

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

IDOMENEO

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

PRODUCTION
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Gil Wechsler

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
David Kneuss

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Giovanni Battista Varesco

Monday, March 13, 2017

7:30–11:35PM

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

The Metropolitan Opera

2016-17 SEASON

The 70th Metropolitan Opera performance of
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART'S

IDOMENEO

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

ILIA
Nadine Sierra

HIGH PRIEST
Noah Baetge

IDAMANTE
Alice Coote

VOICE OF NEPTUNE
Eric Owens

WOMEN OF CRETE
Michelle Bradley**
Rihab Chaieb**

CONTINUO
David Heiss, CELLO
Bryan Wagorn*, HARPSICHORD

TROJAN SOLDIERS
Rolando Sanz
David Crawford

ELETTRA
Elza van den Heever

ARBACE
Alan Opie

IDOMENEO
Matthew Polenzani

This performance
is being broadcast
live on Metropolitan
Opera Radio on
SiriusXM channel 74.

Monday, March 13, 2017, 7:30-11:35PM



A scene from
Mozart's *Idomeneo*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Linda Hall, Gareth Morrell,
Joshua Greene, and Bryan Wagorn***
Assistant Stage Directors **Yefim Maizel and
Peter McClintock**
Stage Band Conductor **Jeffrey Goldberg**
Prompter **Joshua Greene**
Met Titles **Sonya Haddad**
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**
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; Bergmann of
Laupheim, Germany**
Ladies chorus millinery by **Gary Brouwer**

* Graduate of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

** Member of the
Lindemann Young Artist
Development Program

Yamaha is the
Official Piano of the
Metropolitan Opera.

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

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Met Titles

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usher at intermission.



The Met
ropolitan
Opera

2016-17 SEASON

Sonya Yoncheva as Violetta
in Verdi's *La Traviata*

The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute
Bank of America in recognition of its generous
support during the 2016-17 season.



PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/ METROPOLITAN OPERA

Synopsis

Crete, around 1200 BCE. Idomeneo, King of Crete, has been fighting on the side of the Greeks in the Trojan War for several years. Prior to his victorious return home, he has sent ahead of him some Trojan captives, including princess Ilia, daughter of the Trojan king, Priam. She has fallen in love with Idomeneo's son, Idamante, who has ruled as regent in his father's absence. Also in love with Idamante is princess Elettra. The daughter of Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks during the war, she has taken refuge in Crete after killing her mother, Clytemnestra, in revenge for her father's death.

Act I

Ilia is torn between her love for Idamante and her hatred for his father and what he has done to her country. Idamante proclaims his love for her, but Ilia, still a prisoner, can't yet bring herself to openly declare her feelings. Idamante announces that as a gesture of goodwill the Trojan prisoners will be released. The king's advisor, Arbace, brings news that Idomeneo's returning fleet has been shipwrecked and that Idomeneo has drowned. Elettra jealously observes the growing love between Idamante and Ilia.

Idomeneo has in fact survived the shipwreck by making a vow to Neptune, god of the sea, that he would sacrifice to him the first man he comes across on land. That man turns out to be his own son, Idamante. Horrified, Idomeneo pushes him away. Idamante is confused by his father's behavior, while the Cretans praise Neptune for the return of their king.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:30 PM)

Act II

Idomeneo confides in Arbace, and they try to devise a plan to save Idamante. They agree to send Idamante out of the country: he is to escort Elettra back to Argos. Happy and confident, Ilia tells Idomeneo that she now considers Crete her new homeland. Idomeneo begins to suspect that she and her son are in love, and it dawns on him that all three of them will be victims of the gods. Elettra, however, is triumphant: She hopes that as soon as Idamante is far away from Crete and Ilia, she will be able to win him over.

