GIUSEPPE VERDI

RIGOLETTO

CONDUCTOR
Pablo Heras-Casado

PRODUCTION
Michael Mayer

SET DESIGNER
Christine Jones

COSTUME DESIGNER
Susan Hilferty

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Kevin Adams

CHOREOGRAPHER
Steven Hoggett

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Francisco Maria Piave, based on the play *Le Roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo

Wednesday, October 28, 2015
8:00–11:10PM

The production of *Rigoletto* was made possible by a generous gift from the **Hermione Foundation**, **Laura Sloate**, **Trustee**; and **Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. Montrone**

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from the Estate of Francine Berry

The Metropolitan Opera
2015–16 SEASON

The 866th Metropolitan Opera performance of

GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

RIGOLETTO

CONDUCTOR
Pablo Heras-Casado

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

THE DUKE
Stephen Costello

BORSA
Richard Troxell

COUNTESS CEPRANO
Katherine Whyte

RIGOLETTO
George Gagnidze

MARULLO
Jeff Mattsey

COUNT CEPRANO
David Crawford

MONTERONE
Stefan Szkafarowsky

SPARAFUCILE
Štefan Kocán

GILDA
Olga Peretyatko

GIOVANNA
Maria Zifchak

A PAGE
Catherine MiEun Choi-Steckmeyer

GUARD
Earle Patriarco

MADDALENA
Katarina Leoson

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 8:00–11:10PM

Olga Peretyatko as Gilda and George Gagnidze in the title role of Verdi's *Rigoletto*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Dennis Giauque**, **Howard Watkins**, and **Joel Revzen**
Assistant Stage Directors **Eric Einhorn** and **Sara Erde**
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**, revised for this production by **Michael Panayos** and **Paul Cremo**
Assistant to the Set Designer **Brett Banakis**
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Marina Reti**
Assistant Choreographer **Lorin Latarro**
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**
Costumes constructed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Shop**; **Giliberto Designs, Inc.**, New York; **Tricorne**, New York; **Eric Winterling, Inc.**, New York; **Euroco Costumes, Inc.**, New York; and **Merimask Designs**, Tonawanda, New York
Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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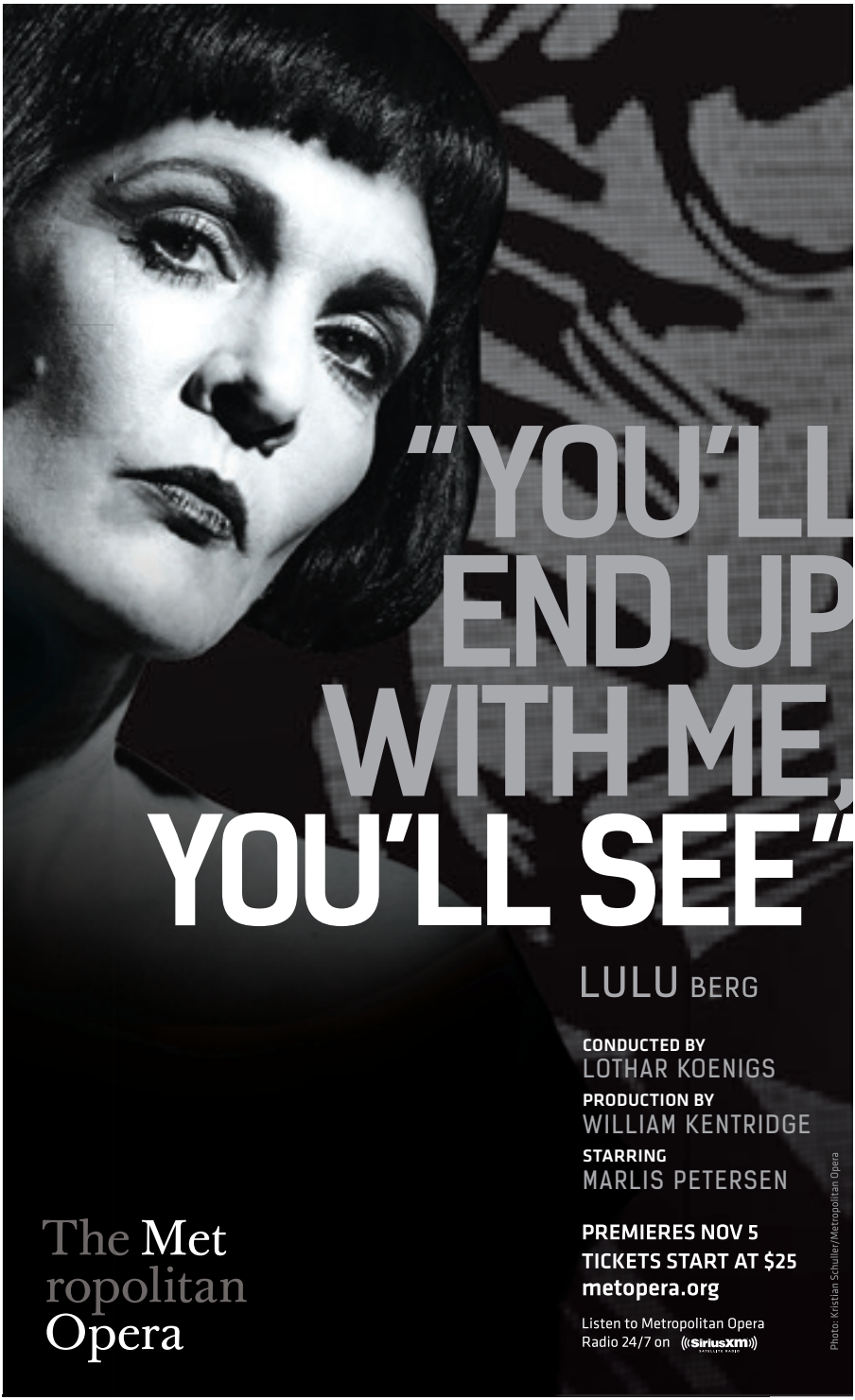
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Synopsis

