ALBAN BERG

WOZZECK

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION
William Kentridge

CO-DIRECTOR
Luc De Wit

PROJECTION DESIGNER
Catherine Meyburgh

SET DESIGNER
Sabine Theunissen

COSTUME DESIGNER
Greta Goiris

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Urs Schönebaum

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer, based on the play Woyzeck by Georg Büchner

Friday, December 27, 2019
8:00–9:40 PM

New Production Premiere

The production of Wozzeck was made possible by a gift from Robert L. Turner

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Salzburg Festival; the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto; and Opera Australia

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin
The 70th Metropolitan Opera performance of
ALBAN BERG’S
WOZZECK

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

THE CAPTAIN
Gerhard Siegel

WOZZECK
Peter Mattei

ANDRES
Andrew Staples DEBUT

MARIE
Elza van den Heever

MARGRETT
Tamara Mumford*

THE DOCTOR
Christian Van Horn

THE DRUM-MAJOR
Christopher Ventris

APPRENTICES
David Crawford
Miles Mykkanen DEBUT

THE FOOL
Brenton Ryan

A SOLDIER
Daniel Clark Smith

A TOWNSMAN
Gregory Warren

MARIE’S CHILD
Eliot Flowers

PUPPETEERS
Andrea Fabi
Gwyneth E. Larsen

ACTORS
Frank Colardo
Tina Mitchell

STAGE PIANO SOLO
Jonathan C. Kelly

This performance is being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 75 and streamed at metopera.org.

WOZZECK is presented without intermission.

Friday, December 27, 2019, 8:00–9:40PM
This evening’s performance is dedicated in memory of Nancy Jane Kilpatrick Wilbert, 1926–1975.

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Video Control  Kim Gunning
Assistant Video Editor  Snezana Marovic
Musical Preparation  Caren Levine*, Jonathan C. Kelly,
  Patrick Furrer, Bryan Wagorn*, and Zalman Kelber*
Assistant Stage Directors  Gregory Keller, Sarah Ina Meyers,
  and J. Knighten Smit
Met Titles  Christopher Bergen
Stage Band Conductor  J. David Jackson
Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo
German Coach  Marianne Barrett
Prompter  Caren Levine*
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  Lindemann Young Artist
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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
Germany, before the First World War. The soldier Wozzeck is working for the captain. The officer urges him to work more slowly, then tells him that he is a good man but lacks morality because he has an illegitimate child. Wozzeck replies that virtue is a luxury not meant for the poor.

Wozzeck and a fellow soldier, Andres, are carrying firewood in the fields. Wozzeck is frightened by visions: He hears noises and imagines the sinking sun as a fire setting the earth aflame. Suddenly, all is quiet.

Marie, who is the mother of Wozzeck’s child, and her neighbor Margret watch a military band pass by outside their window. Marie admires the handsome drum-major, and Margret mocks her. Alone with her young son, Marie sings him a lullaby. Wozzeck arrives and tells her about his visions, which he sees as an omen of evil things to come. Marie tries to comfort him, but he rushes off to the barracks without looking at his son. Overwhelmed by her own fears, Marie runs out of the room, leaving the child.

Wozzeck visits the doctor, who pays him to act as a subject in his pseudo-scientific research. Full of self-delusion about making a grand scientific discovery, the doctor asks Wozzeck about his diet. Wozzeck again brings up his visions, which the doctor dismisses as mere imagination.

On the street outside her door, the drum-major makes advances toward Marie. She resists at first, then gives in to him.

Act II
Marie is admiring the earrings that the drum major has given her. When Wozzeck enters, she tries to hide them, then claims that she found them in the street. Wozzeck is suspicious. He gives her the money that he has earned and leaves. Marie is overwhelmed by remorse.

The captain and the doctor meet in the street and talk morbidly of sickness and death. When Wozzeck passes by, they taunt him with allusions to Marie’s infidelity. Shocked, Wozzeck asks them not to make fun of the one thing in the world that is his. Then, he rushes off.

Wozzeck confronts Marie with his suspicions and tries to force her to confess. He is about to hit her, but she remains defiant, telling him that she’d rather have a knife in her belly than his hand on her.
Two drunken apprentices amuse the crowd in a beer garden. Wozzeck enters and sees Marie and the drum-major on the dance floor. A fool approaches Wozzeck and tells him that he smells blood. Wozzeck has a vision of people waltzing while covered with blood.

