PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

IOLANTA
AND

BÉLA BARTÓK

BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE

Iolanta
Opera in one act
Libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky, based on the play King René’s Daughter by Henrik Hertz

Bluebeard’s Castle
Opera in one act
Libretto by Béla Balázs, based on the fairy tale by Charles Perrault

Friday, February 1, 2019
7:30–10:40 PM

The productions of Iolanta and Bluebeard’s Castle were made possible by a generous gift from Ambassador and Mrs. Nicholas F. Taubman

Additional funding was received from Mrs. Veronica Atkins; Dr. Magdalena Berenyi, in memory of Dr. Kalman Berenyi; and the National Endowment for the Arts

Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera and Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera
The tenth Metropolitan Opera performance of

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY’S

IOLANTA

CONDUCTOR
Henrik Nánási

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARTHA
Larissa Diadkova

DUKE ROBERT
Alexey Markov

IOLANTA
Sonya Yoncheva

COUNT GOTTFRIED VAUDÉMONT
Matthew Polenzani

BRIGITTA
Ashley Emerson*

LAURA
Megan Marino

BERTRAND
Harold Wilson

ALMÉRIC
Mark Schowalter

KING RENÉ
Vitalij Kowaljow

IBN-HAKIA
Elchin Azizov

Friday, February 1, 2019, 7:30–10:40PM
The Metropolitan Opera
2018–19 Season

The 34th Metropolitan Opera performance of
BÉLA BARTÓK’S
BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE

CONDUCTOR
Henrik Nánási

CAST

JUDITH
Angela Denoke

DUKE BLUEBEARD
Gerald Finley

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

Friday, February 1, 2019, 7:30–10:40PM
Chorus Master (*Iolanta*) Donald Palumbo
Musical Preparation (*Iolanta*) Linda Hall, J. David Jackson, and Natalia Katyukova*
Musical Preparation (*Bluebeard’s Castle*) Linda Hall,
J. David Jackson, Natalia Katyukova*, and Dimitri Dover*
Assistant Stage Directors Yefim Maizel and Stephen Pickover
Stage Band Conductor (*Bluebeard’s Castle*) Jeffrey Goldberg
Met Titles J. D. McClatchy
The Voice (*Bluebeard’s Castle*) Jan Frycz

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted by Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera, Warsaw; and Metropolitan Opera Shops
Costumes executed by Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera, Warsaw; Metropolitan Opera Costume Department; and Suitable Costumes Ltd., Toronto
Wig and Makeup design by Waldemar Pokromski
Wigs and Makeup executed by Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department

The production of *Bluebeard’s Castle* uses strobe effects.

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

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*Bluebeard’s Castle* is performed by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

**Met Titles**
To activate, press the red button to the right of the screen in front of your seat and follow the instructions provided. To turn off the display, press the red button once again. If you have questions, please ask an usher at intermission.
Synopsis

Iolanta
Iolanta is blind. She lives a secluded life, and everyone treats her like a doll. A long time ago, her father, King René, hid her from the world and placed her in the care of simple people, Martha and Bertrand. The King’s greatest concern is that his daughter never finds out that she is blind. He also doesn’t want the news of Iolanta’s blindness to reach Robert, her future husband. Iolanta is convinced that eyes are only for crying, but she is becoming anxious and has some vague presentiments. Alméric arrives at Iolanta’s dwelling, announcing a visit from the king and a famous Moorish physician. The doctor’s diagnosis is clear: Iolanta must be told of her disability before treatment can begin. René says no. Robert and Vaudémont appear at Iolanta’s house. They are overawed—the place seems to hide a secret danger, and they feel threatened. They meet Iolanta, not knowing who she is. Robert doesn’t realize that she is his betrothed, whom he doesn’t want to marry because he loves someone else. Vaudémont is enchanted with the girl, while Robert is worried by this mysterious place. Enthralled with Iolanta’s beauty, Vaudémont asks her to give him a red rose as a keepsake. Iolanta hands him a white one, twice.

