PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

THE QUEEN OF SPADES

CONDUCTOR
Vasily Petrenko

PRODUCTION
Elijah Moshinsky

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Mark Thompson

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Paul Pyant

CHOREOGRAPHER
John Meehan

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
Peter McClintock

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky
and the composer, based on the
story by Alexander Pushkin

Monday, December 2, 2019
7:30–11:05 PM

The production of The Queen of Spades was
made possible by a generous gift from the
Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Endowment
Fund, established by the founders of The
Reader’s Digest Association, Inc.

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

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

The 73rd Metropolitan Opera performance of
PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY’S
THE QUEEN OF SPADES

CONDUCTOR
Vasily Petrenko

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

TCHEKALINSKY
Paul Groves*

THE GOVERNESS
Jill Grove

SOURIN
Raymond Aceto*

MASHA
Leah Hawkins**

COUNT TOMSKY / PLUTUS
Alexey Markov

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
Patrick Cook

HERMANN
Yusif Eyvazov

CHLOË
Mané Galoyan

PRINCE YELETSKY
Igor Golovatenko

TCHAPLITSKY
Arseny Yakovlev**

LISA
Lise Davidsen

NAROUMOV
Mikhail Svetlov

THE COUNTESS
Larissa Diadkova

CATHERINE THE GREAT
Sheila Ricci

PAULINE / DAPHNIS
Elena Maximova

PIANO SOLO
Lydia Brown*

Monday, December 2, 2019, 7:30–11:05PM
A scene from Tchaikovsky’s The Queen of Spades

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Musical Preparation  John Keenan, Yelena Kurdina,
  Lydia Brown*, and Natalia Katyukova*
Assistant Stage Directors  Gregory Keller and Paula Williams
Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo
Prompter  Yelena Kurdina
Met Titles  Sonya Haddad
Assistant to the Costume Designer  Charlotte Bird
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 performance uses strobe-light and gunshot effects.

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

Additional funding for this production was received from the
National Endowment for the Arts.

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

Act I

St. Petersburg, Russia, at the close of the 18th century. In the Summer Park, Sourin and Tchekalinsky discuss the strange behavior of their fellow officer Hermann. He seems obsessed with gambling, watching his friends play all night, though he never plays himself. Hermann appears with Count Tomsky and admits to him that he is in love with a girl whose name he doesn’t know. When Prince Yeletsky enters, followed by his fiancée, Lisa, and her grandmother, the old countess, Hermann is shocked to realize that Lisa is his unknown girl. After Yeletsky and the women have left, Tomsky tells the others the story of the countess. Decades ago in Paris, she won a fortune at the gambling table with the help of the “three cards,” a mysterious winning combination. She only ever shared this secret with two other people, and there is a prophecy that she will die at the hands of a third person who will force the secret from her. The men laugh at the story except for Hermann, who is deeply affected by it and decides to learn the countess’s secret.

In her room, Lisa thinks about her ambivalent feelings for her fiancé and the impression Hermann has made on her. To her shock, he suddenly appears on the balcony. He declares his love and begs her to have pity on him. Lisa gives in to her feelings and confesses that she loves him too.

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:40PM)

Act II

Yeletsky has noticed a change in Lisa’s behavior. During a ball, he assures her of his love. Hermann, who is also among the guests, has received a note from Lisa, asking him to meet her. Sourin and Tchekalinsky tease him with remarks about the “three cards.” Lisa slips Hermann the key to a garden door that will lead him to her room and through the countess’s bedroom. She says that the old lady will not be there the next day, but Hermann insists on coming that very night, thinking that fate is handing him the chance to learn the countess’s secret.

In the countess’s bedroom, Hermann looks fascinated at a portrait of her as a young woman. He hides as the woman returns from the ball and, reminiscing about her youth, falls asleep in an armchair. She awakens when Hermann suddenly steps before her and demands to know the secret of the cards. The countess refuses to talk to him, and when Hermann, growing desperate, threatens her with a pistol, she dies of fright. Lisa rushes in. Horrified at the sight of her dead grandmother, she realizes that Hermann was only interested in the countess’s secret.
Act III
Hermann is descending into obsession. In his quarters, he reads a letter from Lisa asking him to meet her at midnight. He recalls the countess’s funeral, and suddenly, her ghost appears, telling him that he must save Lisa and marry her. The ghost says that his lucky cards will be three, seven, and the ace.