The same evening in the barracks, Wozzeck wakes to nightmarish memories of what happened in the beer garden. The drum major enters, drunk, and boasts about his conquest. The two men fight, and Wozzeck is knocked down.

**Act III**

Alone with her child, Marie reads from the Bible, first about the adulteress who was forgiven, then about Mary Magdalene. She begs God for mercy.

Marie and Wozzeck are walking together near a pond. Marie wants to hurry back to town, but Wozzeck makes her stay with him. He makes ironic remarks about her fidelity. When she attempts to escape, he draws a knife and kills her.

Wozzeck is drinking in a tavern, shouting wildly, and dancing with Margret. When she notices blood on his arm, he is unable to explain where it has come from and rushes out.

At the pond, Wozzeck searches for the knife and throws it into the water. Suddenly, he imagines that the moon will reveal his crime. He wades farther into the water to hide the knife in a safer place and to wash the blood off his hands. The doctor and captain, passing by, hear him drown.

Neighbor children playing in the street tell Marie’s son that his mother is dead. He does not understand and keeps singing and playing.

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**Berg on Demand**

Looking for more music by Alban Berg? Check out *Met Opera on Demand*, our online streaming service, to enjoy other outstanding performances from past Met seasons—including two gripping radio broadcasts of Wozzeck, conducted by James Levine, and the 2015 *Live in HD* transmission of William Kentridge’s riveting production of *Lulu*. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 700 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](http://metoperaondemand.org).
In Focus

Alban Berg

Wozzeck

Premiere: Staatsoper, Berlin, 1925
One of the emblematic achievements of the thriving artistic forces in Germany and Austria during the brief period between world wars, Wozzeck was a sensation and a scandal at its premiere. Remarkably, it has lost none of its power to fascinate, shock, and engage audiences, and its status as one of the defining musical works of the 20th century has not blunted its vitality. Wozzeck is the drama of a common soldier who, through relentless dehumanization and systematic humiliation, is driven to insanity and the murder of his mistress. Its subject matter resonated with the German public traumatized by the First World War and its aftermath, but the work’s scope reaches far beyond that, making it a monument to the alienation and angst of modern life. Berg’s score encapsulates the artistic ideals of Expressionism in music—emphasizing the unseen and the subconscious by focusing on the symbolic rather than the concrete. The characters’ highly charged, exaggerated words and music reveal the drama’s inner truth.

The Creators
Among the most visionary and influential composers of the 20th century, Alban Berg (1885–1935) came of age amid an explosion of artistic and intellectual creativity in Vienna. His vocal and instrumental writing merges the revolutionary techniques of Arnold Schoenberg with the grandeur of such late Romantic composers as Gustav Mahler. Wozzeck is the only opera Berg completed; Lulu was left unfinished at the time of his premature death. The libretto is Berg’s own close adaptation of the play Woyzeck by Georg Büchner (1813–1837). Büchner, who was a natural scientist and whose small oeuvre of dramatic and prose works became extremely influential after his early death, found inspiration for Woyzeck in an actual incident in 1821. He even based some of the dialogue on the historic Woyzeck’s actual words, as recorded in the medical inquiry prior to his trial for murdering his mistress.

The Setting
Berg did not specify a time or location for the opera. The background of Büchner’s play has led to the assumption of Leipzig, Germany, circa 1821 as an appropriate setting, but the work’s ideas are universal. In his new production, William Kentridge places the action in the more immediate lead-up to the First World War.
The Music
Atonality and whole-tone composition coexist in Berg’s score with moments of romanticism and melody. The vocal writing ranges from pure speech to declaimed speech with musical inflections to melodic singing. Recurring motifs occur but not in the strict Wagnerian sense of a musical phrase attached to a specific character or idea. The motifs in Wozzeck are often fragments of lines or even rhythms. There are suggestions of familiar sounds, such as the Military March (Act I, Scene 3) and the music of the tavern (Act III, Scene 3), but the music is distorted, creating a sense of parody. To provide a structural framework for his largely atonal composition, Berg used traditional musical forms as the basis for each act and scene, although most of these are not apparent when listening to the music. (The grotesque, pseudo-scientific world of the doctor, for example, is reflected in a passacaglia, a form whose most notable feature is a fixed, recurring bass line or theme running through the piece.) Among the most striking moments of the score—in fact, of the entire operatic repertoire—is the orchestral interlude following the scene of Marie’s murder (labeled “Invention on a pitch”): an enormous orchestral crescendo builds on the single note B, interrupted by a crashing chord and a rhythm played on the bass drum. A second crescendo on B suddenly vanishes as the curtain rises and the action resumes. Berg himself famously warned against mistaking the musicological intricacy of the score for the opera’s central point: “However thorough one’s knowledge of the opera’s musical forms,” he said, “from the curtain’s rise until its final fall no one in the audience should think of the various fugues, inventions, suite and sonata movements, variations, and passacaglias. Everyone should be filled only with the idea of the opera, an idea that far transcends the individual fate of Wozzeck.”

