RICHARD STRAUSS
DER ROSENKAVALIER

Conductor
Gareth Morrell

Production
Robert Carsen

Set designer
Paul Steinberg

Costume designer
Brigitte Reiffenstuel

Lighting designers
Robert Carsen
Peter Van Praet

Choreographer
Philippe Giraudeau

Revival stage director
Paula Suozzi

General manager
Peter Gelb

Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer
Music director
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in three acts
Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal
Saturday, December 28, 2019
7:30–11:50 PM

The production of Der Rosenkavalier was made possible by a generous gift from Howard Solomon and Sarah Billinghurst Solomon

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London; Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires; and Teatro Regio di Torino
The Metropolitan Opera
2019–20 SEASON

The 398th Metropolitan Opera performance of
RICHARD STRAUSS’S

DER ROSENKAVALIER

CONDUCTOR
Gareth Morrell

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

OCTAVIAN
Angela Brower  DEBUT

THE MARSHALLIN
Katie Van Kooten

MOHAMMED
Billy Conahan

BARON OCHS AUF LERCHENAU
Günther Groissböck

THE MARSHALLIN’S MAJOR-DOMO
Scott Scully

LACKEYS
Marco Antonio Jordão
Ross Benoliel
Patrick Miller
Edward Hanlon

A NOBLE WIDOW
Sidney Fortner

NOBLE ORPHANS
Lianne Coble-Dispensa
Catherine MiEun Choi-Steckmeyer
Rosalie Sullivan

Saturday, December 28, 2019, 7:30–11:50PM
A MILLINER
Anne Nonnemacher

AN ANIMAL VENDOR
Dustin Lucas

A NOTARY
James Courtney

VALZACCHI
Thomas Ebenstein

ANNINA
Katharine Goeldner

A HAIRDRESSER
Jonathan Amaro

AN ITALIAN SINGER
Matthew Polenzani

LEOPOLD
Patrick Stoffer

HERR VON FANINAL
Markus Eiche

SOPHIE
Golda Schultz

MARIANNE LEITMETZERIN
Alexandra LoBianco

FANINAL’S MAJOR-DOMO
Mark Schowalter

A DOCTOR
Zephyrus White

AN INNKEEPER
Tony Stevenson*

WAITERS
Matthew Grills
Brian Vu
Jeongcheol Cha
Bradley Garvin

A POLICE COMMISSIONER
Scott Conner

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program
A scene from Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Assistant Set Designer  Blake Palmer
Assistant Set Designer, Properties  Ellie Bye
Musical Preparation  Linda Hall, Gareth Morrell,
Howard Watkins*, Bradley Moore*, and Carol Isaac
Assistant Stage Directors  Stephen Pickover and
Kathleen Smith Belcher
Prompter  Carol Isaac
German Coach  Marianne Barrett
Met Titles  Cori Ellison
Stage Band Conductor  Gregory Buchalter
Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed
and painted by Metropolitan Opera Shops
Costumes executed by Royal Opera House
Production Department and Metropolitan
Opera Costume Department
Wigs and Makeup executed by Metropolitan Opera
Wig and Makeup Department
Animals supervised by All-Tame Animals

This production uses camera flash effects.

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

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program
Yamaha is the Official Piano of the Metropolitan Opera.

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Synopsis

Act I
Vienna, 1911. The Marschallin, Princess Marie-Therese von Werdenberg, has spent the night with her young lover, Octavian, Count RoRan. As they are sharing breakfast, they hear voices in the anteroom, and Octavian quickly hides. The unexpected visitor turns out not to be Marie-Therese’s husband, the Feldmarschall, but her country cousin, Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau. After bragging about his latest amorous adventures, Ochs turns to the subject of his upcoming marriage to Sophie, the young daughter of the recently ennobled and extremely wealthy arms dealer, Herr von Faninal. Ochs has come to ask the Marschallin’s advice as to which young aristocrat should be chosen to present his fiancée with the traditional silver engagement rose. On a playful whim, the Marschallin suggests Octavian, who suddenly emerges from his hiding place disguised as a chambermaid called “Mariandel.” Ochs instantly starts making advances toward her, but she escapes from him as the room fills with the daily crowd of petitioners for the Marschallin’s morning levée. Among them is a pair of Italian intriguers, Annina and Valzacchi, whom Ochs hires to track down the pretty servant girl. When the room is cleared, the Marschallin, appalled by the thought of Ochs being married to an innocent young girl, reflects on her own unhappy marriage and former youth. Octavian returns and passionately declares his love, but he is surprised to find Marie-Therese in a distant and melancholic mood. She can only think about the passing of time and tells him that the day will come when he will leave her for a younger woman. Hurt by her words, Octavian rushes off. The Marschallin summons her page Mohammed and sends him after Octavian with the silver rose.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:45PM)

