GIACOMO PUCCINI

LA BOHÈME

Operas in four acts
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, based on the novel Scènes de la Vie de Bohème by Henri Murger

Tuesday, November 5, 2019
7:30–10:35 PM

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

This season’s performances of La Bohème and Turandot are dedicated to the memory of Franco Zeffirelli.
The Metropolitan Opera
2019–20 SEASON

The 1,335th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIACOMO PUCCINI’S

LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR
Marco Armiliato

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARCELLO
David Bizic

MUSETTA
Olga Kulchynska

RODOLFO
Matthew Polenzani

A CUSTOMHOUSE SERGEANT
Yohan Yi

COLLINE
Jongmin Park

A CUSTOMHOUSE OFFICER
Jonathan Scott

SCHAUNARD
Andrey Zhilikhovsky

BENOIT
Arthur Woodley

MIMÍ
Ailyn Pérez

PARPIGNOL
Marco Antonio Jordão

ALCINDORO
Arthur Woodley

Tonight’s performances of the roles of Mimi and Rodolfo are underwritten by the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Great Singers Fund.
A scene from
Puccini’s La Bohème

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Musical Preparation  Gareth Morrell, Carol Isaac,
Liora Maurer, and Bryan Wagorn*
Assistant Stage Directors  Mirabelle Ordinaire and
J. Knighten Smit
Met Titles  Sonya Friedman
Stage Band Conductor  Joseph Lawson
Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo
Italian Coach  Loretta Di Franco
Prompter  Carol Isaac
Associate Designer  David Reppa
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and
painted in Metropolitan Opera Shops
Costumes executed by Metropolitan Opera Costume
Department
Wigs and Makeup executed by Metropolitan Opera
Wig and Makeup Department
Ladies millinery by  Reggie G. Augustine
Men’s hats by  Richard Tautkus
Animals supervised by  All-Tame Animals, Inc.

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

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Met Titles
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* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program
Yamaha is the Official Piano of the Metropolitan Opera.
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Bloomberg Philanthropies
Synopsis

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

Act II
Amid the shouts of street hawkers near the Café Momus, Rodolfo buys Mimi a bonnet and introduces her to his friends. They all sit down and order supper. Marcello’s former sweetheart Musetta makes a noisy entrance on the arm of the elderly, but wealthy, Alcindoro. The ensuing tumult reaches its peak when, trying to gain Marcello’s attention, she loudly sings the praises of her own popularity. Sending Alcindoro away to buy her a new pair of shoes, Musetta finally falls into Marcello’s arms. A parade of soldiers passes by the café as the friends join the crowd of revelers.

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:30PM)

Act III
At dawn at the Barrière d’Enfer, a toll-gate on the edge of Paris, a customs official admits farm women to the city. Mimi arrives, searching for the place where Marcello and Musetta now live. When the painter appears, she tells him of her distress over Rodolfo’s incessant jealousy. She says that she believes it is best that they part. As Rodolfo emerges from the tavern, Mimi hides nearby. Rodolfo tells Marcello that he wants to separate from Mimi, blaming her flirtatiousness. Pressed for the real reason, he breaks down, saying that her illness can only
grow worse in the poverty that they share. Overcome with emotion, Mimì comes forward to say goodbye to her lover. Upon hearing Musetta’s laughter, Marcello runs back into the tavern. While Mimi and Rodolfo recall past happiness, Marcello returns with Musetta, quarreling about her flirting with a customer. They hurl insults at each other and part, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until springtime.

