GIACOMO PUCCINI

LA BOHÈME

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, based on the novel Scènes de la Vie de Bohème by Henri Murger

Saturday, November 13, 2021
8:00–11:05 PM

The production of La Bohème was made possible by a generous gift from Mrs. Donald D. Harrington

CONDUCTOR
Eun Sun Kim

PRODUCTION
Franco Zeffirelli

SET DESIGNER
Franco Zeffirelli

COSTUME DESIGNER
Peter J. Hall

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Gil Wechsler

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
Gregory Keller

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin
The Metropolitan Opera
2021–22 SEASON

The 1,346th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIACOMO PUCCINI’S

LA BOHÈME

CONDUCTOR
Eun Sun Kim

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARCELLO
Artur Ruciński

MUSETTA
Federica Lombardi

RODOLFO
Charles Castronovo*

A CUSTOMHOUSE SERGEANT
Tyler Simpson

COLLINE
Nicholas Brownlee

A CUSTOMHOUSE OFFICER
Ross Benoliel

SCHAUNARD
Alexander Birch Elliott

MIMI
Anita Hartig

BENOIT
Donald Maxwell

PARPIGNOL
Marco Antonio Jordão

ALCINDORO
Donald Maxwell

Maestro Eun Sun Kim’s Metropolitan Opera debut performances are underwritten by the Oscar Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang, Ph.D. endowment fund.

Tonight’s performances of the roles of Mimi and Rodolfo are underwritten by the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Great Singers Fund.
Charles Castronovo as Rodolfo and Anita Hartig as Mimi in Puccini’s *La Bohème*

Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo  
Musical Preparation  Donna Racik, Gareth Morrell, Liora Maurer, and Jonathan C. Kelly  
Assistant Stage Directors  Mirabelle Ordinaire and Kathleen Smith Belcher  
Met Titles  Sonya Friedman  
Stage Band Conductor  Joseph Lawson  
Children’s Chorus Director  Anthony Piccolo  
Italian Coach  Hemdi Kfir  
Prompter  Donna Racik  
Associate Designer  David Reppa  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in Metropolitan Opera Shops  
Costumes executed by Metropolitan Opera Costume Department  
Wigs and Makeup constructed and executed by Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department  
Ladies millinery by  Reggie G. Augustine  
Men’s hats by  Richard Tautkus  
Animals supervised by  All-Tame Animals, Inc.  
Rehearsal space for the Children’s Chorus provided by The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York City  

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.

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

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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.
The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute Rolex in recognition of its generous support during the 2021–22 season.
Synopsis

Act I

Paris, in the 1830s. In their Latin Quarter garret, the near-destitute artist Marcello and poet Rodolfo try to keep warm on Christmas Eve by feeding the stove with pages from Rodolfo’s latest drama. Soon, their roommates—Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician—return. Schaunard brings food, fuel, and funds that he has collected from an eccentric nobleman. While they celebrate their unexpected fortune, the landlord, Benoit, comes to collect the rent. After getting the older man drunk, the friends urge him to tell of his flirtations, then throw him out in mock indignation at his infidelity to his wife. As the others depart to revel at the Café Momus, Rodolfo remains behind to finish an article, promising to join them later. There is another knock at the door—it is Mimì, a pretty neighbor whose candle has gone out in the stairwell. As she enters the room, she suddenly feels faint. Rodolfo gives her a sip of wine, then helps her to the door and relights her candle. Mimì realizes that she lost her key when she fainted, and as the two search for it, both candles go out. Rodolfo finds the key and slips it into his pocket. In the moonlight, he takes Mimì’s hand and tells her about his dreams. She recounts her life alone in a lofty garret, embroidering flowers and waiting for the spring. Rodolfo’s friends call from outside, telling him to join them. He responds that he is not alone and will be along shortly. Happy to have found each other, Mimì and Rodolfo leave, arm in arm, for the café.

Act II

Amid the shouts of street hawkers near the Café Momus, Rodolfo buys Mimì a bonnet and introduces her to his friends. They all sit down and order supper. Marcello’s former sweetheart Musetta makes a noisy entrance on the arm of the elderly, but wealthy, Alcindoro. The ensuing tumult reaches its peak when, trying to gain Marcello’s attention, she loudly sings the praises of her own popularity. Sending Alcindoro away to buy her a new pair of shoes, Musetta finally falls into Marcello’s arms. A parade of soldiers passes by the café as the friends join the crowd of revelers.

