

GIUSEPPE VERDI

# AIDA

CONDUCTOR  
**Daniele Rustioni**  
DEBUT

PRODUCTION  
**Sonja Frisell**

SET DESIGNER  
**Gianni Quaranta**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**Dada Saligeri**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**Gil Wechsler**

CHOREOGRAPHER  
**Alexei Ratmansky**

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
**Stephen Pickover**

GENERAL MANAGER  
**Peter Gelb**

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
**James Levine**

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR  
**Fabio Luisi**

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Thursday, March 23, 2017  
7:30–11:15PM

The production of *Aida* was made possible by a generous gift from  
**Mrs. Donald D. Harrington**

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

# The Metropolitan Opera

2016-17 SEASON

The 1,156th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

## AIDA

CONDUCTOR  
Daniele Rustioni DEBUT

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

RAMFIS  
James Morris

A PRIESTESS  
Jennifer Johnson Cano\*

RADAMÈS  
Jorge de León DEBUT

AMONASRO  
George Gagnidze

AMNERIS  
Violeta Urmana

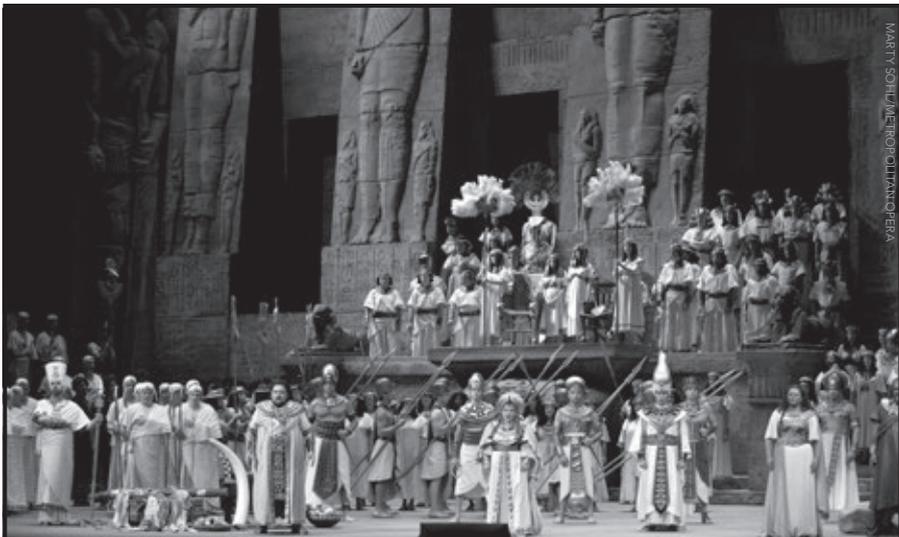
SOLO DANCERS  
Jennifer Cadden  
Scott Weber

AIDA  
Krassimira Stoyanova

THE KING  
Morris Robinson\*

A MESSENGER  
Ronald Naldi

Thursday, March 23, 2017, 7:30-11:15PM



A scene from  
Verdi's *Aida*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Steven Eldredge,  
Pierre Vallet, and Joshua Greene**  
Assistant Stage Directors **Jonathon Loy and J. Knighten Smit**  
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**  
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**  
Prompter **Donna Racik**  
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and  
painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume  
Department**  
Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera  
Wig and Makeup Department**  
Headdresses by **Rodney Gordon Studios and Miles-Laity, Ltd.**  
Animals supervised by **All-Tame Animals, Inc.**

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

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\* Graduate of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

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usher at intermission.



PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

BEETHOVEN

# *FIDELIO*

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**MAR** 16, 20, 24, 28 **APR** 1 mat, 5, 8 eve

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Beethoven's only opera—an ode to freedom, justice, and the human spirit—returns to the Met. Adrienne Pieczonka is Leonore, who courageously fights to free her husband Florestan, sung by Klaus Florian Vogt, from prison. Greer Grimsley is Don Pizarro, Falk Struckmann is Rocco, and Sebastian Weigle conducts.

Tickets from \$27

[metopera.org](http://metopera.org)

# Synopsis

## Act I

Egypt, during the reign of the pharaohs. At the royal palace in Memphis, the high priest Ramfis tells the warrior Radamès that Ethiopia is preparing another attack against Egypt. Radamès hopes to command the Egyptian army. He is in love with Aida, the Ethiopian slave of Princess Amneris, the King's daughter, and he believes that victory in the war would enable him to free her and marry her. But Amneris also loves Radamès and is jealous of Aida. A messenger brings news that the Ethiopians are advancing. The King names Radamès to lead the army, and all join in a patriotic anthem. Left alone, Aida is torn between her love for Radamès and loyalty to her native country, where her father, Amonasro, is king.

