

RICHARD STRAUSS

ELEKTRA

CONDUCTOR
Esa-Pekka Salonen

PRODUCTION
Patrice Chéreau

SET DESIGNER
Richard Peduzzi

COSTUME DESIGNER
Caroline de Vivaise

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Dominique Bruguière
DEBUT

STAGE DIRECTOR
Vincent Huguet
DEBUT

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in one act

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal,
adapted from his play, after
Sophocles's *Electra*

Thursday, April 14, 2016
8:00–9:50PM

New Production Premiere

The production of *Elektra* was made possible
by a generous gift from **Robert L. Turner**

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Teatro alla Scala, Milan; the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence;
the Finnish National Opera, Helsinki; the Staatsoper Unter
den Linden, Berlin; and the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona

The Metropolitan Opera

2015–16 SEASON

The 102nd Metropolitan Opera performance of
RICHARD STRAUSS'S

ELEKTRA

CONDUCTOR
Esa-Pekka Salonen

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Nina Stemme

KLYTÄMNESTRA
Waltraud Meier

CHRYSOTHEMIS
Adrienne Pieczonka

OREST
Eric Owens

AEGISTH
Burkhard Ulrich DEBUT

OREST'S GUARDIAN
Kevin Short

A YOUNG SERVANT
Mark Schowalter

AN OLD SERVANT
James Courtney

OVERSEER OF THE SERVANTS/
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Susan Neves

FIRST MAID
Bonita Hyman DEBUT

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Maya Lahyani

THIRD MAID/
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Andrea Hill DEBUT

FOURTH MAID
Claudia Waite

FIFTH MAID
Roberta Alexander

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is being broadcast
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Thursday, April 14, 2016, 8:00–9:50PM



Nina Stemme in the title role of Strauss's *Elektra*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
 Musical Preparation **Robert Morrison, Howard Watkins, Carol Isaac, and Steven White**
 Assistant Stage Directors **Peter McClintock and J. Knighten Smit**
 Artistic Collaborator to the Production **Thierry Thieu Niang**
 Prompter **Carol Isaac**
 German Coach **Marianne Barrett**
 Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**
 Assistant Costume Designer **Pascale Paume**
 Assistant Lighting Designer **François Thouret**
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Synopsis

In the courtyard of the Palace of Mycenae, the servants are wondering whether Elektra will be grieving over her father, as is her daily ritual. Daughter of King Agamemnon and Klytämnestra, Elektra appears and locks herself up in solitude straight away. The servants all criticize and mock her, except for one, who comes to her defense.

By herself, Elektra remembers how Agamemnon was assassinated upon his return from Troy, slain with an axe by Klytämnestra and her lover, Aegisth. Devastated with grief, Elektra is obsessed with the revenge she intends to take together with her sister, Chrysothemis, and her brother, Orest. The latter grew up far away from the palace, and Elektra keenly waits for him to return day after day.

Chrysothemis interrupts Elektra, who is caught up in her thoughts, and warns her that Klytämnestra and Aegisth have decided to lock her up in a tower. Chrysothemis asks her sister to renounce vengeance and let life take over again. Elektra rejects the idea with disdain.

Klytämnestra arrives with her entourage. She has been preparing sacrifices hoping to pacify the gods as she suffers from nightmares. She wants to talk to Elektra, and when her daughter's words are more amenable than usual, she sends off her followers to stay with her. The mother asks her daughter what remedy could restore her sleep, and Elektra reveals that a sacrifice may indeed free her from her nightmares. But when the queen, full of hope, asks who needs to be killed, Elektra replies that it is Klytämnestra herself who must die. Elektra goes on to describe with frenzied elation how her mother will succumb under Orest's blows. Then the court is thrown into a panic: Two strangers have arrived and asked to be seen. A few words are whispered to the queen, who immediately leaves without saying a single word to Elektra.

Chrysothemis is the one who comes to bear the terrible news: Orest has died. At first, Elektra remains deaf to what has been said. Then, having lost all hope, she concludes that she and her sister must themselves take their vengeance without further delay. But Chrysothemis refuses to commit such a deed and flees. Elektra curses her, realizing that she will have to act alone.