Vaudémont realizes that she can’t see. Iolanta has no idea what it means to see; she isn’t aware what she is missing. King René catches Vaudémont talking to Iolanta and is furious with him for revealing the secret to her. With no will of her own, Iolanta doesn’t even know whether she wants to be able to see—she will do anything her father tells her. This only confirms the doctor’s words that, without an inner desire, no change is possible. To awaken her desire to regain her sight, the king threatens that if the treatment fails, Vaudémont will be killed. The doctor heals Iolanta, and her father consents to her marriage to Vaudémont. But regaining her sight doesn’t bring Iolanta the expected deliverance. Blinded by the world, she can’t believe that the people she loves look the way they do. Her love for Vaudémont and the wedding ceremony subdue her fears. Will it be forever?

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:05PM)

Bluebeard’s Castle
Judith has come to live with Bluebeard, having left her family home and her peaceful, ordered existence. Bluebeard’s secret mesmerizes her—she knows the terrifying rumors, she fears she may be on a road of no return, yet she decides to enter his home. The door closes. Judith confesses her love for Bluebeard, believing that it will change him and light up his gloomy home. She repeats her profession of love like a mantra as she demands that the doors to seven rooms be opened. The first one is a torture chamber, the second an armory.
These rooms fill her with terror. The next doors conceal a treasury and a garden. Then, Bluebeard shows Judith his empire. She sees blood everywhere: on jewels, weapons, flowers. She doesn’t want to defer to Bluebeard who says, “Love me” and “Ask no questions.” Judith responds that she does love him and wants him to open up to her, reveal his inner self, and uncover his fears. She demands that all the doors be opened. The sixth door, which conceals a sea of tears, is where Judith reaches the limit of knowledge. That leaves the seventh door. Behind it is a space beyond life, on the border of life and death. Here are concealed Bluebeard’s previous wives. Passing through the seventh door, Judith joins them. She is made a part of Bluebeard’s space forever. The circle of her journey closes. Or, perhaps it closed a long time ago, when she first met Bluebeard?

Iolanta and Bluebeard’s Castle on Demand

Looking for more Iolanta and Bluebeard’s Castle? Check out Met Opera on Demand, our online streaming service, to enjoy other outstanding performances from past Met seasons, including the 2015 Live in HD transmission of this eerie double bill—as well as a gripping 1999 telecast of another of Tchaikovsky’s lesser-known masterpieces, The Queen of Spades, starring Plácido Domingo and Dmitri Hvorostovsky. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of nearly 700 complete performances at metoperaondemand.org.
In Focus

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Iolanta

Premiere: Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, 1892
St. Petersburg’s Imperial Theatres commissioned Tchaikovsky’s final opera as part of a double bill with a new ballet—which became The Nutcracker. Although Iolanta, unlike its companion piece, has remained relatively unknown outside of Russia, it is prime operatic Tchaikovsky. Based on a Danish play, the opera is a romantic fantasy about the blind daughter of a king. Ignorant of her affliction, her father keeps her prisoner, but eventually Iolanta must face the truth of who she is before she can experience both sight and love. The story’s abstract psychological underpinnings are explored through Tchaikovsky’s unique gift for ravishing lyricism, making Iolanta both intellectually fascinating and musically accessible.

The Creators
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) enjoyed tremendous fame during his lifetime as a composer of symphonic music and ballets. Today, his operas have also achieved a steadily growing popularity, both in Russia and around the world, with Eugene Onegin and The Queen of Spades firmly established in the repertoire. His brother Modest (1850–1916), who wrote the libretto for Iolanta, also worked with him on the libretto for The Queen of Spades. The source for Iolanta was the play Kong Renés Datter (King René’s Daughter) by the Danish poet Henrik Hertz (1797–1870), written in 1845 and highly popular throughout the 19th century.

The Setting
A largely fictionalized account of the life of Yolande, daughter of René d’Anjou, Count of Provence and King of Naples, the story originally takes place in mid–15th-century France. The Met’s production is set in an unspecified space visually inspired by the films noirs of the 1940s.

The Music
The score of Iolanta contains a wealth of instantly recognizable Tchaikovskian melody, beginning with the opening scene and the title character’s first solo. Free of form rather than a textbook aria, it is still so lyrical that it has enjoyed a separate life on Russian concert stages. The Moorish doctor’s solo is painted with exotic strains and has reminded some commentators of the Arabian Dance from The Nutcracker. Iolanta and Vaudémont’s expansive love duet
is also exemplary romantic Tchaikovsky—its main theme will reappear at the opera’s conclusion sung by all the characters in a general expression of joy. Reflecting the story’s subject matter of blindness and vision, one of the score’s most instantly notable features is its highly sophisticated use of colors in both the orchestral and vocal writing.

