

RICHARD STRAUSS

# ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

CONDUCTOR

Marek Janowski

PRODUCTION

Elijah Moshinsky

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

Michael Yeargan

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gil Wechsler

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR

Stephen Pickover

Opera in prologue and one act

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Saturday, March 12, 2022

1:00–4:00PM

The production of *Ariadne auf Naxos* 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.

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Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

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# The Metropolitan Opera

2021-22 SEASON

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The 95th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
RICHARD STRAUSS'S

## ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

CONDUCTOR  
Marek Janowski

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

THE MUSIC MASTER  
Johannes Martin Kränzle

THE DANCING MASTER  
Brenton Ryan

THE MAJOR-DOMO  
Wolfgang Brendel

NAJADE  
Deanna Breiwick

A LACKEY  
Patrick Carfizzi

DRYADE  
Tamara Mumford\*

AN OFFICER  
Thomas Capobianco

ECHO  
Maureen McKay

THE COMPOSER  
Isabel Leonard

HARLEKIN  
Sean Michael Plumb

THE TENOR / BACCHUS  
Brandon Jovanovich

TRUFFALDIN  
Ryan Speedo Green\*

A WIGMAKER  
Philip Cokorinos

SCARAMUCCIO  
Alok Kumar

ZERBINETTA  
Brenda Rae

BRIGHELLA  
Miles Mykkanen

THE PRIMA DONNA / ARIADNE  
Lise Davidsen

PIANO SOLO  
Bryan Wagorn\*

Saturday, March 12, 2022, 1:00–4:00PM

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Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, J. David Jackson,  
Bradley Moore\***, and **Bryan Wagorn\***

Assistant Stage Directors **Mirabelle Ordinaire** and  
**J. Knighten Smit**

Intimacy Direction **Rocio Mendez**

German Coach **Nils Neubert**

Prompter **Donna Racik**

Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**

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usher at intermission.

# Synopsis

## Prologue

*Vienna, 18th century.* Backstage at the private theater in the house of the richest man in Vienna, preparations are in progress for the performance of a new opera seria, *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The major-domo enters to inform the music master that, immediately after the opera, an Italian comedy will be performed, followed by a fireworks display in the garden. The outraged music master replies that the composer, his young pupil, will never tolerate that, but the major-domo is unimpressed by his objections and leaves. When the composer appears, hoping for a last-minute rehearsal, a disdainful servant tells him that the musicians are still playing dinner music. Suddenly, the tenor rushes in from his dressing room, arguing with the wigmaker. The prima donna furiously comments on the presence of the comedy troupe and their leading lady, Zerbinetta. In the middle of the confusion, the major-domo returns with an announcement: In order for the fireworks to begin on time, the opera and the comedy are to be performed simultaneously.

General consternation soon gives way to practical reactions. The dancing master suggests cutting the opera's score. The music master persuades the despairing composer to do so, while the two lead singers independently urge him to abridge the other's part. Meanwhile, Zerbinetta gives her troupe a briefing on the opera's plot. Ariadne, they are told, has been abandoned by her lover Theseus on the island of Naxos, where she now waits for death. Zerbinetta, however, claims that all Ariadne really needs is a new lover. When the composer vehemently disagrees, Zerbinetta begins to flirt with him. Suddenly, the young man finds new hope. Filled with love and enthusiasm for his work, he passionately declares music the greatest of all the arts. But when he catches sight of the comedians, ready to go on stage, he realizes with horror what he has agreed to. He blames the music master for the artistic debacle and runs off.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:50PM)

## The Opera

*The Ariadne myth tells how Prince Theseus of Athens set out for Crete to kill the Minotaur, a creature half man, half bull, who was concealed in a labyrinth. Princess Ariadne of Crete fell in love with Theseus and gave him a ball of thread that enabled him to find his way out of the labyrinth after he had killed the Minotaur. When Theseus left Crete, he took Ariadne with him as his bride. During their voyage home, they stopped at the island of Naxos. While Ariadne*

was asleep, Theseus slipped away and continued his journey to Athens without her. The opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* begins at this point.