In the temple of Vulcan, the priests consecrate Radamès to the service of the god. Ramfis orders him to protect the homeland.

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:15 PM)

## Act II

Ethiopia has been defeated, and Amneris waits for the triumphant return of Radamès. Alone with Aida, she pretends that Radamès has fallen in battle, then says he is still alive. Aida's reactions leave no doubt that she loves Radamès. Amneris is certain she will defeat her rival.

At the city gates, the King and Amneris observe the victory celebrations and crown Radamès with a victor's wreath. Captured Ethiopians are led in, among them Amonasro, Aida's father, who signals his daughter not to reveal his identity as king. Radamès is impressed by Amonasro's eloquent plea for mercy and asks that the order for the prisoners to be executed be overruled, and for them to be freed instead. The King grants his request but keeps Amonasro in custody. He declares that as a victor's reward, Radamès will have Amneris's hand in marriage.

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30 PM)

## Act III

On the eve of Amneris's wedding, Ramfis and Amneris pray in a temple on the banks of the Nile. Nearby, Aida is waiting for Radamès, lost in thoughts of her homeland. Suddenly, Amonasro appears. Appealing to Aida's sense of duty, he makes her promise to find out from Radamès which route the Egyptian army will take to invade Ethiopia. Amonasro hides as Radamès arrives. He and Aida dream about their future life together, and Radamès agrees to run

away with her. Aida asks him about his army's route, and just as he reveals the secret, Amonasro emerges from his hiding place. Realizing what he has done, Radamès is horrified. Aida and Amonasro are trying to calm him when Ramfis and Amneris step out of the temple. Father and daughter are able to escape, but Radamès surrenders to the priests.

### *Pause*

### **Act IV**

Radamès awaits trial as a traitor, believing Aida to be dead. Even after he learns that she has survived, he rejects Amneris's offer to save him if he gives up Aida. Brought before the priests, Radamès refuses to answer their accusations and is condemned to be buried alive. Amneris begs for mercy, but the judges will not change their verdict.

Aida has hidden in the vault to share Radamès's fate. They express their love for the last time while Amneris, in the temple above, prays for Radamès.

*Giuseppe Verdi*

# Aida

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*Premiere: Cairo Opera House, 1871*

This grandest of grand operas features an epic backdrop for what is in essence an intimate love story. Set in ancient Egypt and packed with magnificent choruses, complex ensembles, and elaborate ballets, *Aida* never loses sight of its three protagonists: Amneris, the proud daughter of the pharaoh; her slave, Aida, who is the princess of the rival kingdom of Ethiopia; and Radamès, the Egyptian warrior they both love. Few operas have matched *Aida* in its exploration of the conflict of private emotion and public duty, and perhaps no other has remained to the present day so unanimously appreciated by audiences and critics alike.

### *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. The story of *Aida* is thought to be the creation of Auguste Mariette (1821–1881), an extraordinary French archaeologist who was the founder of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo (though opinions differ—Verdi biographer Mary Jane Phillips-Matz has argued that the source was actually Temistocle Solera). Camille du Locle (1832–1903), who collaborated on the scenario with Mariette and suggested the story to Verdi, had worked with the composer on the libretto of *Don Carlos*. An opera impresario in Paris, he commissioned *Carmen* from Georges Bizet for the Opéra Comique in 1875. *Aida*'s librettist, Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824–1893), was a novelist and poet as well as the creator of some 85 librettos, most of which are forgotten today. He had previously worked with Verdi on the revision of *La Forza del Destino* (1869).

### *The Setting*

The libretto indicates merely that the opera takes place in “ancient Egypt, in the time of the pharaohs.” This may sound vague, but it was a clear direction to approach the drama as myth rather than anthropology or history. Europe's fascination with the ancient Nile civilization had been piqued with stories from Napoleon's Egyptian expedition at the end of the 18th century, and continued into the mid-19th century with the numerous archaeological discoveries being taken from the sands of Egypt and shipped to museums in the European capitals.

