

GIACOMO PUCCINI

# LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR  
Alexander Soddy

PRODUCTION  
Franco Zeffirelli

SET DESIGNER  
Franco Zeffirelli

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Peter J. Hall

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Gil Wechsler

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
Gregory Keller

GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
James Levine

MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and  
Luigi Illica, based on the novel *Scènes  
de la Vie de Bohème* by Henri Murger

Monday, October 23, 2017  
7:30–10:25PM

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

The revival of this production is made possible  
by a gift from Viking Cruises

# The Metropolitan Opera

2017-18 SEASON

The 1,311th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIACOMO PUCCINI'S

## LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR  
Alexander Soddy

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARCELLO  
Michael Todd Simpson

MUSETTA  
Brigitta Kele

RODOLFO  
Russell Thomas\*

CUSTOMHOUSE SERGEANT  
Yohan Yi

COLLINE  
Matthew Rose

CUSTOMHOUSE OFFICER  
Ross Benoiel

SCHAUNARD  
Duncan Rock

BENOIT  
Paul Plishka

MIMI  
Angel Blue

PARPIGNOL  
Daniel Clark Smith

ALCINDORO  
Paul Plishka

Monday, October 23, 2017, 7:30-10:25PM



Angel Blue as Mimì in  
Puccini's *La Bohème*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Yelena Kurdina, J. David Jackson,  
Liora Maurer, and Valeria Polunina\*\***  
Assistant Stage Director **Kathleen Smith Belcher**  
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**  
Prompter **Yelena Kurdina**  
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**  
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**  
Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**  
Associate Designer **David Reppa**  
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**  
Ladies millinery by **Reggie G. Augustine**  
Men's hats by **Richard Tautkus**  
Animals supervised by **All-Tame Animals, Inc.**

\* Graduate of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

\*\* Member of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

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PHOTO: MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

PUCCINI

# *TURANDOT*

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**OCT** 12, 17, 21 eve, 25, 28 eve, 31 **NOV** 4 mat, 8, 11 eve, 16

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Soprano Oksana Dyka tackles the perilous title role of Puccini's final operatic masterpiece, opposite tenor Aleksandrs Antonenko as the mysterious prince fighting to win her hand. Maria Agresta is Liù, Met legend James Morris is Timur, and Carlo Rizzi conducts Franco Zeffirelli's dazzling production.

Tickets from \$25

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# Synopsis

## Act I

*Paris, in the 1830s.* In their Latin Quarter garret, the near-destitute artist Marcello and poet Rodolfo try to keep warm on Christmas Eve by feeding the stove with pages from Rodolfo's latest drama. They are soon joined by their roommates—Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, who brings food, fuel, and funds he has collected from an eccentric nobleman. While they celebrate their unexpected fortune, the landlord, Benoit, comes to collect the rent. After getting the older man drunk, the friends urge him to tell of his flirtations, then throw him out in mock indignation at his infidelity to his wife. As the others depart to revel at the Café Momus, Rodolfo remains behind to finish an article, promising to join them later. There is another knock at the door—the visitor is Mimì, a pretty neighbor, whose candle has gone out in the stairwell. As she enters the room, she suddenly feels faint. Rodolfo gives her a sip of wine, then helps her to the door and relights her candle. Mimì realizes that she lost her key when she fainted, and as the two search for it, both candles go out. Rodolfo finds the key and slips it into his pocket. In the moonlight, he takes Mimì's hand and tells her about his dreams. She recounts her life alone in a lofty garret, embroidering flowers and waiting for the spring. Rodolfo's friends call from outside, telling him to join them. He responds that he is not alone and will be along shortly. Happy to have found each other, Mimì and Rodolfo leave, arm in arm, for the café.