Lisa waits for Hermann by the Winter Canal, wondering if he still loves her. When he at last appears, she says that they should leave the city together. Hermann refuses, replying that he has learned the secret of the cards and is on his way to the gambling house. Lisa realizes that she has lost him and drowns herself in the canal.

At a gambling house, the officers are playing cards, joined by Yeletsky, who has broken off his engagement to Lisa. Hermann enters, distracted, and immediately bets 40,000 rubles. He wins on his first two cards, a three and a seven. Upsetting the others with his maniacal expression, he declares that life is a game. For the final round, he bets on the ace but loses when his card is revealed as the queen of spades. Horrified and imagining the countess’s face staring at him from the card, Hermann stabs himself, asking for Yeletsky and Lisa’s forgiveness.

The Queen of Spades on Demand
Looking for more Queen of Spades? Check out Met Opera on Demand, our online streaming service, to enjoy other outstanding performances from past Met seasons—including three full radio broadcasts and a stellar 1999 telecast, starring Plácido Domingo, Galina Gorchakova, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Olga Borodina, and Elisabeth Söderström. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 700 complete performances at metoperaondemand.org.
In Focus

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The Queen of Spades

Premiere: Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, 1890
A work of extreme moods and colors, The Queen of Spades explores life’s frivolities as well as the darkest impulses of obsession, addiction, madness, and self-destruction. The story tells of a young officer in love with the granddaughter of an aged countess with a mysterious past. The countess is rumored to hold the secret of winning at cards, a secret that the officer, Hermann, becomes obsessed with discovering. With his downward spiral into addiction and eventual insanity, Hermann is an example of the tortured, anti-social, misunderstood young man familiar from literature and cinema. The plot is set against the vast elegance and macabre allure of St. Petersburg, which functions almost as a character in itself. Based on a short story by Alexander Pushkin, the opera retains the darkness of its source. The composer’s lyric mastery is equally apparent throughout the whole of this remarkable score, which moves deftly from the most refined to the most harrowing situations.

The Creators
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) enjoyed tremendous fame during his lifetime as a composer of symphonic music and ballets. Today, his operas also enjoy growing popularity. The composer’s brother Modest (1850–1916) adapted much of the libretto for The Queen of Spades, though the composer himself also created a number of passages, from a short story by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837). Pushkin’s position in Russian literature can be compared only to that of Shakespeare in English. His body of work is marked by a wide range of tone and style, and his writings have been the source of many other operas (such as Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov, Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Golden Cockerel, and Tchaikovsky’s own Eugene Onegin).

The Setting
The story unfolds in St. Petersburg, the imperial capital of Russia, during the later years of the Empress Catherine the Great, who reigned from 1762 to 1796. For Pushkin, the beautiful city of rivers and canals was both a mystical place where elements of fantasy could burst forth at any moment (as in his hallucinatory story The Bronze Horseman, in which an equestrian statue of Peter the Great seems to chase an insane man through the flooded streets) and a very real, modern city that provides an opportunity to satirize contemporary society (as in his verse novel Eugene Onegin). Both the fantastic and the gritty aspects of the city are vitally present in The Queen of Spades.
The Music
Tchaikovsky’s skills as a great symphonist and undisputed master of the ballet are apparent in the many superb orchestral touches throughout this opera’s score. The opera’s great vocal solos, most of them considered concert standards in Russia, are excellent surprises for American audiences, and notable for their diversity. Prince Yeletsky’s Act II aria is a prime example of a lyrical love song, while Lisa’s dramatic aria in Act III, Scene 2 is an arresting psychological narrative that deepens the character beyond what Pushkin wrote. Polina’s Russian Song in Act I and Count Tomsky’s playful solo provide striking, charming contrasts. Ensembles punctuate the work at key moments of interaction—most notably in the first scene’s quintet, in which each of the drama’s lead characters expresses fear of another character. Tchaikovsky’s nods to other composers of the past and near-present are another remarkable aspect of this alluring score. The children’s chorus toward the beginning of the opera is widely considered a homage to Bizet’s Carmen, which Tchaikovsky greatly admired. The extended Pastorale in Act II, a sort of miniature opera-within-the-opera, is written in the style of Mozart. This rococo nostalgia is a trait also practiced in some of the composer’s other works (the Mozartiana Suite and the Variations on a Rococo Theme among them), which reflects a fondness for 18th-century styles prevalent in his day. Even more overt are Tchaikovsky’s actual quotations of earlier composers. The countess sings (or, rather, mutters to herself) snippets of an aria from André Grétry’s 1784 Richard Coeur-de-Lion, an allusion that perfectly captures her old-fashioned sensibility. While in the ballroom scene, Tchaikovsky quotes from a polonaise by composer Jósef Koslowski written in 1791.