One of the strangers, who claims to be a friend of Orest and has come to bear the news of his death, has now been at the court for a while. Elektra besieges him with questions. When she reveals her name, he is shaken. She doesn't recognize him until the servants of the palace throw themselves at his feet: It is Orest who stands before her, Orest who tricked everyone into believing he was dead in order to sneak into the palace. Elektra is both elated and in despair—

she feels immeasurable fondness for her brother and deep sadness about the life of a recluse she has chosen for herself. The two are interrupted by Orest's guardian: The hour of vengeance has arrived, and the deed Orest has come to perform now needs to be done. Orest enters the palace. Elektra listens for the slightest noise. Klytämnestra is heard screaming. "Hit one more time," Elektra cries out. The queen draws her last breath.

There is a moment of panic when the servants hear cries. But they flee when they are told that Aegisth is returning from the fields. As the sun is setting, he encounters Elektra, who in a sudden joyful mood offers to light his way into the house. Soon enough, it is his turn to scream for help. He too succumbs to vengeful hands.

Chrysothemis comes out of the palace and tells her sister about their brother's return and the double murder of Klytämnestra and Aegisth. Elektra, hovering between ecstasy and madness, maintains that only silence and dance can celebrate their liberation. Beset by extreme frenzy, she dances until she drops: She will never be the one to have executed the act of revenge. As for Orest, he leaves the palace, alone and in silence.

—*Patrice Chéreau and Vincent Huguet*
(Reprinted from the 2013 Festival d'Aix-en-Provence program)

Richard Strauss

Elektra

Premiere: Court Opera, Dresden, 1909

Shortly after conquering the opera world with his scandalous masterpiece *Salome*, Richard Strauss turned to a recent adaptation of Sophocles's *Electra* by Austrian author Hugo von Hofmannsthal for his next project. The resulting opera is an intense and still-startling work that unites the commanding impact of Greek tragedy with the unsettling insights of early-20th-century Freudian psychology. The drama unfolds in a single act of rare vocal and orchestral power. It retells one of the final episodes in the collapse of the House of Atreus, the archetypal family of Greek myth that destroyed itself in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence and revenge. The title character longs for the murder of her mother, Klytämnestra, in retaliation for Klytämnestra's murder of her husband, Agamemnon, Elektra's father. These semi-divine characters, descended from the gods, and their emotions are truly larger-than-life. The title role is demanding even by the composer's daunting standards: Once Elektra takes the stage near the beginning of the opera, she does not leave, portraying a wide spectrum of emotions and singing over an enormous orchestra throughout the course of the work. The opera is in many ways a single, sweeping crescendo from beginning to end, an approach that reflects this tragedy's inexorable descent into madness and death.

The Creators

Munich-born Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, the 1905 premiere of *Salome* caused a theatrical sensation, and the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to music for the stage. *Elektra* marks his first collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), with whom he developed a partnership that became one of the most remarkable in operatic history. Hofmannsthal emerged as an author and poet within the fervent intellectual atmosphere of Vienna at the turn of the last century. Their personalities were very different—Hofmannsthal enjoyed the world of abstract ideas, while Strauss was famously simple in his tastes—which makes their collaboration all the more extraordinary. The Athenian dramatist Sophocles (c. 496–406 BC), whose play is the foundation of the opera, is said to have written more than 120 plays, only seven of which have survived.

The Setting

The opera takes place in Mycenae, Greece, some years after the end of the Trojan War. This mythically resonant era has inspired opera composers for centuries,

including Monteverdi (*Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, 1640), Gluck (*Iphigénie en Tauride*, 1779), Mozart (*Idomeneo*, 1781), Strauss himself (*Die Ägyptische Helena*, 1928), and Marvin David Levy (*Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1967). Patrice Chéreau's production is set in an unspecified contemporary era.

