GIUSEPPE VERDI

RIGOLETTO

CONDUCTOR
Daniele Rustioni

PRODUCTION
Bartlett Sher

SET DESIGNER
Michael Yeargan

COSTUME DESIGNER
Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Donald Holder

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave,
based on the play Le Roi s’Amuse
by Victor Hugo

Wednesday, January 19, 2022
7:00–9:40 PM

New Production

The production of Rigoletto was
made possible by a generous gift from
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Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

In cooperation with Staatsoper Berlin

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The Metropolitan Opera
2021–22 SEASON

The 904th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI’S
RIGOLETTO

CONDUCTOR
Daniele Rustioni

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

DUKE OF MANTUA
Piotr Beczała

GILDA
Rosa Feola

BORSA
Scott Scully

GIOVANNA
Eve Gigliotti

COUNTESS CEPRANO
Sylvia D’Eramo**

A PAGE
Catherine MiEun Choi-Steckmeyer

RIGOLETTO
Quinn Kelsey

A GUARD
Yohan Yi

MARULLO
Jeongcheol Cha

MADDALENA
Varduhi Abrahamyan

COUNT CEPRANO
Christopher Job

SPARAFUCILE
Andrea Mastroni

This performance is being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 355 and streamed at metopera.org.

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 7:00–9:40PM
Chorus Master  Donald Palumbo
Musical Preparation  Derrick Inouye, Howard Watkins*,
Joshua Greene, and Liora Maurer
Assistant Stage Directors  Gregory Keller, Gina Lapinski, and
Mirabelle Ordinaire
Assistant Costume Designer  Fabian Fidel Aguilar
Met Titles  Sonya Friedman, revised for this production by
Michael Panayos and Paul Cremo
Stage Band Conductor  Joseph Lawson
Fight Director  Lisa Kopitsky
Italian Coach  Hemdi Kfir
Prompter  Joshua Greene
Intimacy Director  Doug Scholz-Carlson
Assistant Intimacy Director  Rocio Mendez
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and
painted by  Bay Productions and Metropolitan Opera Shops
Costumes constructed by  Metropolitan Opera Costume
Department;  Dawson Tailors Inc, Baltimore;  John Cowles
Studio, East Hampton, Connecticut;  Arel Studio Theatrical
Costumes, New York; and  Fabio Toblini, New York
Additional jewelry and tiaras by  Lawrence Vrba, New York
Wigs and Makeup constructed and executed by  Metropolitan
Opera Wig and Makeup Department

This performance is made possible in part by public
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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,
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usher at intermission.
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Synopsis

Act I

Germany, during the era of the Weimar Republic. At a party in his palace, the Duke of Mantua boasts of his way with women. He dances with the Countess Ceprano, and his hunchbacked jester, Rigoletto, mocks the countess’s enraged but helpless husband. The courtier Marullo bursts in with the latest gossip: Rigoletto is suspected of keeping a young mistress in his home. The jester, unaware of the courtiers’ talk, continues to taunt Ceprano, who plots with the others to punish the duke. Monterone, an elderly nobleman, forces his way into the crowd to denounce the duke for seducing his daughter, and Rigoletto viciously ridicules him. Monterone is arrested and curses Rigoletto.

Rigoletto hurries home, disturbed by Monterone’s curse. He encounters Sparafucile, a professional assassin, who offers his services. The jester reflects that his own tongue is as sharp as the murderer’s dagger. Rigoletto enters his house and warmly greets his daughter, Gilda. Afraid for the girl’s safety, he warns her nurse, Giovanna, not to let anyone into the house. When the jester leaves, the duke appears and bribes Giovanna, who lets him into the courtyard. He declares his love for Gilda, who has secretly admired him at church, and tells her he is a poor student. After he leaves, she tenderly thinks of her newfound love before going to bed. The courtiers gather outside intending to abduct Rigoletto’s “mistress.” Meeting the jester, they quickly change their story and fool him into wearing a blindfold and holding a ladder; then, they carry off Gilda. Rigoletto, rushing into the house, realizes his daughter is gone and collapses as he remembers Monterone’s curse.

