

GIACOMO PUCCINI

TOSCA

CONDUCTOR
Paolo Carignani

PRODUCTION
Luc Bondy

SET DESIGNER
Richard Peduzzi

COSTUME DESIGNER
Milena Canonero

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Max Keller

STAGE DIRECTOR
Paula Williams

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and
Luigi Illica, based on Victorien Sardou's
play *La Tosca*

Monday, November 2, 2015
8:00–11:05PM

The production of *Tosca* was made possible by a
generous gift from **The Annenberg Foundation**

The revival of this production is made
possible by The Agnes Varis Trust and the
Svokos family, in memory of Giovanni Rechichi

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The Metropolitan Opera

2015–16 SEASON

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SACRISTAN

John Del Carlo

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CAVARADOSSI

Roberto Aronica

TOSCA

Angela Gheorghiu

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Željko Lučić

SPOLETTA

Tony Stevenson*

SCIARRONE

James Courtney

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Monday, November 2, 2015, 8:00–11:05PM



A scene from
Puccini's *Tosca*

Dramaturg **Dieter Sturm**
Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Steven Eldredge,
Gareth Morrell, and Liora Maurer**
Assistant Stage Director **Jonathon Loy**
Stage Band Conductor **Roger Malouf**
Prompter **Donna Racik**
Italian Coach **Gildo Di Nunzio**
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Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**
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Act I portrait by **Jerome Lagarrigue**
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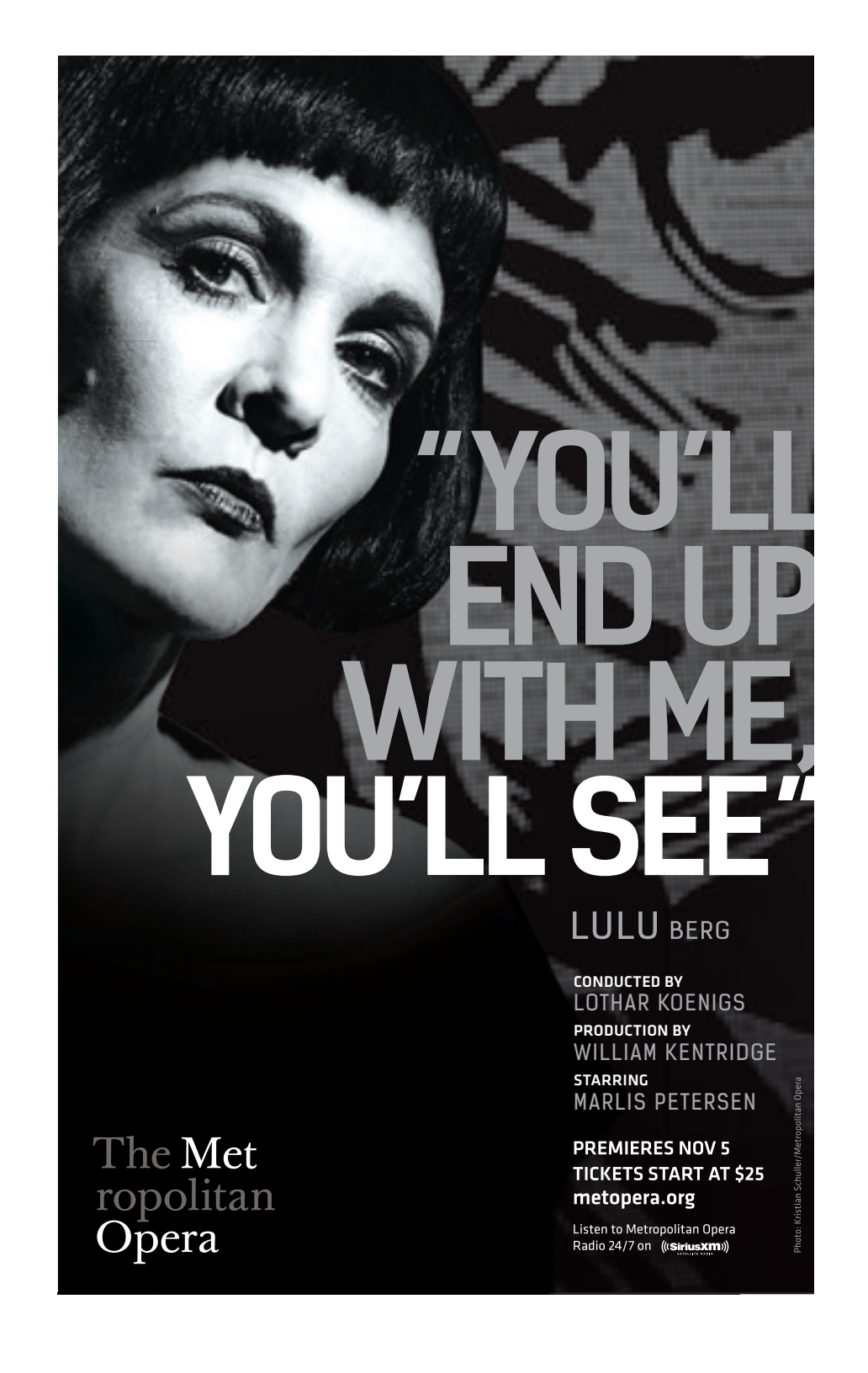
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


