

GIUSEPPE VERDI

OTELLO

CONDUCTOR
Adam Fischer

PRODUCTION
Bartlett Sher

SET DESIGNER
Es Devlin

COSTUME DESIGNER
Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Donald Holder

PROJECTION DESIGNER
Luke Halls

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Arrigo Boito, based on
the play by William Shakespeare

Thursday, April 28, 2016
7:30-10:20PM

New Production

The production of *Otello* was made possible
by a generous gift from **Jacqueline Desmarais,**
in memory of **Paul G. Desmarais Sr.**

The Metropolitan Opera

2015–16 SEASON

The 336th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

OTELLO

CONDUCTOR
Adam Fischer

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MONTANO
Jeff Mattsey

CASSIO
Alexey Dolgov

IAGO
Željko Lučić

RODERIGO
Chad Shelton

OTELLO
Aleksandrs Antonenko

DESDEMONA
Hibla Gerzmava

EMILIA
Jennifer Johnson Cano*

A HERALD
Tyler Duncan

LODOVICO
James Morris

Thursday, April 28, 2016, 7:30–10:20PM



Hibla Gerzmava
as Desdemona
and Aleksandrs
Antonenko in the
title role of Verdi's
Otello

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
 Fight Director **B.H. Barry**
 Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Paul Nadler,
 Howard Watkins, and Miloš Repický**
 Assistant Stage Directors **Katrina Bachus, Gina Lapinski,
 and Sarah Ina Meyers**
 Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**
 Prompter **Donna Racik**
 Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**
 Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**
 Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**
 Assistant Scenic Designer, Properties **Scott Laule**
 Assistant Costume Designers **Ryan Park and
 Wilberth Gonzalez**
 Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and
 painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**
 Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume
 Department; Angels the Costumiers, London;
 Das Gewand GmbH, Düsseldorf; and Seams
 Unlimited, Racine, Wisconsin**
 Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and
 Makeup Department**

* Graduate of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

Yamaha is the
Official Piano of the
Metropolitan Opera.

Latecomers will not be
admitted during the
performance.

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ROLEX

OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE

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Synopsis

Act I

Cyprus, late 19th century. During a violent storm, the people of Cyprus await the return of their governor and general of the Venetian fleet, the Moor Otello. He has been fighting the Muslim Turks and guides his victorious navy to safe harbor. In his absence, the young Venetian Roderigo has arrived in Cyprus and fallen in love with Otello's new wife, Desdemona. Otello's ensign Iago, who secretly hates the governor for promoting the officer Cassio over him, promises Roderigo to help win her. While the citizens celebrate their governor's return, Iago launches his plan to ruin Otello. Knowing that Cassio gets drunk easily, Iago proposes a toast. Cassio declines to drink, but abandons his scruples when Iago salutes Desdemona, who is a favorite of the people. Iago then goads Roderigo into provoking a fight with Cassio, who is now fully drunk. Montano, the former governor, tries to separate the two, and Cassio attacks him as well. Otello appears and restores order, furious about his soldiers' behavior. When he realizes that Desdemona has also been disturbed by the commotion, he takes away Cassio's recent promotion and dismisses everyone. Otello and Desdemona reaffirm their love.

Act II

Iago advises Cassio to present his case to Desdemona, arguing that her influence on Otello will secure his rehabilitation. Alone, Iago reveals his bleak, nihilistic view of humankind. He makes dismissive remarks about Desdemona's fidelity to Otello, whose jealousy is easily aroused. Otello's suspicions are raised when Desdemona appears and appeals to him on Cassio's behalf. Evading her question, Otello complains of the loss of his peace of mind. Desdemona offers him a handkerchief to cool his brow and he tosses it to the ground. Emilia, Iago's wife and Desdemona's maidservant, retrieves it, and Iago seizes the handkerchief from her. Left alone with Otello, Iago fans the flames of the governor's suspicions by inventing a story of how Cassio had spoken of Desdemona in his sleep, and how he saw her handkerchief in Cassio's hand. Seething with jealousy, Otello is now convinced that his wife is unfaithful. The two men join in an oath to punish Cassio and Desdemona.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:35 PM)