Las Vegas, 1960

Act I

SCENE 1 The Duke's casino
SCENE 2 Outside Rigoletto's apartment

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00 PM)

Act II

The Duke's penthouse at the casino

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 10:05 PM)

Act III

A seedy club on the outskirts of Las Vegas

Act I

At his casino, the Duke boasts of his way with women. He flirts with the wife of Ceprano, one of his entourage, while Rigoletto, the Duke's hunchbacked sidekick and comedian, mocks the enraged husband. Marullo, another one of the Duke's entourage, bursts in with the latest gossip: Rigoletto is keeping a young mistress at his place. Unaware of this, Rigoletto continues to taunt Ceprano, who plots with the others to punish Rigoletto for his insults. Monterone, an Arab tycoon, forces his way into the crowd to denounce the Duke for seducing his daughter and is viciously ridiculed by Rigoletto. Monterone is arrested and puts a curse on Rigoletto.

Rigoletto is disturbed by Monterone's curse. He encounters Sparafucile, a hitman, who offers his services. Rigoletto reflects that his own tongue is as sharp as the murderer's knife. Arriving at home, he warmly greets his daughter, Gilda. Fearing for the girl's safety, he warns the housekeeper, Giovanna, not to let anyone into the apartment. When Rigoletto leaves, the Duke appears and bribes Giovanna, who lets him see Gilda whom he's seen in church. He declares his love for her and tells her he is a poor student. After he has left, Gilda tenderly reflects on her newfound love. The Duke's entourage gathers nearby, intending to abduct Rigoletto's "mistress." When Rigoletto arrives, surprising them, they convince him they are abducting the Countess Ceprano, and enlist his aid in their scheme. Successfully deceiving Rigoletto, they kidnap Gilda. When Rigoletto discovers that his daughter has been taken, he collapses as he remembers Monterone's curse.

Act II

Arriving at his penthouse apartment in the casino, the Duke is distraught, having immediately gone back to see Gilda only to find her missing. When his entourage returns and tells him the story of how they abducted a girl from Rigoletto's apartment and left her in the Duke's bedroom, he realizes it is Gilda and hurries off to her. Rigoletto enters, looking for Gilda. The entourage is astonished to find out that she is his daughter rather than his mistress, but they prevent him from storming into the Duke's bedroom. Rigoletto violently denounces them for their cruelty, then asks for compassion. Gilda returns from the Duke's room. She tells Rigoletto of the Duke's courtship, her abduction, and her deflowering by the Duke. Monterone is brought in to be killed by the Duke's men, and Rigoletto swears that both he and the Arab will be avenged. Gilda begs her father to forgive the Duke.

