GIUSEPPE VERDI

MACBETH

CONDUCTOR
Marco Armiliato

PRODUCTION
Adrian Noble

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Mark Thompson

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Jean Kalman

CHOREOGRAPHER
Sue Lefton

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave and Andrea Maffei, based on the play by William Shakespeare

Saturday, September 28, 2019
8:00–11:10 PM

The production of Macbeth was made possible by a generous gift from

Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. Montrone

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Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin
The Metropolitan Opera
2019–20 Season

The 107th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI’S
MACBETH

CONDUCTOR
Marco Armiliato

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MACBETH
Plácido Domingo

BANQUO
Ildar Abdrazakov

LADY MACBETH
Anna Netrebko

LADY-IN-WAITING
Sarah Cambidge

A SERVANT
Bradley Garvin

DUNCAN
Raymond Renault

MALCOLM
Giuseppe Filianoti

MACDUFF
Matthew Polenzani

FLEANCE
Misha Grossman

A MURDERER
Richard Bernstein

APPARITIONS
A WARRIOR
Christopher Job

A BLOODY CHILD
Meigui Zhang**

A CROWNED CHILD
Karen Chia-Ling Ho

A HERALD
Yohan Yi

A DOCTOR
Harold Wilson

Saturday, September 28, 2019, 8:00–11:10PM
Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Assistants to the Set Designer  Colin Falconer and  
Alex Lowde
Assistant to the Costume Designer  Mitchell Bloom
Musical Preparation  John Keenan, Yelena Kurdina,  
Bradley Moore*, and Jonathan C. Kelly
Assistant Stage Directors  Eric Sean Fogel and  
Gina Lapinski
Stage Band Conductor  Bradley Moore*
Fight Director  Joe Isenberg
Italian Coach  Hemdi Kfir
Prompter  Yelena Kurdina
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
This production uses flash effects.

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
** Member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

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Met Titles
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press the red button once again. If you have questions, please ask an 
usher at intermission.
Synopsis

Act I
Scotland in the aftermath of the Second World War. On a battlefield, Macbeth and Banquo, leaders of the Scottish army, meet a group of witches who prophesy the future. They address Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland, before telling Banquo that he will be the father of kings. The two men try to learn more, but the witches vanish. Messengers arrive with news that Duncan, the current king of Scotland, has made Macbeth Thane of Cawdor. The first part of the witches’ prediction has come true.

In Macbeth’s castle, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her of the events that have just transpired. She resolves to follow her ambitions. A servant announces that Duncan will soon arrive at the castle, and when Macbeth enters, she tells him that they must kill the king.

Duncan arrives. Macbeth has a vision of a dagger, then leaves to commit the murder. On his return, he tells his wife how the act has frightened him, and she tells him that he needs more courage. They both leave as Banquo enters with Macduff, a nobleman, who discovers the murder. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feign horror and join the others in condemning the murder.

Act II
Macbeth has become king. Duncan’s son Malcolm is suspected of having killed his father and has fled to England. Worried about the prophecy that Banquo’s children will rule, Macbeth and his wife now plan to kill him and his son Fleance as well. As Macbeth leaves to prepare the double murder, Lady Macbeth hopes that it will finally make the throne secure.

Outside the castle, assassins wait for Banquo, who appears with Fleance, warning him of strange forebodings. Banquo is killed, but the boy escapes.

Lady Macbeth welcomes the court to the banquet hall and sings a drinking song, while Macbeth receives news that Banquo is dead and his son has escaped. About to take Banquo’s seat at the table, Macbeth has a terrifying vision of the dead man accusing him. His wife is unable to calm her unsettled husband, and the courtiers wonder about the king’s strange behavior. Macduff vows to leave the country, which is now ruled by criminals.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30PM)
Act III
The witches gather again, and Macbeth visits them, demanding more prophecies. Apparitions warn him to beware of Macduff and assure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will be invincible until Birnam Wood marches on his castle. In another vision, he sees a procession of future kings, followed by Banquo. Horrified, Macbeth collapses. The witches disappear, and Lady Macbeth arrives. They resolve to kill Macduff and his family.

Act IV
On the Scottish border, Macduff has joined the refugees. His wife and children have been killed. Malcolm appears with British troops and leads them to invade Scotland.

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking through the halls of the castle, haunted by the horrors of what she and her husband have done.