The ship is ready to depart for Argos. Idamante, who still doesn't understand his father's motives, is heartbroken but prepares to leave with Elettra. As they are about to set sail, another storm arises, and a sea monster appears. Idomeneo confesses his guilt in breaking his oath and offers himself as a sacrifice. The Cretans flee in terror.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:50 PM)

Act III

Ilia longs for Idamante and finally admits her love when he tells her that he is going to fight the sea monster. Idomeneo—who still hasn't revealed the subject of his oath—commands again that his son leave Crete. Idamante, full of sorrow, resolves to do so. Arbace reports that the people are angry and, led by the High Priest of Neptune, are demanding to see the king. The monster has brought death and destruction to the island, and the High Priest demands that Idomeneo name the victim who must be sacrificed to appease Neptune. Idomeneo reveals that it is his son. The preparations for the sacrifice are interrupted by news that Idamante has killed the monster. Realizing that his father has been cold to him out of love, not hatred, Idamante demands that the sacrifice proceed, as this is the price for peace in Crete. Ilia volunteers to take his place. As Idomeneo is about to sacrifice his son, the voice of Neptune intervenes, proclaiming that if Idomeneo will step aside and yield power to Idamante and Ilia, the gods will be satisfied. Elettra, robbed of all hope, collapses. Idomeneo agrees to relinquish the throne to his son and unites him with Ilia. The Cretans bless their alliance.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Idomeneo

Premiere: Court Theater (now known as Cuvilliés Theater), Munich, 1781

On its surface, *Idomeneo* is the story of an oath made by the title character to ensure his safe return home to Crete following the Trojan War. The tale recalls many other myths, and specifically brings to mind the story of Jephtha from the biblical Book of Judges. The larger theme, however, concerns the motivations and emotions of humans whose fates seem beyond their own control. The opera explores these issues within the framework of the *opera seria* genre, a stylized format favored by aristocratic courts, in which idealized noble characters function with a clear delineation between action (expressed in recitative) and reflection (expressed in arias, ensembles, and choruses). While 18th-century audiences accepted, and even celebrated, the artificial nature of this form of theater, subsequent generations sought a greater sense of realism in opera. Along with many other pieces from this period, *Idomeneo* essentially disappeared from the world's stages until the mid-20th century. Modern audiences, familiar with works that reject realism and embrace certain artistic mannerisms, have once again returned this masterpiece to a place in the repertory.

The Creators

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was the son of a Salzburg court musician and composer, Leopold, who served as his principal teacher and exhibited him as a musical prodigy throughout Europe. His achievements in opera, in terms of melodic beauty, vocal challenge, and dramatic insight, remain unsurpassed, and his seven mature works of the genre (*Idomeneo* now considered to be in this category) are pillars of the repertory. Giovanni Battista Varesco (1735–1805) was a poet and court chaplain of the Principality of Salzburg, Mozart's place of employment at the time of *Idomeneo*. The libretto is based on a 1712 French libretto by Antoine Danchet, an early member of the Académie Française.

The Setting

The opera unfolds on the island of Crete in the aftermath of the Trojan War. The tales of this time have provided fertile grounds for many creators of opera, from Monteverdi (*Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, 1640) and Berlioz (*Les Troyens*, 1863) to Richard Strauss (*Die Ägyptische Helena*, 1928) and Martin David Levy (*Mourning Becomes Electra*, 1967). The era is evocative, reflecting the confusion of a post-traumatic historical moment.

The Music

The composer's rich use of the orchestra in the recitative sections, highly unusual for its time, is one of *Idomeneo's* most striking aspects. The woodwinds are especially active, and the score is among the first in opera to employ clarinets. The choral writing, likewise, is especially refined, with the music woven into the action in an unprecedented manner: the muted brass in the elegantly jaunty Act II orchestral march, for example, return as ominous harbingers of communal grief in the haunting Act III chorus "O voto tremendo." The diversity of the vocal solos and ensembles is astounding: from the ethereal beauty of Ilia's Act II "Se il padre perdei" and Act III "Zeffiretti lusinghieri" to Idamante's heroic Act I "Non ho colpa," and the title character's flamboyant "Fuor del mar" in Act II. Mozart even offers one of the first operatic mad scenes with Elettra's demented Act III "D'Oreste, d'Ajace." The Act III quartet "Andrò, ramingo e solo," a remarkable analysis of multiple characters caught in a single moment, is as insightful and sophisticated as any example in opera.