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Synopsis

Rome, June 1800

Act I

Morning, the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:50 PM)

Act II

That evening, Scarpia's rooms in the Palazzo Farnese

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 10:05 PM)

Act III

Dawn, the prison and ramparts of Castel Sant'Angelo

Act I

Cesare Angelotti, an escaped political prisoner, rushes into the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle. He hides in one of the chapels just before the painter Mario Cavaradossi arrives to work on his portrait of Mary Magdalene. The painting has been inspired by the Marchesa Attavanti, whom Cavaradossi has seen in the church but does not know. He is struck by the resemblance of the dark-haired beauty of his lover, the singer Floria Tosca, and that of the blonde Marchesa Attavanti. Angelotti, who was a member of the former Bonapartist government, emerges from his hiding place. Cavaradossi recognizes him and promises help, then hurries him back into the chapel as Tosca is heard calling from outside. She jealously asks Cavaradossi whom he has been talking to and reminds him of their rendezvous that evening. Suddenly recognizing the Marchesa Attavanti in the painting, she accuses him of being unfaithful, but he assures her of his love. When Tosca has left, Angelotti again comes out of hiding. A cannon signals that the police have discovered the escape, and he and Cavaradossi flee to the painter's house. The sacristan enters with choirboys who are preparing to sing in a Te Deum celebrating the recent victory against Napoleon at the Battle of Marengo. Their excitement is silenced by the arrival of Baron Scarpia, chief of the secret police, who is searching for Angelotti. When Tosca comes back looking for Cavaradossi, Scarpia shows her a fan with the Attavanti crest that he has just found. Seemingly finding her suspicions about her lover's infidelity confirmed, Tosca bursts into tears. She vows vengeance and leaves as the church fills with worshippers. Scarpia sends his men to follow her to Cavaradossi, with whom he thinks Angelotti is hiding. While the congregation sings the Te Deum, Scarpia declares that he will bend Tosca to his will.

Act II

Scarpia anticipates the pleasure of having Tosca in his power. The spy Spoletta arrives with news that he was unable to find Angelotti. Instead he brings in Cavaradossi. While Scarpia interrogates the defiant painter, Tosca is heard singing at a royal gala in the same building. Scarpia sends for her and she appears just as Cavaradossi is being taken away to be tortured. Frightened by Scarpia's questions and Cavaradossi's screams, Tosca reveals Angelotti's hiding place. Cavaradossi is brought in, badly hurt and hardly conscious. When he realizes what has happened, he angrily confronts Tosca, just as the officer Sciarrone rushes in to announce that Napoleon in fact has won the battle, a defeat for Scarpia's side. Cavaradossi shouts out his defiance of tyranny and is dragged off to be executed. Scarpia calmly suggests to Tosca that he would let Cavaradossi go free if she'd give herself to him. Fighting off his advances, she declares she has dedicated her life to art and love and calls on God for help. Scarpia insists, when Spoletta interrupts: faced with capture, Angelotti has killed himself. Tosca, now forced to give in or lose her lover, agrees to Scarpia's proposition. Scarpia orders Spoletta to prepare for a mock execution of Cavaradossi, after which he is to be freed. Tosca demands that Scarpia write her a safe-conduct. When he has done so, she grabs a knife from a table and stabs him.

Act III

Cavaradossi awaits execution. He bribes the jailer to deliver a farewell letter to Tosca, then, overcome with emotion, gives in to his despair. Tosca appears and explains what has happened. The two imagine their future in freedom. As the execution squad arrives, Tosca implores Cavaradossi to fake his death convincingly, then hides. The soldiers fire and depart. Cavaradossi doesn't move and Tosca realizes that Scarpia has betrayed her. Just as Spoletta rushes in to arrest her, she leaps from the battlement.

