GIUSEPPE VERDI

AIDA

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**Opera in four acts**

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Thursday, March 7, 2019
7:30–11:10 PM

**Last time this season**

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 Viking Cruises
The 1,176th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI’S
AIDA

CONDUCTOR
Plácido Domingo

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

RAMFIS
Štefan Kocán

AMONASRO
Quinn Kelsey

RADAMÈS
Jorge de León

SOLO DANCERS
Min-Tzu Li
Brian Gephart

AMNERIS
Olesya Petrova

AIDA
Sondra Radvanovsky*

THE KING
Soloman Howard

A MESSENGER
Arseny Yakolev**

A PRIESTESS
Leah Hawkins**

This performance is being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 75 and streamed at metopera.org.

Thursday, March 7, 2019, 7:30–11:10PM
A scene from Verdi’s Aida

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Musical Preparation  John Keenan, Yelena Kurdina, Liora Maurer, and Bryan Wagorn*
Assistant Stage Directors  Jonathon Loy and J. Knighten Smit
Stage Band Conductor  Gregory Buchalter
Italian Coach  Loretta Di Franco
Prompter  Yelena Kurdina
Met Titles  Christopher Bergen
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in Metropolitan Opera Shops
Costumes executed by Metropolitan Opera Costume Department
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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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Yamaha is the Official Piano of the Metropolitan Opera.

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The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute Viking Cruises in recognition of its generous support during the 2018–19 season.
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 and marry her. But Amneris also loves Radamès and is jealous of Aida, whom she suspects of being her rival for Radamès's affection. A messenger brings news that the Ethiopians are advancing. The king names Radamès to lead the army, and all prepare for war. 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 Ptah. Ramfis orders Radamès to protect the homeland.

*Intermission*  (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:15PM)

Act II

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

At the city gates, the king and Amneris observe the victory celebrations and praise Radamès's triumph. Soldiers lead in the captured Ethiopians, among them Amonasro, who signals his daughter not to reveal his identity as king. Amonasro's eloquent plea for mercy impresses Radamès, and the warrior asks that the order for the prisoners to be executed be overruled and that they 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 9:30PM)

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 discover 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 Aida convinces him 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 try to calm him when Ramfis and Amneris emerge from the temple. Father and daughter are able to escape, but Radamès surrenders himself to the high priest’s guards.

Act IV
Radamès awaits trial as a traitor, believing Aida to be dead. Amneris summons him, but even after he learns that Aida has survived, he rejects Amneris’s offer to save him if he gives up his lover. Brought before the priests, Radamès refuses to answer their accusations, and they condemn him 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 peace.
In Focus

Giuseppe Verdi

Aida

Premiere: Khedivial Opera House, Cairo, 1871
This grandest of grand operas, Aida 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, the opera never loses sight of its three protagonists: Amneris, the proud daughter of the pharaoh; her slave Aida, who is secretly the princess of the rival kingdom of Ethiopia; and Radamès, the Egyptian warrior that 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 also 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 composer and librettist 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 libretti, 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, 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 Triumphal March (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 1890. (The Met’s inaugural 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. Arturo Toscanini made his Met debut conducting a spectacular new production (even though the previous production was only a year old) for opening night of the 1908–09 season. That performance also 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-soprano Louise Homer (who sang Amneris 97 times between 1900 and 1927), tenor Enrico Caruso (91 performances as Radamès at the Met between 1903 and 1919), and the great baritone Pasquale Amato (70 appearances between 1908 and 1921). Other unforgettable Aidas at the Met have included Zinka Milanov (1938–58), Elisabeth Rethberg (1922–42), Birgit Nilsson (1961–1967), Leontyne Price (from 1961 until her farewell appearance at the Met in 1985), Martina Arroyo (1965–1986), and Gilda Cruz-Romo (1973–1979). A number of exceptional tenors have appeared as Radamès over the years, including Giovanni Martinelli (a company record 123 times between 1913 and 1943), Giacomo Lauri-Volpi (1925–1933), Mario Del Monaco (1951–1954), Carlo Bergonzi (1956–1978), Richard Tucker (1965–1973), and Luciano Pavarotti (1986–2001). The current staging by Sonja Frisell, with sets by the acclaimed film production designer Gianni Quaranta (*A Room with a View*), premiered in 1988 with a cast headed by Leona Mitchell, Fiorenza Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, and Paul Plishka. The production was telecast a year later, with Aprile Millo and Dolora Zajick squaring off as Aida and Amneris.
A fter 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 Khedivial Opera House, and Ismail Pasha 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 outside 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, large crowds, massed forces of many kinds. The second scene in Act I, with its invocations of Ptah 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.
Baritone Ambrogio Maestri reprises his acclaimed portrayal of Verdi’s larger-than-life title character, in Robert Carsen’s ingenious production. Richard Farnes makes his Met debut conducting a starry ensemble, which also features sopranos Ailyn Pérez and Golda Schultz.