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00PM)

Act III

At dawn at the Barrière d’Enfer, a toll-gate on the edge of Paris, a customs official admits farm women to the city. Mimì arrives, searching for the place where Marcello and Musetta now live. When the painter appears, she tells him of her distress over Rodolfo’s incessant jealousy. She says that she believes it is best that they part. As Rodolfo emerges from the tavern, Mimì hides nearby. Rodolfo tells Marcello that he wants to separate from Mimì, blaming her flirtatiousness. Pressed for the real reason, he breaks down, saying that her illness can only
grow worse in the poverty that they share. Overcome with emotion, Mimì comes forward to say goodbye to her lover. Upon hearing Musetta’s laughter, Marcello runs back into the tavern. While Mimi and Rodolfo recall past happiness, Marcello returns with Musetta, quarreling about her flirting with a customer. They hurl insults at each other and part, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until springtime.

**Intermission** (AT APPROXIMATELY 10:05PM)

**Act IV**

Months later in the garret, Rodolfo and Marcello, now separated from their lovers, reflect on their loneliness. Colline and Schaunard bring a meager meal. To lighten their spirits, the four stage a dance, which turns into a mock duel. At the height of the hilarity, Musetta bursts in with news that Mimì is outside, too weak to come upstairs. As Rodolfo runs to her aid, Musetta relates how Mimi begged to be taken to Rodolfo to die. She is made as comfortable as possible, while Musetta asks Marcello to sell her earrings for medicine and Colline goes off to pawn his overcoat. Left alone, Mimi and Rodolfo recall their meeting and their first happy days, but she is seized with violent coughing. When the others return, Musetta gives Mimi a muff to warm her hands, and Mimì slowly drifts into unconsciousness. Musetta prays for Mimi, but it is too late. The friends realize that she is dead, and Rodolfo collapses in despair.
In Focus

Giacomo Puccini

La Bohème

Premiere: Teatro Regio, Turin, 1896

La Bohème—the passionate, timeless, indelible story of love among young artists in Paris—can stake its claim as the world’s most popular opera. It has a marvelous ability to make a powerful first impression (even to those new to opera) and to reveal previously unnoticed treasures after dozens of hearings. At first glance, La Bohème is the definitive depiction of the joys and sorrows of love and loss; on closer inspection, it explores the deep emotional significance hidden in the trivial things—a bonnet, an old overcoat, a chance meeting with a neighbor—that make up our everyday lives. Following the breakthrough success of Manon Lescaut three years earlier, La Bohème established Puccini as the leading Italian opera composer of his generation.

The Creators

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was immensely popular in his own lifetime, and his mature works remain staples in the repertory of most of the world’s opera companies. His operas are celebrated for their mastery of detail, sensitivity to everyday subjects, copious melody, and economy of expression. Puccini’s librettists for La Bohème, Giuseppe Giacosa (1847–1906) and Luigi Illica (1857–1919), also collaborated with him on his next two operas, Tosca and Madama Butterfly. Giacosa, a dramatist, was responsible for the stories, and Illica, a poet, worked primarily on the words themselves. The French author Henri Murger (1822–61) drew on his own early experiences as a poor writer in Paris to pen an episodic prose novel and later a successful play, Scènes de la Vie de Bohème, which became the basis for the opera.

The Setting

The libretto sets the action in Paris, circa 1830. This is not a random setting but rather reflects the issues and concerns of a particular time and place. After the upheavals of revolution and war, French artists had lost their traditional support base of aristocracy and Church, and they were desperate for new sources of income. The rising bourgeoisie took up the burden of patronizing artists and earned their contempt in return. The story, then, centers on self-conscious youths at odds with mainstream society, feeling themselves morally superior to the rules of the bourgeoisie (specifically regarding sexual mores) and expressing their independence with affectations of speech and dress. The bohemian
ambience of this opera is clearly recognizable in any modern urban center. *La Bohème* captures this ethos in its earliest days.