Met History
The U.S. premiere of this opera was given at the Met in German in 1910, with Gustav Mahler conducting Emmy Destinn and famed Wagnerian tenor Leo Slezak. It then disappeared from the repertoire until 1965, when Thomas Schippers led a new production with a remarkable cast including Jon Vickers, Teresa Stratas, and Regina Resnik as the countess. A 1972 revival featuring Raina Kabaivanska, Nicolai Gedda, and Resnik marked the first time that a Russian opera was given at the Met in its original language. The current production premiered in 1995, with Valery Gergiev conducting Ben Heppner, Karita Mattila, Leonie Rysanek, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky in his Met debut. The last performance of the run was memorable as Rysanek’s farewell to opera in America. Other notable singers who have appeared in this production include Galina Gorchakova, Olga Borodina, Maria Guleghina, Birgitta Svendén, Plácido Domingo, Dame Felicity Palmer, Dolora Zajick, and Peter Mattei.
It was Ivan Vsevolozhsky, the director of the Imperial Theatres, who set in motion in 1885 the project that would—several years later—give the world Tchaikovsky’s opera *The Queen of Spades*. Vsevolozhsky’s original choice of composer was a former pupil of Tchaikovsky’s, Nikolay Klenovsky, who was a conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, but his search for a suitable libretto was unsuccessful. Finally, in September 1887, Vsevolozhsky told Klenovsky to approach Modest Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich’s brother, about supplying a libretto based on Pushkin’s short story.

When Klenovsky ultimately withdrew from the *Queen of Spades* project, Modest tried to tempt his brother to take it on. Tchaikovsky, having recently suffered the unsuccessful premiere of his opera *The Enchantress* at the Mariinsky in St. Petersburg, was not interested, replying:

I am very sorry that you have spent so much time on the libretto for Klenovsky. Forgive me, Modya, but I have no regrets that I will not be writing *The Queen of Spades*. After the failure of *The Enchantress*, I wanted to turn around my fortunes and was ready to grab any plot, and at the time, I was jealous that somebody else was writing it. Right now, though, that’s all in the past, and first of all in the summer, I will certainly be writing a symphony. I will be writing an opera only if a subject becomes available that can deeply warm my heart. Such a plot as *The Queen of Spades* does not excite me, and I would be able to complete only a mediocre writing.

Tchaikovsky did, indeed, spend the summer of 1888 writing his Fifth Symphony. By the time of its first performance that November, he had begun work on his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*, which he finished in September 1889. In November, he was approached again with the idea of writing *The Queen of Spades*, this time by Vsevolozhsky, who really wanted the opera for his star tenor Nikolay Figner. At that point, Tchaikovsky was more receptive. In December, a meeting was held at the Imperial Theatre offices, where Modest read his scenario to Vsevolozhsky and various department heads. It was decided to change the setting of the opera from the time of Alexander I to the end of the reign of Catherine II, which meant changes to the ball scene. Tchaikovsky insisted on adding the scene by the Winter Canal with Lisa’s suicide—“otherwise the entire third act will have no women in it, and that would be boring. Besides, the audience must know what has happened to Lisa.”