Intermission  (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:00PM)

Act II

In his palace, the duke is distraught about the abduction of Gilda. When the courtiers return and tell him the story of how they took the girl from Rigoletto’s house and left her in the duke’s chamber, the duke hurries off to the conquest. Rigoletto enters, looking for Gilda. The courtiers are astonished to find out that she is his daughter rather than his mistress but prevent him from storming into the duke’s chamber. The jester violently accuses them of cruelty, then asks for compassion. Gilda appears and runs in shame to her father, who orders the others to leave. Alone with Rigoletto, Gilda tells him of the duke’s courtship, then of her abduction. When Monterone passes by on his way to execution, the jester swears that both he and the old man will be avenged. Gilda begs her father to forgive the duke.
Act III
Rigoletto and Gilda arrive at an inn where Sparafucile and his sister, Maddalena, live. Inside, the duke laughs at the fickleness of women. Gilda and Rigoletto watch through the window as the duke amuses himself with Maddalena. The jester sends Gilda off to Verona disguised as a boy and pays Sparafucile to murder the duke. Gilda returns to overhear Maddalena urge her brother to spare the handsome stranger and kill the hunchback instead. Sparafucile refuses to murder Rigoletto but agrees to kill the next stranger who comes to the inn so that he will be able to produce a dead body. Gilda decides to sacrifice herself for the duke. She knocks at the door and is stabbed. Rigoletto returns to claim the body, which he assumes is the duke’s. As he gloats over the sack Sparafucile has given him, he hears his supposed victim singing in the distance. Frantically tearing open the sack, he finds his daughter, who dies asking his forgiveness. Horrified, Rigoletto remembers Monterone’s curse.
In Focus

Giuseppe Verdi

Rigoletto

Premiere: Teatro La Fenice, Venice, 1851
A dramatic journey of undeniable force, Rigoletto commands the respect of critics, performers, and audiences alike. It was immensely popular from its premiere—from even before its premiere, according to accounts of the buzz that surrounded the initial rehearsals—and remains fresh and powerful to this day. The story is one of the most accessible in opera, based on a controversial Victor Hugo drama whose full dramatic implications only became apparent when transformed by Verdi’s musical genius. Rigoletto is the tale of an outsider—a hunchbacked jester—who struggles to balance the dueling elements of beauty and evil that exist in his life. Written during the most fertile period of Verdi’s artistic life, the opera resonates with a Shakespearean universality.

The Creators
In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today’s repertoire. His role in Italy’s cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Francesco Maria Piave (1810–1876), Verdi’s librettist for Rigoletto, collaborated with him on ten works, including Ernani, La Traviata, La Forza del Destino, and the original versions of Macbeth and Simon Boccanegra.

The Setting
Victor Hugo’s 1832 play Le Roi s’Amuse (The King Amuses Himself), set at the court of King François I of France (circ. 1520), is a blatant depiction of depraved authority. In adapting it, Verdi and Piave fought incessantly with the Italian censors in a well-documented battle. Though Verdi had no love of royalty and favored a republic, he was not a proletarian ideologue like Hugo, and he tended to view people more as individuals than as representatives of classes. He was content, with Piave’s deft juggling, to set the opera at the non-royal Renaissance court of Mantua and to change all the names, but held firm on other issues in the story, such as the curse that is the catalyst of the drama. Although the Duke remains unnamed, he was modeled on history’s Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612). The Gonzaga family motto—“Forse che sì, forse che no” (“Maybe yes, maybe no”)—provides an interesting insight into some of the Duke’s cavalier pronouncements. In this season’s new production by Bartlett Sher, the director moves the action to Weimar-era Germany, a time and place with surprising parallels to the decadent world of Verdi’s original setting.
The Music
Rigoletto contains a wealth of melody, including one that is among the world’s most famous: the tenor’s jaunty “La donna è mobile.” The opera’s familiar arias—“Questa o quella” and “Caro nome,” for example—are also rich with character insight and dramatic development. The heart of the score, though, lies in its fast-moving subtleties and apt dramatic touches. The baritone’s solos, “Pari siamo” (Act I) and “Cortigiani, vil razza dannata” (Act II), are epic scenes telescoped to less than ten minutes each. The celebrated father-daughter duets also reflect Verdi’s overall design. Rigoletto sings of his protective love for Gilda in Act I in a spun-out phrase of simple, honest melody, while her music decorates his. In their subsequent scene in Act II, Gilda’s music (and, by implication, her life) is similarly intertwined with that of Rigoletto, until finally her melody breaks away as she strives to declare her adolescent independence. The famous Act III quartet, “Bella figlia dell’amore,” is an ingenious musical analysis of the diverging reactions of four characters in the same moment: The Duke’s music rises with urgency and impatience, Gilda’s droops with disappointment, Rigoletto’s remains measured and paternal, while the promiscuous Maddalena is all over the place. In the context of the opera, the merely lovely music becomes inspired drama.