## Act II

Amid the shouts of street hawkers near the Café Momus, Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet and introduces her to his friends. They all sit down and order supper. The toy vendor Parpignol passes by, besieged by children. Marcello's former sweetheart, Musetta, makes a noisy entrance on the arm of the elderly, but wealthy, Alcindoro. The ensuing tumult reaches its peak when, trying to gain Marcello's attention, she loudly sings the praises of her own popularity. Sending Alcindoro away to buy her a new pair of shoes, Musetta finally falls into Marcello's arms. Soldiers march by the café, and as the bohemians fall in behind, the returning Alcindoro is presented with the check.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:35 PM)

## Act III

At dawn at the Barrière d'Enfer, a toll-gate on the edge of Paris, a customs official admits farm women to the city. Guests are heard drinking and singing within a tavern. Mimì arrives, searching for the place where Marcello and Musetta now live. When the painter appears, she tells him of her distress over Rodolfo's incessant jealousy. She says she believes it is best that they part. As Rodolfo emerges from the tavern, Mimì hides nearby. Rodolfo tells Marcello

that he wants to separate from Mimì, blaming her flirtatiousness. Pressed for the real reason, he breaks down, saying that her illness can only grow worse in the poverty they share. Overcome with emotion, Mimì comes forward to say goodbye to her lover. Marcello runs back into the tavern upon hearing Musetta's laughter. While Mimì and Rodolfo recall past happiness, Marcello returns with Musetta, quarreling about her flirting with a customer. They hurl insults at each other and part, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until springtime.

### *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30 PM)

## Act IV

Months later in the garret, Rodolfo and Marcello, now separated from their girlfriends, reflect on their loneliness. Colline and Schaunard bring a meager meal. To lighten their spirits, the four stage a dance, which turns into a mock duel. At the height of the hilarity, Musetta bursts in with news that Mimì is outside, too weak to come upstairs. As Rodolfo runs to her aid, Musetta relates how Mimì begged to be taken to Rodolfo to die. She is made as comfortable as possible, while Musetta asks Marcello to sell her earrings for medicine and Colline goes off to pawn his overcoat. Left alone, Mimì and Rodolfo recall their meeting and their first happy days, but she is seized with violent coughing. When the others return, Musetta gives Mimì a muff to warm her hands, and Mimì slowly drifts into unconsciousness. Musetta prays for Mimì, but it is too late. The friends realize that she is dead, and Rodolfo collapses in despair.

*Giacomo Puccini*

# La Bohème

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*Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin, 1896*

*La Bohème*—the passionate, timeless, and indelible story of love among young artists in Paris—can stake its claim as the world’s most popular opera. It has a marvelous ability to make a powerful first impression (even to those new to opera) and to reveal unsuspected treasures after dozens of hearings. At first glance, *La Bohème* is the definitive depiction of the joys and sorrows of love and loss; on closer inspection, it explores the deep emotional significance hidden in the trivial things—a bonnet, an old overcoat, a chance meeting with a neighbor—that make up our everyday lives. Following the breakthrough success of *Manon Lescaut* three years earlier, *La Bohème* established Puccini as the leading Italian opera composer of his generation.

### *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 *La Bohème*, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his next two operas, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories, and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. The French author Henri Murger (1822–1861) drew on his own early experiences as a poor writer in Paris to pen an episodic prose novel and later a successful play, *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, which became the basis for the opera.

### *The Setting*

The libretto sets the action in Paris, circa 1830. This is not a random setting but rather reflects the issues and concerns of a particular time and place. After the upheavals of revolution and war, French artists had lost their traditional support base of aristocracy and church, and they were desperate for new sources of income. The rising bourgeoisie took up the burden of patronizing artists and earned their contempt in return. The story, then, centers on self-conscious youths at odds with mainstream society, feeling themselves morally superior to the rules of the bourgeoisie (specifically regarding sexual mores) and expressing their independence with affectations of speech and dress. The bohemian ambience of this opera is clearly recognizable in any modern urban center. *La Bohème* captures this ethos in its earliest days.