Act III

Iago's plot continues to unfold as he tells Otello that he will have further proof of his wife and Cassio's betrayal. When, moments later, Desdemona approaches Otello and once again pleads for Cassio, Otello insists on seeing the missing handkerchief, which he had once given her as a gift. When she cannot produce it, he insults her as a whore. Alone, he gives in to his desperation and self-pity. Iago

returns with Cassio, and Otello hides to eavesdrop on their conversation, which Iago cleverly leads in such a way that Otello is convinced they are discussing Cassio's affair with Desdemona. Cassio mentions an unknown admirer's gift and produces the telltale handkerchief—in fact planted by Iago in his room. Otello is shattered and vows that he will kill his wife. Iago promises to have Roderigo deal with Cassio.

A delegation from Venice arrives to recall Otello home and to appoint Cassio as the new governor of Cyprus. At this news, Otello loses control and explodes in a rage, hurling insults at Desdemona in front of the assembled crowd. He orders everyone away and finally collapses in a seizure. As the Cypriots are heard from outside praising Otello as the "Lion of Venice," Iago gloats over him, "Behold the Lion!"

Act IV

Emilia helps the distraught Desdemona prepare for bed. She has just finished saying her evening prayers when Otello enters and wakes her with a kiss to tell her he is about to kill her. Desdemona again protests her innocence. Otello coldly smothers her. Emilia runs in with news that Cassio has killed Roderigo. Iago's plot is finally revealed and Otello realizes what he has done. Reflecting on his past glory he pulls out a dagger and stabs himself, dying with a final kiss for his wife.

Giuseppe Verdi

Otello

Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1887

Often cited as Italian opera's greatest tragedy, *Otello* is a miraculous union of music and drama, a masterpiece as profound philosophically as it is thrilling theatrically. Shakespeare's tale of an outsider, a great hero who can't control his jealousy, was carefully molded by the librettist Arrigo Boito into a taut and powerful libretto. Verdi's supreme achievement in this work may be the title role, a pinnacle of the tenor repertory. All three lead roles are demanding—making the opera a challenge to produce—but the role of Otello in particular requires an astounding natural instrument capable of both powerful and delicate sounds, superb musical intelligence, and impressive acting abilities. *Otello* almost wasn't written: Following the success of *Aida* in 1871 and his setting of the Requiem mass in 1874, Verdi considered himself retired, and it took Boito and publisher Giulio Ricordi several years to persuade him to take on a major new work.

The Creators

In an extraordinary career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Arrigo Boito (1842–1918) was also a composer (his opera *Mefistofele*, based on Goethe's *Faust*, premiered in 1868), as well as a journalist and critic. The plays of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) have inspired countless operatic interpretations. Verdi and Boito would turn to Shakespeare again after *Otello* for their final masterpiece, *Falstaff*.

The Setting

The opera is set on the island of Cyprus, originally in the late 15th century. (Boito jettisoned Shakespeare's Act I, set in Venice, for a tighter and more fluid drama.) The island itself represents an outpost of a European power (Venice) under constant attack from an encroaching, hostile adversary (the Turkish Empire). In a sense, the island of Cyprus could be said to echo Otello's outsider status: he is a foreigner (a "Moor," an uncertain term applied indiscriminately at that time to North African Arabs, black Africans, and others) surrounded by suspicious Europeans. This season's new production moves the action to the time of the opera's creation.

