Benjamin Britten

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Opera in three acts
Libretto by the composer and Peter Pears, adapted from the play by William Shakespeare

Saturday, October 19, 2013, 1:00–4:40 pm

This production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream was made possible by a generous gift from the Edgar Foster Daniels Foundation.

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from Rolex.
The Metropolitan Opera
2013–14 Season

The 16th Metropolitan Opera performance of
Benjamin Britten’s

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Conductor
James Conlon

Oberon, King of the Fairies
Iestyn Davies

Tytania, Queen of the Fairies
Kathleen Kim

Puck
Riley Costello

Theseus, Duke of Athens
Ryan McKinny

Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
Tamara Mumford*

Lysander, in love with Hermia
Joseph Kaiser

Demetrius, in love with Hermia
Michael Todd Simpson

Hermia, in love with Lysander
Elizabeth DeShong

Helena, in love with Demetrius
Erin Wall

Bottom, a weaver
Matthew Rose

Quince, a carpenter
Patrick Carfizzi

Flute, a bellows-mender
Barry Banks

Snug, a joiner
Paul Corona

Snout, a tinker
Scott Scully

Starveling, a tailor
Evan Hughes*

Cobweb, a fairy
Seth Ewing-Crystal

Peaseblossom, a fairy
Kiki Porter

Mustardseed, a fairy
Benjamin P. Wenzelberg

Moth, a fairy
Thatcher Pitkoff

SOLO TRUMPET
Billy R. Hunter, Jr.

Saturday, October 19, 2013, 1:00–4:40 pm
Kathleen Kim as Tytania and Matthew Rose as Bottom in a scene from Britten’s
A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo
Assistants to the Set Designer  Roderick Langsford and
George Souglides
Assistants to the Costume Designer  Wizzy Shawyer and
Tania Spooner
Musical Preparation  Dennis Giauque, Gareth Morrell, and
Dan Saunders
Assistant Stage Directors  Peter McClintock and
J. Knighten Smit
Stage Band Conductor  Jeffrey Goldberg
English Coach  Felicity Palmer
Met Titles  Sonya Haddad
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and
painted in Metropolitan Opera Shops
Ass’s Head by  Ralph Lee
Wigs and Wall by  Izquierdo Studio
Costumes executed by Metropolitan Opera Costume Shop
Wigs and Makeup executed by Metropolitan Opera Wig and
Makeup Department

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Met Titles
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ON STAGE NOW

A new production and three returning favorites!

BRITTEN

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

OCT 15, 19 mat, 23, 26, 31
Britten’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s magical romance returns to the Met for the first time in ten years, in celebration of the composer’s centennial.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Eugene Onegin

OCT 16, 19
The Met’s 2013–14 season opens with the premiere of Deborah Warner’s new production of Tchaikovsky’s fateful romance, starring Anna Netrebko, Mariusz Kwiecien, and Piotr Beczala. Valery Gergiev conducts.

SHOSTAKOVICH

The Nose

OCT 17, 22, 26 mat
William Kentridge’s inventive production of Shostakovich’s satirical opera, which stormed the Met in 2010, returns to the stage starring Paulo Szot, conducted by Valery Gergiev.

BELLINI

Norma

OCT 14, 18, 24, 28  NOV 1
Sondra Radvanovsky and Angela Meade take on the title role in Bellini’s crowd-pleaser of bel canto fireworks, opposite Aleksandrs Antonenko and Kate Aldrich.

Visit metopera.org for full casting information and ticket availability.
Act I
Just after nightfall in the woods outside Athens

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:55 PM)

Act II
Later that night

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:20 PM)

Act III
Shortly before dawn

Act I
Night has fallen. Oberon, King of the Fairies, is quarrelling with Tytania, his queen, over a young boy who is under her protection. She refuses to give him up. Oberon sends his servant Puck to find a magic flower, whose juice, sprinkled on Tytania’s eyelids, will make her fall in love with the first creature she sees upon waking. He plans to steal the boy while she is under the spell.

Lysander and Hermia have escaped from the city and its law, which allows Hermia’s father to force her into marriage with Demetrius. They decide to elope and set off into the woods. Demetrius, who loves Hermia, chases after her, himself pursued by Helena, who is hopelessly in love with him. But Demetrius scornfully rejects her and runs off into the forest. Oberon, who has witnessed their argument, orders Puck to seek out Demetrius and make him fall in love with Helena with the help of the magic juice.