Met History
“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.
Alban Berg began preliminary work on *Wozzeck* in 1914 as World War I approached, then returned his full attention to the opera in 1917, as the conflagration raged. His experience of those years of conflict left an indelible mark on the score. Like many of his peers, including his former teacher Arnold Schoenberg, he served in the Austro-Hungarian Army, having been conscripted in August 1915. Considered fit for service, “like everybody else, without even being examined,” Berg began military training in Vienna before moving to Bruck an der Leitha, in Lower Austria, in October 1915.

Positioned on the Hungarian border, Bruck had been at the heart of military operations in the Habsburg lands since the Napoleonic Wars. It was a deeply foreboding place, which fellow cadet Jaroslav Hašek captured vividly in his 1923 novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*.

In the men’s huts, the soldiers shivered with cold, and in the officers’ quarters, they were opening the windows because of overheating. […] Down in Bruck an der Leitha shone the lights of the Imperial and Royal factory for tinned meat. Here they worked day and night and processed various kinds of offal. Because the wind blew from that quarter toward the alley in the military camp, it brought with it the stink of rotten sinews, hooves, trotters, and bones, which all went into the tinned soup.

Writing to his wife, Berg described the place as “hell” and quickly became ill due to primitive sanitary arrangements, as well as the hard beds and the perpetual winds off the Hungarian plain. By November, he had been consigned to the Reserve Hospital, following a complete physical breakdown. When he was examined the next day, Berg was found to have “bronchial asthma” and was consequently returned to Vienna, where he worked at the War Ministry for the rest of the conflict.

His experiences, not least those medical examinations, would have reminded Berg of a play he had seen in May 1914, just a month before the decisive assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo: Georg Büchner’s fragmentary drama *Woyzeck*. Written in 1837 and left incomplete upon Büchner’s death the same year, the play surfaced after Austrian author Karl Emil Franzos discovered the manuscript in 1875 and released his edition four years later.

Editing the play had not been easy, given Büchner’s miniscule handwriting and the bleaching of the ink over time—hence the misspelling of the protagonist’s name as Wozzeck (preserved by Berg). What had not faded, however, was the work itself. Offering a bold hybrid of naturalism and expressionism, the play, based on the downfall of a real-life Leipzig soldier, gained an avid following among the literary cognoscenti of the fin de siècle, including Gerhard Hauptmann and Frank Wedekind, as well as, later, Bertolt Brecht. The first production took
Berg, a voracious theatergoer since his teenage years, was present at the Vienna premiere, as recalled by his friend, the writer Paul Elbogen in 1981:

They played the drama for three hours without the smallest interruption in complete darkness. Indescribably excited and enthusiastic, I stood up amidst wild applause and met Alban Berg a few steps behind me. He was deathly pale and perspiring profusely. “What do you say?” he gasped, beside himself. “Isn’t it fantastic, incredible?” Then, already taking his leave, “someone must set it to music.”

Berg’s response to the play was as much intellectual as it was emotional. “It is not only the fate of this poor man, exploited and tormented by all the world, that touches me so deeply,” he wrote to Anton Webern, “but also the unheard-of intensity of mood in each individual scene.”

Berg took his libretto directly from Paul Landau’s revised 1909 edition of the play. He duly preserved Landau’s sequence of scenes, formulated out of the pile of papers Büchner had left behind, but also decided to omit passages in which ideas were repeated. All this Berg annotated directly into his copy of the play, complete with a cast list, voice types, and a “Scenarium,” detailing the division of the 15 scenes over three almost equal acts.