Giacomo Puccini

Tosca

Premiere: Teatro Costanzi, Rome, 1900

Puccini's melodrama about a volatile diva, a sadistic police chief, and an idealistic artist has offended and thrilled audiences for more than a century. Critics, for their part, have often had problems with *Tosca's* rather grungy subject matter, the directness and intensity of its score, and the crowd-pleasing dramatic opportunities it provides for its lead roles. But these same aspects have made *Tosca* one of a handful of iconic works that seem to represent opera in the public imagination. *Tosca's* popularity is further secured by a superb and exhilarating dramatic sweep, a driving score of abundant melody and theatrical shrewdness, and a career-defining title role.

The Creators

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world's opera companies. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, sensitivity to everyday subjects, copious melody, and economy of expression. Puccini's librettists for *Tosca*, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his two other most enduringly successful operas, *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. Giacosa found the whole subject of *Tosca* highly distasteful, but his enthusiastic collaborators managed to sway him to work on the project. The opera is based on *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou (1831–1908), a popular dramatist of his time who wrote the play specifically for the talents of the actress Sarah Bernhardt.

The Setting

No opera is more tied to its setting than *Tosca*: Rome, the morning of June 17, 1800, through dawn the following day. The specified settings for each of the three acts—the Church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Palazzo Farnese, and Castel Sant'Angelo—are familiar monuments in the city and can still be visited today. While the libretto takes some liberties with the facts, historical issues form a basis for the opera: the people of Rome are awaiting news of the Battle of Marengo in northern Italy, which will decide the fate of their symbolically powerful city.

The Music

The score of *Tosca* (if not the drama) itself is considered a prime example of the style of verismo, an elusive term usually translated as “realism.” The typical musical features of the verismo tradition are prominent in *Tosca*: short arias with an uninhibited flood of raw melody, including the tenor’s Act I soliloquy shortly after the curtain rises and his unforgettable “E lucevan le stelle” (“And the stars were shining”) in Act III; ambient sounds that blur the distinctions between life and art (the cantata heard through the window in Act II, the passing shepherd’s song, and the extraordinary tolling of morning church bells as dawn breaks to open Act III); and the use of parlato—words spoken instead of sung—at moments of tension (Tosca’s snarling “Quanto? Il prezzo!” in Act II as she asks the price she must pay for her lover’s life). The opera’s famous soprano aria, “Vissi d’arte” in Act II, in which Tosca sings of living her life for love and her art, also provides ample opportunity for intense dramatic interpretation. One of *Tosca*’s most memorable scenes is the Te Deum, in which the baritone’s debased inner thoughts are explored against a monumental religious procession scored for triple chorus and augmented orchestra including bells, organ, and two cannons.

Met History

A year after its world premiere in Rome, *Tosca* premiered at the Met with an all-star cast that included the great baritone Antonio Scotti as Scarpia. Scotti would go on to sing the part 217 times at the Met, a house record for an artist in a lead role. Among his principal Toscas were Emma Eames, Geraldine Farrar, Olive Fremstad, Emmy Destinn, Claudia Muzio, and Maria Jeritza. Farrar headlined a new production in 1917, which, incredibly, was in use for half a century. Renata Tebaldi, Richard Tucker, and Leonard Warren, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting, headlined a “revised” production in 1958, and in 1968 a new one directed by Otto Schenk starred Birgit Nilsson, Franco Corelli, and Gabriel Bacquier. Maria Callas brought her legendary portrayal of Tosca to the Met for six performances, two each in 1956, 1958, and 1965. A new staging by Franco Zeffirelli premiered in 1985 starring Hildegard Behrens, Plácido Domingo, and Cornell MacNeil with Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting. The current production by Luc Bondy opened the Met’s 2009–10 season with Karita Mattila in the title role, Marcelo Álvarez as Cavaradossi, and James Levine conducting the opera of his 1971 Met debut.

Program Note

When looking for an operatic subject, Giacomo Puccini suffered agonies of doubt; when decided, his certainty about what he wanted could be the despair of his librettists. Puccini knew about Victorien Sardou's 1887 play *La Tosca* as early as 1889, when he wrote to his publisher, Giulio Ricordi: "In this *Tosca* I see the opera which exactly suits me, one without excessive proportions, or decorative spectacle, and one which gives opportunity for an abundance of music...."

