was much easier to work with on a personal level. Before he had finished *Die Schweigsame Frau*, Strauss was already bombarding Zweig with requests for dramatic ideas, and the pair rapidly drew up an agenda of four operatic projects.

Strauss considered combining two of these into a hybrid piece reminiscent of his earlier *Ariadne auf Naxos*. As in *Ariadne*, a comic backstage prologue (the germ that eventually grew into *Capriccio*) would precede a highly stylized neo-Classical opera based on timeless Greek myth. The prologue would be developed from an 18th-century buffo libretto Zweig had unearthed: Giovanni Casti’s *Prima la Musica, Poi le Parole* (“First the Music, Then the Words”). Casti’s text—once set by Salieri for performance in a famous Viennese court double-bill with Mozart’s *Impresario*—was now hopelessly dated; but Zweig planned to explore the perennial operatic question at its core: “Which is more important, the music or the drama?” The evening would close with Strauss’s “answer” to Casti’s conundrum: a one-act opera on the mythological subject of Daphne. What tickled Strauss about this plan was that it echoed musical history: what

is generally considered to be the first opera ever written—Jacopo Peri's *Dafne* (1597)—had grown out of similar words-versus-music debates.

As *Die Schweigsame Frau*'s June 1935 premiere approached, however, Strauss was disabused of his naïve belief that the Nazis would countenance his partnership with the Jewish Zweig. The composer successfully fought to have Zweig's name listed on the playbills (as a result, the piece would disappear from theaters), but the writer had already found a substitute librettist for his other Strauss projects: Joseph Gregor, a theater historian. With Zweig's assistance, Gregor worked out a Casti scenario, sending it to Strauss 11 days before *Die Schweigsame Frau* premiered. In consternation, Strauss urged Zweig to stick by him; ultimately, he had to accept the Aryan Gregor as a fact of life. Putting the Casti project on the back burner (it would remain there for almost four years), the composer turned Gregor loose on the rest of his Zweig agenda.

Alas, where Zweig (the creative artist) danced, Gregor (the academic) lumbered. An exasperated Strauss rejected draft after draft, often finding it difficult to keep his criticisms within the bounds of civility. Given draconian editing, Gregor's efforts could pass muster in the mythic or historical complexities of *Daphne*, *Friedenstag*, and *Die Liebe der Danae*. The Casti adaptation, at last resumed in March 1939, was another matter. Strauss knew that it needed sparkling conversation and delicate wit; Gregor kept getting bogged down in amorphous poetic imagery and pompous sermonizing. That October, the composer told Gregor to drop the project altogether.

Fortunately, Strauss had already been discussing the opera with the conductor Clemens Krauss, whose literary and dramatic instincts he had good reason to admire. In 1933, Krauss had come to the rescue of Strauss's one abysmal failure with Hofmannsthal, *Die Ägyptische Helena*, which had languished unperformed for several years. Stepping sure-footedly through the poet's mytho-symbolic quagmire, Krauss clarified the action and won the disgraced score a heartening measure of acclaim. Strauss now asked the conductor to develop the *Wort oder Ton* project with him, offering Krauss libretto credit.

The scenario Krauss inherited already contained many elements of the final *Capriccio*. Clearly, the words-versus-music question demanded to be embodied in a love triangle. The beautiful, aesthetically inclined heroine (Countess Madeleine) is courted by a composer (Flamand) and a poet (Olivier) and unable to decide between them—the choice becoming even more difficult when Flamand sets Olivier's love-sonnet to music. The milieu was Enlightenment France, with the birth pangs of Gluck's "modern" opera sending tremors through *Capriccio*'s central debate and allowing witty musical references to Gluck, Rameau, and Couperin. Krauss wrote the libretto in pithy prose. For the crucial sonnet, he asked his conducting protégé Hans Swarowsky (an adept linguist) to find and translate a good period example. Discovering that French love sonnets circa

1777 did not exist (André Chénier came a bit later), Swarowsky went back two centuries to Pierre Ronsard. Strauss was delighted by Swarowsky's German rendering and finished setting the sonnet on November 23, 1939. The first music in *Capriccio* to be composed, it is particularly important because it is repeated in key scenes.

As late as June 1940, Strauss still intended to close the evening with his already completed *Daphne* (1937), to be presented as an opera by Flamand and Olivier (the pairing would have lasted over four hours). Fortunately, he found a far more ingenious solution—toward the end, the audience learns that what they have been watching is the Flamand–Olivier opera, *Capriccio*! With the book still incomplete but well along, Strauss began composing the introduction and first scene in July 1940. Receiving the last of the libretto in mid-January 1941, he finished the entire short score on February 24 and the full orchestration on August 3.