Macbeth awaits the arrival of his enemies and realizes that he will never live to a peaceful old age. Messengers bring news that Lady Macbeth has died and that Birnam Wood appears to be moving. English soldiers appear, camouflaged with its branches. Macduff confronts Macbeth and tells him that he was not born naturally but had a Caesarean birth. He kills Macbeth and proclaims Malcolm king of Scotland.
BLACK VOICES AT THE MET

All season long, the Met hosts a special exhibition that pays tribute to the extraordinary contributions of black artists on the company’s historic stage. Featuring nearly 170 archival photographs, newspaper clippings, costume designs, and more, Black Voices at the Met recounts a fascinating 120-year story showcasing the groundbreaking careers of such prominent singers as Marian Anderson, Robert McFerrin, Mattiwilda Dobbs, and Leontyne Price.

Black Voices at the Met is open now through the end of the 2019–20 season in Founders Hall, located on the Concourse level.
Giuseppe Verdi

Macbeth

Premiere: Teatro della Pergola, Florence, 1847 (original version); Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1865 (revised version)

Verdi’s opera is a powerful musical interpretation of Shakespeare’s timeless drama of ambition and its personal cost. Raising questions of fate, superstition, guilt, and power, it marks an important step on the composer’s path from his more conventional earlier efforts to the integrated musical dramas of his mature years. Macbeth is different from many operas in other ways as well, including those by Verdi himself. Instead of the tenor–soprano love interest that forms the core of most romantic operas, Macbeth uses a baritone and dramatic soprano to depict a married couple whose relationship is dominated by the desire for power.

The Creators

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas during his 60 active years in the theater, at least half of which are at the heart of today’s repertory. His role in Italy’s cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country, and he is cherished the world over for the universality of his art. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–76), one of the two librettists for Macbeth, collaborated with the composer on ten works, including La Traviata, Rigoletto, and La Forza del Destino. Verdi’s friend Count Andrea Maffei (1798–1885), a cosmopolitan literary amateur who also wrote the libretto for Verdi’s I Masnadieri and introduced the work of many great foreign writers, including those of Shakespeare, to Italians, provided additional portions of the opera’s libretto. The plays of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) have provided much excellent source material to composers for four centuries. But when the opera Macbeth premiered, Shakespeare was not well known in Italy and was considered to have been a daring choice.

The Setting

The historical “Macbeth” (Mac Bethad mac Findlaích) was king of Alba from 1040 to his death in 1058, but Shakespeare departs so far from history in his play that the facts are of little concern. This production of Macbeth places the action of the opera in a non-specific post–World War II Scotland. This is not the mythic land popular among Romantic artists (as in earlier operas such as Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor), but a barbarous place in a constant state of warfare with only the slightest hint of civility.
The Music
The score of Macbeth features little of the melodic abundance that made Verdi famous. In fact, the composer went out of his way to avoid making this score too pretty, insisting that the drama was not served by lyricism. The duet between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after Duncan’s murder, for example, is more about breathy suspense than standard operatic tuneful flow. (For the premiere performance, Verdi famously rehearsed this duet an astounding 150 times with the leading singers so that they would understand entirely what he was trying to express.) Lady Macbeth, as the true protagonist of the story, has the most commanding of the great solos, notably her first aria, “Vieni t’affretta ... Or tutti sorgete,” as she responds to Macbeth’s letter and sets her mind on a course of crime, and the eerie and intensely difficult “La luce langue,” partly sung, partly declaimed in Act II. Her sleepwalking scene in Act IV is a study of guilt unlike any other. The final phrase, rising up to a high D-flat, is to be sung with “a thread of voice,” according to Verdi’s directions in the score. Macbeth has solos, yet many of his most arresting moments are, appropriately, in response to the words and actions of others. His music varies from jaunty and imperious with the witches in Act I (represented in the opera by a three-part chorus) to madness in the banquet scene in Act II. Throughout the opera, the score makes as much of an effect in its striking details as in its grand gestures. The fading string chords that form a musical depiction of silence as Macbeth enters the room to murder Duncan in Act I and the weird wind orchestration for Macbeth’s vision of Banquo’s descendants in Act III (six clarinets, two oboes and bassoons, and one contrabassoon, all intended to be under the stage) are only two examples of the haunting individuality of this remarkable opera.