Act II
On the morning of her engagement, Sophie excitedly awaits the arrival of the Knight of the Rose. Octavian enters with great ceremony and presents her with the silver rose on behalf of Baron Ochs. The two young people feel an instant attraction to each other. Ochs, whom Sophie has never met, now arrives, and both Sophie and Octavian are shocked by his crude manners. When Ochs leaves to discuss the wedding contract with Faninal, Sophie desperately asks Octavian to help her. Overcome by their feelings, they kiss. Annina and Valzacchi have been spying on them and immediately summon Ochs, who takes in the situation with good humor. This infuriates Octavian even more: He draws his sword, and in so doing, slightly grazes Ochs, who melodramatically calls for a doctor. In the ensuing confusion, Sophie tells her father that she will never marry the Baron, while Octavian enlists Annina and Valzacchi’s help to devise a plan to prevent Ochs from marrying Sophie. Left alone with his entourage, Ochs
nurses his wounded pride with a glass of wine. Annina appears with a letter from Mariandel asking for a rendezvous the next evening. The delighted Ochs rejoices in his latest conquest.

**Intermission**  (AT APPROXIMATELY 10:15PM)

**Act III**

At a house of ill repute, Annina and Valzacchi prepare a private room for the Baron’s rendezvous with Mariandel. Ochs arrives and begins his seduction of the young girl over a private supper. Mariandel coyly leads him on, when grotesque apparitions suddenly appear from secret panels. The baron’s confusion turns to alarm when Annina, disguised as a poverty-stricken mother, appears with a group of children in tow and claims that Ochs is their father. A police commissioner enters and attempts to restore order. When he interrogates Ochs regarding his intentions with Mariandel, Ochs declares that she is his fiancée. Faninal, summoned anonymously by Octavian, arrives with Sophie, but Ochs pretends not to know either of them. This so upsets Faninal that he takes ill and must be carried off. At the height of the confusion, the Marschallin appears unexpectedly. Ochs is astonished to discover that Mariandel is in fact Octavian in disguise, but his astonishment turns to thoughts of blackmail when he realizes the true nature of the Marschallin and Octavian’s relationship. The Marschallin, losing all patience, informs her cousin that his marriage plans are finished and that he had better leave. Ochs finally admits defeat and makes a swift exit, pursued by the innkeeper and numerous other creditors. Octavian, Sophie, and the Marschallin are left alone, each one reflecting on what has brought them to this moment. The Marschallin observes the loss of her lover to the younger woman, as she had predicted, and quietly leaves the room. The young lovers are left alone, wondering whether their future together is merely a dream.

—Robert Carsen

**Forty-Year Dash**

This season, the Met salutes bass-baritone James Courtney on the occasion of his 40th anniversary with the company. Courtney, who sings the Notary in this performance of *Der Rosenkavalier*, made his Met debut on November 29, 1979, as the Monk in *La Gioconda*, going on to sing 95 roles and counting. With nearly 2,000 performances to his credit, Courtney has graced the Met stage more times than any other active company member.
Richard Strauss