Ariadne is alone in front of her cave. Three nymphs look on and lament her fate. Watching from the wings, the comedians are doubtful whether they will be able to cheer her up. Ariadne recalls her love for Theseus, then imagines herself as a chaste girl, awaiting death. Harlekin tries to divert her with a song, but Ariadne ignores him. As if in a trance, she resolves to await Hermes, messenger of death. He will take her to another world, where everything is pure. When the comedians' efforts continue to fail, Zerbinetta finally addresses Ariadne directly, woman to woman, explaining to her the human need to change an old love for a new. Insulted, Ariadne leaves. After Zerbinetta has finished her speech, her colleagues leap back onto the scene, competing for her attention. Zerbinetta gives in to Harlekin's comic protestations of love and the comedians exit.

The nymphs announce the approach of a ship: It carries the young god Bacchus, who has escaped the enchantress Circe. Bacchus's voice is heard in the distance, and Ariadne prepares to greet her visitor, whom she thinks must be death at last. When he appears, she at first mistakes him for Theseus come back to her, but he majestically proclaims his godhood. Entranced by Ariadne's beauty, Bacchus tells her that he would sooner see the stars vanish than give her up. Reconciled to a new existence, Ariadne joins Bacchus as they ascend to the heavens. Zerbinetta sneaks in to have the last word: "When a new god comes along, we're dumbstruck."



## *Ariadne auf Naxos* on Demand

Looking for more *Ariadne auf Naxos*? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy outstanding performances from past Met seasons, including a legendary 1988 telecast starring Jessye Norman as Ariadne, one of her signature roles, and Kathleen Battle as her comic foil, Zerbinetta. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 750 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](https://metoperaondemand.org).

*Richard Strauss*

# Ariadne auf Naxos

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*Premiere: Hoftheater, Stuttgart, 1912 (original version);  
Hofoper, Vienna, 1916 (revised version)*

Richard Strauss's operas cover a wide spectrum of styles, from tragic and heroic (*Elektra*) to comic and grand (*Der Rosenkavalier*) to intimate (*Capriccio*). In *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the composer and his librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, hit on a formula that allowed them to express several aspects of operatic storytelling in a single work. A prologue, set in the house of an unspecified "richest man in Vienna" in the 18th century, shows preparations for a great party. There is to be a serious opera on the subject of Ariadne from Greek mythology and a light entertainment by an Italian commedia dell'arte troupe, followed by fireworks. But the host upsets everything (and everybody) by announcing that, to save time, the clown show and the opera are to be performed simultaneously. The second half of *Ariadne*, the "opera" itself, presents the resulting combination of lofty and lowbrow entertainments. Comedy and myth complement each other as the practical flirtatiousness of the comedienne Zerbinetta contrasts with the morbid sentiments of Ariadne. Strauss's talents for both witty realism and soaring melody flourish throughout the work, in both the true-to-life prologue and in the subsequent dreamlike opera.

### *The Creators*

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, *Salome* (1905) caused a theatrical sensation, and the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to the stage. His next opera, *Elektra* (1909), was his first collaboration with 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 last 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*

*Ariadne*'s 18th-century Viennese setting is not as exhaustively mined as it is in Strauss and Hofmannsthal's previous opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*. It is, however, an important background feature: The nostalgia for a legendary Old Vienna adds an additional layer of fantasy to the myths unfolding on the stage.