Met History
Macbeth first came to the Met in 1959 as part of a trend of rediscovering the lesser-known works of Verdi. The Met premiere was a spectacular occasion, featuring Leonard Warren and the house debut of the riveting Austrian soprano Leonie Rysanek (substituting for the originally scheduled Maria Callas), as well as Jerome Hines and Carlo Bergonzi, with Erich Leinsdorf conducting. Martina Arroyo and Grace Bumbry shared the role of Lady Macbeth in a 1973 revival featuring Sherrill Milnes in the title role, a part that he would perform 38 times until 1984. Peter Hall’s first production at the Met was a new Macbeth in 1982, led by Milnes and Renata Scotto, with Ruggero Raimondi and Giuseppe Giacomini, and James Levine conducting. The current production by Adrian Noble had its debut on October 22, 2007, with Željko Lučić as Macbeth and Maria Guleghina as Lady Macbeth. In 2014, Anna Netrebko sang her first Met Lady Macbeth, with Fabio Luisi conducting a cast that also included Lučić, Joseph Calleja, and René Pape.
Over and over again, Giuseppe Verdi trumpeted his veneration of Shakespeare. In a letter to Leon Escudier in 1865, the composer wrote, "He is a favorite poet of mine, whom I have had in my hands from earliest youth, and whom I read and re-read constantly." Verdi believed that Shakespeare was an unparalleled analyst of the human mind and praised "that grandeur, that sublime, rarefied, and strange atmosphere" that only Shakespeare could create.

In 1847, in the initial stages of his work on his operatic adaptation of Macbeth, Verdi wrote to his librettist Francesco Maria Piave: "This tragedy is one of the greatest of human creations! … If we can’t make something great out of it, let’s at least try to make something uncommon." He wanted nothing less than to transform the conventions of Italian opera into something sufficiently malleable and eloquent to be a vehicle for Shakespearean passions.

It is likely that the first Shakespeare play Verdi ever actually saw onstage was Macbeth, during a visit to London in June 1847, after the premiere of his own Macbeth the previous March at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence. There was precious little Shakespeare available in Italian at the time; Verdi’s main source, a prose version by Carlo Rusconi, was a ludicrous botch, although one feels a certain sympathy for anyone asked to turn "rump-fed ronyon" into any other language (Rusconi simply left it out.). The Milanese translator Giulio Carcano’s (1812–94) far more skillful versified version was not published until 1848, but Verdi knew it; Carcano was a dear friend of the composer’s and would, a few years later in 1850, offer him a libretto based on Hamlet.

Verdi, who pestered Piave with the maxim “Poche parole—poche parole—poche parole“ (“Few words”), knew he would have to eliminate large swaths of the drama to allow music to work its magic. He therefore cut out Lady Macduff and her son, most of the minor characters (including the drunken porter, to everyone’s disappointment), and all of the scenes in England, with the exception of Macduff’s agony on hearing of the slaughter of his wife and children in Act IV. The good king Duncan is reduced to a walk-on part in Act I as the “banda” (a military-style wind band traditional in Italy) plays ceremonial music. What is left of Shakespeare’s drama is a pitiless psychogram, a reduction of this most political of all Shakespeare’s plays to those psychological forces that impel murderous ambition and are in conflict with unwelcome conscience rising from the depths of the soul to punish those who transgress.

In its own time, Macbeth was a “Powder Plotter” play, performed in front of James I and with him in mind. The Protestant James was supposedly a descendant of the historical Banquo and the only son of the beautiful, doomed Mary, Queen of Scots, beheaded at Fotheringay in 1567. His accession to the English throne in 1603 happened in a realm rife with distrust and conspiracy, a world of informer and spy. When Catholics became disappointed in the new monarch’s failure to convert to his mother’s religion, a group of conspirators
planned to blow up Parliament, with the explosives expert Guy Fawkes in charge of the munitions. The very language of the play and opera have origins in the language of the Gunpowder Plot trials for Catholic treason—the Jesuits in England were accused of diabolical practices—with its witches who traffic in what is “fair and foul” and its equivocations and ambiguity; “Nothing is but what is not,” Macbeth famously proclaims. James himself wrote a treatise on witchcraft entitled *Daemonologie* in 1597, and the “weird” or “wayward sisters” we meet at the beginning of the play can trace their etymology to “wyrd,” an Old English word for fate. These witches are ambiguous to the core: Are they male or female, real or imaginary, benevolent or wicked, supernatural or human? Whatever their double nature in Shakespeare, they posed a problem for Italian opera composers, and yet Verdi in 1865 would proclaim that the opera has only three roles: Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and the witches, who “rule the drama—they are truly a character and a character of greatest importance.”