Der Rosenkavalier

Premiere: Court Opera, Dresden, 1911

Strauss’s most popular opera was an instant success at its premiere, earning a secure spot in the repertory that has not wavered in the century since. Set in an idealized Vienna of the mid-18th century, it concerns a wise woman of the world who is involved with a much younger lover. Over the course of the opera, she is forced to confront and ultimately accept the laws of time, giving him up to a pretty young heiress. Octavian, the titular “Knight of the Rose,” is sung by a woman—partly as an homage to Mozart’s Cherubino and partly as a nod to the power of illusion, which emerges as an important theme in the opera. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who would go on to work with Strauss on four more operas, created a fascinating libretto that deftly combines comedy (of both the sophisticated and the slapstick varieties), dreamy nostalgic fantasy, genuine human drama, and light-but-striking touches of philosophy and social commentary. Strauss’s magnificent score, likewise, works on several levels, combining the refinement of Mozart with the epic grandeur of Wagner. The result is a unique achievement: a grand opera that is as vast and complex as it is humane and charming.

The Creators

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, Strauss caused a theatrical sensation with Salome (1905), and from then on, the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to the stage. His next opera, Elektra (1909), was his first collaboration with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), a partnership that became one of the most remarkable in theater history. Hofmannsthal emerged as an author and poet within the fervent intellectual atmosphere of Vienna at the turn of the 20th century. Their personalities were very different—Hofmannsthal enjoyed the world of abstract ideas, while Strauss was famously simple in his tastes—which makes their collaboration all the more extraordinary.

The Setting

The opera was originally set in Vienna in the 1740s. Genuine historical references (to the Empress Maria Theresa, the wars in the Low Countries, and the Imperial “Morals Police”) are merged with fictitious inventions (like the “noble custom” of the presentation of the silver rose to a fiancée) and anachronisms (such as the Viennese Waltz, which did not yet exist). It’s a mixture that creates a seductive mythical landscape, a ceremonious and impossibly beautiful Vienna-that-never-
was. The Met’s current production moves the timeframe to 1911, the year of the opera’s premiere, amidst a declining Habsburg Empire.

The Music

The score of Der Rosenkavalier is lush, rich, and romantic to an extraordinary degree—perhaps surprisingly so, considering that the composer had written the disturbingly edgy and modern Elektra only two years earlier. The presentation of the rose, with its soaring vocal lines sprinkled with chromatic figures reflecting the shimmering of the silver rose (a motif that reappears with renewed poignancy at the very end) is ravishingly beautiful. Waltzes appear frequently, sometimes bumptious, sometimes elegant: Ochs’s musings at the end of Act II are both. In fact, the relationship between the banal and the sublime is expressed through the music as well as the libretto: The clunky tune of the tavern music in the early part of Act III later assumes a different texture and becomes the famous final trio, a gorgeous blend of female voices that is among the supreme accomplishments of lyric theater. The score also contains comic depictions of chaos and confusion, like the various characters competing for the Marschallin’s attention in Act I, the skirt-chasing lackeys of Act II, and, most of all, the screaming children and ghostly apparitions of Act III. The seemingly effortless musical craft of these passages masks the fact that the score is devilishly difficult to perform, ranked by instrumentalists among the most demanding in the repertory.

Met History

Alfred Hertz conducted the 1913 U.S. premiere of Der Rosenkavalier at the Met, starring Frieda Hempel as the Marschallin. Maria Jeritza, a favorite soprano of both Strauss and Puccini, was a dazzling Octavian in the 1920s, and Lotte Lehmann, with whom Strauss had worked extensively in Europe, was the reigning Marschallin from 1935 to 1945. The 1949 Opening Night broadcast of Der Rosenkavalier in the then-new medium of television featured Risë Stevens as Octavian, Eleanor Steber as the Marschallin, and the debut of Erna Berger as Sophie. Régine Crespin made her Met debut as the Marschallin in 1962 in a revival directed by Lotte Lehmann, and in 1964, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf made her only Met appearances as the Marschallin. A new production by Nathaniel Merrill had its premiere in 1969 with Karl Böhm conducting Leonie Rysanek, Walter Berry, Reri Grist, and Christa Ludwig. Its 1976 run marked the Met debut of Tatiana Troyanos as Octavian, with Luciano Pavarotti singing his first of 15 appearances as the Italian Singer. Carlos Kleiber led seven notable performances during the 1990–91 season, and over the course of his Met career, James Levine conducted 49 performances of the piece. Robert Carsen’s production had its premiere in 2017, with Renée Fleming and Elīna Garanča giving their final career performances as the Marschallin and Octavian, respectively, alongside Erin Morley as Sophie and Günther Groissböck as Ochs, conducted by Sebastian Weigle.
Before January 26, 1911, Richard Strauss was renowned as the leader of Germany’s musical avant-garde. His remarkable tone poems had extended orchestral writing to new levels, and his most recent operas, Salome (1905) and Elektra (1909), shocked audiences by seeming to push musical harmony, as well as subject matter, almost to the limit. But after the premiere of his new opera, all that changed. As he himself explained when Allied soldiers knocked on his door in April 1945, “I am Richard Strauss, composer of Der Rosenkavalier.”