**Met History**
Mariusz Treliński’s production—which opened on January 29, 2015, and starred Anna Netrebko, Piotr Beczała, Alexey Markov, Elchin Azizov, and Ilya Bannik, conducted by Valery Gergiev—marked the opera’s Met premiere.

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**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.

For information on how you can support the Met, visit [metopera.org/support](http://metopera.org/support).

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

Béla Bartók

Bluebeard’s Castle

Premiere: Royal Hungarian Opera House, Budapest, 1918

Bartók’s only opera is an intense psychological journey, a powerful drama of inner emotion, and a tour de force for two singers (and the orchestra). Loosely based on Charles Perrault’s late-17th-century fairy tale, it tells the grotesque story of a rich and powerful man, suspected of having murdered several wives, who brings a new bride to his castle. In Bartók’s version, the bride, Judith, prods Bluebeard to open seven doors, each of which reveals an aspect of Bluebeard’s life, material possessions, and, by extension, his soul. With the opening of the final door, Judith is engulfed in his dark subconscious—and possibly killed. By the time the opera was written, the Perrault tale had become a metaphor for contemporary psychological questions: How well can two people know each other? How much should they attempt to find out? While such an approach, almost completely without conventional “action,” could easily have resulted in an overly didactic treatment, Bartók’s music makes the opera a thrilling journey. The score lives on, yet not quite beyond, the jagged edges of tonality. Like the subconscious and the dream world it depicts, it sounds familiar enough to not be experienced as abstract, yet foreign and disturbing enough to create a feeling of unease. It is a unique achievement in opera and a great challenge to the performers and production team.

The Creators

Béla Bartók (1881–1945) was a Hungarian composer and an important pioneer in the field of ethnomusicology. During the first decades of his life, he was better known for his work in collecting and analyzing folk music than for his own compositions. He fled fascism to settle in New York City in 1940. At the time of his death from leukemia, his stature as a composer was beginning to grow internationally. Born Herbert Bauer of German-Jewish parents, Béla Balázs (1884–1949) was a writer and poet based in Hungary who later became an influential film critic. He originally created the libretto of Bluebeard’s Castle for his friend, composer Zoltán Kodály. French writer Charles Perrault (1628–1703) is considered the father of the fairy tale. His Stories or Tales from Past Times (better known by their subtitle, “Tales of Mother Goose”), contain the first literary versions of the stories of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, and others.
The Setting
The libretto indicates nothing more specific than a massive, dark castle hallway with seven doors. No time period or geographical location is given. In this production, Iolanta and Bluebeard’s Castle are set in a similar physical environment inspired by 1940s film noir.

The Music
Musicologists delight in analyzing the score of Bluebeard’s Castle, but the opera is remarkable for its ability to make a direct and powerful impression on anyone. The music is closely linked to the Hungarian text, and yet gives it an acoustic power that transcends the strictly syntactic meaning. It speaks to the emotions as well as to the intellect. The opera opens with a spoken prologue, in which the audience is invited to question whether what they’re about to see is really happening or takes place in their imagination. Bartók builds each of the scenes, represented by each of the seven doors of Bluebeard’s castle, around its own pitch center: beginning in F-sharp, moving to a bright C (expressed in a glorious outpouring of melody) in the fifth scene, and returning to the subdued F-sharp at the end. The whole drama is contained within this sequence: loneliness with a glimpse of the lost opportunity for love and light. Much of the title character’s vocal line is declamatory and indeed without much color or range. Its power lies in its dramatic delivery. Conversely, Judith’s music covers a wider range. The underlying intention is clear: She is attempting to break away from his stifling presence. The music of Bluebeard’s Castle makes a universal tale of human relationships from a symbolist psychological study.