The Music

The orchestra for *Elektra* is often cited as the largest for any repertory opera. It includes eight clarinets, four French horns, four Wagner tubas, seven trumpets, two harps, a huge body of strings, and a substantial percussion section. The orchestra opens and closes the drama with a crashing motive that we learn represents Agamemnon, Elektra's father, who even in death dominates the lives of his family members. Much of the vocal writing clearly reflects the characters' most apparent traits: The villain Aegisth bumbles in short, broken phrases; the devoted sister Chrysothemis sings approachable, attractive music; and the corrupt Klytämnestra's lines hover between identifiable keys and are punctuated by freakish sound effects, most notably when she describes her nightmares in the opera's central scene. The title heroine's pathological obsession is apparent right from her opening narrative, as her music returns inevitably to the chords that represent her father. The score encompasses an astonishing range of musical color: There are moments of sublime lyricism when the characters express tenderness or love, and there is brutal, harsh dissonance when they are at (or beyond) the bounds of sanity.

Met History

Elektra premiered at the Met in 1932, with Artur Bodanzky conducting and Gertrude Kappel in the title role. Later in the 30s, the Met paired this opera with other one-acts, including Puccini's comedy *Gianni Schicchi* and Menotti's romantic *Amelia Goes to the Ball*. Fritz Reiner led a revival in 1952 with Astrid Varnay in the title role. (Varnay also sang the role of Klytämnestra at the Met in 1975–76.) Inge Borkh gave five memorable performances in this production in 1961. During the Met's first season at Lincoln Center in 1966, a new production by Herbert Graf was unveiled, with Thomas Schippers conducting Birgit Nilsson, Leonie Rysanek, and Regina Resnik in the leading roles. Karl Böhm led five performances of this production, including two with this same formidable triad of leading ladies, in 1970 and 1971. A new production by Otto Schenk premiered in 1992, with James Levine conducting Hildegard Behrens, Leonie Rysanek, and Deborah Voigt. Other notable singers to appear in *Elektra* at the Met include Jean Madeira, Mignon Dunn, and Christa Ludwig as Klytämnestra, Eva Marton and Karita Mattila as Chrysothemis, and Gwyneth Jones and Gabriele Schnaut in the title role. Patrice Chéreau's new production opens April 14, 2016, with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting Nina Stemme, Adrianne Pieczonka, Waltraud Meier, and Eric Owens.

Program Note

It's easy to understand why Richard Strauss was reluctant to compose *Elektra* as his next opera after the 1905 *Salome*—he had to create music for another obsessed woman. Not this time a teenage girl with sexual cravings that turn to a savage and bloody act of spite when they are spurned, but a mature woman who for years has been plotting revenge against her mother and her mother's lover for the murder of her father. Strauss originally wanted to wait until the dust had settled from *Salome*, feeling uncomfortable to tackle two similar subjects in a row. He suggested to Hugo von Hofmannsthal that they should collaborate on *Semiramis* or *Cesare Borgia*, or a Renaissance subject. But the poet, whose *Elektra* had premiered two years before *Salome*, was certain it would make a good operatic subject and pointed out that the Jewish princess and the Greek princess didn't really have that much in common.

Hofmannsthal wrote his play, adapted from Sophocles, in three weeks in August 1903 when he was 29. It had been in his mind for some time, as he mentioned to director Max Reinhardt and actress Gertrud Eysoldt when they all met at writer Hermann Bahr's house in May of that year. Reinhardt was immediately enthusiastic and promised a production at the Kleines Theater in Berlin that fall, with Eysoldt in the title role. (It was she, incidentally, whom Strauss had seen as Salome in 1902 in Reinhardt's German-language production of Oscar Wilde's play.)

Perhaps because he wrote it so fast and under a certain amount of pressure, Hofmannsthal was never wholly satisfied with *Elektra*. Nevertheless, when Reinhardt produced it on October 30, 1903, it was a huge success. Its turbulent extremes of emotion stunned its first audiences, who were also aware of its modernity as "psycho-drama." Psychological ideas were much in the air in Vienna at the start of the 20th century, and Hofmannsthal was well aware of them. It has often been said that *Elektra* owes a good deal to Freud. However, the strongest influence was almost certainly Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Strauss, who worked in Berlin as imperial court conductor of the opera, saw Hofmannsthal's play at the Deutsches Theater, where there were three performances between October 21 and November 7, 1905. Shortly afterward, he contacted Hofmannsthal to express interest in converting the play into an opera. As in the case of *Salome*, Strauss's copy of *Elektra*, which he used to cut the text, contains musical annotations in the margin, where certain lines and situations had already suggested music to him. Strauss adapted the play's text to a manageable libretto size himself, while Hofmannsthal contributed, at the composer's request, eight lines to the recognition scene, when Elektra belatedly realizes that the stranger who has entered the courtyard is her brother, Orest. Hofmannsthal also wrote new text for the final duet between Elektra and her sister Chrysothemis.