It all began in early February 1909 with a chance remark by the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal to his erudite friend Count Harry Kessler. Hofmannsthal’s play Elektra had been the basis of Strauss’s opera, and he was looking for a new, preferably light, subject with which he could tempt Strauss to continue their collaboration. Did Kessler have any ideas? Kessler mentioned a new opéra bouffe that he had just seen in Paris by Claude Terrasse, based on Les Aventures du Chevalier de Faublas, an erotic 18th-century novel. Hofmannsthal was intrigued, read the novel (Kessler’s library was extensive), and the next day pondered mixing its characters with those of Molière’s play Monsieur de Pourceaugnac to create a new drama.

Kessler’s diary charts the fascinating creation of a scenario for Der Rosenkavalier, with the two men firing suggestions and alterations at each other over the course of the next few days as they refined the action, revised the characters, borrowed ideas from other sources (mostly French, though Hogarth’s series of paintings Marriage à la Mode also contributed), and occasionally even reordered the acts. On February 11, Hofmannsthal wrote to Strauss, “I have spent three quiet afternoons drafting the full and entirely original scenario for an opera, full of burlesque situations and characters, with lively action, pellucid almost like a pantomime. There are opportunities in it for lyrical passages, for fun and humor, even for a small ballet … It contains two big parts, one for baritone and another for a graceful girl dressed up as a man à la [Geraldine] Farrar or Mary Garden. Period: the old Vienna under the Empress Maria Theresa."

The ballet disappeared, and the baritone became the comic bass role of Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau. The graceful girl dressed up as a man turned into Octavian, the young nobleman who, almost by accident, becomes the Knight of the Rose after which the opera is titled. (Der Rosenkavalier replaced Ochs auf Lerchenau as the title a few months before the premiere.) Operagoers will notice something important missing from Hofmannsthal’s initial description—the Marschallin, Princess Werdenberg, who only gradually evolved into the central figure of the drama, and who has become one of the most beloved characters in all of opera.

By the middle of April, Hofmannsthal had sent Strauss the libretto of the opening scene. “Am impatiently waiting for the next installment,” Strauss wrote back. “The opening scene is delightful: It’ll set itself to music like oil and melted butter: I’m hatching it out already. You’re Da Ponte and Scribe rolled into one.”
Hofmannsthal was gratified by the composer’s reaction and promised the rest of the first act within a few days, but he warned, “Not all passages, of course, will be as ‘good’ to set to music as this first, purely lyrical one. There are bound to be sticky patches, too.” Then he added in a P.S.: “Do try and think of an old-fashioned Viennese waltz, sweet and yet saucy, which must pervade the whole of the last act.” There were, indeed, “sticky patches” to come. Strauss, ever the experienced man of the theater, was polite, but firm, in asking for some major revisions, for instance to the structure of Act II.

For *Der Rosenkavalier*, Hofmannsthal created a world that never existed, but seems entirely true, because of the libretto’s astonishing level of detail. “Every relationship between two people is unique; it is a highly individual and delicate, yet substantial thing. Understanding this and using it as the raw material of my creations is perhaps my thing,” he wrote to a friend. Elsewhere he observed, “Manners are walls, disguised with mirrors … manners are based on a profound conception of the necessity of isolation, while upholding—deliberately upholding—the illusion of contact.”