The Music

The score of *Otello* is remarkable for its overall intensity and dramatic insight rather than the memorable solo numbers that made Verdi's earlier works so popular. There are arias in this opera, most notably Desdemona's Willow Song and haunting "Ave Maria" in the last act and the baritone's "Credo" at the beginning of Act II. But equally important are the shorter vocal solos that cover considerable dramatic territory: the tenor's opening "Esultate!" in Act I is just a few measures long but reveals many facets of his character. Two notable duets, the tenor-soprano love duet that ends Act I and the tenor-baritone oath duet that concludes Act II, are remarkable examples of their respective forms. Throughout the score, the orchestra plays a diverse role unprecedented in Italian opera. In the opening storm scene, the power of nature is depicted with full forces, including an organ, playing at the maximum possible volume. In the Act I love duet, subtle psychological detail is revealed when the oboe and clarinet are seamlessly replaced by the darker English horn and bass clarinet as Otello's mind turns to painful memories. The very end of the opera belongs to the orchestra as well, with every instrument playing as softly as possible, pulsing like the last breaths of a dying being.

Met History

The great tenor Jean de Reszke sang the title role in the first two Met performances of *Otello* in 1891—the first of them on tour in Chicago. A new production in 1894 featured tenor Francesco Tamagno and baritone Victor Maurel (Verdi's choices for Otello and Iago at the world premiere in Milan). Conductor Arturo Toscanini, who had played in the orchestra in the world premiere, led 29 performances at the Met between 1909 and 1913, all of which starred Leo Slezak in the title role. Subsequent productions have been led by Ettore Panizza, with Elisabeth Rethberg, Giovanni Martinelli, and Lawrence Tibbett (1937); Georg Solti, with Gabriella Tucci, James McCracken, and Robert Merrill (1963); Karl Böhm, with Teresa Zylis-Gara, McCracken, and Sherrill Milnes (1972); and Valery Gergiev, in his Met debut, with Carol Vaness, Plácido Domingo, and Sergei Leiferkus (1994). Among the other great artists to have made a mark in the title role are Ramón Vinay, Mario Del Monaco, and Jon Vickers. Renata Tebaldi made her Met debut as Desdemona in 1955, and Kiri Te Kanawa was first heard here when she made her company debut in the same role on short notice in 1974. In recent years, other notable interpreters have included Renée Fleming, Johan Botha, José Cura, Falk Struckmann, and Thomas Hampson. Music Director James Levine conducted *Otello* 82 times at the Met between 1972 and 2005. Bartlett Sher's new production opened the company's 2015–16 season on September 21, 2015, with Aleksandrs Antonenko, Sonya Yoncheva, Željko Lučić, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium.

Program Note

Were it not for the intervention of publisher Giulio Ricordi, Verdi may never have written *Otello*. Following the premiere of *Aida* in 1871, the celebrated Italian composer decided to go into retirement. Barring the composition of his String Quartet and the Requiem—initially part of a tribute to Rossini and then completed in honor of Italian author Giuseppe Manzoni—Verdi steered clear of composition altogether. He was a happy and wealthy man in his 60s, no longer feeling the compunction to accept operatic commissions. And yet, as his publisher insisted, this was a waste of Verdi's incomparable talents.

Ricordi tried to lure his most successful composer out of retirement. It was not an easy task. Verdi was content to remain at home and survey the expanse of agricultural land he owned around his villa at Sant'Agata, just northeast of Parma. He was, moreover, disappointed by the new strand of cosmopolitanism emerging within the conservatories and theaters of Italy, though this did not stop him from traveling to Bologna to hear the 1871 Italian premiere of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. As to his own work, the completed Requiem, premiered in May 1874 and soon heard all over Europe, was perpetuating Verdi's fame and fortune, though he remained unmoved by the idea of writing more operas. And then Ricordi had an ingenious idea: another stage work based on a play by Verdi's beloved Shakespeare (whose portrait still hangs in the composer's bedroom and study, just as he left it).