**The Music**

Lyrical and touchingly beautiful, the score of *La Bohème* exerts a powerfully immediate emotional pull. Many of its most memorable melodies are built incrementally, with small intervals between the notes that carry the listener with them on their lyrical path. This is a distinct contrast to the grand leaps and dives on which earlier operas often depended for emotional effect. *La Bohème*’s melodic structure perfectly captures the “small people” (as Puccini called them) of the drama and the details of everyday life. The two great love arias in Act I—the tenor’s “Che gelida manina” and the soprano’s “Sì, mi chiamano Mimi”—seduce the listener, beginning conversationally, with great rushes of emotion seamlessly woven into more trivial expressions. In other places, small alterations to a melody can morph the meaning of a thought or an emotion. A change of tempo or orchestration transforms Musetta’s famous, exuberant Act II waltz into the nostalgic, bittersweet tenor-baritone duet in Act IV, as the bohemians remember happier times. Similarly, the “Streets of Paris” theme first appears as a foreshadowing in Act I, when one of the bohemians suggests going out on the town; hits full flower in Act II, when they (and we) are actually there; and becomes a bitter, chilling memory at the beginning of Act III, when it is slowed down and re-orchestrated.

**Met History**

*La Bohème* had its Met premiere while the company was on tour in Los Angeles in 1900. Nellie Melba sang Mimi and improbably added the mad scene from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* as an encore after the final curtain (a practice she maintained for several other performances). This production lasted until 1952, when one designed by Rolf Gerard and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who insisted his name be removed after a disagreement with some of the singers, replaced it. In 1977, *La Bohème* served as the first opera telecast as part of the *Live from the Met* series, starring Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto in a new production directed by Fabrizio Melano. This season, the spectacular current production by Franco Zeffirelli celebrates the 40th anniversary of its premiere. James Levine conducted the staging’s debut performance on December 14, 1981, leading an impressive cast that included Teresa Stratas, Scotto (as Musetta), José Carreras, Richard Stilwell, and James Morris. *La Bohème* was presented at the Met in 59 consecutive seasons after its first appearance and has appeared in all but nine seasons since 1900, making it the most-performed opera in company history. Having been presented nearly 500 times since its premiere, Zeffirelli’s staging is the most-performed production in Met history.
When Puccini decided—in the wake of his first major success, Manon Lescaut (1893)—to write La Bohème, he did so against a fascinating historical backdrop stretching back four decades. The French writer Henri Murger’s 1849 drama and 1851 novel about the poor, young, artistic “bohemians” of Paris owed their popularity in part to Europe’s roiling Revolutions of 1848; tales of idealistic, nonconformist youths with social reform on their minds attracted new interest in revolutionary times. Puccini might well have seen some of his own youthful Milanese days in this story as well, a reminder of the Scapigliati (“the scruffy or disheveled ones”)—an important group of convention-defying painters, writers (including Verdi’s collaborator Arrigo Boito), and musicians active in salon circles in the 1860s and 1870s. The story Puccini and his librettists, Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, fashioned from Murger might seem laughably simple at first—boy meets girl, they break up, she dies—but it is made more profound by its realism, a trend of the times for which the influential Austrian critic Eduard Hanslick sharply criticized La Bohème. The realistic depiction of poverty, artistic striving with little chance of success, and the destruction of love by disease and lack of means: All of this puts a different sociopolitical frame around the love story. “Non basta amor!,” cries Rodolfo, and lamentably, he is right. Love is not enough.

The creation of La Bohème began with a highly public controversy between two of the foremost opera composers of the day: Puccini and Ruggero Leoncavallo, fresh off the colossal success of Pagliacci (1892). In circumstances that are still mysterious, Leoncavallo was furious to discover that Puccini was working on La Bohème, as he too was developing an opera on the same subject. The imbroglio hit the newspapers, with Puccini writing to Milan’s Corriere della Sera (The Evening Courier) on March 21, 1893, “Let him compose, and I will compose, and the public will judge.” And they have: Leoncavallo’s version may have been more successful at the outset, but Puccini’s opera has long since outstripped that of his rival. And no wonder: It was a considerable feat to compose an opera in the wake of Wagner and late Verdi, all the more so since Puccini carefully devised his own method of composing acts in which the music never stops, as well as his own fast-paced conversational style, learning the lessons of those two giants without resorting to imitation.

The characters of Puccini’s opera differ in some respects from Murger’s originals, especially Mimì, who is flightier and more of a gold digger in the French than in the Italian. Puccini’s lovable seamstress is a variation on a turn-of-century literary type known as the “femme fragile,” or “fragile woman”; we identify Mimì as such by her delicacy, refinement, association with flowers and moonlight, pallor, and consumption. Eros and Death join hands in opera yet again. When she introduces herself to Rodolfo in “Sì, mi chiamano Mimì,” she sings ecstatically of the flowers that speak to her of love and springtime, and
we hear a brief, poignant emphasis on B minor: the harmony to which she will die three acts later.