The composition itself, however, was much more challenging. “The problem,” Berg wrote, “became more musical than literary and had to be solved by the laws of musical structure rather than by the rules of dramaturgy.” And so he invoked a whole host of established musical forms: five character pieces for Act I; a five-movement symphony for Act II; and six inventions for Act III. Though these processes may seem to indicate a level of abstraction and distance from the expressive emotion of the drama, Berg’s lifelong fascination with symmetry, palindromes, and retrogrades emphasizes instead his strong personal attachment to Wozzeck.

By the summer of 1918, he confided in Webern that he was finally making progress with the score and to his wife Helene that he had, at last, found the right musical expression for one of Wozzeck’s key entrances. Berg’s confidence, however, proved premature; three years later, in June 1921, he wrote that Act III, Scene 1, “still won’t quite come.” Perhaps Schoenberg, who sent an encouraging letter at the time, had been right in his initial skepticism. “I was greatly surprised when this soft-hearted, timid young man had the courage to engage in a venture which seemed to invite misfortune,” he explained: “to compose Wozzeck, a drama of such extraordinary tragedy that seemed forbidding to music.”

Ever the teacher, Schoenberg nonetheless admitted that Berg succeeded—the score was finally completed in April 1922—because of his former pupil’s unwavering faithfulness to his ideas (just as he had been faithful to Schoenberg). And yet, as Bernard Grun noted in his edition of the composer’s letters to
his wife, “Berg wanted to compose Wozzeck without Schoenberg’s personal influence and was afraid that if Schoenberg returned to Vienna, he would expect to be continually shown the score as it progressed—which Berg would find impossible to refuse.” Distance, thanks to Schoenberg’s own military service and postwar travels, gave Berg the space he required and the completion of Wozzeck became an act of personal release.

The opera’s pumping heart is to be found in Berg’s juxtaposition of the 15 scenes and the orchestral interludes. The audience’s emotions constantly shift between the ostensible objectivity of the former, characterized by the music’s atonality and the brutal concision of the text, and the more subjective commentaries of the latter. Throughout, Berg uses dissonance for its power to shock, challenging our aural resistance—dramatic violence begets musical violence—but he also leads us by the hand, telling us when we should be appalled and when we should reach out to the poor folk pictured therein. That is certainly the case with what he had found as the initially tricky opening to Act III, which developed into a tableau of unbearable solo-string and voice-led poignancy.

As well as pitying Marie, the focus of that scene, Berg clearly saw himself in Wozzeck. The soldier’s eerily visionary moments, gazing at the moon or rooting through the toadstools, may well echo the composer’s own interests in the occult. And Berg’s experiences of life as a soldier, of course, provided another crucial link, as he wrote to his wife in August 1918: “There is a bit of me in his character, since I have been spending these war years just as dependent on people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, in fact humiliated. Still, perhaps, but for this, that musical expression wouldn’t have occurred to me.” Consequently, Berg included musical ciphers in Wozzeck’s medical examination: In parallel to the Doctor’s initial A–E-flat (written in German as A and Es, or S), which some have seen to represent the overly dogmatic Arnold Schoenberg, Wozzeck’s first words revolve around A and B-flat, for Alban Berg (B-flat is written as B in German), looking ahead to similar self-portraits in the composer’s Lyrische Suite and, as Alwa, in Lulu.

It is entirely because of Berg’s “soft-hearted” approach that the opera proved so potent. Someone more hard-hearted might not have imbued the adaptation with the same level of self-identification, manifest in both its music and structural finesse. Berg had registered his horror at the drama while finding expression for it, using his own humiliation during the war to artistic ends. But as Wozzeck turns from submission to mortal violence in Act III, Berg and his protagonist part ways. Appalled by Wozzeck’s actions, Berg duly registers his dismay at the soldier’s world.

The final two episodes in the drama provide that commentary. First comes an intense, Mahlerian interlude (based on an earlier piano piece), which Berg described in his 1929 “lecture on Wozzeck”:
This interlude is to be understood as an “Epilogue” following Wozzeck’s suicide, as a confession of the author who now steps outside the dramatic action on the stage. Indeed, it is, as it were, an appeal to humanity through its representatives, the audience. From a musical standpoint, this final orchestral interlude represents a thematic development of all the important musical ideas related to Wozzeck.