Usually a fast worker when he began to compose a subject in earnest, Strauss took an uncharacteristically long time over *Elektra*. By mid-July 1906 he had composed the first two scenes, and by the end of the year, he had written

enough to play parts of it for Hofmannsthal. During 1907, he was so busy with conducting assignments that progress was slow. By the fall, he had reached the recognition scene, but then he experienced a creative block. He abandoned the scene for nearly nine months and began to score the completed sections. He did not resume composition until June 1908, and the full score was completed in September. The premiere was set for January 25, 1909, in Dresden. After the "scandalous" success of *Salome*, the event was keenly and commercially anticipated. A critic reported that "the shop windows were full of Elektra boots, spoons, and beer mugs."

The Freudian aspects of *Elektra* have sometimes been overstated. The heroine doesn't have a case history of hysteria, which involves suppression of the trauma that caused the hysteria. Elektra has done anything but suppress the thought of Agamemnon's murder. On the contrary, every evening at the hour it happened, she recalls it in detail, like a ritual, and renews her vow of revenge: She and her brother and sister, Orest and Chrysothemis, will kill Klytämnestra and Aegisth and, afterwards, will "dance around [Agamemnon's] grave. I will raise my knees high, step by step ..." Loyalty, or fidelity, is Elektra's primary motivation. This was a favorite notion of Hofmannsthal, rather than Freud, and it can be traced in his other collaborations with Strauss, notably in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Arabella*. When it comes to the moment of truth, Elektra is as ineffectual as Hamlet. For seven years she has been hiding the axe with which Agamemnon was killed, to give it to Orest upon his return to use on their mother. Yet when he comes, she forgets to do it. Her dance of triumph after Orest has entered the palace of Mycenae to accomplish what she has failed to do becomes her dance of death.

The character in *Elektra* that connects more closely to Freudian theories is Klytämnestra. She has suppressed the memory of the vile deed. "First it was to come, then it was past. In between I did nothing," she says. Now she is tormented by nightmares and asks Elektra for a remedy—"there are rites. There must be proper rites for everything ... I will find out whose blood must flow so that I can sleep again." This Klytämnestra is an entirely 20th-century, post-Freudian creation. In Sophocles's play, she is not a major figure; she justifies killing Agamemnon because he had sacrificed her first daughter Iphigenia. Hofmannsthal suppresses this in order to create a monster of depravity, on whom Strauss later lavished the music of Expressionism.

It has often been said that with *Elektra*, Strauss carried harmony to the limits of the tonal system, and that he then drew back from the abyss that opened at his feet and retreated into the rococo world of *Der Rosenkavalier*. This overlooks the daring use of polytonality in *Salome*. It also obscures the fact that *Elektra* is a tonal opera with a structure remarkable for its symmetry. Almost the whole work is influenced by the tension between C minor and C major, a tension unresolved until the end when Chrysothemis is hammering on the palace door.

A keen listener will detect many anticipations of *Der Rosenkavalier* in *Elektra* (which ends with a gigantic slow waltz!). The idea that a great gulf separates these two operas, or that Strauss “changed style” is not supported by the musical evidence. He remained the same composer, drawing, according to need, on several stylistic features of his musical personality. *Elektra* also mirrors its successor in containing three magnificent roles for female voices: Elektra, who resembles a tragic, psychologically charged Valkyrie, a superb part for a dramatic soprano; Chrysothemis, all radiance and tenderness; and Klytämnestra, whose “nightmares” aria contains the most advanced music in the opera, as she makes our flesh creep when she sings of her bone marrow melting and of “something” crawling over her as she tries to sleep.