The other important female character, Musetta, is what Parisians in 1830 would have called a “lorette,” or a “good-time girl” with a string of protectors, but we are not invited to scorn or condemn her; she is too high spirited and loyal, too loving, for that. Her celebrated waltz-aria, “Quando m’en vo’,” gives us a welcome pause in the helter-skelter action of Act II, and the swirl of her skirts, the waves of sensual delight in the orchestra remind us that Puccini’s famous melodies are inseparable from their masterful orchestrations. When Musetta shrieks that her shoes are killing her (what woman would not sympathize?) in order to rid herself of her latest sugar daddy, even as Marcello is declaring his renewed love for her, we can only laugh along with such a spirited and clever creature. Her tenderness to Mimi in the final act confirms her likeability; in fact, the depiction of male and female friendship is one of the opera’s most endearing traits. And if orchestration is crucial to Puccinian melody, so too are his trademark harmonies. When he swerves suddenly from G major to A major for “O soave fanciulla” in Act I, the effect is magic, achieved through remarkably economic means.

We meet the male characters first and in a distinctive way; just as Mozart withholds the introduction of the Countess until Act II of Le Nozze di Figaro, Puccini makes us wait for Mimi’s appearance. And just as Verdi catapults the audience into the comic maelstrom of Falstaff right at the start, with no orchestral prelude or scene-setting chorus, Puccini dives into Act I without throat-clearing, the four bohemians entering immediately, two by two. (Nor is this Puccini’s only reference to Verdi. The quartet at the end of Act III, with Mimi and Rodolfo bidding each other the saddest of farewells and Marcello and Musetta quarreling yet again, is a nod to the design of the Act II quartet in Otello.) We encounter the tempestuous painter Marcello first, his music stabbing at dotted rhythms in somewhat the same way that he stabs at his painting of the Red Sea parting, and after him, the young poet Rodolfo, whose very first strains foreshadow the lyrical tenderness of “Che gelida manina” later in the act. It is typical of Puccini to prefigure the “big tunes” to come and then repeat fragments later on to trigger memories and emotions.

The philosopher Colline and the group’s ironist-in-chief, the composer Schaunard, enter next, and it is telling that Marcello’s assertive melody comes to characterize all of the bohemians together, hippie-like in their lack of discipline, their rejection of social conventions, their hedonistic ethos, their espousal of free love, their ironic twitting of the comfortable bourgeoisie. The conversational style of this music, the declamatory chatter above a lively orchestra, the colloquialisms: This is something new on the operatic scene. We hear this sort of hectic activity again in Act II, when the string of rule-breaking
parallel chords for three trumpets in the Café Momus theme anticipate Stravinsky’s Shrovetide Fair music in *Petrushka*, and the toymaker Parpignol sells his wares to music of staccato, childlike charm. Puccini makes a practice in *La Bohème* of contrasting this sort of crowd music and boisterous male banter with his distinctive, expansive lyricism, which slows time and tries, however unsuccessfully, to make love last forever. Indeed, time is of the essence in this opera, as the sands of Mimi’s life and of the bohemians’ youth are running out. In Act IV, Puccini underscores the gravity, the inevitability, of time’s passage, and the powerlessness of memory to bring what was beautiful and bygone back, by weaving a tapestry of musical reminiscences. Here, death is not transcendence. Unlike with Violetta’s otherwise similar death scene in Verdi’s *La Traviata*, there is no heaven, only loss.

Puccini’s score was finally completed at midnight on December 10, 1895. In the autograph manuscript, the composer wrote “lunga” (“long”) with an exaggerated fermata (pause symbol) at the moment of Mimi’s death and sketched a skull-and-crossbones in the left-hand margin. Whether he meant it ironically, as a tiny dash of cynicism to obviate sentimentality, we cannot know. But when Puccini tells us, the listeners, of her death—with a single eloquent B-minor chord in the orchestra, followed by the massive orchestral recurrence of Mimi’s deathbed greeting to Rodolfo (“Sono andati?”), and the solemn “Addio” cadence of Colline’s farewell to his overcoat—the characters’, and composer’s, grief becomes ours. Distance from what we see and hear is impossible to maintain. Puccini’s publisher Giulio Ricordi was overjoyed when he received Puccini’s masterpiece, swearing that it would make the orchestra dissolve in tears. “If this time you have not succeeded in hitting the nail squarely on the head,” he wrote to the composer, “I will give up my profession and sell salami.”