Act III

Rigoletto brings Gilda to a seedy club on the outskirts of town where Sparafucile and his sister Maddalena live. The Duke appears, and Gilda and Rigoletto watch him through the window as he amuses himself with Maddalena. Rigoletto tells his distraught daughter to leave town disguised as a man and, after she leaves, pays Sparafucile to murder the Duke. Gilda returns to overhear Maddalena urge her brother to spare the Duke and kill Rigoletto instead. Sparafucile refuses but agrees to kill the next person to arrive at the club, so that he will be able to produce a dead body for Rigoletto. Gilda decides to sacrifice herself for the Duke. Her plan succeeds and Sparafucile and Maddalena put her body in the trunk of a car. Rigoletto returns, and assuming the body is the corpse of the Duke, gloats over his revenge. But when he hears the Duke singing inside the club, he realizes he has been duped. He quickly removes the hood covering the head of the body in the car and is horrified to find it has been masking the identity of his dying daughter. Gilda dies asking her father's forgiveness and Rigoletto realizes Monterone's curse has been fulfilled.

Giuseppe Verdi

Rigoletto

Premiere: Teatro la Fenice, Venice, 1851

A dramatic journey of undeniable force, *Rigoletto* commands the respect of critics, performers, and audiences alike. It was immensely popular from its premiere—from even before its premiere, if we credit accounts of the buzz that surrounded the initial rehearsals—and remains fresh and powerful to this day. The story is one of the most accessible in opera, based on a controversial Victor Hugo drama whose full dramatic implications only became apparent when transformed by Verdi's musical genius. *Rigoletto* is the tale of an outsider—a hunchbacked jester—who struggles to balance the dueling elements of beauty and evil that exist in his life. Written during the most fertile period of Verdi's artistic life, the opera resonates with a universality that is frequently called Shakespearean.

The Creators

In a remarkable 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. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876), his librettist for *Rigoletto*, collaborated with him on ten works, including *Ernani*, *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino*, and the original versions of *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*.

The Setting

Victor Hugo's 1832 play *Le Roi s'amuse*, set at the court of King François I of France (circa 1520), is a blatant depiction of depraved authority. In adapting it, Verdi and Piave fought incessantly with the Italian censors in a well-documented battle. It makes for interesting reading, particularly in revealing what Verdi found important in the story and what he considered superfluous. Though Verdi had no love of royalty and favored a republic, he was not a proletarian ideologue like Hugo, and he tended to view people more as individuals than as representatives of classes. He was content, with Piave's deft juggling, to set the opera at the non-royal Renaissance court of Mantua and to change all the names, but held firm on other issues in the story, such as the curse that is the catalyst of the drama. Although the Duke remains unnamed, he was modeled on history's Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612). The Gonzaga family motto—*Forse che sì, forse che non* ("Maybe yes, maybe no")—provides an interesting insight into some of the duke's cavalier pronouncements. In Michael Mayer's Met production, the action unfolds in Las Vegas in 1960, a time and place with surprising parallels to the decadent world of Verdi's original setting.

The Music

Rigoletto contains a wealth of melody, including one that is among the world's most famous: "La donna è mobile." The opera's familiar arias—"Questa o quella" and "Caro nome," for example—are also rich with character insight and dramatic development. The heart of the score, though, lies in its fast-moving subtleties and apt dramatic touches. The baritone's solos, "Pari siamo!" (Act I, Scene 2) and "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" (Act II), are epic scenes telescoped to less than four minutes each. Not even Wagner's great monologues cover more territory than these, and certainly not within Verdi's economy of means. The celebrated father–daughter duets also reflect Verdi's overall design. Rigoletto sings of his protective love for Gilda in Act I, Scene 2 in a spun-out phrase of simple, honest melody, while her music decorates his. In their subsequent scene in Act II, Gilda's music (and, by implication, her life) is similarly intertwined with that of Rigoletto, until finally her melody breaks away as she strives to declare her adolescent independence. The famous quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore" (Act III) is an ingenious musical analysis of the diverging reactions of four characters in the same moment: the Duke's music rises with urgency and impatience, Gilda's droops with disappointment, Rigoletto's remains measured and paternal, while the promiscuous Maddalena is literally all over the place. In the context of the opera, the merely lovely music becomes inspired drama.