### *The Music*

The score of *Aida* is a sophisticated example of Italian Romanticism, imbued with a convincingly mysterious and exotic hue. Making no claims to authenticity (nobody knows what music in ancient Egypt sounded like), Verdi created a unique musical palette for this opera. The grandeur of the subject is aptly conveyed with huge patriotic choruses (Acts I and II) and the unforgettable Triumphant March in Act II. These public moments often serve as frames for the solos of the leading tenor and soprano: his grueling “Celeste Aida” right at the beginning of Act I, her demanding “Ritorna vincitor!” that follows, and her great internal journey, “O patria mia,” in Act III. Perhaps most impressive in this drama of public versus private needs are the instances of solo voice pitted directly against complex ensembles and vast choruses: the tenor in the temple scene in Act I, the mezzo-soprano in the judgment scene in Act IV, and especially the soprano in the great triumphal scene in Act II.

### *Met History*

*Aida* first came to the Met during the “German Seasons” of the 1880s and was performed in German until 1891. (The Met’s opening 1883–84 season was a financial disaster, so for a few seasons the company hired less expensive German singers and had them sing in their native language.) *Aida* has been among the most popular operas in the Met’s repertory since those early days. Conductor Arturo Toscanini inaugurated his Met career with a spectacular new production (even though the previous production was only a year old) for opening night of the 1908–09 season. That performance featured the Met debut of Czech soprano Emmy Destinn (who would sing the title role 52 times at the Met through 1920) as well as American mezzo Louise Homer (who sang Amneris 97 times between 1900 and 1927), Enrico Caruso (91 performances as Radamès at the Met between 1903 and 1919), and the great baritone Pasquale Amato (79 appearances between 1903 and 1919). Other unforgettable *Aidas* at the Met include Zinka Milanov (1938–58), Elisabeth Rethberg (1922–42), and Leontyne Price (from 1961 until her farewell appearance at the Met in 1985). The current production by Sonja Frisell, with sets by the acclaimed film production designer Gianni Quaranta (*A Room with a View*), premiered in 1988 with James Levine conducting a cast headed by Leona Mitchell, Fiorenza Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, and Paul Plishka.

## Program Note

After the 1867 premiere in Paris of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, Camille du Locle, the composer's Parisian friend and co-librettist for that opera, persisted in attempts to further collaborate with the most famous opera composer in the world at the time. The two struck up a correspondence after du Locle's return from a trip to Egypt: "a land," wrote Verdi, "which once possessed a grandeur and a civilization which I could never bring myself to admire." How ironic that he would, not long after, embark on one of the most notable artistic monuments of 19th-century "Egyptomania," the fad for all things Egyptian that followed Napoleon's expeditions in 1797–1801 and the subsequent magnificent archeological discoveries.

The process that led to *Aida* began with the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail Pasha, known as Ismail the Magnificent, who stated in 1879 (the same year in which he was toppled from power by the British), "My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe." As part of the festivities marking the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Khedive invited Verdi to compose a celebratory ode, but the composer declined: he had no desire to write *pièces d'occasion*. Determined to secure a new work by Verdi, the Khedive then offered a much more attractive commission—a new opera to open Cairo's extravagant new opera house, for which the composer was offered unlimited rehearsal time whenever he wished. When Verdi learned that Wagner might be offered the project should the great Italian composer continue to be obdurate, he capitulated almost immediately. A shrewd businessman who recognized the value of having a ruler so desirous of his services, Verdi requested—and received—a fee four times what he was paid for *Don Carlos*.

It was du Locle who brought to Verdi's attention the scenario that eventually became *Aida*, but if he had hoped for a French-language, Parisian version of the opera, his hopes were dashed by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, which threw the French capital into chaos. Verdi also encountered the usual complications attendant on completing a libretto with sufficient specimens of "parola scenica" (a term he invented in a letter to his Italian librettist Antonio Ghislanzoni in 1870 to describe words and phrases that leap off the page in moments of heightened drama, such as "Ritorna vincitor!"), and casting the La Scala and Cairo premieres proved troublesome, as well. Ultimately, the delays prevented the work from being ready for the 1869 opening of the Cairo Opera House, and Khedive Ismael had to be content with a performance of *Rigoletto* instead. Finally, with all the complexities resolved, *Aida* received its world premiere in Cairo on December 24, 1871, and its European premiere in Milan on February 8, 1872. The La Scala performance—Verdi cared more about this one—was a huge success with the public, but the critics were less happy with the musical mixture of "the modern school" (influences from Wagner, Meyerbeer, and Gounod) and traditional Italian traits than they had been with *Don Carlos*.