To this end, Hofmannsthal created a society that owes some of its elements to history but most to the poet’s fertile imagination. He developed a specific “speech costume” for each of his characters that instantly conveys not only their place within *Rosenkavalier’s* society, but how they view those with whom they interact. The nuances of this unique amalgam of German (with its polite and familiar verb forms), Viennese dialects, borrowed French terms, and occasional slang is largely lost on non-German speakers, but it inspired Strauss to create a score that matches the libretto in its attention to detail, while gloriously sweeping the audience into the enchanting world of the opera.

Sometimes the musical specifics are obvious: the bird songs at the beginning of the first scene or the flames appearing as the candles are lit at the beginning of Act III. Others reflect Strauss’s sense of humor: In Act I, when the Marschallin tells Baron Ochs that she had a migraine that morning, the oboe very softly (and slyly) plays a motif associated with the lovemaking that had gone on before the curtain was raised, leaving no doubt about exactly what that “migraine” was—and is instantly followed by the flutes and piccolo giggling at the oboe’s impishness. Later in the act, when the animal vendor announces that his lapdogs are house-trained, two flutes and the first violins play a staccato, descending chromatic scale of 16th notes, letting us know that’s not true.

But more important are the numerous occasions during which Strauss adds details to the characters through his music, such as when the Marschallin tells Octavian that one day he’ll meet a woman who is younger and prettier than she is. With his unerring sense of characterization, Strauss inserted a slight hesitation, two eighth-note rests, between “younger” and “and prettier,” deftly letting us know that it’s a little more difficult for the Marschallin to admit that a woman is prettier than to admit that she’s younger.
It was Strauss himself who added the two most famous words in the opera. Hofmannsthal’s libretto for the end of Act III moves directly from Faninal’s words, “That’s how young people are” to the second part of Sophie and Octavian’s duet. But Strauss understood it would be impossible for the opera’s most important figure to make her last appearance as a mere walk-on, so he added her response to Faninal’s observation, her beloved—and utterly perfect—“Ja, ja.”

Bringing this new level of detail in words and music to life on stage was quite beyond the skill of the resident stage director of the Dresden Court Opera, and the first rehearsal was a disaster. Strauss—without asking the permission of the theater—begged Max Reinhardt to come and save the day, something the head of the theater only discovered when he read it in the newspaper. Initially, Reinhardt was forbidden to set foot on stage, but there was such an obvious improvement after his first day in Dresden that he was given free rein. But even so, his name did not appear in the program. In gratitude for saving their opera, Strauss and Hofmannsthal wrote Ariadne auf Naxos for Reinhardt.

The first performance of Der Rosenkavalier was the most successful of Strauss’s career. At first, critics didn’t understand the new work, but the public adored it. Dresden gave it more than 50 times that first year and had to install a post office in the theater to handle ticket requests. The German railway put on special trains from Berlin to Dresden: round trip fare and an orchestra seat for 16 and a half marks. Ten days after that first performance, the New York Times devoted an entire page to the new opera under the headline “Richard Strauss Enters the Field of Comic Opera.” Readers were treated to photos of Alfred Roller’s costume designs and of characters on stage, three excerpts from the score (!), and several hundred words on the opera itself, as well as the furor it had created. This was on February 5, 1911, almost three years before the Met first presented the new work in the United States.

The morning of the premiere, Strauss was going over some last-minute details of the score with the conductor when suddenly they were interrupted by his wife, Pauline, who had arrived in town the evening before. “You’ve talked enough, Ricky, come along with me to Prager Strasse,” she ordered. “I have to buy something to put on my head.” Strauss obediently went along to Dresden’s most fashionable shopping district to shop for a hat. That evening Pauline took her place in her box wearing a spectacular gold turban. As one writer observed, it was “a victor’s crown, in every sense.”

—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.
The Cast

Gareth Morrell
CONDUCTOR (SOUTHPORT, ENGLAND)

This Season Der Rosenkavalier at the Met.

Met Appearances An assistant conductor since 1995, he has led performances of Lucia di Lammermoor (debut, 1999), Semiramide, Tosca, La Bohème, Aida, Don Giovanni, and Fidelio.