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30PM)

Act IV

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

La Bohème on Demand

Looking for more La Bohème? Check out Met Opera on Demand, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons: from a classic 1977 telecast starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto—the first in the historic Live from the Met series—to the 2018 Live in HD transmission, featuring Sonya Yoncheva and Michael Fabiano. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of nearly 700 complete performances at metoperaondemand.org.
In Focus

Giacomo Puccini

La Bohème

Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin, 1896

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

The Creators

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world’s opera companies. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, sensitivity to everyday subjects, copious melody, and economy of expression. Puccini’s librettists for La Bohème, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his next two operas, Tosca and Madama Butterfly. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories, and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. The French author Henri Murger (1822–1861) drew on his own early experiences as a poor writer in Paris to pen an episodic prose novel and later a successful play, Scènes de la Vie de Bohème, which became the basis for the opera.

The Setting

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

**The Music**

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

**Met History**

La Bohème had its Met premiere while the company was on tour in Los Angeles in 1900. Nellie Melba sang Mimì and improbably added the mad scene from Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor as an encore after the final curtain (a practice she maintained for several other performances). This production lasted until 1952, when one designed by Rolf Gerard and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who insisted his name be removed after a disagreement with some of the singers, replaced it. In 1977, La Bohème served as the first opera telecast as part of the Live from the Met series, starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto in a new production directed by Fabrizio Melano. The spectacular current production by Franco Zeffirelli premiered in 1981 with James Levine leading an impressive cast that included Teresa Stratas, Scotto (as Musetta), José Carreras, Richard Stilwell, and James Morris. La Bohème was presented at the Met in 59 consecutive seasons after its first appearance and has appeared in all but nine seasons since 1900, making it the most performed opera in company history. Having been presented more than 480 times since its premiere, Zeffirelli’s staging is the most performed production in Met history.
A beloved portrayal of the joys and hardships of ordinary people, Giacomo Puccini’s opera about the bohemians of the Latin Quarter was neither the beginning nor the end of the literary and theatrical journey of Mimi, Rodolfo, Marcello, Musetta, Schaunard, and Colline. The characters first appeared in a series of short stories that Henri Murger published in the Parisian journal Le Corsair between 1845 and 1849. Murger then collaborated with Théodore Barrière on a play, La Vie de Bohème, which premiered in November 1849 at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris, and soon after gathered his stories into a novelized version published in 1851 as Scènes de la Vie de Bohème. Not surprisingly, by the 1890s, an era in which the arts found new inspiration in the lives of the working class (Mascagni’s Cavalleria Rusticana stands out as an operatic example), Murger’s characters seemed perfectly suited for the operatic stage. Not one but two composers stepped up to the task—Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo (of Pagliacci fame), who feuded openly about who had the idea first. Resolution came in the form of two operas, with the same title, premiered a year apart: Puccini’s, with a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, in Turin in 1896; Leoncavallo’s in Venice, 15 months later. To this day, Murger’s bohemians continue to inspire directors, filmmakers, and composers. Constantin Stanislavski staged Puccini’s opera in a famous production at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1927. Baz Luhrmann brought it to Broadway in 1992 and then conflated the story with that of La Traviata in his 2001 film, Moulin Rouge!, itself now adapted for Broadway. Puccini’s opera has received multiple cinematic treatments, including in 1965 (by Franco Zeffirelli and Herbert von Karajan), 1988, and 2008 (starring Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón). And its story was retold as a rock musical set in 1990s New York in Jonathan Larson’s Rent.

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

How remarkable, then, that, despite such creative discord behind the scenes, La Bohème unfolds so seamlessly and effortlessly from its opening notes. There is no prelude, and the music erupts from the depths of the orchestra on a single spring-loaded motive that defines the instability of the bohemians’ lives.
The curtain rises swiftly on a scene in medias res, the first in a series of episodes that tumble forth in quick succession, as characters improvise ways to overcome hardship: Marcello works on his painting; Rodolfo burns the pages of his play to heat the garret; Schaunard brings home the dinner; and the landlord, Benoit, is tricked out of his rent.