Verdi, worried about critical reaction, wrote to his friend Clarina Maffei with regard to the fourth production of the opera in Padua:

The success of *Aida*, as you know, was outspoken and decisive, untainted by *ifs* and *buts* and such unkind phrases as *Wagnerism*, the *Future*, the *Art of Melody*, etc., etc. The audience surrendered to its feelings and applauded. That's all!

Verdi himself conducted the first Parisian performance on March 22, 1880, and this time, it was an unqualified success with public and press alike. Sometimes it takes a few years, or more than a few, to bring a work into proper focus.

That Verdi accepted the Khedive's commission is both somewhat surprising—in light of his characteristic demands for original, even experimental theatrical works—and typical: it was not unknown for him to be drawn to simpler, more old-fashioned plots in the wake of radical endeavors. The love-triangle of Idamante, Ilia, and Electra in Mozart's *Idomeneo* some 90 years earlier is a predecessor for Radamès, Aida, and Amneris in *Aida*; Verdi described the plot as “not entirely new,” its outline simple and straightforward. What attracted him was the sheer theatricality of the story, among other things, including the possibilities of new and exotic orchestral colors. The more limited orchestras of earlier 19th-century Italian opera had long since been replaced by immense ensembles—in this case, including six “Egyptian” trumpets (actually Roman-made), a military banda (every town had its brass band for public occasions, and they are an enduring part of Verdi's orchestras), and an underground ensemble of four trumpets, four trombones, and bass drum for the tomb scene. The distinctive coloration of this opera begins with the first ultra-soft, muted violin sounds at the start of the Prelude; this sort of atmospheric approach, beginning and ending softly, with richer, fuller sonorities in the middle, was fashionable at the time, but Verdi's canonic workings and radical harmonies are his own. We hear an initial theme—a rising fragment ending with a “sighing figure”—that is associated throughout the opera with the heroine Aida and love first repressed, then admitted, followed by a more menacing descending theme treated in counterpoint and associated with the priests of Fthà, or Ptah, the creator god and demiurge who existed before all other things in Egyptian mythology. (We hear Aida's theme memorably in Act III played by the flutes, a high sustained tone in the violins, and cellos *sotto voce*, as she is waiting for Radamès in the temple.) Other equally memorable orchestral sounds are to be found in abundance—for example, the translucent tapestry of strings at the start of Act III, with the note G played in various ways (pizzicato, muted, tremolando, distributed across four octaves in the first violins in swaying fashion). The result is a texture of incomparable delicacy, mystery, and beauty, of nocturnal stillness that is nonetheless vibrant with quivering life.

But this, of course, is an Italian opera, in which voices reign supreme. Verdi's publisher Ricordi describes Aida as being around 20 years old, of “a loving nature,” with “meekness and gentleness” her chief characteristics. This loving nature has

musical heights and depths; we hear despair, longing, and ardor with a huge vocal wingspan in "Ritorna vincitor!" and plaintive homesickness in "O patria mia," her Act III romanza. "Oh my country, never more will I see you," she sings before and after each verse, the line often splitting into expressive fragments. Her father, Amonasro, capable of lyricism when he is persuading Aida to do his bidding, shows his true colors when he bursts forth in anger against the Egyptians. "Just as a man in a towering rage oversteps all the bounds of order, moderation, and propriety and forgets himself completely, so should the music likewise forget itself," Mozart said of Osmin's music in his *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and the same is true of Amonasro. Radamès is given sufficient tenor heroics to satisfy any operagoer, until he realizes in Act III that he has betrayed his country. The lyrical sweetness of his part in the death-duet at the opera's conclusion is a new vein of pathos for him. The mezzo-soprano Amneris is by far the most complex of the major characters. She genuinely loves Radamès, but she is a master of dissimulation, accustomed to power, and determined to humiliate Aida; the melody associated with her tends to appear in the orchestra, with the vocal line ("parlante melodico," or "melodious speech") grafted onto it. But when she pleads with Radamès in Act IV ("Ah! tu dei vivere"), Verdi gives her some of the most anguished, majestic, and beautiful melody ever written for a mezzo, culminating in a plea to the gods for mercy ("Numi, pietà"—words Aida had sung earlier) couched as gasping, sobbing fragments. Ramfis is among the most powerful of all the priests, hermits, and prophets sprinkled throughout Verdi's operas, and he is an especially unyielding and bloodthirsty specimen of the type. In the judgment scene of Act IV, he and his priests sing a version of plainchant-like melody—not to be found in any liturgy—of Verdi's invention, and he is often accompanied by the orchestra's version of sounds from the crypt.