Met History
The opera received its Met premiere in English as part of a summer season in 1974, in a double bill with Puccini’s comedy Gianni Schicchi. Sixten Ehrling conducted David Ward and Shirley Verrett in a production by Bodo Igesz. A new staging in 1989, also in English, paired the work with Arnold Schoenberg’s monodrama Erwartung. Jessye Norman starred in both, with Samuel Ramey as Bluebeard. Ramey also appeared in two concert performances of the work, sung in Hungarian, given by the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and in Newark, New Jersey, in 2000, with Anne Sofie von Otter as Judith. Mariusz Treliński’s production, which opened during the 2014–15 season with Valery Gergiev conducting Nadja Michael and Mikhail Petrenko, marked the opera’s first staged Met performances in the original language.
The standard opening to any fairy tale—“Once upon a time”—performs a wonderfully paradoxical function. The words are both generic and specific, applying to all time yet somehow inviting one particular reader to imagine the details of the realm in which the allegorical tale will unfold. And it is this unique dual function that has guaranteed the genre’s longevity, inviting any reader or audience member, from cradle to grave, to find the pantomimic or the profound in its pages.

During the 19th century, fairy tales enjoyed a renaissance thanks to figures such as the Brothers Grimm in Germany and Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, whose new perspectives on these stories provided lyric contrast to the vicissitudes of the Industrial Revolution. As lives were filled with smoke and steam, the mist and magic of tales handed down from the Middle Ages via the high baroque language of 17th-century French author Charles Perrault to the crepuscular never-land of the German forest provided requisite escape. Even if the nursery was but a distant memory to the reader, the idea that, like Hansel and Gretel, one could dodge drudgery and slip into a world of sandmen and sleeping beauties held great appeal.

Given their ubiquity, however, these stories also became the focus of new types of study. They were questioned, subverted, and, through the work of psychoanalysts and symbolists, revealed, as arch-Freudian Bruno Bettleheim wrote in *The Uses of Enchantment*, to be “a magic mirror which reflects some aspects of our inner world and of the steps required by our evolution from immaturity to maturity.” In short, as a classless reader emerged, thanks to liberal education systems, newly established democracies, and mass culture, the world’s most enduring stories found fresh audiences and revelatory interpretations.

Opera likewise gained a more universal following during the 19th century. Formerly the preserve of court and aristocracy, just as with Perrault’s seminal 1697 *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé (Stories or Tales from Past Times)*, the lyric stage became a more democratic forum, with issues of nation states often mirrored beneath the proscenium arch, as were events from the daily lives of the people, found in both the works of the verismo school in Italy and its boldest predecessor, Bizet’s 1875 masterpiece *Carmen*. Almost immediately after that opera’s premiere, the Russian composer Tchaikovsky acquired a copy of the vocal score; by the following year, he had traveled to Paris to hear the opera live.

“Never before had a work of contemporary music so captivated our composer,” his brother Modest recalled. “From this moment on, it was easy to predict that for the subject of his next opera, Pyotr Ilyich would not choose a story about kings or gods or cardboard boyars, but something as close to life and as close to us as the sad story of Don José’s love.” And yet, despite Modest’s claims, his brother was just as drawn to the escapism of fairy tales as he was to the type of onstage realism that was its seeming antipode. Indeed, Tchaikovsky brought an
BIZET

CARMEN

Bizet’s ever-popular masterpiece stars Clémentine Margaine in the blazing title role, opposite tenor Roberto Alagna as her tortured lover, Don José. Louis Langrée conducts Sir Richard Eyre’s powerful production, a Met favorite since its 2009 premiere.

JAN 9, 12, 17, 21, 26 mat, 29  FEB 2 mat, 5, 8

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
inspired level of spiritual insight to fairy tales, gleaned from his own experience, while for the lives of figures such as Tatiana in his *Eugene Onegin*, he fashioned an intense brand of escapist lyricism.

The complementary nature of Tchaikovsky’s approach is no more apparent than in the double bill with which he, unknowingly, closed his operatic and balletic careers. Following the successful 1890 premiere of his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*, based on Perrault’s fairy tale, and its much darker successor, the opera *The Queen of Spades*, Tchaikovsky was starved for inspiration. And yet the directors of the Imperial Theatres in Russia insisted on another hit, demanding not one but two new works: an opera and a ballet. Choreographer Marius Petipa, Tchaikovsky’s esteemed collaborator on *The Sleeping Beauty*, chose the topic for the ballet, an adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s fantastical *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, drawn from the Brothers Grimm, while Tchaikovsky was able to select the scenario for the opera, picking Hans Christian Andersen’s compatriot Henrik Hertz’s fairy-tale play *King René’s Daughter*.

