ACCESS OPERA
2024–25 SEASON

Access Opera: Guild Open Rehearsals for Students is made possible by Stephen E. and Evalyn E. Milman.


This program is also supported by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

JONATHAN TICHIERI / MET OPERA
Based on George Brant’s 2013 one-woman play, Grounded follows a hot-shot fighter pilot whose unplanned pregnancy takes her out of the cockpit and lands her in Las Vegas operating a Reaper drone halfway around the world. The work delves into crucial contemporary issues, including the struggle to balance family and career, the psychological consequences of combat, and the morality of using advanced technology in modern warfare.

Director Michael Mayer’s high-tech staging uses a vast array of LED screens to present a variety of perspectives on the action, including the drone’s predatory view from high above.

Jeanine Tesori is a two-time Tony Award–winning composer renowned for her musical theater scores, including Thoroughly Modern Millie (2000), Caroline, or Change (2003), Fun Home (2013), and Kimberly Akimbo (2021). This work, commissioned by the Met and premiered at Washington National Opera in 2023, showcases Tesori’s kaleidoscopic orchestral and vocal writing, shifting fluidly among military fanfares, Baroque counterpoint, atmospheric percussion, and more.

Based on Victor Hugo’s controversial play Le Roi s’Amuse (1832), this tragic work tells the tale of a disfigured court jester whose schemes go awry in the worst possible way. Composed in 1851, Rigoletto is considered the first opera of Verdi’s middle period, a time when he focused less on political allegory and larger-than-life protagonists, instead turning his eye to more intimate stories of deep human emotion.

Bartlett Sher’s production of Verdi’s timeless tragedy resets the opera’s action to Weimar Germany in the 1920s, with immersive sets by Michael Yeargan and elegant costumes by Catherine Zuber.

In this thrilling work, Verdi evokes the full spectrum of emotion—from the horror of a curse to the sighs of first love and a tempestuous storm leading to the finale. Many of the opera’s most memorable melodies, especially the ever-popular tenor aria “La donna è mobile,” balance elements of beauty and evil that make it a sublime listening experience for any operagoer.
OSVALDO GOLIJOV / LIBRETTO BY DAVID HENRY HWANG

AINADAMAR

STORY
This opera dramatizes the life and work of Spanish poet-playwright Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), who was assassinated by Fascist forces at the start of the Spanish Civil war for his socialist politics and homosexuality. The story emerges through the dreamlike memories of his muse, the actress Margarita Xirgu, against the violent backdrop of war. Ainadamar, or “fountain of tears,” is the Arabic name for the natural spring outside Granada where Lorca was executed.

PRODUCTION
Brazilian director and choreographer Deborah Colker, renowned for her work with Cirque du Soleil, makes her Met debut in a staging that features sculptural set pieces, varied textures, and flamenco dance to heighten the drama of Lorca’s life and death.

MUSIC
Among the most prominent figures in contemporary classical music, Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov won a Grammy Award for this work, his first opera. The vibrant score crackles with energy, weaving a tapestry of operatic orchestration, flamenco and rumba styles, and electronic effects.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

IL TROVATORE

STORY
While Il Trovatore (1853) lives in a borderland between madness and reality, the opera provides an effective overview of the nature of human intentions. A turbulent web of family strife, political factions, and forbidden love make this over-the-top drama a mainstay of the operatic repertory.

PRODUCTION
Inspired by the work of Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746–1828), this production by Scottish director David McVicar updates the traditional 15th-century setting to the turbulent years of the Napoleonic wars in Spain.

MUSIC
Verdi’s penchant for extreme drama and brilliant vocalism are on full display in this opera, which was composed in the same period as Rigoletto and La Traviata. The opera’s music showcases the extremes of Italian Romanticism with violent shifts in tone, unlikely coincidences, and characters driven by raw emotion rather than cool logic.
**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

**THE MAGIC FLUTE**

**HOLIDAY PRESENTATION**

**STORY**
Mozart’s sublime Enlightenment fable moves freely between earthly comedy and noble mysticism, appealing to audiences from all walks of life. Masonic imagery—alluding to the fraternal order of which both composer and librettist were members—provides a throughline to this universal tale of a young hero’s quest to rescue his beloved from the forces of evil.

**PRODUCTION**
Julie Taymor’s visually stunning adaptation of this classic opera utilizes vibrant costume design and puppetry to transport the audience to a mythical landscape beyond time and space.

**MUSIC**
This opera is an example of the German “singspiel” style, in which sung texts are interspersed with spoken dialogue. Mozart’s final opera, *The Magic Flute* ranges from solemn to comic and triumphant and contains some of the highest and lowest written notes sung in the operatic repertoire.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**
All Ages

**LANGUAGE**
English

**PERIOD**
Classical (18th Century)

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**JAKE HEGGIE / LIBRETTO BY GENE SCHEER**

**MOBY-DICK**

**STORY**
Based on Herman Melville’s sea-drenched, heaven-storming epic novel, Jake Heggie’s *Moby-Dick* (2010) comes to operatic life as the monomaniacal Captain Ahab—alongside the motley crew aboard the Pequod—pursues the white whale that claimed his leg.

**PRODUCTION**
Following acclaimed runs in Dallas, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., Leonard Foglia’s staging—featuring stunning lighting and projection techniques—will be newly enlarged and refined for its premiere at the Met.