Having written *Macbeth* in 1846–47, Verdi had tried to adapt *King Lear*, but that tantalizing project sadly never came to fruition. Ricordi now suggested an opera based on another of Shakespeare's great tragedies, *Othello*. And rather than working with one of Verdi's established collaborators, Ricordi daringly suggested Arrigo Boito as a librettist. A controversial affiliate of the *scapigliatura* movement—the members of which were intent on reviving Italian art, literature, and music by means of foreign influences, not least Wagner—Boito had once offended Verdi by saying that his beloved Italian culture had been “defiled like the wall of a brothel.” The opinionated though highly talented Boito, himself a composer, then had his own fingers burned when his opera *Mefistofele* failed at its La Scala premiere in 1868. Revived seven years later, it was toned down considerably. Nonetheless, in suggesting Boito, Ricordi was clearly trying to reinvigorate the sexagenarian Verdi.

The composer slowly capitulated. After nearly a decade without a theatrical project, Verdi began work on his new musical drama, though not before trying Boito out on a thorough overhaul of the 1857 “fiasco” *Simon Boccanegra*. Suitably impressed by his revisions, the composer turned to Boito's proposed libretto for *Otello*, submitted in 1879. Gone was Shakespeare's first act, set in Venice, with its numerous tense discussions, particularly those featuring Desdemona's father, Brabantio, and his misgivings about her marriage to Othello. Boito distributed salient information from those scenes throughout his libretto,

though he cut Brabantio's part entirely. Gone too are the repeated references to Othello's race, though Boito was clearly aware of their importance, judging by his copious annotations and his preservation of the palpable tension between what he saw as African savagery and Mediterranean civility in Othello's character. Boldly adapting Shakespeare's tragedy, Boito created a well characterized, driven libretto, in which three figures dominate: the saintly Desdemona; Iago, the villain; and Othello, the hero brought low.

Verdi took until November 1886 to declare his score finished. What he created over those seven years was both a bold continuation of the Italian operatic tradition and a daring retort to the cultural influences pouring over the Alps. And he certainly matched Boito's flair for characterization, providing enticing roles for his singers, as Verdi himself explained:

Desdemona is a part in which the thread, the melodic line, never ceases from the first note to the last. Just as Iago has only to declaim and laugh mockingly and just as Othello, now the warrior, now the passionate lover, now crushed to the point of baseness, now ferocious like a savage, must sing and shout, so Desdemona must always, always sing.

With Othello's wife, Verdi created a truly beatific heroine, the victim of a venal, masculine world, whose "Ave Maria"—one of the few ideas Verdi borrowed from Rossini's earlier opera *Otello*—is emblematic of her untainted character. It is this purity that attracts Othello, who has an almost Freudian connection to this idealized (mother) figure, one promptly destroyed by the plotting Iago. Tellingly, the opera closes with a motif associated with that venerated love, the "bacio" (kiss) motif from the Act I love duet, reminding us of the destruction of Desdemona's innocence.

Iago is the polar opposite of this serene image. His music is declamatory and modern. Yet what makes Iago so brilliant is his chameleon-like ability to ape various musical styles and thereby influence those around him. (Tellingly, Verdi and Boito originally considered naming the opera after him.) According to Boito, Iago had to appear "easy and jovial with Cassio; ironic with Roderigo; apparently devoted towards Othello, brutal and threatening with Emilia; obsequious to Desdemona and Lodovico." He is all things to all people, but, as we find out at the opening to Act II, he believes "in a cruel God." Heralded by a fortissimo, chromatic fanfare—arguably the inspiration for the opening of Puccini's *Turandot*—this Credo features all the elements of Iago's style: disjointed intervals, uneven phrases and hard triplet rhythms, all delivered with staccato snarls and accompanied by chilling trills. This is the devil in musical form, and his insidiousness, like the motif that accompanies "È un'idra fosca" ("'Tis a spiteful monster"), snakes through the opera

Caught between the saintly and the demonic, Otello is rendered helpless. Preying on his weakness for the radiant Desdemona, Iago puts into motion Otello's destruction. First, however, we see the celebrated warrior as the epitome of operatic heroism, as if he had ridden the storm alone—conjured in vivid, dissonant terms by Verdi—declaiming "Esultate!" ("Rejoice!") at the very top of his range. His ardent heroism soon changes, however, to Iago-like declamation, as Otello repeats his ensign's phrases in their Act II duet and then, more chillingly, reproduces Iago's musical idiom in the parlando textures of the death scene. Exposed as a monster, the consequence of a cruel plot, Otello resumes a quasi-heroic tone in "Niun mi tema" but, like the last reprise of the "bacio" motif, it only serves to remind us just how far he has fallen.