Its predominantly tonal language, centered on the tragic key of D minor—just as each of the other scenes in Act III revolves around an individual musical element—provides a direct bridge between “the author” and humanity’s “representatives.” Furthermore, the reiteration of the opera’s most crucial leitmotifs, including Wozzeck’s “Wir arme Leut” (“Poor folk like us”), blaring out, fortissimo, on the trombones, binds the audience to the drama’s tragic outcome. And then, seeing Wozzeck and Marie’s child alone, taunted by his own peers, we are all too aware that history will repeat itself.

In just 90 minutes, Berg’s first opera brings together the individual and the collective, the subjective and the objective, in vertiginous synthesis. And that fusion allows Büchner’s tale to speak as effortlessly to his own time and to the hostilities that decided the ruination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—as well as the treacherous interwar years in which it first appeared—as it does to the world today. Berg’s “appeal to humanity” has lost none of its power, even if its warning often falls on deaf ears.

—Gavin Plumley

Gavin Plumley specializes in the music and culture of Central Europe, notably Berg’s life and works, appears frequently on BBC Radio 3, and is the commissioning editor of English-language programme notes for the Salzburg Festival.
The Cast and Creative Team

Yannick Nézet-Séguin
CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON  Wozzeck, Turandot, Werther, and the New Year’s Eve Gala at the Met; Met Orchestra
Concerts at Carnegie Hall, where he is a Perspectives Artist; Fidelio in concert in Montreal; Die
Frau ohne Schatten in concert in Paris; Schubert’s Winterreise with Joyce DiDonato in Quebec
and New York; and numerous concert appearances in North America and Europe.

MET APPEARANCES  Since his 2009 debut leading Carmen, he has conducted nearly 100
performances of 11 operas, including Dialogues des Carmélites, Pelléas et Mélisande, La
Traviata, Elektra, Parsifal, and Der Fliegende Holländer.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  He is in his second season as the Met’s Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music
Director. He has served as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012 and artistic
director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2018, he became
honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director for
ten seasons, and in 2016, he was named an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of
Europe. Between 2008 and 2014, he was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic
Orchestra. He has also led performances in Baden-Baden and at the Vienna State Opera, La
Scala, Covent Garden, and Salzburg Festival.

William Kentridge
DIRECTOR (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

THIS SEASON  Wozzeck at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES  Lulu and The Nose (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  A prolific visual artist, animator, filmmaker, and stage director, he has
recently created productions of Monteverdi’s Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria with Handspring
Puppet Company, Wozzeck at Opera Australia and the Salzburg Festival, Die Zauberflöte
in Tokyo, and Lulu in Rome and at English National Opera. Other recent projects include To
What End as part of Times Square’s Midnight Moment series, The Head and the Load at the Park
Avenue Armory, Notes on a Model Opera at Johannesburg’s Goodman Gallery, and The Refusal
of Time, made for Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, which has also been seen at MAXXI in
version of Schubert’s Winterreise opened at the Vienna Festival, followed by performances at
the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Holland Festival, and Lincoln Center’s White Light Festival. He was
recently awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts by Yale University, received an Honorary
Doctorate in Literature from the University of Cape Town, and was appointed Honorary
Academician of London’s Royal Academy.

**DEC 13, 17, 20, 23, 28 JAN 1, 4 mat**

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
Luc De Wit
CO-DIRECTOR (BRUSSELS, BELGIUM)

This Season  Wozzeck at the Met.

Met Appearances  Lulu and The Nose (debut, 2010).

Career Highlights  He is an actor, director, and drama teacher, but since 1995, he has focused mainly on directing operas. Since 2005, he has collaborated with William Kentridge and often directs revivals of his productions, including Die Zauberflöte (originally at Brussels’s La Monnaie), Monteverdi’s Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria, The Nose, Lulu, and Büchner’s Woyzeck. In 2012, he worked with Kentridge and composer Philip Miller on the chamber opera Refuse the Hour. The following year, he worked as movement director on Guy Cassier’s production of Götterdämmerung at Staatsoper Berlin and La Scala, and that same year, he co-directed Die Zauberflöte with Pierrick Sorin in Lyon. In 2017, he co-directed Wozzeck with Kentridge at the Salzburg Festival, and in 2018, he collaborated with the director on The Head and the Load at London’s Tate Modern and the Park Avenue Armory. He also teaches regularly at theater and music-theater colleges and has given workshops for actors, singers, directors, and set designers. He currently teaches at the École Lassaad International School of Theatre in Brussels.

Catherine Meyburgh
PROJECTION DESIGNER (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

This Season  Wozzeck at the Met.