## *The Music*

After the gargantuan symphonic scale of *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, Strauss telescoped his symphonic powers into an ensemble of 37 players for *Ariadne auf Naxos*. This proved a perfect accompaniment to the conversational tone of the prologue as well as to the lyrical moments of the second half. For the dramatic climax of the final tenor-soprano duet, the composer draws an astonishingly powerful sound from this small-scaled ensemble. The entrance of the pompous Major-Domo (a speaking role) in the prologue is ironically introduced by an orchestral quote of the doltish giants' music from Wagner's *Ring*. The prologue also contains an aria for the Composer, a ravishing piece of music that is both a parody of, and an homage to, the lofty ideals of the dedicated artist. The second half includes some of Strauss's most atmospheric music, especially in the scenes with the three nymphs who serenade the disconsolate Ariadne on her island prison. Ariadne herself delivers one of Strauss's most magnificent solos for the soprano voice, a soaring aria about her longing for death. In the spirit of this piece, however, this is followed by buoyant music for the commedia dell'arte troupe, including plenty of opportunity for physical comedy. But these comedians also sing, and their leader, Zerbinetta, has one of the most remarkable solos in all opera: Counterbalancing Ariadne's serious monologue, she sings an extended aria of fiendishly difficult coloratura and dizzying high notes that is as challenging to the singer as it is gratifying to the audience.

## *Met History*

*Ariadne auf Naxos* arrived at the Met in 1962, with Karl Böhm conducting Leonie Rysanek, Gianna D'Angelo, Kerstin Meyer, and Jess Thomas. Later, Lisa della Casa (1963–64) and Montserrat Caballé (1976) appeared in the title role. Roberta Peters (1963–64), Reri Grist (1970), and Kathleen Battle (1987–88) all sang Zerbinetta, and Elisabeth Söderström (1964), Evelyn Lear (1970), and Tatiana Troyanos (1976–88) sang the Composer. The current production by Elijah Moshinsky, designed by Michael Yeagan, premiered in 1993 with Jessye Norman as Ariadne, Ruth Ann Swenson as Zerbinetta, Susanne Mentzer as the Composer, Thomas Moser in his Met debut as Bacchus, and Ion Marin conducting. Memorable appearances since have included Deborah Voigt (1993–2003) and Nina Stemme (2010) in the title role, Natalie Dessay (1997 and 2003) and Diana Damrau (2005) as Zerbinetta, and Susan Graham (2005) and Joyce DiDonato (2011) as the Composer. Teresa Stratas appeared in both productions as the Composer in eight performances between 1963 and 1994, and James Levine conducted *Ariadne* 41 times between 1976 and 2003.

## Program Note

According to librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Ariadne auf Naxos* was intended to be a mere “divertissement,” “a trifle” to work on with composer Richard Strauss before the two of them again collaborated on “something important” following their success with *Der Rosenkavalier*. The “important” project would be *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, but it was the “trifle” that would result in bitter misunderstandings between the two men and strain their relationship almost to the breaking point.

The pair were enormously grateful to director Max Reinhardt for stepping in and rescuing the *Rosenkavalier* premiere when the resident stage director of the Dresden Court Opera turned out to be inept. Reinhardt received no official recognition for his efforts, but both Strauss and Hofmannsthal realized that he had utterly transformed the cast (“a magician in the truest sense” Hofmannsthal wrote to a friend). In appreciation, they wanted to write something for him and his troupe at Berlin’s Kleines Deutsches Theater. Hofmannsthal came up with the idea of translating and adapting Molière’s comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (*Der Bürger als Edelmann* in German). But at the end of the play, instead of the Turkish ceremony that concluded Molière’s original, Hofmannsthal’s “bourgeois gentleman” would offer his guests the opera *Ariadne*: “a 30-minute opera for small chamber orchestra” that combined “heroic mythological figures in 18th-century costumes” with commedia dell’arte characters “representing the buffo element which is throughout interwoven with the heroic.”

Strauss was fully on board with writing something for Reinhardt, but he was cautious about *Ariadne*, telling Hofmannsthal that it “may turn out very pretty. However, as the dramatic framework is rather thin, everything will depend on the poetic execution. But with you, one doesn’t have to worry about flowing verse.” At that point, he envisioned *Ariadne* as a contralto and Bacchus as a lyric tenor, rather than the soprano and more dramatic tenor they became. But from the first, he knew what he wanted in *Zerbinetta*. “Star role” he noted under her name. “High coloratura soprano (Kurtz, Hempel, Tetrzini).” And he described her number as “great coloratura aria and andante, then rondo, theme and variations, and all coloratura tricks ... a pièce de résistance.” He also suggested that his introverted librettist call Selma Kurtz, the darling of the Vienna Court Opera, and “let her sing to you.” Hofmannsthal did not call Kurtz and pointed out how impractical it would be to have singers like those Strauss mentioned involved since their fee “would swallow up half of Reinhardt’s gross takings each night.”