**MUSIC**
Heggie’s propulsive, undulating score is characteristic of his cinematic style, with largely tonal harmonies accessible to opera newcomers and veterans alike.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**
MS+

**LANGUAGE**
English

**PERIOD**
21st Century
**DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE**

**STORY**
Mozart’s sublime Enlightenment fable moves freely between earthly comedy and noble mysticism, appealing to audiences from all walks of life. Masonic imagery—alluding to the fraternal order of which both composer and librettist were members—provides a throughline to this universal tale of a young hero’s quest to rescue his beloved from the forces of evil.

**PRODUCTION**
English director Simon McBurney’s modern staging features an ingenious theatrical concoction of acrobatics, live Foley (sound effect) artists, projections, and puppetry, in addition to a raised pit allowing the orchestra to interact with the cast in real time.

**MUSIC**
Composed in the “singspiel” tradition, Die Zauberflöte intersperses spoken dialogue between musical numbers, and mixes a wide variety of styles to portray different characters. Whereas clear, noble lines make up Tamino and Pamina’s music, Papageno provides comic relief in pure buffo form, and Sarastro’s solemn depths contrast with the ferocious and showstopping appearances of the high-flying Queen of the Night.

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**LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**

**STORY**
A perennial favorite of opera houses, Le Nozze di Figaro follows the drama, schemes, and romantic entanglements of the nobles and servants in a Seville manor estate. Based on the second work in French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais’s farcical Figaro trilogy, the opera’s plot is a sequel to another beloved Beaumarchais adaptation, Rossini’s Il Barbiere di Siviglia, though Mozart’s work was composed some three decades prior.

**PRODUCTION**
Sir Richard Eyre’s production of this classic updates the setting to the 1930s, creating visual and dramatic parallels to another popular take on class conflict and household drama: Downton Abbey.

**MUSIC**
In Mozart’s score, conflicts between social classes and genders play out through virtuosic ensemble writing. The first impression is one of tremendous beauty and elegance. Dig a little deeper, and you’ll find all the underlying pain and deception, where each character has something to gain and something to hide.
Another adaptation from Beaumarchais's Figaro trilogy, Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is set prior to the events of Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In this work, the titular character is enlisted by Count Almaviva to help woo the clever and beautiful Rosina away from her guardian and would-be husband, the comical old Dr. Bartolo.

**Production**
Bartlett Sher's madcap production lets physical comedy shine, with mobile sets that allow the comic action to swirl from stage to audience and back again.

**Music**
Rossini’s buoyant humor, dazzling coloratura, and elegant melodies make this delightful bel canto work one of the world’s most popular comic operas. Figaro’s swaggering first aria, as well as the famous overture, have made their way into modern pop culture, and the opera showcases tongue-twistingly impressive solos and complex ensemble scenes that remain a delight for operagoers of all ages.

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**Salome**

**Story**
Based on the eponymous play by Oscar Wilde, this one-act tragedy tells the biblical story of the young princess of Judea who seduces her stepfather, King Herod, and chooses the head of prophet John the Baptist as her reward.

**Production**
In this new staging, German director Claus Guth gives the biblical story a psychologically perceptive Victorian-era setting rich in symbolism and subtle shades of darkness and light.

**Music**
Exotic, iconoclastic, and thoroughly compelling, Strauss’s score combines the grandeur of Wagner’s epics with the focus and emotional punch of the Italian verismo tradition. In its musical and dramatic challenges, the title role stands as one of the most exhilarating in opera.
### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

**STORY**
A glorious adaptation of Shakespeare’s immortal drama, John Adams’s latest opera follows the troubled romance and political strife of the captivating Cleopatra and her conflicted consort Antony, a Roman politician and close ally to Julius Caesar.

**PRODUCTION**
This new staging by groundbreaking director Elkhanah Pulitzer transports the story from ancient Rome to the Golden Age of Hollywood in the 1930s.

**MUSIC**
Adams himself takes the podium to conduct his lyrical and richly orchestrated score, which ranges from luscious to militaristic and features an expansive percussion section, including the cimbalom (a kind of hammered dulcimer) and djembe.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**
MS+

**LANGUAGE**
English

**PERIOD**
21st Century

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### THE QUEEN OF SPADES

**STORY**
Tchaikovsky and his brother Modest crafted the work’s libretto from an 1833 short story by Alexander Pushkin. Ranging from the mundane to the supernatural and set against the backdrop of St. Petersburg during the reign of Catherine the Great, the opera follows the desperate attempts by a military officer to learn an old Countess’s secret gambling strategy.

**PRODUCTION**
In this striking production by Elijah Moshinsky, Tsarist St. Petersburg is both a mystical place where elements of fantasy can burst forth at any moment and a very real, modern city that provides an opportunity to satirize contemporary society.

**MUSIC**
Tchaikovsky’s skills as a symphonist and master of ballet are apparent in the score’s soaringly brilliant highs and dramatically dark lows. But his vocal prowess is also on display: Many of the work’s arias are considered concert standards in Russia, and their diversity in mood and character are a rare treat for American audiences.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**
MS+

**LANGUAGE**
Russian

**PERIOD**
Romantic (Late 19th Century)