As if to anticipate the answer to the “words vs. music” debate of his final opera, *Capriccio*, Strauss ends *Elektra* with the orchestra expressing a joy that no words can convey. One feels that the whole work has been building to this last of a series of climaxes. It is the final justification for “the tremendous increase in musical tension to the very end” that attracted him to the subject in the first place. Hofmannsthal was right to cajole him into composing *Elektra*, for it differs fundamentally from *Salome*. Wilde’s play invited a looser, more diverse structural approach. Hofmannsthal’s is more concisely organized with Elektra herself at the center, possessed of an unswerving driving force: revenge. *Salome* is exotic; *Elektra* is granite—symphonic in form, in many ways a more traditional opera than *Salome*, closer at times to a “numbers” opera, with set arias and ensembles. But it also opened the way for the psychological treatment of operatic characters, such as Berg’s Lulu, Shostakovich’s Katerina Ismailova, and Britten’s Peter Grimes. As for Strauss, the next time he ventured into Greek mythology, in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, he entangled it with commedia dell’arte and exchanged his huge orchestra for one of 37 players. No one could call that retreating or even standing still. After all, there could be only one *Elektra*.

—Michael Kennedy

The Cast and Creative Team



Esa-Pekka Salonen

CONDUCTOR (HELSINKI, FINLAND)

THIS SEASON *Elektra* at the Met; Bartók's *Le Château de Barbe-Bleue* and Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* at the Paris Opera; performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Edinburgh International Festival, the BBC Proms, and on tour in Switzerland and France; and guest conducting engagements with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, among others. He is also in the first season of a three-year tenure as the New York Philharmonic's composer in residence.

MET APPEARANCES *From the House of the Dead* (debut, 2009)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is currently the Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor for the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Conductor Laureate for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was Music Director from 1992 until 2009. He is also Artistic Director and co-founder of the annual Baltic Sea Festival. In 1995 and 1996, he was Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Festival, and he was Chief Conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra for 10 seasons beginning in 1985. As a composer, he has written numerous large-scale orchestral pieces and chamber works for solo piano, cello, violin, and voice.



Patrice Chéreau

DIRECTOR

MET PRODUCTIONS *From the House of the Dead* (debut, 2009)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He began directing professionally at the age of 19, and, while in his 20s, created the Théâtre de Sartrouville and worked closely with Giorgio Strehler's Piccolo Teatro in Milan. He staged plays of all eras, from Shakespeare, Molière, and Marivaux to such contemporary authors as Bernard-Marie Koltès, Tankred Dorst, and Heiner Müller, and he was co-director of the Théâtre National Populaire (1971–77) and the Théâtre des Amandiers (1982–90). He directed his first opera in 1969 at Italy's Spoleto Festival, and his other productions included *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and the three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* (1979) in Paris; the legendary centennial *Ring* cycle in Bayreuth (1976–80); *Wozzeck* in Paris and Berlin; *Don Giovanni* in Salzburg; *Così fan tutte* in Aix-en-Provence, Paris, and Vienna; and *From the House of the Dead* in Vienna, Aix-en-Provence, and at La Scala and the Holland Festival. His films, which include *Queen Margot*, *Intimacy*, and *Persecution*, won awards at the Berlin and Cannes Festivals as well as several César Awards.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Richard Peduzzi

SET DESIGNER (PARIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON The new production of *Elektra* and the revival of *Tosca* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *From the House of the Dead* and *Tosca* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has recently collaborated with Vincent Huguet on Xavier Dayer's *Les Contes de la Lune Vague Apres la Pluie* at Paris's Opéra Comique and the Opéra de Rouen Haute Normandie. He collaborated regularly with Patrice Chéreau beginning in 1969, creating sets for theater, opera, and cinema, including *Tristan und Isolde* (La Scala), *Così fan tutte* (Aix-en-Provence Festival), *From the House of the Dead* (Vienna Festival), Wagner's *Ring* cycle (Bayreuth), *Wozzeck* (Paris's Châtelet), and *Don Giovanni* (Salzburg Festival), and the films *Ceux qui M'Aiment Prendront le Train* (1997), *La Reine Margot* (1994), *L'Homme Blessé* (1983), and *Judith Therpauvre* (1978). He has also created set designs for several shows with Luc Bondy, including Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (Avignon Festival, 1988), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Salzburg Festival), Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Handel's *Hercules* (Aix-en-Provence), Martin Crimp's *Cruel and Tender* (London's Young Vic), and Schnitzler's *Anatol* (Vienna). He was director of the French Academy in Rome from 2002 to 2008.