Strauss replied that for the opera to be a success in theaters other than Reinhardt’s “there must be some star singing parts in it, for the plot as such holds no interest, and interesting costumes won’t turn the scale either. Personally, I am not particularly interested in the whole thing myself: That was why I asked you to spur your Pegasus a bit, so that the ring of the verses

should stimulate me a little ... Soaring oratory can drug me sufficiently to keep writing music through a passage of no interest." Alarm bells began to go off for Hofmannsthal, for whom Zerbinetta was "part of the trimmings." For him, the heart of the opera was the relationship between Ariadne and Bacchus. Once Strauss had the entire libretto, he responded, "I like it well enough: I think there'll be some good use for everything."

Hofmannsthal was utterly crushed. In a long letter, he tried to explain to Strauss why the libretto to *Ariadne* was "equally good, equally original and novel" as the libretto to *Rosenkavalier* that Strauss had praised so lavishly. "What [the opera] is about is one of the straightforward and stupendous problems of life: fidelity," he explained to Strauss. "Whether to hold fast to that which is lost, to cling to it even unto death—or to live, to live on, to get over it, to transform oneself, to sacrifice the integrity of the soul and yet in this transmutation to preserve one's essence, to remain a human being and not sink to the level of the beast, which is without recollection." Ariadne's situation is something quite beyond Zerbinetta's comprehension. "She sees in Ariadne's experience the only thing she can see: the exchange of an old lover for a new one. And so these two worlds are, in the end, ironically brought together in the only way in which they can be brought together: in non-comprehension." Which was also a pretty accurate description of where composer and librettist found themselves.

At the heart of the difficulty were the differences between Strauss and Hofmannsthal themselves. During rehearsals for *Rosenkavalier*, Hofmannsthal had written to a friend, "Strauss still strikes me as a remarkable but completely alien person, as if he came from another planet." Edward Sackville-West summed up things brilliantly in the introduction to the published correspondence between the two: "We seem to be watching a Siamese cat working out a modus vivendi with a Labrador." The poet was philosophically and mystically oriented—for him, characters were primarily symbols of the metaphysical ideas his dramas explored. The composer did not have a religious bone in his body. He was inspired by the relationships between earthy, flesh-and-blood people. In their work together on *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, both men had found what they individually needed, but that was proving much more difficult in *Ariadne*, no matter how often Hofmannsthal tried to convince Strauss that Ariadne was "as real as the Marschallin."

Strauss attempted to smooth things over: "I am sincerely sorry that in my dry way I failed to pay you the tribute you had hoped for and which your work certainly deserves." The libretto had arrived at a trying time for Strauss. He was still dealing with the recent death of his friend Gustav Mahler, his wife had been away for a month, and "I haven't touched a cigarette for four weeks—let the devil be cheerful in such circumstances!" But he pointed out that "the piece did not convince me until after I read your letter, which is so beautiful and explains

the meaning of the action so wonderfully that a superficial musician like myself could not, of course, have tumbled to it. But isn't this a little dangerous? ... If even I couldn't see it, just think of the audiences and—the critics. The way you describe it, it's excellent. But in the piece itself, it doesn't emerge quite so clearly and plainly ... Maybe my incomprehension will spur you on after all—and don't take it as anything else. After all, we want to bring out the very best in each other."