Met Appearances  Projection Designer for Lulu and Video Compositor and Editor for The Nose (debut, 2010).

Career Highlights  She is a film maker and projection designer and has collaborated with William Kentridge on video projections for The Head and the Load (Park Avenue Armory and London’s Tate Modern), Wozzeck (the Salzburg Festival and Opera Australia), The Refusal of Time (for Documenta 13 in Germany and seen in numerous cities on tour), Die Zauberflöte (Brooklyn Academy of Music, Tokyo, Brussels, Paris, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and La Scala), Monteverdi’s Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria, Ubu and the Truth Commission, Zeno at 4 AM, and Lulu (Dutch National Opera). She collaborated with composer Philip Miller and artist Gerhard Marx on REwind: A Cantata for Voice and Tape and Testimony (Venice Biennale 2013). She has worked in film as a director, producer, editor and/or co-director for more than 20 years on projects including Dying for Gold, Kentridge and Dumas in Conversation, The Glow of White Women, The Gugulethu Seven, Angola: Saudades from the One Who Loves You, Sophiatown, Yizo Yizo, Heartlines, Taste of Rain, and Gugu and Andile.
THE GERSHWINS’

PORGY AND BESS

BY GEORGE GERSHWIN, DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD, AND IRA GERSHWIN

“A Porgy of its time that speaks to ours” (Washington Post). The Met’s historic new production of America’s greatest opera returns after a sold-out run in the fall. Bass-baritone Eric Owens and soprano Angel Blue star as the title couple—with three additional performances just added in February!

JAN 8, 11, 15, 18, 24, 28 FEB 1 mat, 4, 12, 15

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
Sabine Theunissen
SET DESIGNER (BRUSSELS, BELGIUM)


MET APPEARANCES  Lulu and The Nose (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She studied architecture in Brussels and Seville and since 1995, has been a set assistant at Brussels’s La Monnaie, where she has worked on productions including Il Turco in Italia, Pelléas et Mélisande, Khovanshchina, The Turn of the Screw, Otello, La Cenerentola, Tosca, La Damnation de Faust, Così fan tutte, Monteverdi’s Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria (directed by William Kentridge), Alceste, and Giulio Cesare, among many others. From 1992 to 1994, she was a set assistant at La Scala working on productions of Don Carlo, Don Giovanni, Falstaff, Fedora, and Weber’s Oberon. Recent work includes Wozzeck at Opera Australia and the Salzburg Festival, Waiting for the Sibyl in Rome, The Head and the Load at London’s Tate Modern, Lulu in Rome and at English National Opera, and Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream (directed by Hélène Theunissen) in Brussels. She has also designed exhibitions in New York, Beijing, Seoul, Barcelona, Brussels, Sydney, London, Cape Town, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, among others.

Greta Goiris
COSTUME DESIGNER (GLABBEEK, BELGIUM)

THIS SEASON  Wozzeck at the Met and Don Carlos in Antwerp.

MET APPEARANCES  Lulu and The Nose (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Her work with director Jacques Delcuverlie includes costumes for Rwanda 1994 and Anathème for the Avignon Festival and La Grande Imprecation, La Mère, Andromaque, The Barber of Seville, and La Mouette for the National Theatre in Brussels. Among her collaborations with Dutch director Johan Simons are costumes for Fidelio at the Paris Opera, Bluebeard’s Castle at the Salzburg Festival, Radetzkymarsch at Vienna’s Burgtheater, Sentimenti and Life is a Dream for Germany’s Ruhrrriennale, Hannibal for the Stuttgart State Theatre, Bacchanten for Brussels’s Kunsten Arts Festival, and Oresteia for Amsterdam’s Toneelgroep. In 2016, she created costumes for Rameau’s Les Indes Galantes, directed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, at the Bavarian State Opera. In 2008, she created costumes for Naar Damascus, directed by Pierre Audi. At Brussels’s La Monnaie, she designed costumes for Francesco Provenzale’s opera La Stellidaura Vendicante, directed by Philippe Sireuil, and in 2005, she created costumes for William Kentridge’s staging of Die Zauberflöte, which has been seen at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, La Monnaie, and in Aix-en-Provence and Tokyo.

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GIACOMO PUCCINI

LA BOHÈME

The most-performed production in Met history, Franco Zeffirelli’s breathtaking staging returns with soprano Maria Agresta and tenor Roberto Alagna as the bohemian lovers Mimi and Rodolfo. Marco Armiliato conducts.