Met History

Rigoletto was first heard at the Met within a month of the company's inaugural performance, on November 16, 1883. The 1903–04 season opened with the company debut of Enrico Caruso as the Duke—a role he went on to sing to sing a total of 38 times before his premature death in 1921. The opera's title role was identified for many years with Italian baritone Giuseppe De Luca, who gave 96 performances between 1916 and 1940. Other notable Met Rigolettos have included Leonard Warren (1943–59), Robert Merrill (1952–72), and Cornell MacNeil (who surpassed De Luca's record with 102 appearances between 1959 and 1980). A new production in 1951, with Warren in the title role and Hilde Güden as Gilda, in her first Met appearance, also featured the company debut of designer Eugene Berman. Audience favorite Roberta Peters sang Gilda 88 times between 1951 and 1985. A new staging by Otto Schenk premiered in 1989 with June Anderson in her Met debut as Gilda, Luciano Pavarotti as the Duke, and Leo Nucci as Rigoletto. The current production, which marked the debuts of director Michael Mayer and the entire creative team, opened in January 2013, with Michele Mariotti conducting Diana Damrau, Piotr Beczala, and Željko Lučić. It was revived the following season with Dmitri Hvorostovsky in the title role.

Program Note

As with Beethoven, Verdi's body of work is often divided by contemporary commentators into three artistic periods. In the first, stretching from 1839 to 1850, Verdi was at his most prolific, quickly completing 15 operas that established him with audiences of the time as one of the world's leading opera composers and the successor to Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, all of whom had recently died or retired. The towering masterpieces that guaranteed Verdi's position alongside opera's few all-time great composers, however, did not appear until the second and third periods of his career, marked by a significant break away from, or at least a highly innovative re-interpretation of, the traditional forms and expectations of Italian opera, to which his early works had mostly adhered. Keeping with the Beethoven analogy, *Rigoletto* was Verdi's "Eroica," marking the beginning of the composer's middle period and clearly surpassing in originality and achievement all of his previous work. At its 1851 premiere and throughout the ensuing 13-performance run at Venice's Teatro de Fenice, *Rigoletto* was an enormous success, and it traveled quickly after that. By 1855, the opera had been produced throughout Italy, across Europe, and as far afield as New York, Havana, and Montevideo, Uruguay. This international success, combined with the premieres of *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*—which followed close on *Rigoletto*'s heels in 1853—put to rest any remaining doubt regarding Verdi's operatic primacy.

But despite *Rigoletto*'s eventual success, it was very nearly killed before its birth, needing something of a political miracle just to see the light of day. After receiving the commission from La Fenice, Verdi—an ardent humanist, democrat, and patriot who longed for Italy to be free from the autocratic rule of France and Austria—turned to an uncomfortable source of inspiration: a play by Victor Hugo called *Le Roi s'amuse* ("The King Amuses Himself"). Scathing and bleak, it centers on the amorous exploits of the historical French king François I and the downfall of his physically deformed and morally corrupt jester Triboulet, who encourages and makes light of the king's lechery. The hunchbacked antihero ultimately reaps the poisonous crop he has sown when François discovers and rapes his sheltered daughter, whom he has hidden away from the corruption of the court. Worse yet, in a botched attempt to arrange the king's murder in revenge, Triboulet causes instead the death of his own daughter.

Naturally, Austrian censors (who had jurisdiction over northern Italy, most of which was a province of the Habsburg Empire at the time) were not impressed with Verdi and librettist Francesco Maria Piave's work. Three months before the scheduled premiere, the administration of La Fenice received a letter from the authorities expressing the regional governor's disappointment that Verdi and Piave "should not have chosen a more worthy vehicle to display their talents than the revolting immorality and obscene triviality of *La Maledizione* ['The Curse,' *Rigoletto*'s original title]." The letter communicated that any performance of the

opera was absolutely forbidden, and instructed that no one's time be wasted with protestations or appeals. Luckily this last directive was ignored, and after extensive revisions to the work's setting and its characters' identities—the scene moved from the French court to Mantua, King François became the local duke, Triboulet became Rigoletto, and so on—the newly titled *Rigoletto* won its approval for performance from a censor who, by a crucial twist of fate, was an opera lover and an admirer of Verdi's work.