Angela Brower
MEZZO-SOPRANO (MESA, ARIZONA)

This Season Octavian in Der Rosenkavalier for her debut at the Met; Dorabella in Così fan tutte at Dutch National Opera; Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro in concert in Salzburg; the title role of Cendrillon and Mozart's Requiem in Klagenfurt, Austria; Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro, Zerlina in Don Giovanni, and Dorabella in Bordeaux; and Berg’s Sieben Frühe Lieder and Mahler’s Fourth Symphony with Germany’s Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie.

Career Highlights Between 2010 and 2016, she was a member of the ensemble at the Bavarian State Opera, where her roles have included Adalgisa in Norma, Dorabella, Octavian, Nicklausse / the Muse in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, Cherubino, Annio and Sesto in La Clemenza di Tito, the Composer in Ariadne auf Naxos, the title role of La Cenerentola, and Charlotte in Werther. Recent performances include Nicklausse in Stuttgart, Idamante in Idomeneo at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Octavian in Bogotá, the Composer in Baden-Baden, Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Annio at the Paris Opera. She has appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, Covent Garden, Salzburg Festival, San Francisco Opera, and with the Vienna Philharmonic and Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, among many others.
Katharine Goeldner
MEZZO-SOPRANO (SIGOURNEY, IOWA)

THIS SEASON  Annina in Der Rosenkavalier at the Met, Madame Larina in Eugene Onegin at Palm Beach Opera, and Suzuki in Madama Butterfly at Atlanta Opera.

MET APPEARANCES  The Marquise of Berkenfield in La Fille du Régiment, Giovanna Seymour in Anna Bolena, Stéphano in Roméo et Juliette, Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus, Nicklausse / the Muse in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, the Page in Salome, Ascanio in Benvenuto Cellini, Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro, and the Wardrobe Mistress / Schoolboy / Page in Lulu (debut, 2002).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Ma Joad in Ricky Ian Gordon’s The Grapes of Wrath and Madame Larina at Michigan Opera Theatre; Fricka in Die Walküre in concert in Augsburg, Germany; Brigitta in Die Tote Stadt in Toulouse; Jacqueline Onassis in David T. Little’s JFK in Montreal; Dalila in Samson et Dalila at Virginia Opera; and Ma Joad at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has appeared at Covent Garden, Dutch National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and New York City Opera, among others.

Golda Schultz
SOPRANO (BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA)

THIS SEASON  Sophie in Der Rosenkavalier and Clara in Porgy and Bess at the Met, Micaëla in Carmen at the Bavarian State Opera, Liū in Turandot at the Vienna State Opera, Madame Lidoine in Dialogues des Carmélites at the Glyndebourne Festival, and concert appearances with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES  Nannetta in Falstaff and Pamina in Die Zauberflöte (debut, 2017).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She was a member of the ensemble at the Bavarian State Opera, where her roles have included Liū, Pamina, Musetta in La Bohème, Freia in Das Rheingold, Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte, and Zerlina in Don Giovanni, among others. Recent performances include the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro in Zurich and at the Vienna State Opera, Clara in Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life at San Francisco Opera, and Sophie in Tokyo. She has also sung Vitellia in La Clemenza di Tito at the Salzburg Festival, Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro at La Scala, and the Countess at the Glyndebourne Festival. Between 2013 and 2014, she was a member of the State Theater in Klagenfurt, Austria.
Katie Van Kooten
SOPRANO (FERNDALE, WASHINGTON)

THIS SEASON The Marschallin in Der Rosenkavalier at the Met and Ellen Orford in Peter Grimes in Frankfurt.

MET APPEARANCES Magda in La Rondine and Marguerite in Faust (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has sung the Marschallin in concert with the Minnesota Orchestra; the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro at Arizona Opera and Atlanta Opera; Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni at the Dallas Opera and Opera Grand Rapids; Tatiana in Eugene Onegin, Elizabeth I in Maria Stuarda, Mimi in La Bohème, Ellen Orford, and Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream at Houston Grand Opera; Liù in Turandot at New Orleans Opera; Elettra in Idomeneo and Vitellia in La Clemenza di Tito in Frankfurt; the Countess and Mimi at Lyric Opera of Kansas City; Magda, Antonia in Les Contes d'Hoffmann, Pamina in Die Zauberflöte, Mimi, and Marguerite at Covent Garden; and Micaëla in Carmen under the direction of Seiji Ozawa for her Japanese operatic debut. She has also appeared in concert with the San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, among many others.