### *The Music*

Lyrical and touchingly beautiful, the score of *La Bohème* exerts a uniquely immediate emotional pull. Many of its most memorable melodies are built incrementally, with small intervals between the notes that carry the listener with them on their lyrical path. This is a distinct contrast to the grand leaps and dives on which earlier operas often depended for emotional effect. *La Bohème*'s melodic structure perfectly captures the "small people" (as Puccini called them) of the drama and the details of everyday life. The two great love arias in Act I seduce the listener, beginning conversationally, with great rushes of emotion seamlessly woven into more trivial expressions. In other places, small alterations to a melody can morph the meaning of a thought or an emotion in this score. A change of tempo or orchestration transforms Musetta's famous, exuberant Act II waltz into the nostalgic, bittersweet tenor-baritone duet in Act IV, as the bohemians remember happier times. Similarly, the "streets of Paris" theme first appears as a foreshadowing in Act I, when one of the bohemians suggests going out on the town; hits full flower in Act II, when they (and we) are actually there; and becomes a bitter, chilling memory at the beginning of Act III when it is slowed down and re-orchestrated.

### *Met History*

*La Bohème* had its Met premiere while the company was on tour in Los Angeles in 1900. Nellie Melba sang Mimì and improbably added the mad scene from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* as an encore after the final curtain (a practice she maintained for several other performances). This production lasted until 1952, when one designed by Rolf Gerard and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who insisted his name be removed after a disagreement with some of the singers, replaced it. In 1977, *La Bohème* served as the first opera telecast as part of the *Live from the Met* series, starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto in a new production directed by Fabrizio Melano. The spectacular current production by Franco Zeffirelli premiered in 1981 with an impressive cast led by Teresa Stratas, Renata Scotto, José Carreras, Richard Stilwell, and James Morris, with James Levine conducting. *La Bohème* was presented at the Met in 59 consecutive seasons after its first appearance and has been seen in all but nine seasons since 1900, making it the most performed opera in company history.



## Program Note

A beloved portrayal of the joys and hardships of ordinary people, Giacomo Puccini's opera about the bohemians of the Latin Quarter was neither the beginning nor the end of the literary and theatrical journey of Mimì, Rodolfo, Marcello, Musetta, Schaunard, and Colline. The characters first appeared in a series of short stories that Henri Murger published in the Parisian journal *Le Corsair* between 1845 and 1849. Murger then collaborated with Théodore Barrière on a play, *La Vie de Bohème*, which premiered in November 1849 at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris, and soon after gathered his stories into a novelized version published in 1851 as *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*. Not surprisingly, by the 1890s, an era in which the arts found new inspiration in the lives of the working class (Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* stands out as an operatic example), Murger's characters seemed perfectly suited for the operatic stage. Not one, but two composers stepped up to the task—Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo (of *Pagliacci* fame), who feuded openly about who had the idea first. Resolution came in the form of two operas, with the same title, premiered a year apart: Puccini's, with a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, in Turin in 1896, Leoncavallo's in Venice, 15 months later. To this day, directors, filmmakers, and composers continue to be inspired by Murger's friends. Constantin Stanislavski staged Puccini's opera in a famous production at the Bolshoi Theater in 1927. Baz Luhrmann brought it to Broadway in 1992 and then conflated the story with that of *La Traviata* in his 2001 film, *Moulin Rouge!*. The opera itself has received multiple cinematic treatments, including in 1965 (by Franco Zeffirelli and Herbert von Karajan), 1988, and 2008 (starring Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón). And its story was retold as a rock musical set in 1990s New York in Jonathan Larson's *Rent*.

In contrast to the remarkable amiability of the characters in *La Bohème*, the working relationship of the opera's creators was vexed. Early in his career, Puccini revealed himself to be a remorseless perfectionist, at his most extreme in *Manon Lescaut*, which took a total of seven librettists (including publisher Giulio Ricordi and the composer himself) to lift it off the ground. The labor of bringing *La Bohème* to the stage, however, was marked less by issues of having too many collaborators than by a passionate struggle among Puccini, his two librettists, and Ricordi. Illica had finished the original scenario for the opera by 1894, but the months preceding that watershed moment had been a painful succession of arguments about the Latin Quarter scene and a now-discarded act set in a courtyard. On October 6, 1893, Giacosa, feeling strangled by Puccini's demands and ready to throw in the towel, wrote to Ricordi claiming "artistic impotence."