JAN 9, 12 mat, 17, 21, 25

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

**Urs Schönebaum**
LIGHTING DESIGNER (MUNICH, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** Wozzeck at the Met, the world premiere of Chaya Czernowin’s *Heart Chamber* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the world premiere of *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* at the Bavarian State Opera

**MET APPEARANCES** Lulu and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** His work includes nearly 150 productions at theaters including Paris’s Bastille Opera, Palais Garnier, Comédie Française, and Théâtre du Châtelet; Covent Garden; Brussels’s La Monnaie; Opera de Lyon; Berlin’s Staatsoper, Schaubühne, and Deutsches Theater; Munich’s Bavarian State Opera and Residenztheater; Stockholm’s Royal Dramatic Theatre; Oslo’s Det Norske Teatret; Rome Opera; Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre; Beijing’s NCPA and Poly Theater; the Sydney Opera House; Dutch National Opera; Madrid’s Teatro Real; as well as festivals in Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Bayreuth, and Vienna. He regularly works with directors William Kentridge, Thomas Ostermeier, Pierre Audi, Michael Haneke, La Fura dels Baus, and Sacha Waltz and was a longtime collaborator of Robert Wilson. He designed and directed Mathis Nitschke’s *Jetzt, What Next?*, and *Happy Happy* in Montpellier, and he created the set and lighting design for Ginastera’s *Bomarzo* in Madrid and the 15-hour Stockhausen cycle *Aus Licht* for Amsterdam’s Holland Festival.

**Elza van den Heever**
SOPRANO (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** Marie in Wozzeck at the Met, Julia in Spontini’s *La Vestale* in Vienna, the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Dutch National Opera and in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonore in *Fidelio* in concert with the Orchestre de Paris, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Zurich, Verdi’s Requiem with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mahler’s Eighth Symphony at the Bavarian State Opera, and a Met Orchestra concert at Carnegie Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Elizabeth I in *Maria Stuarda* (debut, 2012), and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the title role of *Norma* and Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in Frankfurt, Chrysothemis at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Elsa at the Vienna State Opera, Leonore in Zurich, the title role of *Alcina* at the Santa Fe Opera, and Norma at the Dallas Opera and Canadian Opera Company. Between 2008 and 2013, she was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt.

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Two extraordinary sopranos—Aleksandra Kurzak and Lisette Oropesa—share the role of Verdi’s beloved heroine Violetta, in Michael Mayer’s sumptuous staging. The remarkable rotating cast also features Dmytro Popov, Piero Pretti, Quinn Kelsey, and Luca Salsi, with Karel Mark Chichon and Bertrand de Billy on the podium.

**JAN** 10, 14, 18 mat, 23, 26 mat, 31  **FEB** 3, 7, 26, 29  **MAR** 5, 9, 13, 19

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
This season Margret in Wozzeck at the Met and concert appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

**Met Appearances** Since her 2006 debut as Laura in Luisa Miller, she has sung 175 performances of 19 roles, including Flosshilde in the Ring cycle, the Third Lady in The Magic Flute and Die Zauberflöte, the Pilgrim in Kaija Saariaho’s L’Amour de Loin, Smeaton in Anna Bolena, Margret, Pauline in The Queen of Spades, the Third Secretary in John Adams’s Nixon in China, Mavra Kuzminichna / Matryosha in War and Peace, Lola in Cavalleria Rusticana, and Maddalena in Rigoletto.

**Career Highlights** Recent performances include Queen Gertrude in the world premiere of Poul Ruders’s The Thirteenth Child at the Santa Fe Opera and the title role of Rossini’s Tancredi with Teatro Nuovo. She has also appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, Dallas Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Glimmerglass Festival, Gotham Chamber Opera, and in concert with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, and Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar, among others. She is a graduate of the Met’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

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**Tamara Mumford**
**Mezzo-Soprano (Sandy, Utah)**

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**Peter Mattei**
**Baritone (Piteå, Sweden)**
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.
Gerhard Siegel
TENOR (TROSTBERG, GERMANY)

This Season
The Captain in Wozzeck at the Met; Florestan in Fidelio in Chemnitz, Germany; Piet vom Fass in Ligeti’s Le Grand Macabre in Dresden; Mime in the Ring cycle at the Paris Opera; and Scrivener in Khovanshchina at Staatsoper Berlin.