Though the play's political bent surely played its part in attracting Verdi's attention, it was *Le Roi s'amuse*'s emotional, psychological, and narrative power and the depth and inherent contradiction of Triboulet's character that most appealed to Verdi, an intensely intellectual and extremely well-read man for whom literature, poetry, and drama held as much significance as music. (The collection of authors on whose work he based his operas reads like a cross-section of history's great writers: Hugo, Byron, Schiller, Voltaire, Dumas, and most of all, Shakespeare, a formative influence and continual source of inspiration for Verdi, who claimed to have read and re-read the playwright's works since childhood.) It is therefore hard to overestimate the composer's level of admiration for Hugo's play, which he described in a letter to Piave as "one of the greatest creations of modern theatre. The story is great, immense, and includes a character who is one of the greatest creations that the theatres of all nations and all times will boast… Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare."

The genius of Verdi's transformation of Hugo's spoken drama into *Rigoletto*—and indeed of the stylistic step forward represented by this first work of Verdi's second creative period—is the closeness of music, text, and action. Form and content are streamlined and treated fluidly, so that neither the drama nor the music is distorted to fit the other, but rather the two are woven into a single organic whole. In the case of *Rigoletto*, this makes for a grim, vicious, and powerfully effective work, an opera noir in which the tension never flags and no respite is provided from the disturbing arc of the plot. Verdi and Piave have stripped Hugo's story and characters down to their bare essentials. From the opening scene—in which Monterone spits out his curse at a man so depraved that he would taunt an anguished father unable to protect his daughter—to the final scenes—in which Rigoletto himself tastes the impotence and torment of that very same situation and worse—not a single word of text or note of music is wasted. This is not a cathartic tragedy or a tale of noble sacrifice. There are no admirable characters here, no moral lesson, no redemption, and no silver lining. There is only a merciless depiction of the dark side of society and the price that must be paid for it.

With his music, Verdi takes all of this and makes it human, creating the psychological and emotional dimension that is mostly absent from the minimalist, clear-eyed text. Largely abandoning the predictable alternating structure of

recitative, aria, and ensemble numbers, Verdi instead drives constantly forward in an arioso-like mixture of the three, relying mostly on passages for two or more characters that flow seamlessly together. Trimming the fat of virtuoso vocal display, he strives for naturalness of expression. Consequently, what solo numbers there are must be handled by the performers with tasteful understatement to avoid seeming out of place and stalling the crucial momentum. As Verdi himself explained in response to a request for an additional showpiece aria for the soprano who first sang Gilda, "any new number would be superfluous… [and] would make no effect without the right time and place…. My intention was that *Rigoletto* should be one long series of duets, without arias and finales, because that is how I felt it. If anyone replies, 'But you could have done this or that or the other,' I can only say 'That may be, but I did not know how to do any better.'" It comes as no surprise, therefore, that *Rigoletto*'s finest moment is the ingenious Act III quartet, combining the work's emotional high point with its musical one and achieving a level of perfection matched by few other passages in all of opera. Perhaps the easiest way to put the effect of this compositional strategy in context is to think of it as a fictional blend of Wagner and Mozart—it looks forward to the former's ideal of endless melody while simultaneously looking back toward Mozart's breathless pacing.