Although Tchaikovsky complained that his energy was waning, he took to the operatic half of the project with much greater verve than the ballet—surprising given the popularity of *The Nutcracker* today—and yet it is easy to perceive why this composer, of all people, would have been drawn to a tale of a blind princess granted the freedom of sight through love. Personal identification with his protagonists, however mythic, was key to Tchaikovsky’s inspiration, not least given the gay composer’s disappointments in matters of the heart. And it was this sense of kinship that can be felt in every chromatic turn of his scores, revealing a much richer consciousness than would have ever been imagined of such tales. Significant, too, is the conclusion to *Iolanta*, for while many of the composer’s dramatic works, like his symphonies, end in tragedy, Tchaikovsky was clearly attracted to the utopian idea of a happy ending, already witnessed in both *The Sleeping Beauty* and its contemporary, the Fifth Symphony.

Unlike those predecessors, however, there is a gentility, even inwardness, to *Iolanta*, leading one critic to describe it as Tchaikovsky’s “spiritual property.” There is certainly a rarefied quality to much of its music. At first, this proves relatively static, backward-looking in its reliance on standalone arias. But if, at the outset, such rigidity reflects Iolanta’s largely unsensual world, then the second half becomes much more fluid. Throughout, the heroine’s voice is Tchaikovsky’s own, characterized by the composer’s distinct melancholy, with its slowly morphing harmonies and dolorous solos, including for the English horn. Vaudémont strikes a more ardent note, yet his music emerges from that of Iolanta, suggesting a kindred spirit—rare in Tchaikovsky’s output. Encouraging her, the knight becomes more confident in his assurances, with strings enriching the serenade-like timbre of his harp accompaniment. While Iolanta claims that she does not need the light, it soon begins to permeate every bar and will, in
MOZART

DON GIOVANNI

Bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni stars in Mozart’s dark comedy of earthly misdeeds and otherworldly retribution. Cornelius Meister makes his Met debut conducting one of opera’s great scores.

JAN 30  FEB 2, 6, 9, 13, 16 mat, 20

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
the score’s final choral splendor, fill her world. How different, then, from the shadowy conclusion to Belá Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*.

Bartók began the project, his sole opera, in 1911, working from a libretto by Béla Balázs. Adapting a particular violent story from Perrault’s collection—now often omitted from modern editions—Balázs, a leading intellectual in Budapest circles, had created a new, psychological rendering of the tale. He removed the happy conclusion, in which Judith is saved from the castle by her brothers and, employing Hungarian folk idiom, turned his focus to the strange relationship between Judith and her husband. “My ballad is the ballad of the inner life,” the poet explained. “Bluebeard’s castle is not a real castle of stone. The castle is his soul. It is lonely, dark and secretive: the castle of closed doors.”

In his score, Bartók likewise presented an inner life, not only pumping musical blood into the veins of the two characters but also presenting a précis of his maturation as a composer. Eleven years old when Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta* first came to the stage, Bartók came of age at the turn of the 20th century. His musical education had begun through his parents’ performances at home, as well as by his own exploration of works by Brahms and Schumann. But in travelling from what is now the borderland between Hungary and Romania to the former’s newly established capital of Budapest, Bartók discovered much richer musical landscapes.

Attending the city’s Academy, he not only encountered the music of Richard Strauss but also that of Debussy, thanks to his meeting with the man who was to be his colleague and companion, Zoltán Kodály, in 1905. Such diverse musical seams fused in the works that Bartók began both to create and to notate. For having announced in 1904 that he would “collect the finest Hungarian folk-songs and […] raise them, adding the best possible piano accompaniments, to the level of art song,” his encounter with Kodály made that ambition a reality. Working in collaboration, they were prolific in their collecting activities and the music they discovered came to infuse their work. But what is so remarkable about Bartók’s output is not its ability to reflect diverse influences but to sublimate the strands into one, as is clear in *Bluebeard’s Castle*.