We don't know what happened to this early initiative: Puccini turned instead to *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème* while *Tosca* was taken up by another Ricordi composer, Alberto Franchetti. In 1894 Franchetti and his librettist, Luigi Illica, were in Paris to confer with Sardou, and one evening Illica read his text aloud, with Verdi among the listeners. Puccini set great store by the enthusiasm of colleagues—he had insisted on composing *Manon* in the face of Massenet's already successful work, and successfully confronted Leoncavallo's simultaneous *Bohème*. The combination of Verdi's reported praise and Franchetti's possession of the subject probably revived Puccini's earlier interest in *Tosca*. Ricordi had no doubt which of his two composers would produce a more successful opera, and so a somewhat discreditable maneuver ensued: Ricordi and Illica persuaded poor Franchetti that the subject was, after all, not suitable for operatic treatment—too brutal, too risqué, too tied to forgotten historical events. The ruse worked, and by the end of the year Illica was at work for Puccini, aided by Giuseppe Giacosa, his collaborator on *La Bohème*.

By that time, in Florence in October 1895, Puccini had seen Sarah Bernhardt perform the play, a skillful tapestry combining historical drama, revolutionary politics, love and religion, architectural spectacle, melodrama, and Grand Guignol into a closely plotted mechanism of ever-tightening tension. Inevitably, in the compression of Sardou's five acts to the opera's three, a good deal of meticulously laid detail and motivation went by the boards. The political circumstances—the occupation of Rome by the Bourbons of Naples, Cavaradossi's liberalism, the approach of Napoleon's army—are reduced to a few obscure phrases. Gone altogether is the original significance of the Angelotti affair. Visiting London years before, Sardou's Angelotti had spent a week with a beautiful girl who plied the oldest profession in Vauxhall Gardens. When he met the same girl later in Naples, she was Lady Hamilton—and so unhappy at being recognized that she had Angelotti framed as a revolutionary and imprisoned. Scarpia, sent by the court of Naples to control dissidence in Rome, knows Lady Hamilton's influence over the queen, and knows that Angelotti's escape can cost him his position.

Yet Puccini was quite certain of the effect he could make with the scenes that suited his talents. His invention yielded some memorable musical images, notably the three-chord progression that opens the opera and embodies the menace of Scarpia, and the headlong syncopations that follow it: Angelotti in flight. The suave bell-like theme that opens the Scarpia–*Tosca* conversation in Act I, the rising bass line that tautens the torture scene, and the suspenseful

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orchestral motives that wind through the murder at the end of Act II and through the “mock” execution in Act III are all masterfully extended and developed. And in lyric mastery no Puccini score can surpass the first-act duet, the tenor arias, or Tosca’s second-act prayer. (There is, in fact, a unifying “Tosca melos,” a pattern of rising and falling thirds, that underlies many of the themes.)

The time-consuming process of compressing Sardou and revising the libretto was complicated by the resistance of Giacosa, who sincerely believed the play unsuitable for operatic treatment: “The first act consists of nothing but duets. Nothing but duets in the second act (except for the short ‘torture’ scene in which only two characters are seen on stage). The third act is one interminable duet.” He was right in terms of operatic tradition, but of course Puccini was in the process of redefining that. (So were others: a few years later Strauss would produce *Elektra*, almost entirely a succession of one-on-one confrontations.)

Though most of the libretto was in hand to Puccini’s satisfaction by the end of 1896, he didn’t begin composition until January 1898. Twice he visited Sardou in Paris, finding the old man, now more than 70, “prodigious.” In 1899 the playwright was preparing a revival of his play with Bernhardt. Wrote Puccini: “In sketching the panorama, he wanted the course of the Tiber to be seen passing between St. Peter’s and the Castello!! I told him that the flumen flows past on the other side, under the Castello. But he, as calm as a fish, said: ‘Oh, that’s nothing!’ A fine fellow, all life and fire and full of historical-topo-panoramical inexactitudes.”

Puccini, for his part, cared a good deal about accuracy, directing precise inquiries to friends in Rome about the appropriate liturgical music and processional order in Act I, about the tuning of the matin bells that would be heard from the Castel Sant’Angelo at the beginning of Act III (in the end, he made a field trip to Rome himself to check this out), about a suitable dialect text for the shepherd boy heard in the same scene. The first act was completed in 1898, the second act the following July. Aspects of the libretto were still under discussion, especially the aria Cavaradossi was to sing in the final act. Puccini objected to the reflective, philosophical “farewell to life and art” that the librettists furnished (and which Verdi had much admired, a fact that no doubt stiffened their resistance). The composer wanted a passionate personal statement and finally insisted, playing the music of what would become “E lucevan le stelle,” complete with dummy words, for Illica and Giacosa. The opera was finished on September 29, 1898, and although Ricordi offered serious objections about the “conception and craftsmanship” of the third act, Puccini held his ground and changed nothing.