—Susan Youens

Susan Youens is the J. W. Van Gorkom Professor of Music at the University of Notre Dame and has written eight books on the music of Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf.
The Met’s landmark production of the Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* returns, following a sold-out 2019–20 run. Many members of the original Grammy Award–winning cast reprise their portrayals, including bass-baritone Eric Owens and soprano Angel Blue in the title roles, with David Robertson conducting.

**OCT** 31 mat  **NOV** 3, 6 mat, 10, 13 mat, 18, 21 mat, 24, 27  **DEC** 1, 4, 9, 12 mat

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The Cast

Eun Sun Kim
CONDUCTOR (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA)

This season, she begins her tenure as music director of San Francisco Opera, and she has served as the principal guest conductor at Houston Grand Opera since 2019. She regularly conducts performances at Staatsoper Berlin, where she has led Il Trovatore, Ariadne auf Naxos, La Traviata, Madama Butterfly, and Un Ballo in Maschera, as well as at Oper Frankfurt, where she has led La Sonnambula, Lehár’s The Count of Luxembourg, La Bohème, Kálmán’s Die Csárdásfürstin, and Der Fliegende Holländer. She has also taken the podium at the Bavarian State Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Royal Swedish Opera, English National Opera, and LA Opera; with opera companies in Stuttgart, Zurich, Bergen, Dresden, Cologne, and Oslo; and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and Orchestre de Paris; among many others.

Anita Hartig
SOPRANO (BISTRIȚA, ROMANIA)

This season, she begins her tenure as music director of San Francisco Opera, and she has served as the principal guest conductor at Houston Grand Opera since 2019. She regularly conducts performances at Staatsoper Berlin, where she has led Il Trovatore, Ariadne auf Naxos, La Traviata, Madama Butterfly, and Un Ballo in Maschera, as well as at Oper Frankfurt, where she has led La Sonnambula, Lehár’s The Count of Luxembourg, La Bohème, Kálmán’s Die Csárdásfürstin, and Der Fliegende Holländer. She has also taken the podium at the Bavarian State Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Royal Swedish Opera, English National Opera, and LA Opera; with opera companies in Stuttgart, Zurich, Bergen, Dresden, Cologne, and Oslo; and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and Orchestre de Paris; among many others.

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**The Cast  CONTINUED**

**Federica Lombardi**  
**SOPRANO (CESENA, ITALY)**

**THIS SEASON**  
Musetta in *La Bohème* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Met; Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan tutte* and the Countess at Staatsoper Berlin, the Countess at Covent Garden, and Amelia Grimaldi in *Simon Boccanegra* in Liège, Belgium.  

**MET APPEARANCES**  
Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (debut, 2019).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  
Recent performances include Donna Elvira at the Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, and in Madrid, Hamburg, and Wiesbaden; the Countess at the Bavarian State Opera; Fiordiligi in Valencia; and Elettra in *Idomeneo* at La Scala. She has also sung Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Bologna; Fiordiligi at the Bavarian State Opera and in Turin and Rome; the Countess in Rome; Donna Anna, Fiordiligi, Micaëla in *Carmen*, the Countess, and the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Donna Anna in Cologne and Nancy, France; Musetta, the title role of *Anna Bolena*, and Fiammetta in Giordano’s *La Cena delle Befite* at La Scala; and Micaëla in Bangkok. She has also sung the Countess at Spoleto’s Festival dei Due Mondi and in Bergamo, Pavia, Brescia, Cremona, and Como.

**Nicholas Brownlee**  
**BASS-BARITONE (MOBILE, ALABAMA)**

**THIS SEASON**  
Colline in *La Bohème* at the Met and the Bavarian State Opera; Créon in Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, Jochanaan in *Salome*, the Messenger of Keikobad in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, De Siriex in *Fedora*, the title role of Szymanowski’s *Król Roger*, and Bluebeard in *Bluebeard’s Castle* in Frankfurt; and Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra* in Liège.