FEB 22, 27 MAR 2, 5, 8, 12, 16mat

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The Cast

Plácido Domingo
CONDUCTOR (MADRID, SPAIN)

This Season
He conducts Aida at the Met and sings the title role of Gianni Schicchi and Germont in La Traviata. He also sings Germont at La Scala, Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera, and in Muscat, Oman; Rodrigo in Don Carlo and Juanillo in Penella’s El Gato Montés at LA Opera; the title role of Simon Boccanegra at the Vienna State Opera; the title role of Macbeth at Staatsoper Berlin; the title role of Nabucco in Dresden; and Giacomo in Verdi’s Giovanna d’Arco in Madrid. He also conducts La Traviata in Muscat and concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Vienna Philharmonic.

Met Appearances
He has opened the Met season 21 times, sung more than 650 performances of 51 roles, and conducted more than 150 performances since his 1968 debut as Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur. He made his conducting debut leading La Bohème in 1984.

Career Highlights
His repertoire includes more than 150 roles, and he has given more than 4,000 performances worldwide. In 1993, he founded the international vocal competition Operalia. He is general director of LA Opera and was general director of Washington National Opera between 2003 and 2011.

Olesya Petrova
MEZZO-SOPRANO (ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA)

This Season
Amneris in Aida at the Met and in Sanxay, France, and Azucena in Il Trovatore in Florence and Halden, Norway.

Met Appearances
Federica in Luisa Miller, Antonia’s Mother in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, and Madelon in Andrea Chénier (debut, 2014).

Career Highlights
Recent performances include Amneris in Verona, Montreal, and in concert at New Zealand Opera; Pauline in The Queen of Spades at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre; Ulrica in Un Ballo in Maschera, Santuzza in Cavalleria Rusticana, and the Countess in The Queen of Spades at St. Petersburg’s Mikhailovsky Theatre; and Amelfa in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Golden Cockerel in Madrid. She has also sung Amneris at the Latvian National Opera; Charlotte in Werther and Federica in Trieste; Emilia in Otello in Barcelona; Azucena at the Latvian National Opera and in Hedehusene, Denmark; Mrs. Sedley in Peter Grimes and Federica in Hamburg; Fenena in Nabucco in Montreal; Ulrica at Deutsche Oper am Rhein; Suzuki in Madama Butterfly in Athens; and Verdi’s Requiem with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, at the Latvian National Opera, and in Paris, Amsterdam, and Sydney.
**The Cast CONTINUED**

**Sondra Radvanovsky**  
**SOPRANO (BERWYN, ILLINOIS)**

**This Season**  The title roles of *Aida* and *Tosca* at the Met, Elisabetta in *Roberto Devereux* at San Francisco Opera, Tosca at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Vienna State Opera, Maddalena di Coigny in *Andrea Chénier* at Covent Garden, and the title role of *Luisa Miller* in Barcelona.

**Met Appearances**  More than 200 performances of 27 roles, including Elisabetta, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto* (debut, 1996), and the title roles of *Norma*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Anna Bolena*, *Tosca*, and *Aida*.

**Career Highlights**  Recent performances include Leonora and Amelia at the Paris Opera, Anna Bolena and Norma at the Canadian Opera Company, Paolina in Donizetti’s *Poliuto* in concert and Maddalena di Coigny in Barcelona, Amelia in Zurich, Tosca at LA Opera, Amelia Grimaldi in *Simon Boccanegra* in concert in Paris and Monte Carlo, Norma at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the title role of *Manon Lescaut* at Covent Garden. She has also sung Tosca at the Bavarian State Opera and Aida at the Paris Opera and Vienna State Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

**Jorge de León**  
**TENOR (SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, SPAIN)**

**This Season**  Radamès in *Aida* at the Met; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Prince Sergio in Sorozábal's *Katiushka* in Madrid; Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at the Vienna State Opera and in Barcelona; des Grieux in Hamburg; Cavaradossi, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Canio in *Pagliacci* in Genoa; and the title role of *Otello* in Málaga, Spain.