Thomas Ebenstein
TENOR (CARINTHIA, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON Valzacchi in Der Rosenkavalier for his debut at the Met; the First Jew in Salome, the Dancing Master in Ariadne auf Naxos, the Young Servant in Elektra, Froh in Das Rheingold, Basilio in Le Nozze di Figaro, Valzacchi, and Elemer in Arabella at the Vienna State Opera; and Jaquino in Fidelio in Hamburg.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2012, he has been a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera, where his roles have included the Four Servants in Les Contes d’Hoffmann, the Steersman in Der Fliegende Holländer, Scrivener in Khovanshchina, Kudrjáš in Kát’a Kabanová, Caliban in Thomas Adès's The Tempest, and Alfred in Die Fledermaus, among others. Between 2003 and 2012, he was a member of the ensemble at Berlin's Komische Oper, where he sang Pedrillo in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Jaquino, David in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Vašek in The Bartered Bride, and the Earl of Kent in Aribert Reimann’s Lear. He has also sung Pedrillo at the Salzburg Festival, the Dancing Master at the Bavarian State Opera, Valzacchi in Dresden, the Sailor in Tristan und Isolde in Baden-Baden, and Andres in Wozzeck in concert at Carnegie Hall.
Markus Eiche
BARITONE (SANKT GEORGEN IM SCHWARZWALD, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON  Faninal in Der Rosenkavalier for his debut at the Met, Luther in Krenek’s Karl V at the Bavarian State Opera, Kurwenal in Tristan und Isolde in concert in Tokyo, The Traveler / Elderly Fop / Old Gondolier / Hotel Manager / Hotel Barber / Leader of the Players / Voice of Dionysus in Death in Venice in Stuttgart, and Wolfram von Eschenbach in Tannhäuser and the King’s Herald in Lohengrin at the Bayreuth Festival.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Between 2001 and 2007, he was a member of the ensemble at Germany’s Mannheim National Theatre, and from 2007 to 2011, he was a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera. Recent performances include Count Vitelozzo Tamare in Schreker’s Die Gezeichneten in concert in Amsterdam; Faninal in Dresden and at the Vienna State Opera; Wolfram von Eschenbach in Hong Kong and Budapest; Donner in Das Rheingold in Seoul and at Covent Garden; and Sixtus Beckmesser in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Gunther in Götterdämmerung, Donner, the Count in Le Nozze di Figaro, and Faninal at the Bavarian State Opera.

Günther Groissböck
BASS (WAIDHOFEN, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON  Baron Ochs in Der Rosenkavalier at the Met; Vodnik in Rusalka in Vienna; Rocco in Fidelio, Kecal in The Bartered Bride, and the Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlo at the Bavarian State Opera; Hunding in Die Walküre in Madrid; Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in Paris; King Henry in Lohengrin in Barcelona; Rocco at the Vienna State Opera; Gurnemanz in Parsifal at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Wotan in the Ring cycle at the Bayreuth Festival.

MET APPEARANCES  Hunding, Fasolt in Das Rheingold, the Old Hebrew in Samson et Dalila, Baron Ochs, Don Fernando in Fidelio, Landgraf Hermann in Tannhäuser, Lodovico in Otello, Banquo in Macbeth, and Colline in La Bohème (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent performances include Veit Pogner in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg and Gurnemanz at the Bayreuth Festival, Veit Pogner in Wiesbaden, King Henry at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Vienna State Opera, Haydn’s Creation and Kaspar in Der Freischütz at La Scala, Fasolt at Covent Garden, Daland in Der Fliegende Holländer in Hamburg and in concert in Baden-Baden, and Gurnemanz at the Paris Opera.
The Cast CONTINUED

Matthew Polenzani
TENOR (Evanston, Illinois)

THIS SEASON The Italian Singer in Der Rosenkavalier, Macduff in Macbeth, Rodolfo in La Bohème, 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.