Though the project had always been slated for Reinhardt's theater in Berlin, it soon became obvious the opera could not be given there. Hofmannsthal had originally envisioned the orchestra on stage as part of the action, but Strauss knew that musicians who could do justice to the score would not consent to "play-acting" as he put it. And his original orchestra of 20 had grown to 37—small by Strauss's standards, but too large to fit into Reinhardt's pit. (The composer's wife, Pauline, had always been against a premiere in Reinhardt's theater. "Producing this little opera in his place is mad. It's good enough for a Busoni, but not a Richard Strass.") Other theaters in Berlin, as well as Munich and Dresden, were considered and rejected. But Stuttgart had a new 800-seat theater, and Strauss considered the intendent, composer, and conductor Max von Schillings a friend. The idea of presenting the first performance of a Strauss-Hofmannsthal-Reinhardt piece with the glittering cast Strauss was trying to assemble was an appealing one. The King of Württemberg was delighted with the idea. But Hofmannsthal was adamantly opposed. He wrote yet another long letter to Strauss, complaining, "Whoever is going to see it in Stuttgart, that most God-forsaken place on earth?" But Reinhardt agreed, so it was settled.

Unfortunately, many of the resident company in Stuttgart did not take kindly to what they saw as an invasion. The actors resented the fact that the lead roles in the Molière were taken by members of Reinhardt's company, and the orchestra was not happy that Strauss brought along key players from Berlin. Things came to a head when Schillings abruptly scheduled a performance of the opera *Undine* in the main theater on the very night of *Ariadne's* dress rehearsal, thus depriving it of the stage manager and most of the technical staff. Strauss blew up—and later had to publicly apologize to Schillings.

The opening night on October 25, 1912, was not a success. The play lasted more than two hours, the King of Württemberg held a reception during the intermission between play and opera that lasted almost an hour, and the opera itself had grown from the originally projected 30 minutes to almost 90. The public was exhausted. Decades later, Strauss chalked up the poor reception to "a certain lack of culture on the part of the audience. The play-going public did not get its money's worth; the opera public did not know what to make of Molière. The producer had to put on dramatic and operatic casts simultaneously, and instead of two box-office successes, he had one doubtful one."

Other theaters took up the new work, but it became painfully obvious it was beyond the reach of the average theater. To salvage things, Hofmannsthal wanted to separate the opera from the play, and by January 1913, he had the rough idea of a new sung prologue to serve as a pedestal for the opera. Strauss was resistant. He disliked rehashing works, and he was convinced that eventually the public would appreciate what they had done. In addition, the role of the Composer would now have to be set to music—something Strauss was loathe to do. *Ariadne* was put on the back burner while Strauss turned to other projects, but in April 1916, he discussed the possible new version of *Ariadne* with the conductor Leo Blech in Berlin, and Blech suggested treating the Composer like a teenage Mozart, to be sung by a soprano, rather than by a tenor or baritone. Strauss loved the idea. Hofmannsthal, again, was furious.

“The idea of giving the part of the young Composer to a female performer goes altogether against the grain,” he wrote to Strauss. “To prettify this particular character, which is to have an aura of ‘spirituality’ and ‘greatness’ about it, and so to turn him into a travesty of himself ... this strikes me as, forgive my plain speaking, odious ... Oh Lord, if only I were able to bring home to you completely the essence, the spiritual meaning of these characters.” The original version of *Ariadne* had ended with the reappearance from the play of the bourgeois gentleman himself. Now, without the Molière, the ending of the opera would have to be changed, and Hofmannsthal hated Strauss’s idea for a new ending. He closed his letter by saying, “I feel quite faint in mind and body to see us quite so far apart for once!”

“Why do you always get so bitterly angry if for once we don’t understand each other straight away? You almost act as if I had never understood you!” Strauss replied. He pointed out that a theater’s main tenor and baritone were already engaged with singing Bacchus and Harlekin, the tenor and baritone buffo singers were tied up as Brighella and Truffaldin. “So what is left to me except the only genre of singer not yet represented in *Ariadne*, my Rofrano [*Rosenkavalier*’s Octavian], for whom an intelligent female singer is available anywhere ... As a rule she is the most talented woman singer in the theater, who will look forward to the little cabinet part and will make something of it.”

