

GIUSEPPE VERDI

OTELLO

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

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

Saturday, October 10, 2015
1:00–3:50PM

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 331st Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

OTELLO

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MONTANO
Jeff Mattsey

CASSIO
Dimitri Pittas*

IAGO
Željko Lučić

RODERIGO
Chad Shelton

OTELLO
Aleksandrs Antonenko

DESDEMONA
Sonya Yoncheva

EMILIA
Jennifer Johnson Cano*

A HERALD
Tyler Duncan

LODOVICO
Günther Groissböck

Saturday, October 10, 2015, 1:00–3:50PM



Željko Lučić as Iago,
Sonya Yoncheva
as Desdemona,
and Aleksandr
Antonenko as
Otello (from left)
in Verdi's *Otello*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
 Fight Director **B.H. Barry**
 Musical Preparation **Steven Eldredge, Dan Saunders,
 Joshua Greene, Joel Revzen, and Nimrod David Pfeffer**
 Assistant Stage Directors **Katrina Bachus, Gina Lapinski,
 and Sarah Ina Meyers**
 Stage Band Conductors **Gregory Buchalter and
 Nimrod David Pfeffer**
 Prompter **Joshua Greene**
 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**
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 Makeup Department**

* Graduate of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

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2015-16 SEASON

Aleksandrs Antonenko as Otello

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PHOTO: KRISTIAN SCHULLER / METROPOLITAN OPERA

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 2:05 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 opens 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 sixties, 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 1846–7, 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



“YOU’LL
END UP
WITH ME,
YOU’LL SEE”


LULU BERG

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Program Note CONTINUED

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. It was not for nothing that 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, though, 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

Remembering Jon Vickers

(1926–2015)

Jon Vickers, who died last July at age 88, was one of the 20th century's legendary tenors. The title role of *Otello*, which he sang more than 30 times at the Met over his 27-year career here, was just one of 17 characters he portrayed for the company, starting with his 1960 debut as Canio in *Pagliacci*. Whether as Parsifal, Peter Grimes, Florestan in *Fidelio*, Siegmund in *Die Walküre*, or any number of other roles with which he was closely identified, Vickers brought unparalleled dramatic intensity and a voice of thrilling power and communicative skill to his interpretations. In a review of his first Met Grimes, in 1967, the *Saturday Review* called his performance, "not merely a career peak for this enormously gifted individual, but very likely the best embodiment of the part that the stage has yet known... The end result is something of a rarity on the operatic stage: a virtuoso performance of a far-from-simple vocal task combined with a powerful involvement in the human condition that spells his life or death." Later, *Newsday* summed up his artist persona nicely, calling Vickers, "a volcanic force." His colleagues agreed, with Met Music Director James Levine asserting, "such a beautiful voice and such intensity in every respect... a truly great artist."



Clockwise from top: In the title role of Britten's *Peter Grimes* (1967), as Aeneas in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (1973), and in the title role of *Otello* (1972)



PHOTOS: MET OPERA ARCHIVES

Program Note CONTINUED

Caught between the saintly and the demonic, Otello is rendered helpless. Preying on his weakness for the radiant Desdemona, Iago puts in train 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 his music?” the English critic Francis Toye later asked. “I think not.”

—Gavin Plumley



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Aleksandrs Antonenko as Otello

PHOTO: KRISTIAN SCHULLER/METROPOLITAN OPERA

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The Cast and Creative Team



Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Otello* at the Met, *Elektra* with Opéra de Montréal, and concert tours with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES *Don Carlo*, *Rusalka*, *La Traviata*, *Faust*, and *Carmen* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has conducted *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Vienna State Opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* in concert at the Baden-Baden Festival, *Roméo et Juliette* and *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburg Festival, *Roméo et Juliette* at La Scala, *Rusalka* at Covent Garden, and *The Makropulos Case*, *Turandot*, and *Don Carlo* at the Netherlands Opera. He is currently Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic, and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain.



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.

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



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

VIDEO 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*.



Sonya Yoncheva

SOPRANO (PLOVDIV, BULGARIA)

THIS SEASON Desdemona in *Otello* and Mimì in *La Bohème* at the Met, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Vienna State Opera, Micaëla in *Carmen* at Covent Garden, Violetta in *La Traviata* and Mimì at the Staatsoper Berlin, the title role of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* at the Paris Opera, Violetta at Paris's Bastille Opera, Mimì and Violetta at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and the title role of Handel's *Alcina* in concert in Monte Carlo, Versailles, and Toulouse.

MET APPEARANCES Gilda in *Rigoletto* (debut, 2013) and Violetta.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* at the Bavarian State Opera, Violetta at Covent Garden and the Staatsoper Berlin, Leïla in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at Paris's Opéra Comique, the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Paris Opera, and Marguerite in *Faust* at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, and in Baden-Baden. She has also been heard at La Scala, Madrid's Teatro Real, and St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, and was a 2010 winner of Plácido Domingo's Operalia International Competition.



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.

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A scene from *Die Zauberflöte*
PHOTO: CORY WEAVER/METROPOLITAN OPERA

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Günther Groissböck

BASS (WAIDHOFEN, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON Lodovico in *Otello* and Landgraf Hermann in *Tannhäuser* at the Met, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* at La Scala, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Paris Opera, and King Henry in *Lohengrin* and Ochs at Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Banquo in *Macbeth* and Colline in *La Bohème* (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons he has sung Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* and Landgraf Hermann at the Bayreuth Festival, Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and Hunding in *Die Walküre* at Paris's Bastille Opera, the title role of *Boris Godunov* and Landgraf Hermann at Madrid's Teatro Real, King Henry and Hunding in Amsterdam, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Vodník in *Rusalka*, King Henry, Sarastro, Fafner, and Hunding at the Vienna State Opera. He has also sung Sarastro at La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Los Angeles Opera, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* in Zurich, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Landgraf Hermann at Barcelona's Liceu, Fafner at Paris's Châtelet and the San Francisco Opera, and Colline at the Washington National Opera.



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.

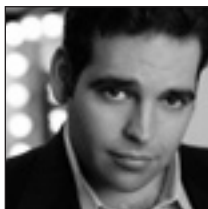
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Dimitri Pittas

TENOR (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Cassio in *Otello* and Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* at the Met, Alfred at Japan's Saito Kinen Festival, and concerts with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Macduff in *Macbeth*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Herald in *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005), Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*, First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, and the First Knight in *Parsifal*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Rodolfo with the Paris Opera and Dallas Opera, the title role of *Don Carlo* with Opera Philadelphia, Nemorino with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Michele in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *Two Women* at the San Francisco Opera. He has also sung Don Carlo for his debut with the Bolshoi Opera, Oronte in *I Lombardi* for his debut in Hamburg, and Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Rodolfo with the Canadian Opera Company. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

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