The plausibility of this tragedy is further enhanced by the fluidity of its musical drama. Boito imbued the story with great pace and punch, moving away from the juxtaposition of "action" and "reflection," centered on recitative and aria forms that had previously dominated Italian opera. Verdi responded with a continuous musical structure in which such "numbers" are effortlessly subsumed. Sometimes, however, he deliberately breaks the flow. Rather than the through-composed sequence of storm, survival, carousing, and love duet in Act I, Iago's Act II Credo, the great "Quell'innocente un fremito" ensemble at the end of Act III, and Desdemona's scene at the beginning of Act IV are purposely separated and thereby highlighted. These comparatively static moments further underline the polarity between good and evil. At the end of Act III, as the entire ensemble is assembled on stage, Otello is caught betwixt and between, symbolized by the contrast between his dutiful declaration of the ducal document announcing Cassio as his successor and his barbed comments to Desdemona. An off-stage chorus trumpets what Otello once was, while Iago's sinister chromaticism pronounces what the great warrior has become.

When *Otello* was first seen at La Scala on February 5, 1887, it was a triumph. Verdi himself was not thrilled with the first performance, but that didn't stop the tide of enthusiasm for the new work, with premieres following quickly throughout Europe, in New York (1888), and in London (1889). Written by the master who had brought *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata* to the world, *Otello* turned out to be the trigger for another exciting era in Italian opera. With its emotional verisimilitude, vivid characterization, and structural fluidity, *Otello* looks forward to verismo and Puccini. Coming out of retirement, Verdi was again the master of Italian opera. "Have the love, the passion, the anguish, and the hatred of human beings ever been presented to an audience with deeper insight or poignancy than in this music?" the English critic Francis Toye later asked. "I think not."

—Gavin Plumley

The Cast and Creative Team



Adam Fischer

CONDUCTOR (BUDAPEST, HUNGARY)

THIS SEASON *Otello* at the Met; *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, all four operas of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, *Parsifal*, and *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Vienna State Opera; and all four *Ring* operas and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Budapest.

MET APPEARANCES *Die Fledermaus*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Otello* (debut, 1994), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *Aida*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He conducts regularly at all the major opera houses and leading music festivals in Europe and the United States and has collaborated regularly with the Vienna State Opera since 1973. In 1984 he made his debut at the Paris Opera with *Der Rosenkavalier*, and in 1986 made his debut at La Scala with *Die Zauberflöte*. His Covent Garden debut came in 1989 with *Die Fledermaus*, and in 2001 he gave his first performance of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Bayreuth Festival. He is founder and chief conductor of the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra and chief conductor of the Danish National Chamber Orchestra.



Bartlett Sher

DIRECTOR (SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON The new production of *Otello* and revivals of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *The Barber of Seville* at the Met, the Tony Award-winning production of *The King and I* at Lincoln Center Theater, and a new Broadway production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Le Comte Ory*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2006), and Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He received the 2008 Tony Award for *South Pacific*, and has also directed Broadway productions of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Awake and Sing!*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *Golden Boy*, all for Lincoln Center Theater, where he is resident director. He was artistic director of Seattle's Intiman Theatre from 2000 to 2010 and directed the world premiere of *Two Boys* for English National Opera in 2011. His staging of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* for New York's Lucille Lortel Theatre was also seen at Stratford, England. He made his operatic debut in 2003 with Levy's *Mourning Becomes Electra* in a joint production of the Seattle Opera and New York City Opera and has also directed *Roméo et Juliette* at the Salzburg Festival. Future plans include *Millions*, a new musical by Adam Guettel.