In addition to the new sung prologue, there were several major differences between the original *Ariadne* and the revised opera. Strauss toned down Zerbinetta’s aria, making some substantial cuts and lowering some passages, though it remains one of the most difficult of all coloratura arias and a guaranteed showstopper. The first version of the opera ended with Zerbinetta reprising portions of her aria and the reappearance for the commedia dell’arte characters before the speaking appearance of the play’s title character. In the new version, Zerbinetta is given only two lines of her aria, the other buffo players never reappear, and *Ariadne* and Bacchus have the final words.

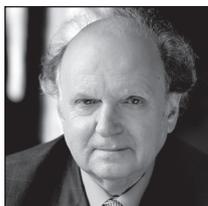
## Program Note CONTINUED

Work on this “trifle” began in 1911. The version the world knows today finally premiered in Vienna on October 4, 1916. Musicologist Bryan Gilliam summed up the new opera brilliantly: “Though neither poet nor composer entirely agreed on *Ariadne* and its meanings, they nevertheless created their finest mythological opera, a work where music and text integrate as in no other Strauss opera. It is a remarkable amalgam of style and substance, tragedy and comedy, economy and surfeit all held together by a phantasmagoric sonic substance unsurpassed by any of [Strauss’s] subsequent operas.”

—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



**Marek Janowski**

CONDUCTOR (WARSAW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Met, *Lohengrin* in Tokyo, and concerts with the Dresden Philharmonic and Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Salome*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and *Arabella* (debut, 1984).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In 2019, he became chief conductor and artistic director of the Dresden Philharmonic, where he previously served as chief conductor between 2001 and 2003. He has also held tenures as artistic director of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra from 2002 to 2016, music director of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande from 2005 to 2012, music director of the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra from 2000 to 2005, music director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France from 1984 to 2000, and chief conductor of the Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne from 1986 to 1990. He has conducted performances with many of the world's leading orchestras and opera companies, including the Bayreuth Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Paris Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and San Francisco Opera, among others.



**Lise Davidsen**

SOPRANO (STOKKE, NORWAY)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Chrysothemis in *Elektra* at the Met; Leonore in *Fidelio* in Florence; Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at the Vienna State Opera; concert appearances with the Orchestre de Paris, National Philharmonic of Russia, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Berlin Philharmonic; and recitals in Hamburg, Zurich, Madrid, Berlin, Vienna, and at the Bavarian State Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* (debut, 2019).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* and Sieglinde at the Bayreuth Festival, Elisabeth at the Bavarian State Opera and in Zurich, Sieglinde at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Leonore at Covent Garden and in concert in Montreal, Ellen Orford in concert at Bucharest's George Enescu Festival, Lisa in Stuttgart, Ariadne 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 the Norwegian National Opera, and Agathe in *Der Freischütz* in Zurich.



## Isabel Leonard

MEZZO-SOPRANO (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** The Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the title role of *Cinderella* at the Met; *Come Home: A Celebration of Return* at Washington National Opera; selections from Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* at the Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center; the title role of *Carmen* at Washington National Opera; and Miranda in Thomas Adès's *The Tempest* at La Scala.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since her 2007 debut as Stéphano in *Roméo et Juliette*, she has sung more than 150 performances of 11 roles, including Blanche de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the title role of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*, Cherubino, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Miranda (debut, 2007).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She has appeared with many of the world's greatest opera companies, including the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, Dutch National Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, and Glimmerglass Festival, among others. She was the 2011 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



## Brenda Rae

SOPRANO (APPLETON, WISCONSIN)

**THIS SEASON** Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Ophelia in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Met, the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* at Covent Garden and the Salzburg Festival, the title role of Handel's *Partenope* in Madrid, Countess Adèle in *Le Comte Ory* in Zurich, Aminta in Strauss's *Die Schweigsame Frau* at the Bavarian State Opera, and Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**MET APPEARANCES** Poppea in *Agrippina* (debut, 2020).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Zerbinetta at the Edinburgh International Festival, La Scala, Bavarian State Opera, and Staatsoper Berlin; Elvira in *I Puritani* with Washington Concert Opera and in Frankfurt; the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Opera San Antonio and Opera Philadelphia; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Madrid; Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Vienna State Opera and in Zurich; the title role of Handel's *Semele* in concert in Paris; Ginevra in Handel's *Ariodante* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Violetta in *La Traviata* in concert in Frankfurt. She was a 2021 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