One is also constantly amazed by Verdi's inventiveness and ability to unmistakably conjure his desired emotions and impressions while leaving them unspoken. Through evocative scoring (the chorus's imitation of wind during the storm in Act III), thematic manipulation (the curse leitmotif that is established in the opera's very first measures and lurks beneath each of its character's realizations of their fate), and pitch-perfect character painting (the very nature of each personality revealed by their music), Verdi's score communicates subliminally with the listener. In Act II, for example, "while [Rigoletto] sings and moves us to pity," musicologist Vincent Godefroy observes, "the orchestra is commenting on his daughter's experience behind the locked door. … Concentrate on the orchestra and you will hear the rape of Gilda." Of similar genius is the treatment of "La donna è mobile," by far the most frequently excerpted bit of *Rigoletto*. So carefree and charmingly tongue-in-cheek on its own, Verdi's jaunty little tune is positively slimy in context, and when its distant strains return in the final scene to transform Rigoletto's bloodthirsty gloating to horrible dread, the effect is viscerally sickening. These musical masterstrokes, resonating with the listener on a subconscious and primal level, ensure that even in our desensitized modern world, *Rigoletto* will never lose its power to send audiences home feeling profoundly impressed, mentally unsettled, and most likely a bit queasy.

—Jay Goodwin

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Aleksandrs Antonenko as Otello

PHOTO: KRISTIAN SCHULLER/METROPOLITAN OPERA

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The Cast

Pablo Heras-Casado

CONDUCTOR (GRANADA, SPAIN)

THIS SEASON *Rigoletto* at the Met and *I Due Foscari* at Madrid's Teatro Real; debuts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and Vienna Symphony Orchestra; and additional concert engagements leading London's Philharmonia Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and Ensemble Intercontemporain.

MET APPEARANCES *Rigoletto* (debut, 2013) and *Carmen*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is Principal Guest Conductor at the Teatro Real and Principal Conductor at the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and is a regular guest with the Chicago and San Francisco symphony orchestras, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Berlin, Munich Philharmonic, and Mariinsky Orchestra. He has conducted *Rigoletto* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *I Vespri Siciliani* in Frankfurt, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* in Madrid, Adams's *Nixon in China* with the Canadian Opera Company, and the world premiere of Hosokawa's *Matsukaze* at Brussels's La Monnaie.

Katarina Leoson

MEZZO-SOPRANO (LYSVIK, SWEDEN)

THIS SEASON Maddalena in *Rigoletto* for her debut at the Met, Lucia in Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* at the Frankfurt Opera, and Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Stockholm's Royal Swedish Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* at the Finnish National Opera, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at Norrland Opera, and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Amastre in Handel's *Serse* with the Royal Swedish Opera. She made her debut at the Royal Swedish Opera in 1996 as the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and in 2011 became a soloist with the company where her roles include Maddalena, Olga, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Erda in *Das Rheingold*, Pauline in *The Queen of Spades*, Fricka in *Die Walküre*, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and the title roles of *Carmen* and Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*. She has also sung Mrs. Pike in Britten's *Albert Herring* at the Royal Danish Opera, Marchesi in Miklós Maros's *Kastrater* at the Drottingholm Court Theater, and Carmen at the Brooklyn Academy of Music while on tour with Sweden's Folkoperan.

Olga Peretyatko

SOPRANO (ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Gilda in *Rigoletto* at the Met, Madrid's Teatro Real, Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Paris Opera and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Brussels.

MET APPEARANCES Elvira in *I Puritani* (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has recently sung Violetta in *La Traviata* in Baden-Baden and Lausanne, Elvira at the Vienna State Opera, and Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello* at La Scala. She has also sung Giunia in *Lucio Silla* at the Salzburg Festival and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Adina at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Adina in Hamburg, and has made debuts at the Vienna State Opera and in Zurich as Gilda and at La Scala as Marfa in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*. Additional performances include Gilda at the Arena di Verona, Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Lyon and Paris, the title role of Handel's *Alcina* in Lausanne, Fiorilla in *Il Turco in Italia* in Amsterdam, and the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for her 2011 debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Stephen Costello

TENOR (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON Percy in *Anna Bolena* and the Duke in *Rigoletto* at the Met, the Duke at Madrid's Teatro Real, des Grieux in *Manon* with Dallas Opera, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Covent Garden, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Vienna State Opera, Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette* for his debut at the Santa Fe Opera, and the Verdi Requiem with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Camille in *The Merry Widow*, and Edgardo and Arturo (debut, 2007) in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Alfredo at the Vienna State Opera, Ishmael in Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick* for his debut with Washington National Opera (a role he also sang for his debut with the Dallas Opera in the 2010 world premiere of the work), the Duke for his debut with the Houston Grand Opera, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* for his debut with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Percy and Nemorino with the Vienna State Opera.