Six working men have also left the city to discuss in secret a play they hope to perform at the wedding of Theseus, Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. There is some disagreement over casting, with Bottom, the weaver, and Flute, the bellows-mender, finally agreeing to play the parts of Pyramus and Thisbe, the star-crossed lovers of the play’s title. Quince, the carpenter, as well as the author and director of the play, hands out scripts, and all agree to meet later that night to rehearse.

Exhausted and lost, Lysander and Hermia lie down to sleep. Puck, who thinks he has found Demetrius, sprinkles the juice of the magic flower on Lysander’s eyes. Demetrius appears, still pursued by Helena, and angrily abandons her. Alone and in despair, she sees the sleeping Lysander and wakes him. Under the effect of the spell, he immediately declares his love. Helena is furious and runs off,
thinking he is making fun of her. Lysander follows. Hermia awakes from a terrible
dream to find herself alone.

In the heart of the forest, the fairies help their mistress Tytania to sleep. Oberon
steals in to put the juice on her eyes, hoping she will “wake when some vile
thing is near.”

Act II
Later that night, Quince and his men meet to rehearse. Puck, seeing them at
work, decides to amuse himself by turning Bottom into an ass. At the sight of
this strange and terrifying transformation, the others run off. Bottom sings out
loud to keep his courage up. This wakes Tytania, who immediately falls in love
with him. With the help of the fairies, she manages to coax him to bed.

Oberon is delighted to find Tytania in love with an ass. But when Demetrius
arrives, still in pursuit of Hermia, he realizes Puck has made a mistake. Demetrius
falls asleep, and Oberon pours the juice on his eyes. The arrival of Helena and
Lysander wakes Demetrius, who now declares his passion for Helena. When
Hermia appears as well, only to be rejected by Lysander, Helena is convinced
that the men have planned it all to mock her. The four quarrel furiously. Enraged
at Puck, Oberon gives him an antidote to administer to Lysander. Puck leads
the lovers away through the forest until they fall asleep and puts the herb on
Lysander’s eyes.

Act III
Shortly before dawn, Oberon releases Tytania from the spell. Daybreak rouses
the four lovers, who are finally reconciled—Demetrius with Helena and Lysander
with Hermia. Bottom, restored to human shape, wakes from what he thinks was
a strange dream. He wanders off while his friends search for him. They’re about
to give up when he returns with news that their play has been chosen to be
performed at court.

Back in Athens, the four lovers ask Theseus’s forgiveness for their disobedience
to the law. Theseus decides that they shall be married together with him and
Hippolyta. Quince and his players finally give their performance of “Pyramus
and Thisbe,” and the three couples retire to bed. Oberon, Tytania, and the
fairies bless the sleeping household—with Puck having the last word.
In Focus

Benjamin Britten

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Premiere: Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, 1960
Wit, romance, a bewitching air of wonder, and moments of genuine human emotion—all the dramatic elements that have made Shakespeare’s fantasy-comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* an audience favorite for centuries are equally abundant in Britten’s operatic adaptation. The unique ambience of the story has attracted musicians for a long time: Mendelssohn’s incidental music for the Shakespeare remains highly popular today, and Purcell’s dramatic setting *The Fairy Queen* was well known to Britten. Yet for all the music inspired by the play, Britten’s opera remains uniquely rewarding in its ability to blend the story’s many layers with a distinctly accessible 20th-century musical language. The multi-faceted cast of characters includes two pairs of lovers who have quarreled themselves to the brink of separation; the King and Queen of the fairies, who are fighting about a foundling child; a lordly couple whose impending marriage appears to have set all creation speculating on the nature and limits of love; and a band of bumbling commoners who hilariously prepare and perform a play about true love gone wrong. To simply capture the essence of these diverse stories and moods in a single work of music is engrossing enough, but it is opera’s (and Britten’s) special ability to brilliantly move among them and illuminate their relationships to each other.

The Creators
British composer Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) created works in a wide variety of genres, and several of his operas (including *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd*) are among the most enduring of the 20th century. The plays of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) have inspired a huge number of operatic interpretations from composers of many nations and in many languages. Britten’s collaborator in adapting *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* into a libretto was his life partner, tenor Peter Pears (1910–1986). Many of Britten’s operas were created with starring roles for Pears; in this one, he took the smaller yet crucial role of Flute.