Caroline de Vivaise

COSTUME DESIGNER (PARIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON *Elektra* at the Met, *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Dijon Opera, and costume design for Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi's film *Three Sisters*.

MET PRODUCTIONS *From the House of the Dead* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has recently collaborated with Vincent Huguet on Xavier Dayer's *Les Contes de la Lune Vague Apres la Pluie* at Paris's Opéra Comique and the Opéra de Rouen Haute Normandie. She has created costumes for more than 50 films, including Chéreau's *L'Homme Blessé*, *Intimacy*, *His Brother*, *Persecution*, and *Gabrielle*, for which she won a César Award. She won another César Award for her work on Bertrand Tavernier's film *The Princess of Montpensier*. Other film work includes collaborations with directors André Techiné, Claude Berri, Jacques Audiard, Benoit Jacquot, Andrezej Zulawski, Peter Bogdanovich, and Nicolas Saada. In theater, she has created costumes for productions by John Malkovich, Thierry de Peretti, and Chéreau, including his 2005 staging of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.



Dominique Bruguière

LIGHTING DESIGNER (PARIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON *Elektra* for her debut at the Met, *Così fan tutte* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She works in theater, dance, and opera, and has collaborated with Robert Carsen, Werner Schroeter, Deborah Warner, Peter Zadek, Youssef Chahine, Jorge Lavelli, Emma Dante, and Arnaud Desplechin. With director Luc Bondy, she has created lighting for *Les Beaux Jours d'Aranjuez*, *Le Retour*, *Les Fausses Confidences*, and *Tartuffe*. She began working with Patrice Chéreau in 1991 and collaborated with him on *Le Temps et la Chambre*, *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *Phèdre*, *Rêve d'Automne*, and *I'm the Wind*. She has also worked on productions at La Comédie Française, the Paris Opera, the Avignon Festival, Vienna's Burgtheater, Brussels's La Monnaie, the Salzburg Festival, London's Barbican, the Berlin Staatsoper, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Madrid's Teatro Real, and Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, among many others. At the Aix-en-Provence Festival, she has designed lighting for *Orlando*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Hercules*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Miss Julie*, and *Passion*.



Vincent Huguet

STAGE DIRECTOR (PARIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON *Elektra* for his debut at the Met, *To Be or Not to Be* at the Opéra de Rouen, and *Histoires sacrées* at the Opéra de Caen and in the Palace of Versailles. He also collaborates with director Ivo van Hove for the French production of *View from the Bridge* and with Peter Sellars on the double bill of *Iolanta* and *Perséphone* as well as Kaja Saariaho's *Only the Sound Remains*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He began his work in theater with Patrice Chéreau in 2010, collaborating on all his projects until Chéreau's passing in October 2013. He worked with Chéreau for his special guest season at the Louvre, where he directed *La Nuit Juste Avant les Forêts* and *Rêve d'Automne*, and in 2013, he was the assistant director for Chéreau's *Elektra* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He then directed the production's first revival at La Scala. In 2012, he made his operatic directorial debut with *Lakmé* at the Opéra National de Montpellier. His next opera was Xavier Dayer's *Contes de la lune vague après la pluie* at the Opéra de Rouen and Paris's Opéra Comique. He also directed *Encor sur le Pavé Sonne mon pas Nocturne* at the Aix-en-Provence festival.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Waltraud Meier

MEZZO-SOPRANO (WÜRZBURG, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Klytämnestra in *Elektra* at the Met, Zurich Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Dresden; Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at the Vienna State Opera; Kundry in *Parsifal* at the Berlin Staatsoper; and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* in Budapest.

MET APPEARANCES Waltraute, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the title role of *Carmen*, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Kundry, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* (debut, 1987) and *Die Walküre*, Sieglinde, and Venus in *Tannhäuser*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She sang Kundry every season at the Bayreuth Festival from 1983 through 1993 before moving into dramatic soprano repertoire as well. Notable engagements include Isolde at La Scala, Paris's Bastille Opera, the Berlin Staatsoper, and at the Salzburg Festival; Sieglinde in the "Millennium" *Ring* at the 2000 Bayreuth Festival and at La Scala; Kundry at Paris's Châtelet and the Vienna State Opera; Waltraute at La Scala and the BBC Proms; Marie at the Bavarian State Opera and Berlin's Staatsoper; Carmen in Dresden; Dido in *Les Troyens* at the Munich Opera Festival; and Leonore at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Bavarian State Opera.