**Met Appearances**  Radamès (debut, 2017).

**Career Highlights**  Recent performances include Cavaradossi in Otsu, Tokyo, and Hamburg; the title role of *Andrea Chénier* and des Grieux in Barcelona; Radamès at La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Calàf in *Turandot* in Turin and Macau; des Grieux in Hamburg; Andrea Chénier in Oviedo, Spain; Don Fadrique in Vives’s *La Villana* and Pinkerton in Madrid; Macduff in *Macbeth* at the Vienna State Opera; and Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at Deutsche Oper Berlin. He has also appeared at the Bavarian State Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera, and in Seville, Jerez, Las Palmas, Valencia, Pamplona, Valladolid, Naples, Palermo, Rome, Florence, Monte Carlo, Beijing, and Avenches, Switzerland.
Soloman Howard

BASS (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

THIS SEASON The King in Aida at the Met, the Friar in Don Carlo at LA Opera, Fafner in Das Rheingold in Montreal, the Lion/Second Butcher in Jeanine Tesori’s The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me at Washington National Opera, Cadmus/Somnus in Handel’s Semele with the English Concert, Mozart’s Requiem with Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society, and Colline in La Bohème at the Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES The King (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the King in Madrid and at Washington National Opera, Sparafucile in Rigoletto and Fafner in Das Rheingold at North Carolina Opera, and Timur in Turandot at San Francisco Opera. He has also sung the Duke of Verona in Roméo et Juliette and the Commendatore in Don Giovanni at the Santa Fe Opera; Fafner in the Ring cycle, Frederick Douglass/Martin Luther King Jr. in Philip Glass’s Appomattox, Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, and the Commendatore at Washington National Opera; Prince Gremin in Eugene Onegin, Muhammad Ali in D.J. Sparr’s Approaching Ali, and Colline at North Carolina Opera; Banquo in Macbeth and Sarastro at the Glimmerglass Festival; and Porgy in Porgy and Bess in concert with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra.

Quinn Kelsey

BARITONE (HONOLULU, HAWAII)

THIS SEASON Amonasro in Aida and Germont in La Traviata at the Met, the title role of Rigoletto in Zurich, Ford in Falstaff at the Dallas Opera, Germont at the Hawaii Opera Theatre, and Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor at the Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Enrico, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore, Peter in Hansel and Gretel, Marcello and Schaunard (debut, 2008) in La Bohème, Germont, and Monterone in Rigoletto.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Germont in Zurich; Rodrigo in Don Carlo at Washington National Opera; Rigoletto at Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, and in Frankfurt; Amonasro in Orange; Count di Luna at Covent Garden; and Enrico at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also sung Rigoletto the Paris Opera, Santa Fe Opera, English National Opera, and in concert at the Hawaii Opera Theatre; Germont at Covent Garden, the Canadian Opera Company, San Francisco Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago; Enrico in Frankfurt; Count di Luna at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and the title role of Falstaff at Japan’s Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival. He was the 2015 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.
The Cast CONTINUED

Štefan Kocán
BASS (TRNAVA, SLOVAKIA)

This season Ramfis in Aida, the Commendatore in Don Giovanni, and Sparafucile in Rigoletto at the Met; Philip II in Don Carlo in Bratislava; the Commendatore in Bologna; and Hunding in Die Walküre in Bordeaux.

MET APPEARANCES Ferrando in Il Trovatore, the Commendatore, Sparafucile, Prince Gremin in Eugene Onegin, Konchak in Prince Igor, and Ramfis and the King (debut, 2009) in Aida.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Vodník in Rusalka in Český Krumlov, Czech Republic, and Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; the title role of Boito’s Mefistofele in Prague; Gurnemanz in Parsifal in Antwerp; Hunding and Fafner in the Ring Trilogy and Banquo in Macbeth in Vienna; Don Basilio in Il Barbiere di Siviglia in Bratislava; and Sparafucile in Orange, Bologna, and at Palm Beach Opera. He has also sung the Watcher in Enescu’s Oedipe at Covent Garden; Banquo in Dresden; Leporello in Don Giovanni in Bratislava; Bluebeard in Bluebeard’s Castle and Leporello in Antwerp; Philip II and the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlo and Banquo at La Scala; Osmin in Die Entführung aus dem Serail and the Commendatore at the Bavarian State Opera; and Masetto in Don Giovanni at La Scala and Staatsoper Berlin.

The New South Entrance

This season, the Met introduces a new entrance to the opera house for eligible Patrons and Subscribers. The area inside the South Entrance will also be used for intermission and education events. The South Entrance will open for performances one hour prior to curtain.

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The South Entrance is made possible thanks to the generosity of Betsy Z. Cohen and Edward E. Cohen.