## Wolfgang Brendel

BARITONE (MUNICH, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** The Major-Domo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 1975 debut as the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, he has sung nearly 100 performances of 13 roles, including Altair in *Die Ägyptische Helena*, Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Count in *Capriccio*, Eisenstein and Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Mandryka in *Arabella*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and Miller in *Luisa Miller*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He became a member of the Bavarian State Opera in 1971 and was named a Kammersänger in 1977. Throughout his career, he has also appeared at the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayreuth Festival, Salzburg Festival, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera, Dallas Opera, Washington National Opera, and in Leipzig, Tokyo, Madrid, Verona, Barcelona, and Düsseldorf, among others. Since 2011, he has been an instructor at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, where he currently serves as professor of practice.



## Brandon Jovanovich

TENOR (BILLINGS, MONTANA)

**THIS SEASON** Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Met; Siegmund in *Die Walküre* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; the title role of *Parsifal* at the Vienna State Opera; Bacchus, Enée in *Les Troyens*, and the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Bavarian State Opera; the title role of *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden; and Siegmund in the first act of *Die Walküre* in concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** The Prince in *Rusalka*, Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Don José in *Carmen* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *Parsifal* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hermann in *The Queen of Spades* and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Samson in *Samson in Dalila* at Staatsoper Berlin, Don José in Wiesbaden, Canio in *Pagliacci* at Dutch National Opera, Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West* at the Bavarian State Opera, the Prince at San Francisco Opera, Florestan in *Fidelio* at the Vienna State Opera, and Enée at the Paris Opera. He has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival, LA Opera, Opera Australia, Houston Grand Opera, and Glyndebourne Festival, among others.



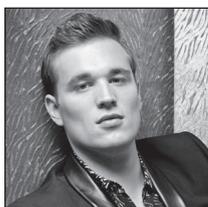
## Johannes Martin Kränzle

BARITONE (AUGSBURG, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** The Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Met, Danilo in *The Merry Widow* in Frankfurt, the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Wiesbaden, Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Bavarian State Opera, and concerts with the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester.

**MET APPEARANCES** Beckmesser (debut, 2014).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 1998 and 2016, he was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt, where his roles have included the Music Master, the Dark Fiddler in Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades*, and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, among many others. Recent performances include Don Alfonso at the Salzburg Festival; Beckmesser at the Bayreuth Festival; Alberich in *Das Rheingold* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* at the Bavarian State Opera; Rangoni in *Boris Godunov* and the title role of *Don Pasquale* in Zurich; Bluebeard in *Bluebeard's Castle* with the New York Philharmonic; Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Beckmesser, and Bluebeard in Wiesbaden; Ibn-Hakia in *Iolanta* at the Paris Opera; and Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* in Cologne.



## Sean Michael Plumb

BARITONE (BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for his debut at the Met and Marco in *Gianni Schicchi*, the Countess's Footman / Ivan Ivanovitch / a Student in *The Nose*, Moralès in *Carmen*, Ottokar in *Der Freischütz*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*, and Prince Henri de Condé in Penderecki's *Die Teufel von Loudun* at the Bavarian State Opera.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since 2016, he has been a member of the Bavarian State Opera, where his roles have included Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Marullo and Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Apollo and the Herald in *Alceste*, Jake Wallace in *La Fanciulla del West*, Count Dominik in *Arabella*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Prosdócimo in *Il Turco in Italia*, Harlekin, and Olav Bjaaland in the world premiere of Miroslav Srnka's *South Pole*, among others. He has also sung Count Dominik in concert at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; Papageno at Kentucky Opera, the Dallas Opera, and with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra; Schaunard at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and Melot with the Cleveland Orchestra.