George Gagnidze

BARITONE (TBILISI, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Rigoletto* and Tonio in *Pagliacci* at the Met, Rigoletto at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Amonasro in *Aida* at Paris's Bastille Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Amonasro, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*, the title role of *Macbeth*, and Rigoletto (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Scarpia at the Paris Opera, La Scala, and Vienna State Opera, Amonasro and Rigoletto at La Scala, the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Hamburg, Rigoletto at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and the title role of *Nabucco* in Palermo. He has also sung Macbeth at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Rigoletto at the Los Angeles Opera and Parma's Verdi Festival, Miller in *Luisa Miller* in Valencia, and Germont in *La Traviata* at La Scala. He has also appeared at Madrid's Teatro Real, Paris's Bastille Opera, and Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice. He made his operatic debut in 1996 at the Tbilisi Opera House as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

Štefan Kocán

BASS (TRNAVA, SLOVAKIA)

THIS SEASON Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* at the Met and the Watcher in George Enescu's *Oedipe* for his debut at Covent Garden.

MET APPEARANCES Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Konchak in *Prince Igor*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Ramfis and the King (debut, 2009) in *Aida*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons he has sung the title role of *Attila* in Santiago, Banquo in *Macbeth* and King Philip in *Don Carlo* at La Scala, and the Commendatore with Munich's Bavarian State Opera. Additional performances include Ramfis with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Masetto in *Don Giovanni* at La Scala and the Staatsoper Berlin, the Commendatore with the Los Angeles Opera, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Cologne, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* in Graz, and Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo*, and Banquo at the Vienna State Opera.

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Doctor in attendance during performances; contact an usher for assistance.

LECTURE SERIES
Opera-related courses, pre-performance lectures, master classes, and more are held throughout the performance season at the Opera Learning Center. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028.

LOST AND FOUND
Security office at Stage Door. Monday–Friday, 2pm–4pm; 212-799-3100, ext. 2499.

MET OPERA SHOP
The Met Opera Shop is adjacent to the North Box Office, 212-580-4090. Open Monday–Saturday, 10am–final intermission; Sunday, noon–6pm.

PUBLIC TELEPHONES
Telephones with volume controls and TTY Public Telephone located in Founders Hall on the Concourse level.

RESTAURANT AND REFRESHMENT FACILITIES
The Grand Tier Restaurant features creative contemporary American cuisine, and the Revlon Bar offers panini, crostini, and a full service bar. Both are open two hours prior to the Met Opera curtain time to any Lincoln Center ticket holder for pre-curtain dining. Pre-ordered intermission dining is also available for Met ticket holders. For reservations call 212-799-3400.

RESTROOMS
Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are on the Dress Circle, Grand Tier, Parterre, and Founders Hall levels.

SEAT CUSHIONS
Available in the South Check Room. Major credit card or driver's license required for deposit.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS
For information contact the Met Opera Guild Education Department, 212-769-7022.

SCORE-DESK TICKET PROGRAM
Tickets for score desk seats in the Family Circle boxes may be purchased by calling the Met Opera Guild at 212-769-7028. These no-view seats provide an affordable way for students to study an opera's score during a performance.

TOUR GUIDE SERVICE
Backstage tours of the Opera House are held during the Met season on most weekdays at 3:15pm, and on select Sundays at 10:30am and/or 1:30pm. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028. Tours of Lincoln Center daily; call 212-875-5351 for availability.

WEBSITE
www.metopera.org

WHEELCHAIR ACCOMMODATIONS
Telephone 212-799-3100, ext. 2204. Wheelchair entrance at Concourse level.

The exits indicated by a red light and the sign nearest the seat you occupy are the shortest routes to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run—walk to that exit.

In compliance with New York City Department of Health regulations, smoking is prohibited in all areas of this theater.

Patrons are reminded that in deference to the performing artists and the seated audience, those who leave the auditorium during the performance will not be readmitted while the performance is in progress.

The photographing or sound recording of any performance, or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Offenders may be ejected and liable for damages and other lawful remedies.

Use of cellular telephones and electronic devices for any purpose, including email and texting, is prohibited in the auditorium at all times. Be sure to turn off all devices before entering the auditorium.