Met History

Idomeneo was first seen at the Met in 1982 in the present production by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, featuring the against-type casting of Luciano Pavarotti in the title role and a stellar ensemble including Ileana Cotrubaș, Hildegard Behrens, Frederica von Stade, and John Alexander. Ben Heppner made his Met debut in the title role in 1991, and Plácido Domingo starred in the 1994 and 2000 revivals. Other notable artists who have appeared in the opera include Carol Vaness and Cheryl Studer (Elettra); Benita Valente, Dawn Upshaw, and Hei-Kyung Hong (Ilia); and Anne Sofie von Otter, Susanne Mentzer, Susan Graham, and Magdalena Kožená (Idamante). Music Director Emeritus James Levine has conducted more than 45 performances of *Idomeneo* since 1982.

Program Note

In 1829, nearly a half-century after *Idomeneo*'s premiere, Mozart's widow Constanze recalled an episode that underscores the special place the opera clearly held in its composer's heart. The young couple was visiting Salzburg, where Mozart introduced his wife to his father for the first time with the hope of patching things up following a period of estrangement. As the family spent an evening making music together, according to Constanze, they sang the quartet from the third act of *Idomeneo* ("Andrò ramingo e solo"). Suddenly, Mozart became "so overwhelmed that he burst into tears and had to leave the room; it was some time before I could console him."

Idomeneo marked a personal and professional watershed for its creator. Mozart, whose 25th birthday coincided with the dress rehearsal (January 27, 1781), had at last received an operatic commission commensurate with his growing mastery, thanks (most likely) to his musician friends at the court of Karl Theodor, Elector of Bavaria. It was during an extensive and revelatory tour across Europe (between 1777 and 1779) that the young composer stopped in Mannheim, where this enthusiastic patron of the arts had built up his court orchestra into an internationally reputed ensemble. Though the permanent position Mozart longed for was not forthcoming—he had grown increasingly desperate to escape opera-poor Salzburg—the Elector commissioned him in the fall of 1780 to write the major operatic entertainment for the upcoming Carnival season.

Idomeneo was an especially exciting prospect for Mozart because of the resources he knew would be at his disposal in Munich, where Karl Theodor had recently relocated his court. The libretto was to be furnished by Giovanni Battista Varesco (1735–1805), a cleric, poet, and musician based in Salzburg. In November 1780, Mozart moved temporarily to Munich to work with the singers as he prepared *Idomeneo*. Because Varesco remained behind in Salzburg, the composer relied on his father, Leopold, to serve as a diplomatic go-between while he tailored the libretto to his vision—and to his practical sense of stage worthiness.

Thanks to this happy accident, the surviving correspondence from son to father gives us a fascinating glimpse into Mozart's creative process. The letters involving *Idomeneo* show his fixation on detail and overall effect alike. They address such topics as the quality of the singers' acting: for example, Mozart complained of the stand-and-sing delivery of the tenor Anton Raaff (*Idomeneo* would be the final role in his long career). Mozart also repeatedly emphasized the virtue of brevity and directness as he attempted to rein in Varesco's rambling, tendentious text. Thus, he objected to the first draft for the mysterious oracle at the denouement as overwritten: "The longer [the voice] goes on, the more the audience will become aware that there's nothing real about it. If the speech of the Ghost in *Hamlet* were not quite so long, it would be much more effective," noted the composer.