How remarkable, then, that despite such creative discord behind the scenes, *La Bohème* unfolds so seamlessly and effortlessly from its opening notes. There is no prelude, and the music erupts from the depths of the orchestra on a single spring-loaded motive that defines the instability of the bohemians' lives.

The curtain rises swiftly on a scene in medias res, the first in a series of episodes that tumble forth in quick succession, as characters improvise ways to overcome hardship: Marcello works on his painting; Rodolfo burns the pages of his play to heat the garret; Schaunard brings home the dinner; and the landlord, Benoit, is tricked out of his rent.

What is the secret to such utter freshness and spontaneity? One answer is that Puccini keeps the story moving, finding musical expression appropriate to the characters and their station in life. For this composer, “real” people simply could not sing in the formal Italian verse and musical structures that had governed so many Italian operas that came before his. Instead, he advances a more energetic and naturalistic repartee in which lyrical moments arise seamlessly out of the drama. That is exactly what happens in the second half of Act I, as the brief, intimate contact of hands groping in the dark for a lost key moves Rodolfo and Mimì to reveal something of themselves to one another in two of the opera’s greatest arias, “Che gelida manina” and “Sì, mi chiamano Mimì.”

The tone shifts again, though, as it is Christmas Eve and the new lovers must join friends in the Latin Quarter, in a square teeming with a “vast and motley crowd of citizens, soldiers, serving girls, children, students, seamstresses, gendarmes, etc.,” as the libretto says. In the hands of a lesser composer, Rodolfo, Mimì, and their companions might have been lost in such tumult. But here Puccini exercises his particular genius for manipulating large numbers of people and devising transparent musical textures that shine a spotlight on the characters he wants us to see and hear. At the center of it all is Musetta, who delivers a siren song (the waltz “Quando m’en vo”) that Marcello cannot resist. As he falls into her arms, the bill arrives, and the bohemians disappear into the crowd.

One of the most familiar—and original—scenes of *La Bohème* is Mimì’s death, which differs significantly from the traditional “curtain deaths” of earlier operas. A good example for comparison is *La Traviata*, whose consumptive heroine, Violetta, is frequently thought of as a model for Mimì. Violetta, surrounded by loved ones, dies with a cry of renewed joy, a tonic chord, and a final curtain in fortissimo dynamics. When Mimì passes away, none of the characters on stage even notices that she is gone until it’s too late. She has no final spasm, nor does she collapse into a pair of loving arms. She sings no high notes; her friends have busied themselves by heating medicine, adjusting lights, and plumping pillows; there is no vigil, no stage directions that communicate the exact moment of her death or how the singer is to enact it. The libretto does not even mark it with the perfunctory phrase that defines dozens of melodramatic deaths in opera: “She dies.” The only material indicator is in Puccini’s autograph score, where, in the margins next to the measures of the death music, he ironically drew a skull and

crossbones. A highly choreographed “good death” was not to be for the likes of his poor seamstress. Mimì only nods her head, “as one who is overcome by sleep,” and thereafter the libretto notes only “silence.” In the score, a slowing of the tempo leads to a “lunga pausa” just before the key changes from D-flat major to B minor and the tempo to *Andante lento sostenuto*. Puccini adds a subtle detail in the single cymbal struck in quadruple *pianissimo* with a mallet; the diffuse sound seems to originate from and fade into the ether. Mimì is gone, and the final curtain belongs to Rodolfo.