Es Devlin

SET DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Otello* for her debut at the Met and *Der Freischütz* for Royal Danish Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent theater includes Jennifer Haley's *The Nether* at London's Royal Court and Duke of York's theaters, *American Psycho* and Harold Pinter's *Chimerica* at the Almeida Theatre, and *The Master and Margarita* with Complicite at the Roundabout Theatre. Her work for dance includes

Connectome for London's Royal Ballet and *God's Plenty* and *Four Scenes* for the Rambert Dance Company. Concert designs include sets for *Yeezus*, *Glow in the Dark*, and *Touch the Sky* for Kanye West, *Innocence + Experience* for U2, *Watch the Throne* for Kanye West and Jay Z, *The Monster Ball* (U.S. theater version) for Lady Gaga, *Resistance* for Muse, *Electric*, *Pandemonium*, and *Fundamental* for the Pet Shop Boys, *Ellipse* for Imogen Heap, *Head First* for Goldfrapp, and *Bangerz* for Miley Cyrus. Her awards include Olivier Awards in 2006, 2013, and 2014, and Critics' Circle Awards in 2013 and 2014. She was made OBE in 2014.



Catherine Zuber

COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON New production of *Otello* and revivals of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *The Barber of Seville* at the Met and *Fiddler on the Roof* on Broadway.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Two Boys*, *Le Comte Ory*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2006), *Doctor Atomic*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and the 125th Anniversary Gala.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has won Tony Awards for *The King and I*, *The Royal Family*, *South Pacific*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *Awake and Sing!* and *The Light in the Piazza*. Other Broadway work includes *Gigi*, *Golden Boy*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Born Yesterday*, and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*. Work on television includes *The Sound of Music Live!* and *Peter Pan Live!*, and opera includes *Carmen* and *Two Boys* for English National Opera, *Roméo et Juliette* for the Salzburg Festival and La Scala, and *La Forza del Destino* and Wagner's *Ring* cycle for Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera.



Donald Holder

LIGHTING DESIGNER (CROTON-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Otello* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 2004) and Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Work in opera includes *Carmen* and the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair* for the Houston Grand Opera, *Faust* at the Baden-Baden Festival, Heggie's *Moby-Dick* and Todd Machover's *Death and the Powers* for Dallas Opera, Elliot Goldenthal's *Grendel* for Los Angeles Opera and Lincoln Center Festival, Muhly's *Dark Sisters* for the Philadelphia Opera, the world premiere of *Two Boys* for English National Opera, and *Salome* for the Mariinsky Theatre. Broadway credits include *The King and I*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *On the Twentieth Century*, *Big Fish*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, *South Pacific* (Tony Award), *The Lion King* (Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards), *Golden Boy*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Spider-Man: Turn off the Dark*, *Annie*, *Promises, Promises*, *Come Fly Away*, and *The Boy from Oz*.

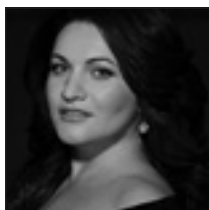


Luke Halls

PROJECTION DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Otello* for his debut at the Met.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has collaborated regularly with designer Es Devlin on projects including *Don Giovanni* for Covent Garden, Alastair Marriott's *Connectome* for London's Royal Ballet, *Hamlet* at London's Barbican Centre, and Jennifer Haley's *The Nether* at London's Duke of York's Theatre. He has also produced video designs and animations for a wide variety of music, theater, and dance performances. Opera work includes Szymanowski's *King Roger* for Covent Garden and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* for Royal Danish Opera. Theater work includes *Man and Superman* for the National Theatre, *2071* for the Royal Court Theatre, as well as the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Closing Ceremonies. He has also created video designs for touring groups including Pet Shop Boys, U2, Nitin Sawhney, and Rihanna. He received a BAFTA Award for his work on the ITV show *The Cube*.



Híbla Gerzmava

SOPRANO (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Liù in *Turandot* and Desdemona in *Otello* at the Met; Violetta in *La Traviata*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, and the title roles of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Cherubini's *Médée* with Moscow's Stanislavsky and

Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre; and concerts at Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and in St. Moritz.