In 1865, 18 years after the opera’s premiere, Verdi revised *Macbeth* for a production at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris. Originally, he planned only to lengthen several numbers, but he quickly decided that an overhaul of the entire work was required. In Paris, divertissements with dancing were integral to opera, and therefore ballets enclose the scene with the witches’ conjured apparitions in the third act. Macbeth’s original final aria in Act III, “Vada in fiamme,” in which he threatens to track down Macduff and set his stronghold on fire, was discarded in favor of a duettino, “Ora di morte e di vendetta,” for both Macbeths as they plan to kill Fleance and the Macduffs. The exquisite refugees’ chorus at the start of Act IV, “Patria oppressa,” was completely revised, and Macbeth’s final aria in the 1847 version, “Mal per me che m’affidai,” was scrapped in favor of an offstage death and triumphal victory chorus.

For all the importance Verdi accorded an entire chorus of witches (not Shakespeare’s three), their opening chorus and round dance, “Che faceste?,” is stock gypsy-peasant introductory scene-setting, par for the course in 1840s Italian opera, despite the piccolos and violins (sul ponticello—played with the bow near the bridge) attempting to add a touch of eeriness. The recitative and duettino, “Due vaticini compiuti or sono,” for Macbeth and Banquo, in which Macbeth first begins to yield to the witches’ evil seeds of suggestion, sets a contrasting mood of brooding uncertainty, while its harmonic derring-do was new for Italian opera in 1847. When the witches return, they sing of their triumph in music that sounds like a Neapolitan street song, according to one unimpressed commentator.

We meet Lady Macbeth—Verdi wanted her voice to be “cupo,” dark, harsh, not beautiful—in the second scene via the operatic convention whereby letters are declaimed against a musical backdrop. She is heralded by an orchestral prelude whose every gesture bespeaks power; one hears reminiscences of
Beethoven’s “Pathétique” Sonata, Op. 13. Another Italian convention, that of a slower aria (cavatina) followed by an arioso or recitative bridge to a faster, virtuosic aria (cabaletta), is brilliantly exemplified by “Vieni! t’affrettà!” and “Or tutti sorgete,” the latter corresponding to one of Lady Macbeth’s most horrifying speeches in Shakespeare: “Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here.” After King Duncan’s wordless entrance, Macbeth prepares to carry out the assassination, and Verdi’s music for the famous “dagger scene” has no parallel in any of his earlier operas; the tonal daring, orchestral colors, and dark atmosphere bespeak Verdi the great harmonic innovator and are followed by the duet “Fatal mia donna” for the murderers to be. As Duncan’s body is discovered in the grand concertato finale (“Schiudi, inferno”), we hear a Verdian signature inherited from Donizetti and Bellini: a “groundswell,” or emphatic cadential adagio near the close.

The orchestra begins the second act by brooding on what has just transpired; in fact, much of the music of this opera is based on stylizations of the traditional sighing figure. In the 1847 version, after Macbeth goes out to arrange for Banquo’s murder, Lady Macbeth sang an exultant cabaletta, “Trionfai, securi alfine,” in a fiendish expression of power. (Shakespeare’s lady is no longer capable of such diabolical exultation after the murder of King Duncan.) When Verdi went back to the score in 1865, he was horrified, eliminated the aria, and substituted the magnificent “La luce langue,” for which he himself drafted the words; here, she exults in the powers of darkness. The orchestral web is just as important as the vocal part, and its harmonic richness is extraordinary, in stark contrast with the cutthroats’ chorus, “Chi v’impose,” which follows (Gilbert and Sullivan would later parody this sort of ensemble menace). Banquo’s “Come dal ciel precipita” is a typical smaller romanza for a comprimario role, but its scoring is thickened and darkened with bassoons, trombones, and cimbasso. The finale of Act II is a brilliant, macabre conclusion: No one equals Verdi at portraying the glitter and bustle of a ballroom or banquet, and this one features a brindisi, or drinking song, not for a man but for Lady Macbeth (“Si colmi il calice”). The banquet music is interrupted by Macbeth’s hallucinations, which Verdi made far more chromatic and eerily powerful in his 1865 revision.

After the apparitions and their prophecies in Act III (Verdi did not realize that Hecate’s appearance was an addition by the Jacobean dramatist Thomas Middleton), both Macbeths come to ruin in the fourth and final act. The refugees’ chorus is unforgettable, with its brass chorale and timpani rolls, pizzicato cellos and basses, modal inflections, and harmonic ambiguities worthy of Liszt and Wagner. The magnificent sleepwalking scene (“Una macchia è qui tuttora,” a masterpiece unchanged from 1847) restores Lady Macbeth’s humanity—too late—in the form of lyrical melody that takes flight from declamatory muttering; this mad scene ends with a high D-flat marked “un fil di voce,” on “a thread
of voice,” as she disappears from life. The fated end of making a contract with the devil is always to see that the contract was a trick, and Macbeth in her wake discovers, to his downfall, new meaning in the pledge that he could not be vanquished “until Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane.” Acknowledging the hopelessness of his situation in his final aria, “Pietà, rispetto, amore,” he faces his death, and Malcolm’s army hails its victory. Shakespeare’s tragedies often end with a state or nation restored to order, and this ending tells us that tyrants never last. If only they did not crop up so often.