This opera was Verdi's hail-and-farewell to the French-derived Italianate version of grand opera, based on history (or imagined history) and filled with huge ceremonial scenes, crowd scenes, massed forces of many kinds. The second scene in Act I, with its invocations of Fthà to melodies made to sound non-Western (a kind of exotic wailing); the dances for Moorish slaves and for the temple priestesses; the massing of male chorus, female chorus, banda, the soloists, and the entire orchestra for the triumphal scene of Act II: these are guaranteed to wow the spectator. But Verdi has a heartbreaking habit in his late tragedies of pulling the camera away from the gigantic and the public to focus instead on the most intimate matters of love and death, and he does so here. The work's final moments, with the chorus above the tomb chanting "Immenso Fthà" and Amneris pleading in anguished monotone for Radamès's soul, are like none other in operatic history.

—Susan Youens

*Susan Youens is the J. W. Van Gorkom Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame and has written eight books on the music of Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf.*

## The Cast



**Daniele Rustioni**  
CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *Aida* for his debut at the Met, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Zurich, *L'Elisir d'Amore* in St. Petersburg, Johann Strauss Jr.'s *Eine Nacht in Venedig* in Lyon, *La Traviata* at Covent Garden, *Rigoletto* at the Paris Opera, Verdi's Requiem in Budapest, and concerts with Florence's Orchestra della Toscana.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *La Traviata* in Orange, Venice, and at the Berlin Staatsoper; Mozart's Requiem and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Florence; *Il Trittico* in Rome; *Rigoletto* at the Bavarian State Opera; *Falstaff* and *Nabucco* in Stuttgart; *Luisa Miller* in Naples and Budapest; and *La Juive* and *Simon Boccanegra* at the Lyon Opera, where he will become music director later this year. He has also conducted *Il Trovatore*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *La Bohème* at La Scala; *Aida* in Verona; *Madama Butterfly* at the Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and in Tokyo; *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Covent Garden; *Stiffelio*, *Il Trovatore*, and *I Masnadieri* in Venice; *Il Viaggio a Reims* in Zurich; *Il Turco in Italia* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Turin; and *Il Signor Bruschino* at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro. He has served as the principal conductor of the Orchestra della Toscana since 2014.



**Krassimira Stoyanova**  
SOPRANO (VELIKO TARNOVO, BULGARIA)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Aida* at the Met; Elizabeth in *Don Carlo* at La Scala, Covent Garden, and the Vienna State Opera; the title role of *Lucrezia Borgia* at the Salzburg Festival; and Verdi's Requiem at La Scala and in Vienna and Zurich.

**MET APPEARANCES** Desdemona in *Otello*, Mimì in *La Bohème*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Violetta in *La Traviata* (debut, 2001), Liù in *Turandot*, and Nedda in *Pagliacci*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Danae in Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Salzburg Festival; Verdi's Requiem in Orange; Amelia Grimaldi in *Simon Boccanegra* at La Scala and the Berlin Staatsopera; the title role of *Rusalka* and Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Vienna State Opera; *Aida* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Marguerite in *Faust* at the Berlin Staatsopera, Deutsche Opera Berlin, and Paris Opera. She has also sung Mathilde in *Guillaume Tell*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, the title role of *Luisa Miller*, and Amelia Grimaldi at the Bavarian State Opera; Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* at Covent Garden; Marguerite in Barcelona; and Mimì and the title roles of *Anna Bolena* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Vienna State Opera.



## Violeta Urmana

MEZZO-SOPRANO (KAZLU RODOS, LITHUANIA)

**THIS SEASON** Amneris in *Aida* at the Met, Vienna State Opera, and on tour with Plácido Domingo; Kundry in *Parsifal* in Budapest; Verdi's Requiem with the London Symphony Orchestra; and a recital in Madrid.

**MET APPEARANCES** Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the title role of *Aida*, Odabella in *Attila*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, Eboli in *Don Carlo*, Kundry (debut, 2001), and the title roles of *Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *La Gioconda*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Amsterdam; Jocaste in *Oedipus Rex* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival; Kundry at the Vienna State Opera; and Santuzza in St. Petersburg, Beijing, and at La Scala. She has also sung Amneris and Azucena in Verona; Kundry and Eboli at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Vienna State Opera; Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* at the Paris Opera, Covent Garden, and in Barcelona; Tosca in Florence, Los Angeles, Bilbao, and at the Vienna State Opera; Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* in Madrid; Gioconda at the Paris Opera and Covent Garden; and Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, BBC Proms, and in Rome, Naples, Madrid, and Helsinki.