Progress with the score was slow. With it, Bartók had hoped to win the Ferenc Erkel Prize in 1911, but he failed both in this and in a 1912 competition run by music publishers Rózsavölgyi, with one judge deeming the work impossible to stage and another thinking it far too dark. Bartók was devastated, but when, after World War I, the opera was finally mounted in Budapest, he refuted the claims of that first judge. Given the incontrovertibly pessimistic nature of *Bluebeard’s Castle*, however, the second judge’s objection is more understandable.

As musical drama, Bartók’s only opera offers a decidedly bleak resolution to the oppositions at its core: Judith vs. Bluebeard, light vs. dark, sanity vs. madness, tonality vs. atonality. These tensions are immediately apparent as the
DONIZETTI

LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT

Donizetti’s zany yet heartfelt farce stars soprano Pretty Yende and tenor Javier Camarena, alongside an outstanding comic cast, conducted by Enrique Mazzola. And in the cameo role of the Duchess of Krakenthorp, legendary actress Kathleen Turner makes an exciting Met debut.

FEB 7, 11, 15, 18, 23, 26   MAR 2mat

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
ambiguous spoken prologue trails into silence and the score begins, low down in the orchestra’s register. Its music revolves around a penumbrous F-sharp chord, spelled out in folksy, pentatonic terms. Quickly, the woodwinds cut across this dark but sonorous sound, centering instead on a triad of C major. The clash between these elements spells out the interval of a tritone, the middle point in the chromatic scale or, rather, the polar opposite of the very first note we heard.

Such a dichotomy is seemingly resolved at the blinding opening of the fifth of the seven doors in Bluebeard’s castle. Accompanied by full orchestra (including an organ), Judith screams in amazement at the vastness of the kingdom she can see beyond, the music resounding with the luminescence of C major. But as with every door that she unlocks, there follows a shudder, a strange, angular scale, couched in the same sound-world as the clashing semitone that represents the blood covering everything in sight. Once more, Bluebeard coolly thanks Judith for bringing daylight into the castle, but when, inevitably, she unlocks the last door of his soul, following her forebears into that final room, the music returns to Bluebeard’s dark, modal sound-world. The light from the fifth room, as well as that granted to Iolanta and so many other figures in the “happily ever after,” has been extinguished. Instead, we are taken back to the primordial “Once upon a time” that is, thanks to the psychologically acute music of figures such as Tchaikovsky and Bartók, no longer the herald of pasteboard pantomime but the clarion call of eternity.

—Gavin Plumley

Gavin Plumley, commissioning editor of English-language program notes for the Salzburg Festival, specializes in the music and culture of Central Europe. He appears frequently on the BBC and has written for publications around the world.
VERDI

RIGOLETTO

Michael Mayer’s vivid staging transports Verdi’s classic tragedy to the neon-bedecked Las Vegas of 1960. Baritone Roberto Frontali takes on the commanding title role, opposite soprano Nadine Sierra and tenors Vittorio Grigolo and Bryan Hymel. Nicola Luisotti conducts.

FEB 12, 16, 19, 23mat MAR 1, 6, 9, 15, 20

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
Henrik Nánási

**CONDUCTOR (PECS, HUNGARY)**

**THIS SEASON** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard’s Castle* for his debut at the Met, *Die Zauberflöte* in Rome and at the Paris Opera, *Simon Boccanegra* at Covent Garden, *Iolanta* in Valencia, and concert appearances with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Japan’s Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, and Germany’s Essener Philharmoniker.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 2012 and 2017, he was general music director of the Komische Oper Berlin, where he led productions of Mussorgsky’s *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*, *Don Giovanni*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Rusalka*, *Cendrillon*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, Prokofiev’s *The Fiery Angel*, *Mazeppa*, *Gianni Schicchi*, Offenbach’s *La Belle Hélène*, *Cosi fan tutte*, *Bluebeard’s Castle*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Rigoletto*. Recent performances include *Otello* in Frankfurt, *Rigoletto* in Naples, *La Bohème* in Rome, *Salome* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Covent Garden, *Elektra* at San Francisco Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, and *Werther* in Valencia. He has also appeared in concert with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bruckner Orchester Linz, Florence’s Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the orchestra of Venice’s Teatro La Fenice, Orquestra de la Comunitat Valenciana, and the orchestra of Naples’s Teatro di San Carlo, among others.