—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.
The Cast

Marco Armiliato
CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

This season Macbeth, Turandot, and La Bohème 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, Ermani, 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.

Anna Netrebko
SOPRANO (KRASNODAR, RUSSIA)

This season Lady Macbeth in Macbeth, the title role of Tosca, and the New Year’s Eve Gala at the Met; Tosca at La Scala and Covent Garden; the title role of Turandot at the Bavarian State Opera; the title role of Adriana Lecouvreur at the Paris Opera; and Elisabeth of Valois in Don Carlo in Dresden.

MET APPEARANCES Since her 2002 debut as Natasha in War and Peace, she has sung nearly 200 performances of 22 roles, including Tatiana in Eugene Onegin, Leonora in Il Trovatore, Lady Macbeth, Adina in L’Elisir d’Amore, and the title roles of Adriana Lecouvreur, Aida, Tosca, Manon Lescaut, Iolanta, Manon, Anna Bolena, and Lucia di Lammermoor. She has also given a solo recital.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Adriana Lecouvreur in concert at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Salzburg Festival; Leonora in Il Trovatore in Verona; Leonora in La Forza del Destino and Lady Macbeth at Covent Garden; Maddalena di Coigny in Andrea Chénier, Adriana Lecouvreur, and Leonora in Il Trovatore at the Vienna State Opera; Lady Macbeth at Staatsoper Berlin; Maddalena di Coigny at La Scala and in concert at the Hungarian State Opera; and Aida at the Salzburg Festival.
Radiant soprano Lisette Oropesa—recent recipient of both the Richard Tucker and Beverly Sills Artist Awards—returns to the Met as Massenet’s irresistible heroine. Laurent Pelly’s stylish production also stars tenor Michael Fabiano as the Chevalier des Grieux, with Maurizio Benini conducting.

SEP 24, 28 mat OCT 2, 5, 19, 22, 26 mat

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
Ildar Abdrazakov
BASS (UFA, RUSSIA)

This season Banquo in Macbeth and Méphistophélès in La Damnation de Faust at the Met; Philip II in Don Carlo at the Salzburg Festival, Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, Bavarian State Opera, and in Dresden; the title role of Don Giovanni at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and the title role of Attila in concert in Baden-Baden.

Met appearances Since his 2004 debut as Masetto in Don Giovanni, he has sung more than 150 performances of 16 roles, including Leporello and the title role in Don Giovanni, Assur in Semiramide, Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro, Mustafà in L’Italiana in Algeri, the title roles of Prince Igor and Attila, and Méphistophélès.

Career highlights Recent performances include de Silva in Ernani and Attila at La Scala, Mustafà at the Salzburg Festival, the title role of Boris Godunov and Philip II in Don Carlos at the Paris Opera, and Attila in concert in Barcelona. He has also sung Alfonso in Donizetti’s Lucrezia Borgia in concert at the Salzburg Festival, the Four Villains in Les Contes d’Hoffmann at the Bavarian State Opera, Philip II in Don Carlo at Covent Garden, and Giovanni da Procida in I Vespri Siciliani at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre.

Plácido Domingo
TENOR (MADRID, SPAIN)

This season The title role of Macbeth and Sharpless in Madama Butterfly at the Met; the title role of Nabucco in Zurich, Valencia, and at the Bavarian State Opera; Macbeth and Nabucco at the Vienna State Opera; Germont in La Traviata at Staatsoper Berlin and La Scala; the Duke of Nottingham in Roberto Devereux at LA Opera; the title role of Simon Boccanegra in Hamburg; Vidal Hernando in Moreno Torroba’s Luisa Fernanda and Germont in Madrid; and Rodrigo in Don Carlo at Covent Garden. He also conducts La Traviata at the Vienna State Opera.

Met appearances Since his 1968 debut as Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur, he has sung more than 700 performances of 52 roles and opened the Met season 21 times. He made his conducting debut in 1984 with La Bohème, going on to lead more than 150 performances.

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.
Matthew Polenzani

Tenor (Evanston, Illinois)

This season Macduff in Macbeth, Rodolfo in La Bohème, 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.