Varesco adapted a pre-existing French text from the early 18th century by Antoine Dancher; it had already been set by André Campra in 1712 in the style of French Baroque opera. Though encountered relatively rarely in classical

literature (most famously in *The Iliad* as a brave warrior), the figure of Idomeneo had become freshly attractive during the Enlightenment as a classical counterpart to the biblical narratives of Abraham and Isaac and Jephtha and his daughter. The scholar Nicholas Till has observed that such myths were valued because they dramatized the Enlightenment conviction in “the superiority of natural law to customary and religious law; for human sacrifice, as a sacramental deed, provides a religious sanction for a basic transgression against nature: murder.” Gluck, for example, whose reformist opera Mozart had encountered in Paris, showed a predilection for the Iphigenia myth, involving similar scenarios of human sacrifice, in two of his greatest works.

The operatic *Idomeneo* actually entails a synthetic myth that interlaces the returning warrior’s story with the figure of Elettra, who appears as a refugee from Mycenae after her brother Orestes had slain their mother Clytemnestra—still another variant of a sort of human sacrifice, though in this case not of an “innocent” victim. Dancher’s original ending was tragic: Idomeneo, having become insane, does sacrifice Idamante, and Elettra thus obtains her longed-for vengeance. The revised version set by Mozart, in contrast, ends with the triumph of both reason and love.

Idomeneo’s core conflict—the confrontation between an old order beholden to superstition and a new one motivated by love—must have resonated deeply for Mozart as he stood on the threshold of personal and artistic independence. The son-father scenario, in which many have detected a personal echo of the Wolfgang-Leopold tension, is thus just one instance in *Idomeneo* of the archetypal relationship of submission to a figure of authority. Others are the enslavement of the Trojan prisoners of war by the Greeks and, on the cosmic level, of mortals to the will of the gods. With Elettra, we even encounter the captivity of lovers to the emotions that rule them.

Far from representing the increasingly antiquated conventions of myth-centered *opera seria*, *Idomeneo* prompted Mozart to animate the story’s characters and situations by drawing on the musical wisdom he had accumulated to date. Into this score he poured everything he had learned: the lyrical illumination of heightened emotions from Italian opera (his preceding *opera seria*, *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, dated from nearly a decade before); the dramatic naturalness and simplicity of the Gluckistes he had witnessed in Paris, according to which arias are anchored within a clear dramatic context—Elettra’s first aria, for example, bleeds into the ensuing storm—while the emotional resonance of the recitatives becomes amplified; but also the beautiful pomp and impressive spectacle of French Baroque opera (for the prominent choruses and ballet music and the divine interventions that erupt in all three acts: the shipwreck, the storm and sea monster, and the oracle).

Mozart similarly drew on his experience composing sacred music for chorus and soloists and on his knowledge of the symphonic orchestra, inspired by the

remarkable ensemble of virtuoso players from Karl Theodor's court (especially the woodwinds—this is Mozart's first opera to include clarinets in his orchestra, while his use of three trombones and two horns endows the climactic oracle scene with its numinous power). As musicologist and biographer David Cairns observes, Mozart's deployment in *Idomeneo* "of orchestral color for dramatic and psychological effect looks forward to the discoveries and experiments of Romanticism."

Idomeneo's variety of scenes and interludes elicited from Mozart music of brilliant, innovative colors. He also uses the principle of contrast to remarkable dramatic effect. Thus the oracle's power is enhanced by its position within the larger context of the final scene, and Mozart does not hesitate to summon the sublime alongside his beautiful melodies—even if that requires imagining sonorities that might be perceived as ugly.

The title character's entrance aria reveals his capacity to feel pity for his victim—not yet identified as his son Idamante—yet Idomeneo remains bound to the old order of blind obedience. His plight results from the warrior's vow, which stands for his superstitious, fear-driven perspective—a fear concretely symbolized by the sea-monster that his son elects to confront. In the end, anticipating the denouement of *The Magic Flute* a decade later, Idomeneo's old order yields governance to the marriage of reason and love represented by the union of Idamante and Ilia, who herself had overcome her tribal allegiance to Priam and the Trojans. Yet Elettra rages on, the outcast who is still enslaved by passion, prefiguring the coloratura rage and untamed emotions of the Queen of the Night. Elettra exemplifies Mozart's creative reimagining of convention (the stereotype of the Baroque rage aria). The musicologist Julian Rushton likens her final aria to an exorcism. In another sense, perhaps, Elettra is the lurking fury waiting to erupt into revolution by century's end.