## Jorge de León

TENOR (SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, SPAIN)

**THIS SEASON** Radamès in *Aida* for his debut at the Met, Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Deutsche Opera Berlin, Calàf in *Turandot* in Macau, Macduff in *Macbeth* and Cavaradossi with the Vienna State Opera, Don Fadrique in Vives's *La Villana* and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in Madrid, and Radamès on tour with Plácido Domingo.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Cavaradossi at the Bavarian State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Tokyo, Seville, and Jerez; Don José in *Carmen* in Verona; the title role of *Andrea Chénier* in Genoa and Las Palmas; Giuseppe Hagenbach in *La Wally* in Monte Carlo; and Radamès at the Vienna State Opera and in Beijing. He has also sung Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Beijing; Radamès at La Scala, LA Opera, and in Naples, Verona, and Palermo; Calàf in Rome, Valencia, and Florence; Cavaradossi at the Berlin Staatsoper and in Barcelona, Pamplona, and Valladolid; Don José in Avenches, Switzerland; Canio in *Pagliacci* in Madrid; Pinkerton in Barcelona; and Verdi's Requiem in Turin.



PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA

VERDI

# *RIGOLETTO*

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**APR 19, 22 eve, 27**

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Michael Mayer's hit production places the action in a neon-bedecked Las Vegas in 1960. Joseph Calleja is the womanizing Duke, Olga Peretyatko is the innocent Gilda, and Željko Lučić reprises his heartbreaking take on the title role. Pier Giorgio Morandi conducts.

Tickets from \$25

[metopera.org](http://metopera.org)



## George Gagnidze

BARITONE (TBILISI, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA)

**THIS SEASON** Amonasro in *Aida* at the Met, in Tbilisi, and on tour with Plácido Domingo; Scarpia in *Tosca* and Carlo Gérard in *Andrea Chénier* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Amonasro and Carlo Gérard with San Francisco Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Tonio in *Pagliacci*, the title role of *Rigoletto* (debut, 2009), Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Scarpia, the title role in *Macbeth*, and Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Amonasro at the Paris Opera and La Scala, *Rigoletto* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, the title role of *Falstaff* in Tokyo, Tonio at LA Opera, and Scarpia at the Paris Opera and Vienna State Opera. He has also sung the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Hamburg, Madrid, and at the Bavarian State Opera; the title role of *Nabucco* in Orange and Palermo; Alfio at the Vienna State Opera and in Barcelona; Iago in *Otello* in Athens and Hamburg; *Macbeth* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Genoa; Miller in *Luisa Miller* in Valencia; Germont in *La Traviata* at La Scala and in Verona; and *Rigoletto* at La Scala, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, LA Opera, and in Tokyo, Weimar, and Parma.



## James Morris

BASS-BARITONE (BALTIMORE, MARYLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Ramfis in *Aida*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and the 50th Anniversary Gala at the Met; and Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in *Lulu* at English National Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** He has sung nearly 1000 performances in 60 roles since his 1971 debut as the King in *Aida*, including Wotan in the *Ring* cycle; Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*; Claggart in *Billy Budd*; Jacopo Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*; Scarpia in *Tosca*; Claudius in *Hamlet*; Philip II in *Don Carlo*; Iago in *Otello*; Méphistophélès in *Faust*; and the title roles of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Boris Godunov*, and *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In recent seasons, he has sung the Old Doctor in *Vanessa* with the Santa Fe Opera, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Hans Sachs with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Doctor in *Wozzeck* with English National Opera. He has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses and with 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.



## Morris Robinson

BASS (ATLANTA, GEORGIA)

**THIS SEASON** The King in *Aida* and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* at the Met, Timur in *Turandot* in Philadelphia, Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* at La Scala, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at LA Opera, and Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic. **MET PRODUCTIONS** Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Reinmar in *Tannhäuser*, the High Priest of Baal in *Nabucco*, Mercury in *Les Troyens*, First Nazarene in *Salome*, and the Second Prisoner in *Fidelio* (debut, 2002).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent appearances include Joe in *Show Boat* with Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Dallas Opera; Sarastro at Houston Grand Opera, Opera Australia, and the Ravinia Festival; Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* with Boston Lyric Opera and Atlanta Opera; Ramfis in *Aida* at the Ravinia Festival and Cincinnati Opera; Oroveso in *Norma* with LA Opera; and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* at Boston Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Dallas Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.