The Setting
The opera, like the play, is set in the “woods outside Athens.” This locale refers to both the dim and unknown atmosphere of the forest and the city of Athens, the epitome of civilization. The play has scenes in both environments; in the
libretto, most of the action taking place in the city (Shakespeare’s first act) is cut, shifting the emphasis onto the world of the fairies.

**The Music**
Much of the power of Britten’s remarkable score lies in the colors depicted in both vocal lines and subtle changes in orchestral tone, which masterfully reflect the aura of magical transformation so central to the story. The orchestra prepares the audience’s ear at the very beginning of the opera, moving through a sequence of 12 string chords that appear to morph imperceptibly from one to the next. The various realms that intersect throughout the story are clearly defined in the instrumentation: harps, harpsichord, celesta, and percussion are notable in the world of the fairies; woodwinds and strings are prominent for the lovers; and bassoon and lower brass are emphasized for the rustics. The onstage fairies in Act II serenade Bottom using sopranino recorders, small cymbals, and woodblocks. Vocal settings likewise illustrate the nature of the characters: the all-male rustics are mostly lower-voiced; the lovers, male and female, occupy the middle ranges; and the fairies are sung by children’s voices, coloratura soprano, and countertenor. Puck, as a sort of emissary between these worlds (including our own, since he addresses the audience directly) is a spoken role, with trumpet and snare drum often accompanying his lines. Among the score’s vocal highlights is Thisbe’s lament during the play-within-the-play in Act III. Featuring a florid flute accompaniment (with the role of Thisbe fittingly performed by Flute), it is a parody of a Donizetti mad scene. Tytania’s coloratura aria in Act II is a more modern vision of madness. Oberon’s Act I aria, “I know a bank” explores the dreaminess in this tale, while the trio “Now until the break of day” toward the end of Act III, performed by Oberon, Tytania, and the fairies, is a haunting depiction of strife giving way to concord.

**A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Met**
Britten’s opera was first seen at the Met in this production in 1996, which marked the company debuts of director Tim Albery and designer Antony McDonald. David Atherton conducted the ensemble cast, which included Sylvia McNair as Tytania and Jochen Kowalski as Oberon, as well as Met debutants Peter Rose, Barry Banks, and Rodney Gilfrey. The production was revived in 2002, featuring, among others, Susan Chilcott in her debut as Helena, David Daniels, Paul Groves, and Nathan Gunn.
Benjamin Britten, the composer who excelled in the evocation of night and dreams and nightmares, was bound to turn to one of the world’s greatest poet-dramatist’s extrusion into the realm of fairy nocturnal fantasy. But Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream also offered him two worlds, human and fairy, real and unreal, mixed together until reality becomes unreality, and it offered that ambiguous eroticism in the depiction of which his music abounds: Oberon and Tytania quarrel because of Tytania’s love for the “lovely boy stolen from an Indian King;” Tytania desires Bottom in his guise as an ass; the human lovers quarrel and exchange partners while under the influence of fairy magic; and in the final scene, the human lovers watch the rustics’ comic play as a means of passing time until Duke Theseus announces “Lovers to bed.” No doubt what this play and this opera are about!

A Midsummer Night’s Dream was Britten’s ninth opera, if we include Paul Bunyan and exclude Noye’s Fludde. Written in haste for the Aldeburgh Festival of 1960, it was the first opera he had composed since The Turn of the Screw in 1954. Thirty-nine composers are listed in The New Grove Dictionary of Opera as having made some sort of attempt to transfer this play (or selections of it) to the opera stage, but their efforts have mostly vanished like the soft air. Only two others have left their mark on it to any extent: Purcell, whose music for the masque The Fairy Queen is superb (though the text has nothing to do with Shakespeare), and Mendelssohn, whose wonderful overture, written when he was 17, was followed 17 years later by several numbers of incidental music in which he miraculously recaptured its youthful spirit and sparkle.

The most radical departure Britten and his co-librettist on this project, the tenor Peter Pears, made from Shakespeare’s play was to open the opera in the forest near Athens and to introduce the fairies and the supernatural beings before bringing in the lovers, the rustics, and the Duke’s court. They reduced Shakespeare’s five acts to three and his 2000-odd lines by half, yet they needed to insert only six words of their own. When in Act I Lysander tells Hermia that he will marry her in his widowed aunt’s house seven leagues from Athens, he explains that there “the sharp Athenian law (compelling thee to marry with Demetrius) cannot pursue us.” The words in parenthesis were the librettists’ inspired means of dispensing with Shakespeare’s Act I, much of which is concerned with the insistence of Hermia’s father that she should marry the man he will choose for her. Elsewhere, in about six instances, lines are allocated to different characters in order to balance the ensembles. The restructuring led to certain minor discrepancies in the plot that only the most persnickety listener would bother about. Britten felt no guilt about halving a play he had always loved (“the original Shakespeare will survive”). He said he always felt it to be the work of a very young man “whatever Shakespeare’s actual age.
when he wrote it. The greatness of Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* lies in the fact that he and Pears created an opera, separate and in its own right, which acknowledged the glory of Shakespeare, just as Boito and Verdi did with *Otello* and *Falstaff*.