Vsevolozhsky wanted to give the opera the following year, which meant Tchaikovsky had to work quickly. He wrote his patron Nadezhda von Meck on January 7, 1890, “I am longing to work, and if I can contrive to find some comfortable corner abroad, I think I shall cope with my task and will deliver
the vocal score to the directorate by May and score it during the summer.” The following week, he attended the premiere of his *Sleeping Beauty*, and on January 26, he left St. Petersburg—his ultimate destination still unclear. Two days later, he was in Berlin, where he, apparently on a whim, bought a ticket for Florence, arriving on January 30. He only had the libretto for the first two scenes, and Modest had to work hard to keep up with his brother’s rapid composing. The whole opera was written between January 31 and March 15, 1890, in Florence. Tchaikovsky wrote his brother, “Modi, either I am greatly mistaken, or *The Queen of Spades* is a masterpiece.” He completed the orchestration by mid-June, by which point he was back in Russia.

The opera has been severely criticized for the numerous liberties it takes with Pushkin’s story, which Dostoyevsky called a masterpiece of cold fury. Pushkin, who was a heavy gambler, wrote *The Queen of Spades* in 1833, four years before his death in a duel. It is a model of concise storytelling—spare, ironic, and ultimately chilling, the devastating ending all the more effective for the dispassionate, almost clinical tone of the prose. The opera, on the other hand, takes a leisurely approach to the drama, opening it up by adding scenes not in the story (though charming in their own right), and drawing out the heavily embellished love story between Lisa and Hermann. But this fleshing out of the characters is undoubtedly what attracted Tchaikovsky to the libretto in the first place.

In Pushkin, Lisa is not engaged, and she and Hermann speak to each other only once, when he enters her room after the countess’s death. Until then, they have only exchanged glances and letters. In the opera, when we meet Hermann, he is desperately in love with an unknown woman (Lisa). In Pushkin, he is unaware of Lisa until one day, as he stands outside the house of the old countess, wondering how he can learn her secret, he notices the face of a young woman at a window and realizes that he may be able to use the young woman to get to the countess. Several of the opera’s scenes are not found in Pushkin’s story: the opening scene in the summer garden, the scene between Lisa and Pauline, the grand ball that opens Act II, and the Act III scene at the Winter Canal. In Pushkin, the countess’s ghost tells him he must play only one card per day and then never play again. In the opera, for obvious dramatic reasons, the three days are compressed into one scene. Pushkin also has a very different ending. Hermann goes insane and is confined to a hospital. Lisa marries “a very pleasant young man,” a civil servant who has his own fortune and is the son of the old countess’s former steward.

The changes all add up to a thoroughly enjoyable opera, but one definitely at odds with the strongest points of Pushkin’s story. While some have characterized the Tchaikovsky version as a romantic melodrama, musicologist Richard Taruskin has quite a different idea: “What critics have been slow to recognize is precisely what the composer meant when he wrote with such uncharacteristic confidence about his originality. Tchaikovsky’s penultimate opera is the first and possibly the
greatest masterpiece of musical surrealism.” He cites the “network of sinister doubles that haunt the opera at every level,” including musical motifs that at first hearing seem benign but end up being sinister.

Two of the main themes Tchaikovsky uses throughout the opera appear in the orchestral introduction. The first is heard in measure 23, when the brass play a three-note phrase (F-sharp–E–A) “heavily and accented,” followed by a second, similar phrase, (G–F-sharp–C). That motif of three notes, the second pitch just below the first, the third a leap upward, is the calling card of the supernatural or fate, always heard in connection with the countess’s three cards. The second theme has to do with the love between Hermann and Lisa. It appears about a minute after the introduction of the supernatural theme, played softly and expressively by the violins, its lyricism immediately capturing our hearts—never more poignantly than when it returns as the dying Hermann asks Lisa (whom only he can see) for her forgiveness.