Adrienne Pieczonka

SOPRANO (BURLINGTON, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Chrysothemis in *Elektra* at the Met and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites* in Amsterdam, the title role of *Tosca* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Countess Madeleine in *Capriccio* at the Paris Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Amelia Grimaldi in *Simon Boccanegra*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, and Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* (debut, 2004).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons she has sung *Tosca* at the Vienna State Opera and Canadian Opera Company; Chrysothemis at La Scala, Covent Garden, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and in Munich; Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Covent Garden, the Bayreuth Festival, Teatro Regio di Torino, and in Munich and Hamburg; Leonora in *Fidelio* at the Salzburg Festival and in Madrid; the Empress in *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* at the Vienna State Opera and the Bavarian State Opera; the title role in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Bavarian State Opera and in Hamburg; Elisabetta in *Don Carlos* at the Vienna State Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Desdemona in *Otello* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the Canadian Opera Company.



Nina Stemme

SOPRANO (STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN)

THIS SEASON The title roles of *Turandot* and *Elektra* at the Met, Alicia Hauser in the world premiere of Hans Gefors's *Notorious* in Göteborg, *Elektra* with the Vienna State Opera, *Turandot* in Zurich and with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, *Brünnhilde* in *Die Walküre* with the Semperoper Dresden, *Brünnhilde* in the full *Ring* cycle with Washington National Opera, and *Isolde* in *Tristan und Isolde* and *Elektra* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

MET APPEARANCES *Ariadne* in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Senta* in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (debut, 2000).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS The title role of *Aida* and her first *Isolde* at the Glyndebourne Festival, *Isolde* at the Bayreuth Festival, and the title role of *Salome* for her debut at Barcelona's Liceu. She has also appeared at the festivals of Salzburg, Savonlinna, Lucerne, and Bregenz, and at La Scala, Paris's Bastille Opera, Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera, Stockholm's Royal Opera, and the Teatro San Carlo in Naples.



Eric Owens

BASS-BARITONE (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON *Orest* in *Elektra* at the Met, *La Roche* in *Capriccio* in Santa Fe, *Stephen Kumalo* in Weill's *Lost in the Stars* at Washington National Opera, an evening of jazz standards at the Kennedy Center, and a series of concerts as artist-in-residence at the New York Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES General Leslie Groves in *Doctor Atomic* (debut, 2008), *Sarastro* in *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Alberich* in the *Ring* cycle.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* conducted by Simon Rattle and staged by Peter Sellars at the Lucerne Festival, the BBC Proms, and New York's Park Avenue Armory; *Porgy* in *Porgy and Bess* and the Water Sprite in *Rusalka* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Washington National Opera; *King Philip* in *Don Carlo* in Philadelphia; the title role of *Macbeth* at the Glimmerglass Festival; the title role of Handel's *Hercules* with the Canadian Opera Company; and *Alberich* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Vienna State Opera. He has also sung General Leslie Groves with the San Francisco Opera (world premiere) and Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Sharpless* in *Madama Butterfly*, *Ferrando* in *Il Trovatore*, and *Colline* in *La Bohème* in Los Angeles Opera; *Oroveso* in *Norma* at Covent Garden; and the *Speaker* in *Die Zauberflöte* with Paris's Bastille Opera.



Burkhard Ulrich

TENOR (WÜRZBURG, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Aegisth in *Elektra* for his debut at the Met and at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Herodes in *Salome*, Dance Master in *Manon Lescaut*, Pollux in *Die Liebe der Danae*, and Ruiz in *Il Trovatore* at Deutsche Oper Berlin.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been an ensemble member of Deutsche Oper Berlin since 2001, where his roles have included Mime and Loge in the *Ring* cycle, the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Roderigo in *Otello*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gastone in *La Traviata*, and the Incredible in *Andrea Chénier*, among many others. He has also sung Mimi and Loge at the Bayreuth Festival.