Met Appearances
Mime (debut, 2004), the Witch in Hansel and Gretel, Herod in Salome, and the Captain.

Career Highlights
Recent performances include the Emperor in Die Frau ohne Schatten in concert at Switzerland’s Verbier Festival; Mime in Budapest, Dresden, Chemnitz, and in concert at the Edinburgh International Festival; Siegmund in Die Walküre in concert in Augsburg, Germany; the Witch and Mime at Covent Garden; Herod in Salome in Graz, Zurich, and at the Hungarian State Opera and Staatsoper Berlin; Tristan in Tristan und Isolde in concert with the Cleveland Orchestra; and the Captain at the Salzburg Festival. He has also sung Herod in Stuttgart, at the Vienna State Opera, and in concert at the Verbier Festival; Tristan in Gelsenkirchen, Germany; Mime at the Bayreuth Festival and in Barcelona and Cologne; and the Captain at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, and in Stuttgart and Madrid.

Andrew Staples
TENOR (LONDON, ENGLAND)

This Season
Andres in Wozzeck for his debut at the Met, the title role of Idomeneo at Staatsoper Berlin, Tichon in Káťa Kabanová in Rome, Nicías in Thaïs in concert with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Britten’s Les Illuminations with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romand, and Mahler’s Eighth Symphony at the Hamburg International Music Festival.

Career Highlights
Recent performances include Tichon, Froh in Das Rheingold, Jaquino in Fidelio, Flaman in Capriccio, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Artabenes in Arne’s Artaxerxes, and Narraboth in Salome at Covent Garden; Jonathan in Handel’s Saul in Vienna; Fenton in Falstaff in concert in Paris and with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; Faust in La Damnation de Faust at New Zealand Opera; Narraboth in concert at Switzerland’s Verbier Festival; and Tamino in Die Zauberflöte at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival and Lucerne Festival; in Prague, Brussels, and Hamburg; and with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, among others.

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Christian Van Horn
BASS-BARITONE (ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON The Doctor in Wozzeck, Colline in La Bohème, Alidoro in La Cenerentola, and the New Year’s Eve Gala at the Met; Claggart in Billy Budd and Silva in Ernani at San Francisco Opera; Walter in Luisa Miller at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Creon in Stravinsky’s Oedipus Rex in concert with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Publio in La Clemenza di Tito, Colline, the title role of Mefistofele, Julio in Thomas Adès’s The Exterminating Angel, the Speaker in Die Zauberflöte, and Pistola in Falstaff (debut, 2013).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Zoroastro in Handel’s Orlando at San Francisco Opera; Escamillo in Carmen at the Bavarian State Opera, Narbal in Les Troyens at the Paris Opera, Raimondo in Lucia di Lammermoor at Opera Philadelphia, the Emperor in Stravinsky’s The Nightingale and Other Short Fables at the Canadian Opera Company, and Méphistophélès in Faust at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also sung Melisso in Handel’s Alcina and Raimondo at the Santa Fe Opera, Oroveso in Norma at the Dallas Opera, the Four Villains in Les Contes d’Hoffmann at LA Opera, and Escamillo and Narbal at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Christopher Ventris
TENOR (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON The Drum-Major in Wozzeck at the Met; Tristan in Tristan und Isolde at the Royal Danish Opera; Siegmund in Die Walküre in Madrid and Lisbon, at the Icelandic Opera, and in concert with the Dresden Philharmonic; and the title role of Parsifal in Hamburg.

MET APPEARANCES Steva in Jenůfa (debut, 2003).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Tristan in Brussels; Siegmund, Max in Der Freischütz, the title role of Lohengrin, Parsifal, and Andrey Khovansky in Khovanshchina at the Vienna State Opera; Florestan in Fidelio in Hamburg; and Paul Ackermann in Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny in Zurich. He has also sung the title role of Peter Grimes in Zurich and at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Parsifal at the Bayreuth Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, San Francisco Opera, and in Zurich; Max at La Scala; Siegmund at the Bayreuth Festival and Washington National Opera; the title role of Wagner’s Rienzi at the Salzburg Festival; the title role of Tannhäuser at the Paris Opera; Lohengrin in Geneva, Madrid, and at the Dallas Opera; Florestan at Washington National Opera; and Sergei in Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk in Geneva, Madrid, and Brussels.