—*Helen M. Greenwald*

*Helen M. Greenwald is chair of the department of music history at New England Conservatory and editor of the Oxford Handbook of Opera.*

## The Cast



**Alexander Soddy**

CONDUCTOR (OXFORD, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *La Bohème* at the Met for his debut and at the Bavarian State Opera, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Vienna State Opera, *Der Freischütz* in Dresden, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at English National Opera, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Fidelio*, *Aida*, *Turandot*, and *Don Giovanni* at Mannheim's National Theatre.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since 2016, he has served as music director of Mannheim's National Theatre, where he has led performances of *Elektra*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Schumann's *Genoveva*, *Parsifal*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Hänsel und Gretel*. Between 2013 and 2016, he was music director of the State Theater in Klagenfurt, Austria, where he conducted *Otello*, *Salome*, *Madama Butterfly*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Così fan tutte*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Macbeth*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. He served as Kapellmeister at Staatsoper Hamburg between 2010 and 2012, where he led *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, among others. He has also conducted performances at Staatsoper Berlin, London's National Opera Studio, and in Cologne, Stockholm, and Frankfurt.



**Angel Blue**

SOPRANO (LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA)

**THIS SEASON** Mimi in *La Bohème* at the Met for her debut and in Dresden, Liù in *Turandot* at San Diego Opera, Violetta in *La Traviata* at Manitoba Opera, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in concert with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and concert appearances with Elbphilharmonie Hamburg.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Myrtle Wilson in John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* in Dresden, the Peri in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* in concert in Rome, Violetta at Seattle Opera, Clara in *Porgy and Bess* at La Scala, and Mimì in Valencia. She has also sung Clara at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Mimi at English National Opera, and Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. She has appeared at the Vienna State Opera, LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, Oper Frankfurt, Vienna's Theater an der Wien, the Edinburgh International Festival, and with the Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Munich Philharmonic, and Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.



## Brigitta Kele

SOPRANO (CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA)

**THIS SEASON** Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Musetta (debut, 2016).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She is a member of the ensemble at Deutsche Oper am Rhein, where her roles have included Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Liù in *Turandot*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. She has also sung Nedda in *Pagliacci* and Suzel in Mascagini's *L'Amico Fritz* in Strasbourg, Mimi in Avignon, Musetta at the Paris Opera, and Nedda in Beijing. She began her career as a member of the Romanian National Opera in her native Cluj-Napoca, where her roles included Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Princess Fedora Palinska in Kálmán's *Die Zirkusprinzessin*, Mimi, and Micaëla.



## Paul Plishka

BASS (OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA)

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

**MET APPEARANCES** He has sung more than 1,600 performances of 83 roles with the Met since his 1967 debut as a Monk in *La Gioconda*, including Colline in *La Bohème* in the first *Live from the Met* telecast in 1977, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Philip II and the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo*, Procida in *I Vespri Siciliani*, the Sacristan in *Tosca*, and the title roles of *Boris Godunov* and *Falstaff* (which marked his 25th anniversary with the company).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has appeared regularly with major opera companies in such North American cities as San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Baltimore, Houston, Pittsburgh, Dallas, San Diego, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. In Europe, he has performed at Covent Garden and La Scala and in Geneva, Munich, Hamburg, Barcelona, Vienna, Berlin, Zurich, Paris, Lyon, and Marseille. Concert appearances include engagements with leading orchestras in New York, Houston, Toronto, Minnesota, and Boston.

## The Cast CONTINUED



### Duncan Rock

BARITONE (EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Schaunard in *La Bohème* at the Met for his debut and at Covent Garden, and Charles Blount in Britten's *Gloriana* in Madrid.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in concert in Paris and at Garsington Opera; Donald in *Billy Budd* in Madrid; the title role of *Don Giovanni*; Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Tarquinius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* with the Glyndebourne Festival; Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* at Houston Grand Opera; Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Opera North; Marcello in *La Bohème* at English National Opera; and Don Giovanni at Boston Lyric Opera and with the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra. He has also sung the English Clerk/Guide in *Death in Venice* in Madrid, Marullo in *Rigoletto* at Covent Garden, Marcello at Opera North, Don Giovanni at Welsh National Opera, Tarquinius at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Papageno in *The Magic Flute* at English National Opera, and the Novice's Friend in *Billy Budd* at the Glyndebourne Festival. He has also appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Munich Radio Orchestra, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, among others.