Angela Denoke

**SOPRANO (STADE, GERMANY)**

**THIS SEASON** Judith in *Bluebeard’s Castle* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** The Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* (debut, 2005).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In 2009, she was named a Kammersängerin of the Vienna State Opera, where her most recent roles have included Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*, the Marschallin, the title role of *Káťa Kabanová*, and Kostelnička in *Jenůfa*. Other recent performances include Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Buenos Aires, Kundry in *Parsifal* in Mannheim, the Woman in Péter Eötvös’s *Senza Sangue* and Countess Geschwitz in Hamburg, Hanna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* in concert in Barcelona, Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* at the Bavarian State Opera, Kostelnička in Stuttgart, Marie in *Wozzeck* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Queen of the Erdgeister in Marschner’s *Hans Heiling* in Vienna, and Kundry, Paulina in Prokofiev’s *The Gambler*, and the Woman in Schoenberg’s *Erwartung* at Covent Garden. She has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; in Dresden, Madrid, Amsterdam, and Paris; and with the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic; among many others.
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Above: Elīna Garanča and Renée Fleming in Der Rosenkavalier  Photo: Ken Howard / Met Opera
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Sonya Yoncheva
SOPRANO (PLOVDIV, BULGARIA)

THIS SEASON  The title role of Iolanta and Desdemona in Otello at the Met, the title roles of Cherubini’s Médée and Tosca at Staatsoper Berlin, Desdemona in Baden-Baden and in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, Tosca at the Paris Opera, Violetta in La Traviata at La Scala, the title role of Norma at the Bavarian State Opera, and Médée at the Salzburg Festival.

MET APPEARANCES  The title roles of Luisa Miller and Tosca, Mimi in La Bohème, Violetta, Desdemona, and Gilda in Rigoletto (debut, 2013).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Poppea in L’Incoronazione di Poppea at the Salzburg Festival; Imogene in Il Pirata and Mimi at La Scala; Elisabeth in Don Carlos at the Paris Opera; Stephana in Giordano’s Siberia in concert in Montpellier, France; Tatiana in Eugene Onegin at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Antonia in Les Contes d’Hoffmann and Norma at Covent Garden; and Violetta at the Bavarian State Opera. She has also sung the title role of Mascagni’s Iris in concert in Montpellier, Violetta and Iolanta at the Paris Opera, Mimi and Violetta at Staatsoper Berlin, Micaëla in Carmen at Covent Garden, and the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro in concert in Baden-Baden.

Elchin Azizov
BARITONE (BAKU, AZERBAIJAN)

THIS SEASON  Ibn-Hakia in Iolanta and Abimélech in Samson et Dalila at the Met and Lescaut in Manon Lescaut and Count Tomsky in The Queen of Spades at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre.

MET APPEARANCES  Ibn-Hakia (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Since 2008, he has been a principal soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre, where his roles have included Ibn-Hakia, Mizgir in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Snow Maiden, Escamillo in Carmen, Rodrigo in Don Carlo, Germont in La Traviata, Grigory Gryaznoy in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tsar’s Bride, Scarpia in Tosca, and the title roles of Prince Igor, Eugene Onegin, Macbeth, and Don Giovanni. Recent performances include Macbeth in Lyon, Carlo Gérard in Andrea Chénier in concert at the Hungarian State Opera, and Ibn-Hakia at the Savonlinna Opera Festival, Polish National Opera, and in Florence. He has also sung Grigory Gryaznoy in Hong Kong and at the Lincoln Center Festival, the title role of Nabucco in Montreal, the High Priest of Dagon in Samson et Dalila in Rome, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore in Limoges, Amonasro in Aida in Santiago, Ibn-Hakia in Vienna, and Germont in Berlin.
The Cast CONTINUED

Gerald Finley
BASS-BARITONE (MONTREAL, CANADA)

This season Bluebeard in Bluebeard’s Castle at the Met, Iago in Otello at the Bavarian State Opera and Canadian Opera Company, and concert appearances with the London Symphony Orchestra and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Met appearances Athanaël in Thaïs, the title role of Guillaume Tell, Nick Shadow in The Rake’s Progress, the Count in Le Nozze di Figaro, the title role of Don Giovanni, Golaud in Pelléas et Mélisande, Marcello in La Bohème, J. Robert Oppenheimer in John Adams’s Doctor Atomic, and Papageno in Die Zauberflöte (debut, 1998).