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

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

One of the most familiar—and original—scenes of La Bohème is Mimì’s death, which differs significantly from the traditional “curtain deaths” of earlier operas. A good example for comparison is La Traviata, whose consumptive heroine, Violetta, is frequently thought of as a model for Mimì. Violetta, surrounded by loved ones, dies with a cry of renewed joy, a tonic chord, and a final curtain in fortissimo dynamics. When Mimì passes away, none of the characters on stage even notices that she is gone until it’s too late. She has no final spasm, nor does she collapse into a pair of loving arms. She sings no high notes; her friends have busied themselves by heating medicine, adjusting curtains, and plumping pillows; there is no vigil, no stage directions that communicate the exact moment of her death or how the singer is to enact it. The libretto does not even mark it with the perfunctory phrase that defines dozens of melodramatic deaths in opera: “She dies.” The only material indicator is in Puccini’s autograph score, where, in the margins next to the measures of the death music, he ironically
drew a skull and crossbones. A highly choreographed “good death” was not to be for the likes of his poor seamstress. Mimì only nods her head, “as one who is overcome by sleep,” and thereafter the libretto notes only “silence.” In the score, a slowing of the tempo leads to a “lunga pausa” just before the key changes from D-flat major to B minor and the tempo to andante lento sostenuto. Puccini adds a subtle detail in the single cymbal struck in quadruple pianissimo with a mallet; the diffuse sound seems to originate from and fade into the ether. Mimì is gone, and the final curtain belongs to Rodolfo.

—Helen M. Greenwald

Helen M. Greenwald is chair of the department of music history at New England Conservatory and editor of the Oxford Handbook of Opera.
Few artists have had a greater impact on Met history than Franco Zeffirelli, the beloved director and designer who died earlier this year. Born in 1923, Zeffirelli created 11 productions for the company over 35 years, starting with his 1964 debut staging of Falstaff at the old Met. Two years later, he would help inaugurate the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center with an extravagant vision of Samuel Barber’s Antony and Cleopatra, starring Leontyne Price and Justino Díaz. Zeffirelli’s historically informed, intricately detailed, and breathtakingly beautiful approach delighted generations of operagoers, and his productions of such classics as Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci (1970), Otello (1972), and Tosca (1985) set the standard for grand Met stagings. His 1981 La Bohème remains in the repertory to this day and, with nearly 500 appearances, is the most-performed production in company history.

Zeffirelli’s extensive Met legacy—which also included stagings of Don Giovanni and Carmen in the 1990s—has been preserved in numerous video recordings, as all but his Antony and Cleopatra and two productions of La Traviata have been captured in full telecasts and HD transmissions. During the 2019–20 season, audiences can enjoy his monumental takes on Turandot and La Bohème, with both star-studded revivals dedicated to his enduring memory.
The Cast

**Marco Armiliato**
CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

**This Season**  
La Bohème, Macbeth, and Turandot at the Met; Tosca, Aida, and Il Trovatore at the Vienna State Opera; La Bohème and Aida in Zurich; La Bohème at Covent Garden; and Tosca at the Bavarian State Opera.

**Met Appearances**  
Since his 1998 debut with La Bohème, he has led nearly 450 performances of 25 operas, including La Fanciulla del West, Turandot, Madama Butterfly, Il Trovatore, Cyrano de Bergerac, Manon Lescaut, Aida, Anna Bolena, La Traviata, La Sonnambula, Tosca, Rigoletto, Francesca da Rimini, Ernani, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, and La Fille du Régiment.

**Career Highlights**  
He regularly appears at the Vienna State Opera, where he has conducted Andrea Chénier, L’Elisir d’Amore, La Traviata, Rigoletto, Samson et Dalila, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Otello, La Fanciulla del West, Turandot, Manon Lescaut, Simon Boccanegra, Don Pasquale, Roméo et Juliette, I Puritani, and Don Carlo, among many others. Other recent performances include Adriana Lecouvreur in concert at the Salzburg Festival, La Traviata and Andrea Chénier at the Bavarian State Opera, La Traviata in Verona, Manon and La Fanciulla del West in Zurich, Madama Butterfly in Muscat, and Il Trovatore and Rigoletto at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

**Olga Kulchynska**
SOPRANO (RIVNE, UKRAINE)

**This Season**  
Musetta in La Bohème for her debut at the Met; Gretel in Hänsel und Gretel, Pamina in Die Zauberflöte, Musetta, and Adina in L’Elisir d’Amore in Zurich; Pamina at the Bavarian State Opera; and Adina at the Glyndebourne Festival.