Met History
Met audiences first heard Rigoletto within a month of the company’s inaugural performance, on November 16, 1883. The 1903–04 season opened with the company debut of Enrico Caruso as the Duke—a role that he went on to sing 38 times before his premature death in 1921. The opera’s title role was identified for many years with Italian baritone Giuseppe De Luca, who gave 96 performances between 1916 and 1940. Other notable Met Rigolettos have included Leonard Warren, Robert Merrill, and Cornell MacNeil (who surpassed De Luca’s record with a record 102 appearances between 1959 and 1980). A new production in 1951, with Warren in the title role and Hilde Güden as Gilda, in her first Met appearance, also featured the company debut of designer Eugene Berman. Audience favorite Roberta Peters sang Gilda 88 times between 1951 and 1985—more than any soprano in Met history. In 1977, John Dexter directed a new production, which starred Sherrill Milnes, Ileana Cotrubas, Plácido Domingo, Isola Jones, and Justino Díaz. A new staging by Otto Schenk premiered in 1989 with June Anderson in her Met debut as Gilda, Luciano Pavarotti as the Duke, and Leo Nucci as Rigoletto. Michael Mayer made his debut with the company directing a new staging in January 2013, with Michele Mariotti conducting Željko Lučić, Diana Damrau, and Piotr Beczała. This season’s new staging, by Bartlett Sher, opened on New Year’s Eve 2021, starring Quinn Kelsey in the title role, Rosa Feola as Gilda, and Beczała as the Duke, conducted by Daniele Rustioni.
Program Note

As with Beethoven, Verdi’s body of work is often divided by contemporary commentators into three artistic periods. In the first, stretching from 1839 to 1850, Verdi was at his most prolific, quickly completing 15 operas that established him with audiences of the time as one of the world’s leading opera composers and the successor to Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, all of whom had recently died or retired. The towering masterpieces that guaranteed Verdi’s position alongside opera’s few all-time great composers, however, did not appear until the second and third periods of his career, marked by a significant break away from, or at least a highly innovative re-interpretation of, the traditional forms and expectations of Italian opera, to which his early works had mostly adhered. Keeping with the Beethoven analogy, Rigoletto was Verdi’s “Eroica,” marking the beginning of the composer’s middle period and clearly surpassing in originality and achievement all of his previous work. At its 1851 premiere and throughout the ensuing 13-performance run at Venice’s Teatro La Fenice, Rigoletto was an enormous success, and it traveled quickly from there. By 1855, the opera had been produced throughout Italy, across Europe, and as far afield as New York, Havana, and Montevideo, Uruguay. This international success, combined with the premieres of Il Trovatore and La Traviata—which followed close on Rigoletto’s heels in 1853—put to rest any remaining doubt regarding Verdi’s operatic primacy.