### Matthew Rose

BASS (BRIGHTON, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Colline in *La Bohème* and Oroveso in *Norma* at the Met, the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and concert appearances in Philadelphia, London, and Rotterdam.

**MET APPEARANCES** Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*, Leporello and Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Colline (debut, 2011), Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Talbot in *Maria Stuarda*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Hunding in *Die Walküre* in concert at the Edinburgh International Festival, Bottom at the Aldeburgh Festival and the Glyndebourne Festival, Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Covent Garden, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* at English National Opera, Baron Ochs at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Callistene in Donizetti's *Poliuto* and Collatinus in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Jesus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Valencia. He has also sung Bottom at La Scala, Covent Garden, Houston Grand Opera, and in Lyon; Talbot, Timur in *Turandot*, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden; Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* in Bordeaux; Leporello at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Claggart in *Billy Budd* at English National Opera.



## Michael Todd Simpson

BARITONE (GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA)

**THIS SEASON** Marcello in *La Bohème* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Carbon in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Escamillo and Moralès in *Carmen*, Jaurfé Rudel in Kaija Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin*, Leuthold in *Guillaume Tell*, Lescaut in *Manon*, Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Streshnev in *Khovanshchina*, a Flemish Deputy in *Don Carlo*, and Hermann/Schlémil in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (debut, 2009).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Escamillo in Aix-en-Provence, the Pirate King in *Pirates of Penzance* at Palm Beach Opera, Gaylord Ravenal in *Show Boat* at the Dallas Opera, and Cecil in *Maria Stuarda* at Seattle Opera. He has also sung Álvaro in Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* and Escamillo at Washington National, John Sorel in Menotti's *The Consul* at Seattle Opera, Tooley in Bennett's *The Mines of Sulphur* at the Glimmerglass Festival, Gaylord Ravenal at San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera, and Don Giovanni at Pittsburgh Opera. He has also appeared at the Cleveland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Portland Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Opera North, Opera Australia, and Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts.



## Russell Thomas

TENOR (MIAMI, FLORIDA)

**THIS SEASON** Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Met, Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani* in Frankfurt, the title role of *Don Carlo* at Washington National Opera, and Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* in Amsterdam.

**MET APPEARANCES** Ismaele in *Nabucco*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Andres in *Wozzeck*, Tito, the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Foresto and Uldino in *Attila*, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, and the Herald in *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Tito at the Salzburg Festival; Loge in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at LA Opera; Mao Zedong in John Adams's *Nixon in China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Pollione in *Norma* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Canadian Opera Company, and LA Opera; Florestan in *Fidelio* at Cincinnati Opera and with the Houston Symphony; Don José in *Carmen* at the Canadian Opera Company; the title role of *Stiffelio* in Frankfurt; and Manrico in *Il Trovatore* at Cincinnati Opera. He has also appeared at Covent Garden, English National Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, San Francisco Opera, and Seattle Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

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## ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM AND BINOCULARS

Wireless headsets, which work with the FM assistive listening system to amplify sound, are available at the coat check station on the South Concourse level before performances. Binoculars are also available for rental at the coat check station on the South Concourse level. The rental cost is \$5. A major credit card or driver's license is required as deposit.



## BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Large print programs are available free of charge from the ushers. Braille synopses of many operas are available free of charge. Please contact an usher. Tickets for no-view score desk seats may be purchased by calling the Metropolitan Opera Guild at 212-769-7028.



## BOX OFFICE

Monday–Saturday, 10am–8pm; Sunday, noon–6pm. The Box Office closes at 8pm on non-performance evenings or on evenings with no intermission. Box Office Information: 212-362-6000.

## CHECK ROOM

On Concourse level (Founders Hall).

## FIRST AID

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 please 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 Metropolitan 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 music students to study an opera's score during a live 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](http://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. Please be sure to turn off all devices before entering the auditorium.