**Career Highlights**  
In 2018, she joined the ensemble at the Zurich Opera, where her roles have included Leïla in Les Pêcheurs des Perles, Zerlina in Don Giovanni, and Giulietta in Bellini’s I Capuleti e i Montecchi. Recent performances include Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Bavarian State Opera; Lyebeyd in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tale of Tsar Saltan in Brussels; Leïla in Barcelona; Pamina at Spain’s Castell de Peralada Festival; Musetta in Rome, Barcelona, and at Dutch National Opera; and Rosina in Il Barbiere di Siviglia at the Paris Opera. She has also sung Corinna in Rossini’s Il Viaggio a Reims in concert, Gerda in Sergei Banevich’s The Story of Kai and Gerda, Marfa in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tsar’s Bride, Musetta, and Xenia in Boris Godunov at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre.
The Cast CONTINUED

Ailyn Pérez
SOPRANO (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON  Mimi in La Bohème and Amelia Grimaldi in Simon Boccanegra at the Met, Nedda in Pagliacci at Dutch National Opera, Antonia in Les Contes d’Hoffmann at the Paris Opera, the title role of Manon at the Vienna State Opera, Marguerite in Faust in Valencia, and the title role of Rusalka at the Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES  Alice Ford in Falstaff, Mimi and Musetta in La Bohème, Juliette in Roméo et Juliette, the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro, the title role of Thaïs, and Micaëla in Carmen (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Violetta in La Traviata at the Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, and in Zurich; Micaëla at Covent Garden; Donna Anna in Don Giovanni at Houston Grand Opera; Elvira in Ernani at La Scala; and Marguerite at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has also sung Mimi and Violetta at La Scala, Juliette at the Santa Fe Opera, Tatiana Bakst in the world premiere of Jake Heggie’s Great Scott at the Dallas Opera, and the Countess at Houston Grand Opera. She was the 2016 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

David Bizic
BARITONE (BELGRADE, SERBIA)

THIS SEASON  Marcello in La Bohème at the Met, the title role of Eugene Onegin at the Israeli Opera, and Rene Gallimard and in the world premiere of Huang Ruo’s M. Butterfly at the Santa Fe Opera.

MET APPEARANCES  Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, Albert in Werther (debut, 2014), and Marcello.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Escamillo in Carmen in Macerata, Dijon, and at the Israeli Opera; Zurga in Les Pêcheurs de Perles in concert in Dortmund; Belcore in L’Elisir d’Amore and Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor in Toulon; Procolo in Donizetti's Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali in Geneva; Lescaut in Manon Lescaut in Barcelona; and Eugene Onegin in Reims and Metz. He has also sung Zurga and Marcello in Bordeaux; Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro in Toulon, Geneva, and at the Flemish Opera; Albert at Covent Garden; Eugene Onegin in Limoges; the title role of Don Giovanni in Rouen; Publio in La Clemenza di Tito in Strasbourg and Montpellier; the Count in Le Nozze di Figaro in Saint-Etienne; and Leporello in Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, Ravinia Festival, LA Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Moscow and Valencia.
THIS SEASON  Colline in La Bohème for his debut at the Met; Ferrando in Il Trovatore, Don Basilio in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, Vodnik in Rusalka, Comte des Grieux in Manon, and Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Vienna State Opera; and the Friar in Don Carlo at the Salzburg Festival.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Between 2010 and 2013, he was a member of the ensemble at the Hamburg State Opera, where his roles included Colline, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, and Sarastro. He appears regularly at the Vienna State Opera, where he has sung Lodovico in Otello, Sparafucile, Raimondo in Lucia di Lammermoor, Fasolt in Das Rheingold, Narbal in Les Troyens, Hunding in Die Walküre, Banquo in Macbeth, Wagner in Faust, Giorgio in I Puritani, and Colline, among others. Recent performances include the Night Watchman in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg at the Salzburg Festival; Lodovico at Savonlinna Opera Festival and in Bergen, Norway; Giorgio in Madrid; and Hunding in concert with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra, among others.