The premiere took place, appropriately enough, in Rome, at the Teatro Costanzi on January 14, 1900. Ercilea Darclée sang the title role, with Emilio De Marchi as Cavaradossi and Eugenio Giraltoni as Scarpia; Leopoldo Mugnone conducted. Despite mixed reviews, the new work was an immediate box-office success and was quickly taken up around the world.

—David Hamilton



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Aleksandrs Antonenko as Otello

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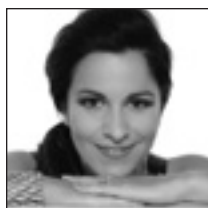
Paolo Carignani

CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Turandot*, *Tosca*, and *La Bohème* at the Met, *Norma* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and *Carmen* with the Canadian Opera Company.

MET APPEARANCES *Nabucco*, *Aida*, and *La Traviata* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS From 1999 to 2008 he was general music director at Oper Frankfurt, where he conducted *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Luisa Miller*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *Tristan und Isolde*, among other works. Recent performances include *Il Trovatore*, *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *La Traviata*, and *Nabucco* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, *Turandot* at the Bregenz Festival, *Guillaume Tell* at the Netherlands Opera, *Nabucco* in Tokyo, *La Fanciulla del West* at the Vienna State Opera, and Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz* in Strasbourg. He has also conducted at the Staatsoper Berlin, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, Barcelona's Liceu, and at festivals in Glyndebourne, Spoleto, Schleswig-Holstein, and Pesaro.



Angela Gheorghiu

SOPRANO (ADJUD, ROMANIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Tosca* at the Met, Covent Garden, and the Vienna State Opera, and an opera gala in Monte Carlo.

MET APPEARANCES *Violetta* in *La Traviata*, *Adina* in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Amelia* in *Simon Boccanegra*, *Liù* in *Turandot*, *Micaëla* in *Carmen*, *Juliette* in *Roméo et Juliette*, *Marguerite* in *Faust*, *Magda* in *La Rondine*, and *Mimi* in *La Bohème* (debut, 1993).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include *Charlotte* in *Werther* at the Vienna State Opera, *Magda* in Tel Aviv, and the title role of *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Paris Opera. She made her international debut in 1992 at Covent Garden, and has since returned there to sing *Mimi*, *Marguerite*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Violetta*, *Amelia*, *Magda*, and *Nedda* in *Pagliacci*. She has also sung *Juliette* at the Arena di Verona, Salzburg Festival, and Orange Festival, *Amelia* in Madrid, *Violetta* at La Scala, *Marguerite* in Monte Carlo, *Fanny* in the world premiere of Vladimir Cosma's *Marius et Fanny* in Marseille, and *Magda* with the San Francisco Opera. She has appeared in film versions of *Tosca* and *Roméo et Juliette*.



Roberto Aronica

TENOR (CIVITAVECCHIA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at the Met, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Turin, the title role of *Otello* in Parma, Luigi in *Il Tabarro* in Rome, Loris in *Fedora* in Naples, and Don José in *Carmen* in Turin.

MET APPEARANCES Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Macduff in *Macbeth*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Alfredo in *La Traviata* (debut, 1998), and the Duke in *Rigoletto*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons he has sung Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Bologna, the title role of *Don Carlo* at Covent Garden, Pinkerton at Barcelona's Liceu and the Arena di Verona, Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* in Bilbao, Foresto in *Attila* in Parma, Calaf in *Turandot* in Turin, and Pollione in *Norma* in Cagliari. He has also sung Alfredo and Cavaradossi at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Rodolfo at Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Florence's Maggio Musicale, Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Vienna State Opera and in Madrid, the title role of *Faust* in Barcelona, and the title role of *Ernani* in Bologna and in Tokyo.



John Del Carlo

BASS-BARITONE (SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON The Sacristan in *Tosca* and Benoit and Alcindoro in *La Bohème* at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Gonzalo in Adès's *The Tempest*, the title role of *Don Pasquale*, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, the Prince in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (debut, 1993), Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier*, Swallow in *Peter Grimes*, Alfieri in Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge*, Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Baron Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, Dansker in *Billy Budd*, and Balducci in *Benvenuto Cellini*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Among his many roles with the San Francisco Opera are Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, General Boom in Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, and the title role of *Falstaff*. He has also appeared with the Paris Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Covent Garden, Houston Grand Opera, San Diego Opera, and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.



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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