MET APPEARANCES Mimì in *La Bohème* and Antonia (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has sung Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Donna Anna with the Vienna State Opera, Mimì at Covent Garden and for her debut with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Violetta at Valencia's Palau de les Arts. She has also appeared as Eva in Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* and the Angel in Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo* at Germany's Ludwigsburg Festival, and as Lyudmila in Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, the Swan Princess in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, Louisa in Prokofiev's *Betrothal in a Monastery*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Mimì and Musetta in *La Bohème*, and Adele in *Die Fledermaus* at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre.



Aleksandrs Antonenko

TENOR (RIGA, LATVIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Otello* at the Met and Barcelona's Liceu, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Canio in *Pagliacci* at Covent Garden, Pollione in *Norma* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Radamès in *Aida* at the Paris Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Don José in *Carmen*, Pollione, Grigory in *Boris Godunov*, Luigi in *Il Tabarro*, and the Prince in *Rusalka* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent engagements include Hermann in *The Queen of Spades* with the Vienna State Opera, Samson in *Samson et Dalila* and Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Calaf in *Turandot* at La Scala and the Latvian National Opera. He has also sung Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at La Scala and the Arena di Verona, Otello and Luigi at Covent Garden, Samson in Geneva, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* for his 2006 Vienna State Opera debut, Sergei in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with the Latvian National Opera, Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* in Frankfurt, and Otello at the Paris Opera, Rome Opera, Vienna State Opera, Salzburg Festival, and in concert with Riccardo Muti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.



Alexey Dolgov

TENOR (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Cassio in *Otello* at the Met and for his debut at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Houston Grand Opera, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in Montreal, and Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* with the Israeli Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Cassio (debut, 2013)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is a principal soloist at Moscow's Bolshoi Opera, where his roles have included Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, Likov in *The Tsar's Bride*, the Prince in *The Love for Three Oranges*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, and Vladimir Igorevich in *Prince Igor*. He has also recently sung Lenski at the Bavarian State Opera, the Israeli Opera, and in Munich; the title role in *Roberto Devereux* at the Bavarian State Opera and in Munich and Tokyo; Pinkerton at the Houston Grand Opera and in Rome; Edgardo at Washington National Opera and in Lille and Tokyo; and Rodolfo at Washington National Opera and Berlin's Staatsoper.



Željko Lučić

BARITONE (ZRENJANIN, SERBIA)

THIS SEASON Iago in *Otello*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and the title role of *Rigoletto* at the Met, the title role of *Nabucco* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Michele in *Il Tabarro* and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* in Frankfurt, Germont in *La Traviata* at the Paris Opera, and Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden.

MET APPEARANCES The title roles of *Nabucco* and *Macbeth*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Count di Luna, Michele, Barnaba in *La Gioconda* (debut, 2006), Germont, and Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has sung Gérard at Covent Garden; Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Amonasro, and Germont at La Scala; Scarpia and Nabucco at the Vienna State Opera; Iago in Zurich; the title role of *Falstaff* in Frankfurt; Rigoletto at the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and La Scala; and Simon Boccanegra and Macbeth at the Bavarian State Opera. He has also sung Macbeth at the Salzburg Festival, Germont at the Vienna State Opera and Covent Garden, and Don Carlo in *Ernani* with the San Francisco Opera.



James Morris

BASS-BARITONE (BALTIMORE, MARYLAND)

THIS SEASON Timur in *Turandot*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Lodovico in *Otello* at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES He has sung 60 roles and more than 970 performances since his 1971 debut, including Wotan in Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, Jacopo Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in *Lulu*, Oroveso in *Norma*, Iago in *Otello*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, and the title role of *Don Giovanni*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons he has sung the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Hans Sachs with Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Doctor in *Wozzeck* with the English National Opera. He has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses and with the major orchestras of Europe and the United States. One of the leading interpreters of Wagner's Wotan, he has sung the role in cycles at the Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and San Francisco Opera, among others.