The quartet that so moved its composer during that visit to Salzburg two years after *Idomeneo*—"nothing in the entire opera pleases me as much as this quartet," he wrote—is an emblem of Mozart's perfecting of his art. It encapsulates in musico-dramatic terms the moment in the opera when its four principal characters are torn by their individual, conflicting predicaments. This quartet, writes Cairns, "marks a new tone in the tragedy, of transfigured suffering, and so prepares for the turning-point of the drama."

Idomeneo gave Mozart "the chance to give out all that he had learned from life and art, all he had experienced of love and suffering and pity and guilt, his comprehensive understanding of the dramatic, his consciousness of unequalled powers, in an opera that was an answer to prayer."

—Thomas May

Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator. His books include *Decoding Wagner* and *The John Adams Reader*, and he blogs at memeteria.com.



PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA

VERDI

LA TRAVIATA

FEB 24 **MAR 1, 4** eve, 7, 11 mat, 14, 18 eve, 22, 25 eve, 29

APR 1 eve, 4, 8 mat, 11, 14

Sonya Yoncheva sings Violetta with "irrepressible vitality and sensuality" (*New York Times*) opposite Michael Fabiano as Alfredo and Thomas Hampson as Germont. Carmen Giannattasio sings later performances of the title role opposite Atalla Ayan, with the great Plácido Domingo as Germont. Nicola Luisotti conducts.

Tickets from \$25

metopera.org

The Cast



James Levine

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS (CINCINNATI, OHIO)

THIS SEASON In his 46th season at the Met, his first as Music Director Emeritus, he conducts *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Nabucco*, and *Idomeneo*, the latter two of which will be transmitted live in HD.

MET HISTORY Since his 1971 company debut leading *Tosca*, he has conducted more than 2,500 performances at the Met—more than any other conductor in the company's history. He became the Met's Music Director in 1976, a position he held for four decades, and was the company's Artistic Director from 1986 until 2004. Of the nearly 90 operas he has led at the Met, 13 were company premieres (including *Stiffelio*, *I Lombardi*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *La Cenerentola*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Erwartung*, *Moses und Aron*, *Idomeneo*, and *La Clemenza di Tito*). He also led the world premieres of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* and Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*. He founded the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program in 1980 and returned Wagner's complete *Ring* to the repertoire in 1989 (in the first integral cycles in 50 years at the Met). He and the Met Orchestra began touring in concert in 1991, and he has led the ensemble in performances around the world, including at Expo '92 in Seville, in Japan, across the US, and throughout Europe.



Alice Coote

MEZZO-SOPRANO (CHESHIRE, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Idamante in *Idomeneo* at the Met, the title role in Handel's *Ariodante* with the Canadian Opera Company, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden, and Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Glyndebourne Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Anne Strawson in *Two Boys*, Octavian, Sesto in *Giulio Cesare*, Hansel in *Hänsel and Gretel*, and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Octavian and the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Bavarian State Opera; Prince Charming in *Cendrillon* in Barcelona and at Covent Garden; Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel* in Madrid; Dejanira in Handel's *Hercules* and the Composer at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hofmann*, Idamante, Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina*, and Charlotte in *Werther* with the San Francisco Opera. She has sung Leonore in *La Favorite* in Paris; Sesto in Frankfurt and with English National Opera; Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and Hänsel in Glyndebourne; Poppea in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and the title roles of *Ariodante*, *Carmen*, and Gluck's *Orfeo* with English National Opera; Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* in Frankfurt; the title role of Handel's *Orlando* at Covent Garden; and Octavian at the Vienna State Opera, LA Opera, Seattle Opera, and in Geneva.



PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

BEETHOVEN

FIDELIO

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

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



Nadine Sierra

SOPRANO (FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA)

THIS SEASON Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Ilia in *Idomeneo* at the Met, Elvira in *I Puritani* at the Zurich Opera, the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Venice, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and Flavia Gemmira in Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* at the Paris Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Gilda (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Gilda at La Scala, Boston Lyric Opera, Atlanta Opera, Seattle Opera, Florida Grand Opera, and in Naples; Zerlina at the Paris Opera; Lucia at the Zurich Opera; Musetta in *La Bohème*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pamina, and Juliet/Barbara in the world premiere of Christopher Theofanidis's *Heart of a Soldier* with the San Francisco Opera; Amor in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Berlin Staatsoper; Tytania in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Boston Lyric Opera and in Valencia; and Norina in *Don Pasquale* in Valencia. She was a winner of the 2007 Marilyn Horne Foundation Vocal Competition and the 2009 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



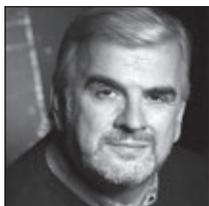
Elza van den Heever

SOPRANO (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

THIS SEASON Elettra in *Idomeneo* at the Met, the title role in *Norma* with the Canadian Opera Company and at the Dallas Opera, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* with the Vienna State Opera, Elvira in *Ernani* in Frankfurt, and the title role in Handel's *Alcina* with the Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Elizabeth I in *Maria Stuarda* (debut, 2012) and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Zurich and Munich; Elizabeth of Valois in *Don Carlo* in Bordeaux and Strasbourg; Ellen Orford with English National Opera; the title roles of *Norma* and *Anna Bolena* in Bordeaux; and Leonore in *Fidelio* at Caramoor. Between 2008 and 2013, she was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt, where her roles included Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*, the title role of *Suor Angelica*, Elsa, and Desdemona in *Otello*, among others. She has also sung Giselda in *I Lombardi* in Hamburg, Armida in *Rinaldo* in Chicago, Agathe in *Der Freischütz* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and Mary Custis Lee in the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Appomattox* in San Francisco.



Alan Opie

BARITONE (REDRUTH, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Arbace in *Idomeneo* and the Gamekeeper in *Rusalka* at the Met, and Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Frank in *Die Fledermaus*, Leon Klinghoffer in *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Baron Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, Fieramosca in *Benvenuto Cellini*, Faninal, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* (debut, 1994).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has recently sung Germont in *La Traviata* with Welsh National Opera, Elgar's *King Olaf* with the Bergen Philharmonic, and Balstrode with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Accademia di Santa Cecilia. Other performances include Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Bayreuth Festival and in Berlin, Amsterdam, Munich, Vienna, and Turin; the title role of *Falstaff* with English National Opera; Sharpless at Covent Garden and Welsh National Opera; the title role of *Rigoletto* with Opera North and Opera Company of Philadelphia; Scarpia in *Tosca* with the Canadian Opera Company; Leon Klinghoffer with English National Opera; and Dr. Kolenatý in *The Makropulos Case* at La Scala. Among his many honors, he was awarded an Order of the British Empire in 2013.



Matthew Polenzani

TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON The title role in *Idomeneo*, Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, and the 50th Anniversary Gala at the Met; Fernando in *La Favorite*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Tamino at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

MET APPEARANCES More than 300 performances of 35 roles, including the title role in *Roberto Devereux*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Roberto in *Maria Stuarda*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, and Boyar Khrushchov in *Boris Godunov* (debut, 1997).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Don Ottavio at the Paris Opera, the title role of *Werther* at the Vienna State Opera and Bavarian State Opera, and Rodolfo in Barcelona. He has sung Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* and *Idomeneo* at Covent Garden, Alfredo in Zurich, Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Nemorino at the Bavarian State Opera. He was the recipient of the Met's 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.