Britten and Pears defined sharply the three sets of characters, the humans (lovers), the fairies, and the “mechanicals” (Britten preferred the word “rustics”). The fairies are portrayed by children’s voices, often raw and strident, with accompaniment of harps, harpsichord, celesta, vibraphone, glockenspiel, and other percussion; the lovers are a conventional soprano–mezzo–tenor–baritone quartet, with woodwind and strings; and the comic rustics are two each of tenor, baritone, and bass, with lower brass and bassoon. Oberon, King of the Fairies, who in German folklore is a kind of pre-Wagnerian dwarf, is drawn by Britten as a jealous sinister tyrant. His music is baroque in its Purcellian brilliance and hardness and, in the composer’s finest and most daring stroke of all, he is a countertenor, the perfect asexual (yet curiously potent) voice for the role. Tytania (Britten adopts the First Folio spelling) is delineated in the diamantine timbre of a coloratura soprano.

Britten’s fairies are far removed from the white-muslin-clad little sweeties of the Victorian era. He had, he wrote, always been struck by “a kind of sharpness in Shakespeare’s fairies: besides they have some odd poetry to speak... The fairies are, after all, the guards of Tytania, so they have, in places, martial music.” Spiky music too, but in the scene where they introduce themselves to Bottom, their music is simultaneously funny and disturbingly touching. Throughout their scenes, Britten achieves the supernatural element, the dealing in charms and spells, by use of ostinato devices and of inversion. The fairies live in a sound-world of weirdly bright instrumental colors, garlanded with harp arpeggios. There is also Puck, the mischievous cause of all that goes wrong in Oberon’s plan, the fairies’ foreman, as it were. Britten regarded Puck as “absolutely amoral and yet innocent” and made his a speaking part, rhythmically notated. He tumbles about like a court jester and his acrobatics are accompanied by drum-taps and ornate (fiendishly difficult) flourishes on a D trumpet. Britten’s inspiration for this was some Swedish child acrobats with vivid powers of agile mimicry whom he saw on a visit to Stockholm.

The lovers’ music is in Britten’s most romantic style, their state of amorous anguish depicted chromatically. Yet when they are under Puck’s misapplied spell—his trumpet now muted and combined with a celesta chord of E flat—Britten subtly alters and intensifies the contours of their vocal lines, culminating in the women’s quarrel. The lovers are reconciled, after some of the most haunting horn-calls in all opera, in a simple and ecstatic quartet all the more effective for following closely upon the solemn and stately ritual with which Oberon and Tytania become “new in amity.”
As for the rustics, although in a sense they represent the light of common day, we meet them first under the enchantment of the wood when they, too, seem to be part of a dream rather than of reality, as they rehearse their play for the Duke’s wedding celebrations. It is typical of the musical magic that Britten distills from Shakespeare’s verbal magic that the most tender, affecting, and sensuous love-music in the opera accompanies Bottom’s wooing of Tytania, his “exposition of sleep.” In the presentation of the rustics’ play “Pyramus and Thisbe,” Shakespeare burlesques the conventions of the theater in his day: in his operatic version, Britten parodied the 19th-century operatic styles of Rossini, Donizetti, and early Verdi. The climax in “Pyramus” is a mad scene after which no bel canto opera can quite seem the same again. Gentle fun is poked at the 20th century too, even at Britten himself—and Peter Evans has drawn attention to the most subtle joke of all, when Snout’s representation of the wall is set like Schoenbergian Sprechgesang and draws from Hippolyta the comment: “This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.”

