

ACCESS OPERA

2024–25 SEASON



The Met
ropolitan
Opera

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

Additional funding from The Robert and Jane Toll Foundation, The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, The Half Windham Foundation, The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, and Nike

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

JONATHAN TICHLER / MET OPERA



JEANINE TESORI / LIBRETTO BY GEORGE BRANT

GROUNDLED

STORY

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.

PRODUCTION

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.

MUSIC

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.

RECOMMENDED FOR
MS+

LANGUAGE
English

PERIOD
21st Century



GIUSEPPE VERDI

RIGOLETTO

STORY

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.

PRODUCTION

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.

MUSIC

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 opera-goer.

RECOMMENDED FOR
MS+

LANGUAGE
Italian

PERIOD
Romantic
(19th Century)



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.

RECOMMENDED FOR
MS+

LANGUAGE
Spanish

PERIOD
21st Century



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.

RECOMMENDED FOR
MS+

LANGUAGE
Italian

PERIOD
Romantic
(19th Century)

KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA



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)

KAREN ALMOND / DALLAS OPERA



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



RECOMMENDED FOR
All Ages

LANGUAGE
German

PERIOD
Classical
(18th Century)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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.



RECOMMENDED FOR
All Ages

LANGUAGE
Italian

PERIOD
Classical
(18th Century)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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.



GIOACHINO ROSSINI

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

STORY

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.

RECOMMENDED FOR
All Ages

LANGUAGE
Italian

PERIOD
Early 19th Century



RICHARD STRAUSS

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.

RECOMMENDED FOR
HS+

LANGUAGE
German

PERIOD
Early 20th Century



JOHN ADAMS

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



PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

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)

Access Opera 2024–25 Season

The Metropolitan Opera

| DATE AND TIME | COMPOSER AND TITLE | LANGUAGE | GENRE | | GOOD FOR OPERA NEWCOMERS? | NEW MET PRODUCTION | AGE LEVEL | MAJOR THEMES AND CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS |
|---|---|----------|--------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---|
| THU, SEP 19, 2024 11 AM – 1:25 PM | JEANINE TESORI Grounded | English | Contemporary Drama | | ✓ | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | Contemporary American politics, global warfare, psychology, gender, science and technology |
| FRI, SEP 27, 2024 10:30 AM – 1:15 PM | GIUSEPPE VERDI Rigoletto | Italian | Romantic Tragedy | ✓ | | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | Italian romanticism, fate and destiny, class power struggles, doomed love |
| FRI, OCT 11, 2024 10:30 AM – 11:50 AM (NO INTERMISSION) | OSVALDO GOLIJOV Ainadamar | Spanish | Historical Drama | | ✓ | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | History of politics and fascism, sexuality and identity, flamenco music and dance, Spanish literature and culture |
| WED, OCT 23, 2024 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM | GIUSEPPE VERDI Il Trovatore | Italian | Tragedy | | ✓ | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | Italian romanticism, political drama, exoticism, romantic rivalry, mistaken identity, melodrama |
| TUE, DEC 10, 2024 10:30 AM – 12:25 PM (NO INTERMISSION) | WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART The Magic Flute | English | Fairy Tale | ✓ | | | ALL AGES | Folk tales, the Enlightenment, right vs. wrong, hero's journey, stage design (puppetry) |
| FRI, FEB 28, 2025 11 AM – 1:20 PM | JAKE HEGGIE Moby-Dick | English | Epic Drama | | ✓ | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | American history and culture, contemporary music, race and ethnicity, literary adaptation (Melville) |

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

Additional funding from The Robert and Jane Toll Foundation, The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, The Half Windham Foundation, The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, and Nike

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

Access Opera 2024–25 Season (CONTINUED)

| DATE AND TIME | COMPOSER AND TITLE | LANGUAGE | GENRE | GOOD FOR OPERA NEWCOMERS? | NEW MET PRODUCTION | AGE LEVEL | MAJOR THEMES AND CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS |
|---|--|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|
| THU, MAR 20, 2025 11 AM – 1:50 PM | WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Die Zauberflöte | German | Fairy Tale | ✓ | | ALL AGES | Folk tales, the Enlightenment, right vs. wrong, hero's journey, stage design (sound, puppetry, projections) |
| FRI, MAR 28, 2025 10:30 AM – 2 PM | WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Le Nozze di Figaro | Italian | Comedy | ✓ | | ALL AGES | Comedy, class commentary, romantic entanglement, mistaken identity, gender, ensemble writing |
| FRI, APR 11, 2025 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM | GIOACHINO ROSSINI Il Barbiere di Siviglia | Italian | Romantic Comedy | ✓ | | ALL AGES | Farce, class commentary, bel canto style, mistaken identity, deceit and intrigue |
| FRI, APR 25, 2025 10:30 AM – 12:10 PM (NO INTERMISSION) | RICHARD STRAUSS Salome | German | Biblical Drama | | ✓ | HIGH SCHOOL AND UP | Biblical narrative, musical modernism, chromaticism and polytonality, gender, literary adaptation (Wilde) |
| FRI, MAY 9, 2025 10:30 AM – 1:45 PM | JOHN ADAMS Antony and Cleopatra | English | Historical Tragedy | | ✓ | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | Ancient history, romantic rivalry, politics and warfare, contemporary music, literary adaptation (Shakespeare) |
| WED, MAY 21, 2025 10:30 AM – 2:05 PM | PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY The Queen of Spades | Russian | Romantic Tragedy | | | MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UP | Russian history and culture, doomed love, romanticism, addiction and obsession, literary adaptation (Pushkin) |