Matthew Polenzani  
TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON  Rodolfo in La Bohème, Macduff in Macbeth, the Italian Singer in Der Rosenkavalier, and the New Year’s Eve Gala at the Met; Don José in Carmen at the Bavarian State Opera; Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis and Florestan in Fidelio in Baden-Baden; Alfredo in La Traviata in Madrid; and the Duke in Rigoletto at Greek National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES  Since his 1997 debut as Boyar Khrushchov in Boris Godunov, he has sung nearly 400 performances of 38 roles, including the Duke, Tito in La Clemenza di Tito, Vaudémont in Iolanta, 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, Roberto in Maria Stuarda, and Alfredo.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Don José at San Francisco Opera; Rodolfo in La Bohème in Palermo and at Covent Garden; Idomeneo, Nadir, and the Duke at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Rodolfo in Luisa Miller in Zurich; and Fernando in Donizetti’s La Favorite and Tamino in Die Zauberflöte at the Bavarian State Opera. He was the 2008 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.
The Cast  CONTINUED

Arthur Woodley
BASS (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON  “Lawyer” Frazier in Porgy and Bess for his debut, Benoit/Alcindoro in La Bohème, and the New Year’s Eve Gala at the Met; and Emile Griffith in Terrence Blanchard’s Champion at Michigan Opera Theatre.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Emile Griffith in Montreal and at Washington National Opera, Daland in Der Fliegende Holländer at Cincinnati Opera, and Dr. Bartolo in Le Nozze di Figaro at Lyric Opera of Kansas City. He has sung Porgy in Porgy and Bess to great acclaim at Opera Philadelphia, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Colorado, the Bregenz Festival, Savolinna Opera Festival, and the Catfish Row Opera Company of Charleston, South Carolina; on tour in Italy; and in concert with the San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and Baltimore Symphony. He has also appeared at San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, the Dallas Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, New Orleans Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, among others.

Andrey Zhilikhovsky
BARITONE (CIMILIA, MOLDOVA)

THIS SEASON  Schaunard in La Bohème for his debut at the Met, the Count in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Icelandic Opera, Don Ferdinand in Prokofiev’s Betrothal in a Monastery at Staatsoper Berlin, and Marcello in La Bohème at the Bavarian State Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Between 2014 and 2019, he was a soloist at Moscow’s Bolshoi Opera, where his roles have included Robert in Iolanta, Marcello, Le Dancaïre in Carmen, the Lamplighter in Sergei Banevich’s The Story of Kai and Gerda, Dr. Malatesta in Don Pasquale, the Count, the title role of Eugene Onegin, Guglielmo in Cosi fan tutte, and Dr. Falke in Die Fledermaus. Between 2010 and 2012, he was a soloist at St. Petersburg’s Mikhailovsky Theatre, where he sang Belcore in L’Elisir d’Amore, Schaunard, Robert, the Prince in Asafiev’s Cinderella, Silvano in Un Ballo in Maschera, Baron Douphol in La Traviata, and Le Dancaïre. Recent performances include Figaro in Il Barbiere di Siviglia at the Glyndebourne Festival and Washington National Opera, the Count in Rome, Schaunard at the Paris Opera and in Santiago, Dr. Malatesta at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Eugene Onegin in Nice and at the Icelandic Opera.