The opera, more than the play, is dominated by the “wood outside Athens” in which all but the last scene is set. Britten brings it to our eyes and ears in music that suggests it as a force of nature—we hear it rustle and breathe—and as the place of spells and dreams and sleep. Strange glissandi on muted strings that gradually open into a series of major triads and open fifths begin the opera and return again and again. They are unforgettable. So is much else: Oberon’s “I know a bank;” the fairies’ “on the ground, sleep sound” chorus at the end of Act II, music of visionary power; the extraordinary effect of the return of day and the departure of magic in Act III, to be followed by the final scene when the fairies (and magic) return and sing their last and most haunting music, “Now until the break of day.” To many of us, this opera belongs among the half-dozen most successful musical interpretations of Shakespeare, a work of the highest imaginative order.

—Michael Kennedy
The Cast

James Conlon
CONDUCTOR (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

This Season: A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Met, I Due Foscari at Vienna’s Theater an der Wien, I Vespri Siciliani at Madrid’s Teatro Real, and Falstaff, Die Zauberflöte, Billy Budd, and Lucia di Lammermoor with the Los Angeles Opera.

Met Appearances: He has conducted more than 260 performances of 21 operas here including the world premiere of Picker’s An American Tragedy, Die Zauberflöte (debut, 1976), Susannah, Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, Semiramide, Tosca, La Traviata, and Dialogues des Carmélites.

Career Highlights: He became music director of the Los Angeles Opera in 2006 and is also music director of the Ravinia Festival and the Cincinnati May Festival. Previously he was principal conductor of the Paris National Opera, general music director of the City of Cologne, and music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic. Since his debut with the New York Philharmonic in 1974 he has appeared with every major North American and European orchestra and with many of the world’s major opera companies including La Scala, Covent Garden, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Florence’s Maggio Musicale.

Elizabeth DeShong
MEZZO-SOPRANO (WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA)

This Season: Hermia in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The Enchanted Island and Suzuki in Madama Butterfly at the Met, Suzuki with the San Francisco Opera, and concerts with the Webern Symphony Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra.

Met Appearances: Suzy in La Rondine (debut, 2008) and the Priestess in Aida.

Career Highlights: Recent performances include Hansel in Hansel and Gretel with Lyric Opera of Chicago and at the Glyndebourne Festival, Rosina in Il Barbiere di Siviglia with Michigan Opera Theatre, Maffio Orsini in Lucrezia Borgia for the San Francisco Opera, Angelina in La Cenerentola at the Glyndebourne Festival and the Canadian Opera Company, Britten’s Hermia with the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Canadian Opera Company, the Composer in Ariadne auf Naxos with the Washington National Opera, and Suzuki with the Santa Fe Opera.
Kathleen Kim  
SOPRANO (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA)

**THIS SEASON**  Tytania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Met, Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the San Diego Opera, and concerts with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.


**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  She has recently appeared as Olympia at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera and Barcelona’s Liceu, the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Bavarian State Opera, Oscar with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Melissa in Handel’s *Amadigi di Gaula* with Central City Opera, and Poppea in *Agrippina* with Boston Lyric Opera. She has also sung the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Sarasota Opera, the Fairy in Massenet’s *Cendrillon* with Opéra de Lille, and Fire, Princess, and the Nightingale in Ravel’s *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges* at the Glyndebourne Festival.

Erin Wall  
SOPRANO (CALGARY, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON**  Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and the title role of *Arabella* at the Met, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the Vancouver Opera, and Anna in Kevin Puts’s *Silent Night* for her Cincinnati Opera debut.

**MET APPEARANCES**  Donna Anna (debut, 2009)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  Recent performances include *Arabella* in Santa Fe, Donna Anna at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, and Antonia in *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* and Clémence in Saariaho’s *L’Amour de Loin* at the Canadian Opera Company. She has also recently sung Jenifer in *The Midsummer Marriage* at the London Proms, and the title role of *Thaïs* at the Edinburgh Festival. Recent concert performances include Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 and Symphony No. 8, the Verdi Requiem, Britten’s *War Requiem*, and Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and Symphony No. 9 in cities including Edinburgh, Sydney, Chicago, Washington, Houston, and Frankfurt. This season’s concert engagements include performances in Tokyo, Toronto, Birmingham, and Edinburgh in works by Beethoven, Poulenc, Mahler, and Strauss.
Barry Banks
TENOR (STOKE-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND)

This season  Flute in A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Met, the Duke in Rigoletto with English National Opera, and Iago in Rossini’s Otello at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Salzburg Festival.

Met Appearances Sixteen roles including Ernesto in Don Pasquale, Carlo and Gernando in Armida, the Italian Tenor in Capriccio, Count Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Elvino in La Sonnambula, Tonio in La Fille du Régiment, Flute (debut, 1996), Pedrillo in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Lindoro in L’Italiana in Algeri, and Don Ramiro in La Cenerentola.