Throughout the opera, Tchaikovsky juxtaposes rococo pastiche and the malevolent supernatural, using the 18th-century–style music as a momentary distraction from the darker world. The lighter music is usually heard in public moments, such as at the ball, but Tchaikovsky also uses a tune from 1784 in the most gripping scene of the opera. As the old countess is falling asleep in her bedroom, she sings to herself a bit of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, an opéra comique by André Grétry. It’s a masterstroke, not only recalling the days when she was a desired beauty but also the time she was given the secret of the cards.

The Queen of Spades affected Tchaikovsky profoundly, largely because he identified strongly with his hero. In March 1890, he wrote to his brother:

When I came to Hermann’s death and the final chorus, I was suddenly overcome by such intense pity for Hermann that I burst out crying. Afterward, I discovered the reason for my tears (for I was never before so deeply moved by the sorrows of my hero, and I tried to explain to myself why it should be so now). I came to the conclusion that Hermann was to me not merely a pretext for writing this or that kind of music but had been all the while an actual, living, sympathetic being. … I have certainly written with love. How I cried yesterday when they sang over my poor Hermann.

Hermann is an outsider, a German living among Russians—a guest, but not really accepted fully, who was destroyed by an obsession he could not control. It is difficult not to draw a parallel between Tchaikovsky’s intense identification with Hermann and his own secret that set him apart from society, the fact of his homosexuality. Three years after the very successful premiere of The Queen of Spades in St. Petersburg, Tchaikovsky was dead, many believe as the result of suicide in order to keep his secret from becoming public. (David Brown goes
into considerable detail on the subject in his superb biography of the composer.) Perhaps it was the accumulating weight of Tchaikovsky's secret life that added to his dark mood when he wrote to Alexander Glazunov shortly after arriving in Florence to write *The Queen of Spades*: “I am passing through a very enigmatic stage on my road to the grave. Something strange, which I cannot understand, is going on within me. A kind of life-weariness has come over me. Sometimes I feel an insane anguish, but not that kind of anguish which is the herald of a new tide of love for life: rather something hopeless, final, and—like every *finale*—a little commonplace. Simultaneously a passionate desire to create. The devil knows what it is!” But out of this despair, Tchaikovsky used (in Taruskin’s words) his “mastery of the grotesque, and its chilling correlation with aberrant psychology” to create a uniquely haunting masterpiece.

—Paul Thomason

Paul Thomason, who writes for numerous opera companies and symphony orchestras in the U.S. and abroad, has contributed to the Met’s program books since 1999.

---

**Reading the Cards**

Faro, the card game that figures prominently in Pushkin’s and Tchaikovsky’s *The Queen of Spades*, was one of the most popular forms of gambling throughout Europe and the United States in the 19th century. Part of its appeal was the simplicity of the game, which involves the player placing a bet on a rank of card (nine, ten, jack, etc.). The dealer then turns over two cards from the top of the deck—one for himself and one for the player. The player wins if the rank of his card matches the rank he bet on, and loses if the dealer’s card matches it. If neither card matches, the next pair of cards is revealed.

*The Queen of Spades* is one of several operas and literary works to incorporate reference to faro. In Massenet’s *Manon*, the heroine and her lover attempt to recover their fortunes at the faro table, and in Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West*, there is a memorable accusation of cheating at the game in the Act I saloon scene. Other examples include Offenbach’s *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, London’s *White Fang*, and Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*.
“Aria Code,” the hit podcast from the Met and WQXR, is back for a second season—and this time, the theme is desire in all its forms.

When the Met and WQXR decided to collaborate last season on the creation of a new podcast, the idea was to explore some of opera’s greatest arias and allow people to hear them in a whole new way. In “Aria Code,” top opera stars would talk through the process of learning, rehearsing, and performing some of the best-known arias in the repertoire, from Tosca’s “Vissi d’arte” to Violetta’s “Sempre libera” to Rodolfo’s “Che gelida manina”—with noted actors, writers, psychologists, scientists, and other expert guests providing additional color commentary.