Inspired by the composer's love of paradox and intellectual argument, the music of *Capriccio* represents a rejuvenated Strauss, notably fresher and more imaginative than in his spotty scores for *Friedenstag* (1936) and *Die Liebe der Danae* (1940). From the outset, Strauss changes all the rules, beginning with an "overture" wholly un-operatic in sound, scored for string sextet. We soon discover that this sonatina-form movement with its seraphic opening and stormy central portion has been composed by Flamand in homage to Madeleine. For the sonnet, Strauss crafts a lovely melody, drawing most discretely on late Verdi—*Otello* ("Ave Maria") at the opening, *Falstaff* (the Nannetta–Fenton duet) at the first melodic climax. Complex ensembles crackle with invention: the central fugue (labeled "Discussion about Words or Notes") and the "Laughing" and "Argument" Octets, in which the director La Roche's stage-spectacles are held up to ridicule. La Roche's ensuing defense is a highlight, its length justified by its musical majesty. Here, Strauss presents a thoroughly convincing warts-and-all picture of a vain but undeniably great man.

But of course he saves his greatest eloquence for Madeleine's final monologue. To introduce the scene, he resurrects a noble horn melody that he had squandered 20 years before on a libelous song-cycle written specifically to break a publishing contract. Even in old age, Strauss was still inspired to lyric rapture by a heroine's quest for self-knowledge, as Madeleine sings the sonnet accompanying herself on the harp and searches her own image in the mirror, faced with a question that has no answer. So long as opera survives—and human brains perceive and integrate the way they do—the choice "words or music" is literally meaningless. Their coexistence in song, fraught with epiphany and vexation, remains an ever-wondrous mystery. —*Benjamin Folkman*

Capriccio in a Twenties Setting

The central issue in *Capriccio*, happily, can never be resolved. The superiority of music over poetry, or vice versa, must always be a matter of personal preference. The countess, not wishing to sacrifice one by choosing the other, proposes opera as a way to possess both. But this compromise, far from being a solution, sharpens a mere topic of conversation into a vexed confrontation—for in opera the conflict of priorities between words and music is enacted with every performance. Those of us who work in opera are inevitably caught up in the battle.

Capriccio is a conversation piece, concerned with ideas. Given that the issues embodied in these ideas are as alive today as they ever were, and that by performing the opera at all we are contributing to the argument, I wanted to find a way of doing it that would stress how contemporary it is. In a piece that is of necessity rather static, the 18th-century convention of paniered skirts and powdered wigs could easily lend to the proceedings an air of the museum. So often with *Capriccio*, one gets the impression of a group of silk and satin dilettantes idling their way affectedly through a vacuous afternoon, whereas the essence of the situation is a number of professional artists discussing their work with their patrons.

However, unlike the ideas, the social circumstances embodied in *Capriccio* are not of the present. Where now do we find an elite wealthy and cultivated enough to patronize artists as extravagantly as the countess and her brother do? The task was thus to find a time that would be true to the dramatic content of the opera.

Paris in the decade after World War I had all that we needed. Patronesses like the Princesse de Polignac commissioned works from Stravinsky, Cocteau, the composers of Les Six, and others for private consumption. All of them were concerned with problems of form, many with finding new ways of combining words and music for the theater. Diaghilev and Reinhardt bestrode the theatrical scene.

Most of all, the relaxation of social behavior found in the post-war period, with its ingenious emphasis on comfort that is not yet at the expense of elegance, seems to look back to the 18th century and forward to our own. It releases to the performer a rich vocabulary of gesture, posture, and moment-to-moment activity that is more accessible to both audience and actors, being much closer to their own, and that, therefore, can only assist in pointing the relevance of the conversation to us as we watch and listen.

Those who find problematic the references within our text to 18th-century composers and writers should reflect that every age has its reformers and traditionalists. Names change but issues remain. Strauss, by claiming in his preface to *Capriccio* that he himself was the direct heir of Gluck's reforms, cleared the way for an exposition in words and music of his own compositional concerns. (As if to leave us in no doubt at all of this musical self-portrait, he even quotes frequently from his own work.) In short, everything Strauss represents was as true during his working life as it was in Gluck's—most notably in the wholly 20th-century figure of the producer La Roche.

La Roche is anxious to people the stage with "creatures of flesh and blood," "people like ourselves with whom we can identify." This interpretation of *Capriccio* is an attempt to please him. —John Cox

John Cox directed the Met's production of Capriccio in 1998.

The Cast



Andrew Davis

CONDUCTOR (HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Capriccio* at the Met, *Peter Grimes* at Covent Garden, *Rusalka* and *Thaïs* at the Glyndebourne Festival, *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Canadian Opera Company, and *The Mikado*, *Lohengrin*, and *La Fanciulla del West* at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

MET APPEARANCES *Salome* (debut, 1981), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Merry Widow*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Rusalka*, and *Die Walküre* with the company on tour in Japan.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been music director and principal conductor of Lyric Opera of Chicago since 2000, is conductor laureate of the Toronto Symphony and BBC Symphony Orchestra, and was music director of the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has conducted all of the major orchestras of the world, from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to the Berlin Philharmonic and the Royal Concertgebouw, as well as at opera houses and festivals throughout the world, including La Scala and the Bayreuth Festival.