**MET APPEARANCES**  
The First Soldier in *Salome* (debut, 2016).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  
He is a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt and a former member of the ensemble at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, where his roles included Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, Paolo, Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena*, Melisso in Handel’s *Alcina*, and Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*. Other recent performances include Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Santa Fe Opera; Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra* in Zurich; Colline at LA Opera, Israeli Opera, and the Dallas Opera; the Porter in Korngold’s *Das Wunder der Heliane* at Bard SummerScape; and Nourabad in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Captain Gardiner in *Moby-Dick* at LA Opera.
Charles Castronovo
TENOR (QUEENS, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Rodolfo in La Bohème at the Met, Staatsoper Berlin, and the Bavarian State Opera; Nemorino in L’Elisir d’Amore at Lyric Opera of Chicago; the title role of Mascagni’s L’Amico Fritz in Florence; Chevalier des Grieux in Manon in Wroclaw, Poland; Puccini’s Messa di Gloria in Paris; and Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly at the Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Roméo in Roméo et Juliette, Tamino in The Magic Flute and Die Zauberflöte, Rodolfo, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, the First Guard in Manon, the First Prisoner in Fidelio, Beppe in Pagliacci (debut, 1999), and the Sailor’s Voice in Tristan und Isolde.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He appears regularly at the Bavarian State Opera, where his roles have included Carlo in Verdi’s I Masnadieri, Admète in Gluck’s Alceste, the title role of Roberto Devereux, Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor, and Alfredo in La Traviata, among others. Other recent performances include Faust in La Damnation de Faust in concert and Gabriele Adorno in Simon Boccanegra at the Salzburg Festival; Rodolfo in Luisa Miller at the Glyndebourne Festival; and Alfredo at Covent Garden and the Vienna State Opera. He is a graduate of the Met’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Alexander Birch Elliott
BARITONE (FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA)

THIS SEASON Schaunard in La Bohème at the Met, the title role of Eugene Onegin at Opera Omaha, and Demetrius in A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Des Moines Metro Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Zurga in Les Pêcheurs de Perles (debut, 2018).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Momus in Rameau’s Platée and Yeletsky in The Queen of Spades at Des Moines Metro Opera, Marcello in La Bohème at San Diego Opera, Escamillo in Carmen at Opera Santa Barbara, Silvio in Pagliacci at Opera Omaha, Sgt. Belcore in L’Elisir d’Amore at Virginia Opera, Maximilian / the Sea Captain / the Grand Inquisitor in Candide in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and a Street Singer in Bernstein’s Mass at Ravinia Festival. He has also sung John Brooke in Mark Adamo’s Little Women at Annapolis Opera, Sonora in La Fanciulla del West at New York City Opera, Guglielmo in Così fan tutte at Opera Omaha, Anthony Hope in Stephen Sondheim’s Sweeney Todd and Eugene Onegin at Portland Opera, Marcello at Tulsa Opera, and Figaro in Il Barbiere di Siviglia at Opera Santa Barbara.

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Donald Maxwell
BARITONE (PERTH, SCOTLAND)

THIS SEASON Benoit and Alcindoro in La Bohème at the Met and the Second Priest in Die Zauberflöte at Covent Garden.

MET APPEARANCES Benoit and Alcindoro, and Hortensius in La Fille du Régiment (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include the Notary in Don Pasquale with Random Opera Company, Hortensius and Alcindoro at Covent Garden, the Sacristan in Tosca and Fra Melitone in La Forza del Destino at Welsh National Opera, and Hanezò in Mascagni’s L’Amico Fritz in concert at Scottish Opera. He has also sung Dai Greatcoat in the world premiere of Iain Bell’s In Parenthesis at Welsh National Opera, the Sacristan at Covent Garden, Alfred Doolittle in My Fair Lady in Paris, Swallow in Peter Grimes in Zurich, Sancho Panza in Massenet’s Don Quichotte with Chelsea Opera Group, Pooh-Bah in The Mikado at English National Opera, and Dr. Bloom in Olga Neuwirth’s American Lulu at the Bregenz Festival and Edinburgh International Festival. He has also appeared at La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the Wexford Festival, and the Glyndebourne Festivals, among others.

Artur Ruciński
BARITONE (WARSAW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Marcello in La Bohème and Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor at the Met, Lescaut in Manon in concert in Lyon and at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Germont in La Traviata in Tokyo and Hamburg, Seid in Verdi’s Il Corsaro in Monte Carlo, the title role of Macbeth and Marcello at the Bavarian State Opera, Renato in Un Ballo in Maschera in Pamplona, the title role of Eugene Onegin in Naples, and a concert with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Marcello, Lescaut, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly (debut, 2016), and Germont.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Renato, Germont, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore, and Enrico in Madrid; Miller in Luisa Miller in concert and Enrico in Monte Carlo; Robert in Iolanta, the title role of Gianni Schicchi, Marcello, and Enrico at the Paris Opera; Francesco in Verdi’s I Masnadieri in Valencia and Rome; Marcello in Bilbao, Turin, and Naples; Germont at San Francisco Opera; and Enrico in Tokyo and Zurich. He has also appeared at Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, and in Barcelona, Verona, Geneva, Warsaw, and Bologna.