Little did the companies expect, however, that “Aria Code” would become a podcast sensation. “I didn’t know that I needed an opera podcast in my life until I heard the trailer for ‘Aria Code,’” declared The New Yorker. “An elegantly constructed, effortlessly listenable series.”

The New York Times agreed, calling the podcast “luminous … A major event and a gift.”

This month, the series returns, once again hosted by the Grammy Award-winning (and opera-trained) folk singer Rhiannon Giddens. The first episode features superstar diva Anna Netrebko talking about Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene from Verdi’s Macbeth, which the soprano performed memorably earlier this season. But it’s not just Netrebko who weighs in on the murderous queen; none other than Dame Judi Dench also shares her thoughts on the motivations and machinations of this timeless character.

The Macbeth episode is the first of ten new installments, which will also look at moments from Porgy and Bess, Turandot, Le Nozze di Figaro, and others, featuring such Met stars as Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, and Eric Owens. The hope is that opera lovers will continue to find their favorite works illuminated, while newcomers will discover that opera is, indeed, for them. Or, as The New Yorker put it in their review of the series, “It encourages fandom through substance, by showing us the art itself.”

Listen to Seasons 1 and 2 on your desktop or phone at ariacode.org.
The Cast

**Vasily Petrenko**

**CONDUCTOR (ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA)**

**THIS SEASON** The Queen of Spades for his debut at the Met and concert appearances with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Dresden Philharmonic, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has served as chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra since 2013, chief conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra since 2009 (a continuation of his tenure as the organization’s principal conductor, which commenced in 2006), chief conductor of the European Union Youth Orchestra since 2015, and principal guest conductor of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia since 2016. His operatic credits include Boris Godunov at the Bavarian State Opera; Macbeth at the Glyndebourne Festival; Eugene Onegin at the Paris Opera; The Queen of Spades in Hamburg; Carmen and Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk in Zurich; Eugene Onegin, La Bohème, and Carmen in St. Petersburg; and Falstaff, Tosca, and Parsifal in concert with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

**Lise Davidsen**

**SOPRANO (STOKKE, NORWAY)**

**THIS SEASON** Lisa in The Queen of Spades for her debut at the Met, Leonore in Fidelio at Covent Garden and in concert in Montreal, Elisabeth in Tannhäuser and Sieglinde in Die Walküre at the Bayreuth Festival, Ellen Orford in Peter Grimes in concert at Bucharest’s George Enescu Festival, Sieglinde in concert with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and concert appearances with the Orchestre de Paris, Vienna Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, and in London, Oslo, Copenhagen, and Bergen, Norway.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Elisabeth at the Bavarian State Opera and in Zurich; Lisa in Stuttgart; the Third Norn in Götterdämmerung, Ortlinde in Die Walküre, and Freia in Das Rheingold at Covent Garden; the title role of Ariadne auf Naxos in Aix-en-Provence and at the Vienna State Opera; and the title role of Cherubini’s Medea at Wexford Festival Opera. She has also sung Ariadne at the Glyndebourne Festival, Isabella in Wagner’s Das Liebesverbot in Buenos Aires, Santuzza in Cavalleria Rusticana at Norwegian National Opera, Agathe in Der Freischütz in Zurich, and Rosalinde in Die Fledermaus and the Dog and the Owl in The Cunning Little Vixen at the Royal Danish Opera.

Visit metopera.org
Larissa Diadkova
MEZZO-SOPRANO (ZELENODOLSK, RUSSIA)

This Season The Countess in The Queen of Spades at the Met.
Career Highlights She regularly appears at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre, where her roles have included the Countess, Marfa, the Duenna in Prokofiev’s Betrothal in a Monastery, Fricka, Grammy, Ulrica, the Princess in Suor Angelica, Konchakovna in Prince Igor, and Ratmir in Glinka’s Ruslan and Lyudmila, among others. She has also sung the Countess at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, the Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, and in Amsterdam; Filippyevna at Japan’s Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival, the Bavarian State Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and in São Paulo; Madelon at the Bavarian State Opera; Ježibaba in Rusalka at the Paris Opera, Covent Garden, and in Rome and Amsterdam; Marfa at the Paris Opera; Mistress Quickly in Falstaff in Hamburg and at the Salzburg Festival; Herodias in Istanbul; and Fricka and Ulrica at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Elena Maximova
MEZZO-SOPRANO (PERM, RUSSIA)