Career highlights Recent performances include Scarpia in Tosca at Staatsoper Berlin; Amfortas in Parsifal in Baden-Baden and at the Vienna State Opera; Scarpia, Guillaume Tell, and Michonnet in Adriana Lecouvreur at Covent Garden; Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen with the Berlin Philharmonic; Kaija Saariaho’s True Fire with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra; the title role of Aribert Reimann’s Lear at the Salzburg Festival; Guillaume Tell at the Bavarian State Opera; and the Count in Wiesbaden. He has appeared in multiple world premieres, including in the title role of Tobias Picker’s The Fantastic Mr. Fox at LA Opera and as J. Robert Oppenheimer at San Francisco Opera.

Vitalij Kowaljow
BASS (CHERKASY, UKRAINE)

This season King René in Iolanta and Ramfis in Aida at the Met; Walter in Luisa Miller in Hamburg, Pimen in Boris Godunov in Geneva, Veit Pogner in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg and Créon in Cherubini’s Médée at the Salzburg Festival, and Zaccaria in Nabucco in Dresden and in concert in Amsterdam.

Met appearances Raimondo in Lucia di Lammermoor, Oroveso in Norma, Ramfis and the King in Aida, Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, Walter, Padre Guardiano in La Forza del Destino, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Timur in Turandot, the Friar in Don Carlo, the Old Hebrew in Samson et Dalila, Lodovico in Otello, and Zaccaria and the High Priest (debut, 2003) in Nabucco.

Career highlights Recent performances include the Marquis of Calatrava/Padre Guardiano in La Forza del Destino and Wotan in the Ring cycle in Dresden; Ramfis in Verona and at La Scala; Fiesco in Simon Boccanegra, Zaccaria, and the Marquis of Calatrava/Padre Guardiano at the Bavarian State Opera; Zaccaria at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Wotan in Die Walküre in Beijing; Padre Guardiano at Dutch National Opera; and Banquo in Macbeth in Turin and Barcelona.
Alexey Markov
BARITONE (VYBORG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON  Robert in Iolanta at the Met; Escamillo in Carmen, Germont in La Traviata, and Scarpia in Tosca in Dresden; the title role of Eugene Onegin at the Vienna State Opera; Germont at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre; Scarpia, Yeletsky in The Queen of Spades, Eugene Onegin, Grigory Gryaznoy in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tsar’s Bride, Amfortas in Parsifal, and Marcello in La Bohème at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre; and Fyodor Shaklovity in Khovanshchina at La Scala.

MET APPEARANCES  Riccardo in I Puritani, Robert, Count Anckarström in Un Ballo in Maschera, Germont, Marcello, Valentin in Faust, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore, Shchelkalov in Boris Godunov, Tomsky in The Queen of Spades, and Prince Andrei in War and Peace (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Since 2008, he has been a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre, where his roles have included Robert, Valentin, Chorèbe in Les Troyens, Ezio in Attila, Don Carlo in La Forza del Destino, Escamillo, Silvio in Pagliacci, Rodrigo in Don Carlo, and Iago in Otello, among others. He has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival, Covent Garden, Dutch National Opera, Polish National Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and in Paris, Lyon, Baden-Baden, Budapest, and Monte Carlo.

Matthew Polenzani
TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON  Vaudémont in Iolanta and Tito in La Clemenza di Tito at the Met, the title role of Idomeneo at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Rodolfo in La Bohème in Palermo, and Don José in Carmen at San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES  Since his 1997 debut as Boyar Khrushchov in Boris Godunov, he has sung more than 300 performances of 36 roles, including Nemorino in L’Elisir d’Amore, the title roles of Idomeneo and Roberto Devereux, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Nadir in Les Pêcheurs de Perles, Hoffmann in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, the Duke in Rigoletto, Roberto in Maria Stuarda, and Alfredo in La Traviata.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Rodolfo in Luisa Miller in Zurich; Fernando in Donizetti’s La Favorite, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, and Rodolfo in La Bohème at the Bavarian State Opera; Nadir, the Duke, and Tamino at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Rodolfo in La Bohème at Covent Garden and in Barcelona; and the title role of Werther at the Vienna State Opera. He was the 2008 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.
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