Career Highlights Don Narciso in Il Turco in Italia at Covent Garden and Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor at the English National Opera, Valletto in L’Incoronazione di Poppea with the Bastille Opera, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni with English National Opera, the title role of Weber’s Oberon at the Edinburgh Festival, and Truffaldino in The Love for Three Oranges with Paris’s Bastille Opera.

Riley Costello
GUEST ARTIST (BELMONT, CALIFORNIA)

This season  Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream for his Met debut.

Career Highlights Born in California and currently living in New York City, he has been seen on Broadway in Everyday Rapture, Bye Bye Birdie, and 13. Other credits include the world premiere of Bruce Hornsby’s SCKBSTD with the Virginia Stage Company, and, most recently, SURF! The Musical in Las Vegas, directed by Kristin Hanggi.
Iestyn Davies  
COUNTERTENOR (YORK, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Oberon in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Met, Angel/Boy in George Benjamin’s *Written on Skin* at Paris’s Opéra Comique, and Bertarido in *Rodelinda* at English National Opera.  

**MET APPEARANCES** Trinculo in *The Tempest* and Unulfo in *Rodelinda* (debut, 2011).  

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Operatic engagements include Daniel in Handel’s *Belshazzar* with Les Arts Florissants in Madrid, London, and Paris, Didymus in Handel’s *Theodora* in Quebec, Eustazio in *Rinaldo* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ottone in *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* in Zurich and with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Arsace in *Partenope* for New York City Opera, Oberon with Houston Grand Opera and English National Opera, Apollo in Britten’s *Death in Venice* with English National Opera and at La Scala, Hamor in Handel’s *Jeptha* with Welsh National Opera, and Creonte in Agostino Steffani’s *Niobe, Regina di Tebe* at Covent Garden. He is a regular recitalist at London’s Wigmore Hall and has also appeared in concert with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Britten Sinfonia, the Concerto Köln, Concerto Copenhagen, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Academy of Ancient Music.

Joseph Kaiser  
TENOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON** Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Met, Walter in Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s *The Passenger* at Houston Grand Opera, Narraboth in *Salome* at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Washington National Opera, and concert engagements with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, and NHK Symphony Orchestra.  

**MET APPEARANCES** Grimoaldo in *Rodelinda*, Flamand in *Capriccio*, Narraboth, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* (debut, 2007), and Tamino.  

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, Matteo in *Arabella*, and Flamand at the Paris Opera, Tamino at Covent Garden, Admète in *Alceste* at the Vienna State Opera, Števa in *Jenůfa* at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Munich Festival. He has also sung the title role of *Faust* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of Messager’s *Fortunio* at Paris’s Opéra Comique, Admète at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* at the Salzburg Festival. He starred as Tamino in Kenneth Branagh’s film adaptation of *The Magic Flute* and appeared on Broadway in the Baz Luhrmann production of *La Bohème*.  

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**The Cast CONTINUED**

**Michael Todd Simpson**  
BARI TONE (GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA)

**THIS SEASON**  Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Met and John Sorel in *Menotti’s The Consul* with Seattle Opera.  
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  Escamillo in *Carmen* and Marcello in *La Bohème* at Seattle Opera, the title role of *Don Giovanni* and Silvio in *Pagliacci* at the Pittsburgh Opera, the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Dallas Opera, Tom Joad in Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The Grapes of Wrath* with Opera Pacific, and Tooley in the American premiere of Richard Rodney Bennett’s *The Mines of Sulphur* at the Glimmerglass Opera. He has also sung with the New York City Opera, Cleveland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Portland Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Opera North, and Opera Australia.

**Matthew Rose**  
BASS (BRIGHTON, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON**  Bottom in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Met, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Talbot in *Maria Stuarda* at Covent Garden.  
**MET APPEARANCES**  Colline in *La Bohème* (debut, 2011) and Talbot.  
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  Bottom at La Scala, Lyon Opera, Covent Garden, Houston Grand Opera, and for his 2006 debut at the Glyndebourne Festival, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Leporello in Santa Fe and at the Glyndebourne Festival, Nick Shadow in *The Rake’s Progress* at the Glyndebourne Festival and Gothenburg Opera, and Claggart in *Billy Budd* for the English National Opera. He has also appeared in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, and Rome’s Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.