This Season Pauline in The Queen of Spades at the Met, Preziosilla in La Forza del Destino at Deutsche Oper Berlin, the title role of Carmen in Muscat, Marchesa Melibea in Rossini’s Il Viaggio a Reims at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, Charlotte in Werther and the title role of La Cenerentola at the Vienna State Opera, and Sara in Roberto Devereux at Opera Australia.
Met Appearances Olga in Eugene Onegin (debut, 2013) and Giulietta in Les Contes d’Hoffmann.
Career Highlights Recent performances include Preziosilla in Zurich; Maddalena in Rigoletto at Staatsoper Berlin; Dulcinée in Don Quichotte and Charlotte at Opera Australia; Prince Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus, Suzuki in Madama Butterfly, Olga, Maddalena, Isabella in L’Italiana in Algeri, Blanche in The Gambler, and Marfa in Khovanshchina at the Vienna State Opera; Federica in Luisa Miller in concert in Monte Carlo; Preziosilla and Curra in La Forza del Destino and Carmen in Dresden; Carmen at Israeli Opera; and Prince Orlofsky at La Scala. She has also appeared at the Paris Opera, Moscow’s Stanislavsky Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, Finnish National Opera, and in Tokyo and Taormina, Italy.
Igor Golovatenko  
BARITONE (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON  Prince Yeletsksy in The Queen of Spades for his debut at the Met; Riccardo in I Puritani at the Paris Opera; Don Alvaro in Rossini’s Il Viaggio a Reims, Rodrigo in Don Carlo, and Renato in Un Ballo in Maschera at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre; Francesco in Verdi’s I Masnadieri and the title role of Eugene Onegin at the Bavarian State Opera; and Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor at Covent Garden.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  He appears regularly at the Bolshoi Theatre, where his roles have included Eugene Onegin, Robert in Iolanta, Price Yeletsksy, Andrey Shchelkalov in Boris Godunov, Germont in La Traviata, Lescaut in Manon Lescaut, Malatesta in Don Pasquale, and Marcello in La Bohème. He has also sung Germont at LA Opera, Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, and in Santiago; Eugene Onegin at Washington National Opera, Savonlinna Opera Festival, and in Aix-en-Provence; Enrico in Dresden and Cologne; Count di Luna in Il Trovatore at the Bavarian State Opera; Prince Yeletsksy at the Salzburg Festival; Ernesto in Bellini’s Il Pirata in concert in Bordeaux; Severo in Donizetti’s Poliuto at the Glyndebourne Festival; and Sharpless in Madama Butterfly in Buenos Aires.
The Cast CONTINUED

Alexey Markov
BARITONE (VIBORG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Tomsky in The Queen of Spades at the Met; Scarpia in Tosca in Dresden; the title role of Eugene Onegin, Escamillo in Carmen, Robert in Iolanta, Amonasro in Aida, Don Carlo in La Forza del Destino, the title role of Macbeth, Grigory Gryaznoy in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tsar’s Bride, Chorèbe in Les Troyens, Amfortas in Parsifal, Ford in Falstaff, and Prince Andrei in War and Peace at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre; Escamillo in Wiesbaden; Robert and Amfortas in concert in Paris; Amonasro in Geneva; Scarpia in Lyon; and Escamillo in Hamburg.

MET APPEARANCES Robert, Riccardo in I Puritani, Count Anckarström in Un Ballo in Maschera, Germont in La Traviata, Marcello in La Bohème, Valentin in Faust, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore, Tomsky, Shchelkalov in Boris Godunov, and Prince Andrei (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2008, he has been a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre, where his roles have included Scarpia, Prince Yeletsky in The Queen of Spades, Valentin, Ezio in Attila, and Silvio in Pagliacci, among many others. He has also appeared at the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, Salzburg Festival, Dutch National Opera, and Bavarian State Opera, among others.