Robert Perdziola

COSTUME DESIGNER & INTERIOR DÉCOR (PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON *Capriccio* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS Costume designer for *Il Pirata* (debut, 2002).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Sets and costumes for *Arabella* for Opera Australia; *Così fan tutte* for Opera Monte Carlo, Garsington Opera, and San Francisco Opera; *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera; *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein* for Opera Boston; and productions at the Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Glimmerglass Opera. He has also designed sets and costumes for *Pillar of Fire* and *Le Spectre de la Rose* for American Ballet Theatre. Current productions include costumes for *An Ideal Husband* at Washington, D.C.'s Shakespeare Theatre Company and sets and costumes for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for Ontario's Stratford Shakespeare Festival.



Sarah Connolly

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MIDDLESBOROUGH, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Clairon in *Capriccio* at the Met and Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

MET APPEARANCES The Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* (debut, 2005).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at Covent Garden and La Scala, the title role of *Giulio Cesare* and Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Glyndebourne Festival, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at Barcelona's Liceu and Florence's Maggio Musicale, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Scottish Opera and for English National Opera, the title role of *Maria Stuarda* and Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for Opera North, and Romeo and the title role of *Ariodante* with New York City Opera. Future engagements include Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at Covent Garden, Orfeo in Montpellier, Octavian at English National Opera, and return engagements at the Liceu, Paris Opera, and Glyndebourne Festival.



Renée Fleming

SOPRANO (INDIANA, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Armida* and the Countess in *Capriccio* at the Met, Desdemona in *Otello* at the Paris Opera, and concert engagements with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, National Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Munich Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony, Aarhus Symphony, Royal Stockholm Symphony, Staatskapelle Dresden, and Berliner Philharmoniker, among others.

MET APPEARANCES The title roles of *Thaïs*, *Rusalka*, *Manon*, *Rodelinda*, *Arabella*, and *Susannah*, the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Desdemona, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 1991), Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Rosina in the world premiere of *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Imogene in *Il Pirata*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Marguerite in *Faust*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses, is the recipient of three Grammy Awards, and was awarded the titles *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* and *Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government. She was a 1988 winner of the Met's National Council Auditions.



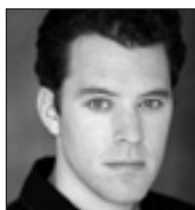
Russell Braun

BARITONE (FRANKFURT, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Chou En-lai in *Nixon in China* and Olivier in *Capriccio* at the Met, Lescaut in *Manon* on tour in Japan with London's Royal Opera (Covent Garden), and Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* at La Scala.

MET APPEARANCES Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* (debut, 1995), and Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the Traveller in *Death in Venice* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, Valentin in *Faust* at Covent Garden, Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at La Scala, Oreste in *Iphigénie en Tauride* with the Paris Opera, the title role of *Eugene Onegin* with the San Francisco Opera, and the title role of *Billy Budd*, Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*, and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Canadian Opera Company.



Joseph Kaiser

TENOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Flamand in *Capriccio* at the Met, Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* for his debut at the Paris Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden, Števa in *Jenůfa* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Munich Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Narraboth in *Salome*, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* (debut, 2007), and Tamino.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent debuts include the title role of *Faust* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of Messenger's *Fortunio* at Paris's Opéra Comique, Don Ottavio at the Salzburg Festival, and Admète in Gluck's *Alceste* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He also recently sang Tamino with Los Angeles Opera, Lenski at the Salzburg Festival, Narraboth at Covent Garden, and Jonas in Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* at Santa Fe Opera. He starred as Tamino in Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of *The Magic Flute* and appeared on Broadway as Schaunard in the Baz Luhrmann production of *La Bohème*.



Morten Frank Larsen

BARITONE (HAMMERUM, DENMARK)

THIS SEASON The Count in *Capriccio* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Mandryka in *Arabella* with the Vienna State Opera and in Zurich, Berlin, Graz, and Frankfurt; Jochanaan in *Salome* with the Vienna State Opera and in Munich, Berlin, Toulouse, and Palermo; Don Giovanni, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, and Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Copenhagen; Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Denmark's Aarhus Festival; and Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Tokyo. He has also sung Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, the Count in *Capriccio*, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* at the Vienna State Opera and Nathan in Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice* and Gilles de Rais in the posthumous world premiere of Walter Braunfels's *Jeanne d'Arc* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. A member of the Vienna Volksoper since 2000, his many roles with that company range from Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* to Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and the title role in Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*.



Peter Rose

BASS (CANTERBURY, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON La Roche in *Capriccio* at the Met, Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* in Hamburg, and Claggart in *Billy Budd* with the Vienna State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Bottom (debut, 1996), Ramfis in *Aida*, Baron Ochs, and Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Among his recent performances are Falstaff with Seattle Opera, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with the San Francisco Opera and Bavarian State Opera, and Baron Ochs at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, and in Barcelona. He has also sung King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* and Gurnemanz at the Vienna State Opera, Kecal in *The Bartered Bride* at Covent Garden and in Chicago, Mustafa in *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Amsterdam and Dresden, Dosifei in *Khovanshchina* in Hamburg, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in Cologne, Rocco in *Fidelio* in Vienna, and Boris Godunov with English National Opera. This October he will sing Baron Ochs at La Scala.