But despite Rigoletto’s eventual success, it was very nearly killed before its birth, needing something of a political miracle just to see the light of day. After receiving the commission from La Fenice, Verdi—an ardent humanist, democrat, and patriot who longed for Italy to be free from the autocratic rule of France and Austria—turned to an uncomfortable source of inspiration: a play by Victor Hugo called Le Roi s’Amuse (The King Amuses Himself). Scathing and bleak, it centers on the amorous exploits of the historical French king François I and the downfall of his physically deformed and morally corrupt jester Triboulet, who encourages and makes light of the king’s lechery. The hunchbacked antihero ultimately reaps the poisonous crop he has sown when François discovers and rapes his sheltered daughter, whom he has hidden away from the corruption of the court. Worse yet, in a botched attempt to arrange the king’s murder in revenge, Triboulet causes instead the death of his own daughter.

Naturally, Austrian censors (who had jurisdiction over northern Italy, most of which was a province of the Habsburg Empire at the time) were not impressed with Verdi and librettist Francesco Maria Piave’s work. Three months before the scheduled premiere, the administration of La Fenice received a letter from the authorities expressing the regional governor’s disappointment that Verdi and Piave “should not have chosen a more worthy vehicle to display their talents than the revolting immorality and obscene triviality of La Maledizione [The Curse, Rigoletto’s original title].” The letter communicated that any performance of the
opera was absolutely forbidden and instructed that no one’s time be wasted with protestations or appeals. Luckily, this last directive was ignored, and after extensive revisions to the work’s setting and its characters’ identities—the scene moved from the French court to Mantua, King François became the local duke, Triboulet became Rigoletto, and so on—the newly titled Rigoletto won its approval for performance from a censor who, by a crucial twist of fate, was an opera lover and an admirer of Verdi’s work.

Though the play’s political bent surely played its part in attracting Verdi’s attention, it was the emotional, psychological, and narrative power of Le Roi s’Amuse, and the depth and inherent contradiction of Triboulet’s character, that most appealed to Verdi, an intensely intellectual and extremely well-read man for whom literature, poetry, and drama held as much significance as music. (The collection of authors on whose work he based his operas reads like a cross-section of history’s great writers: Hugo, Byron, Schiller, Voltaire, and most of all, Shakespeare, a formative influence and continual source of inspiration for Verdi, who claimed to have read and re-read the playwright’s works since childhood.) It is therefore hard to overestimate the composer’s level of admiration for Hugo’s play, which he described in a letter to Piave as “one of the greatest creations of modern theatre. The story is great, immense, and includes a character who is one of the greatest creations that the theatres of all nations and all times will boast. … Triboulet is a creation worthy of Shakespeare.”

The genius of Verdi’s transformation of Hugo’s spoken drama into Rigoletto—and indeed of the stylistic step forward represented by this first work of Verdi’s second creative period—is the closeness of music, text, and action. Form and content are streamlined and treated fluidly so that neither the drama nor the music is distorted to fit the other, but rather the two are woven into a single organic whole. In the case of Rigoletto, this makes for a grim, vicious, and powerfully effective work, an opera noir in which the tension never flags and no respite is provided from the disturbing arc of the plot. Verdi and Piave have stripped Hugo’s story and characters down to their bare essentials. From the opening scene—in which Monterone spits out his curse at a man so depraved that he would taunt an anguished father unable to protect his daughter—to the final scenes—in which Rigoletto himself tastes the impotence and torment of that very same situation and worse—not a single word of text or note of music is wasted. This is not a cathartic tragedy or a tale of noble sacrifice. There are no admirable characters here, no moral lesson, no redemption, and no silver lining. There is only a merciless depiction of the dark side of society.

With his music, Verdi takes all of this and makes it human, creating the psychological and emotional dimension that is mostly absent from the minimalist, clear-eyed text. Largely abandoning the predictable alternating structure of recitative, aria, and ensemble numbers, Verdi instead drives constantly forward
in an arioso-like mixture of the three, relying mostly on passages for two or more characters that flow seamlessly together. Trimming the fat of virtuoso vocal display, he strives for naturalness of expression. Consequently, what solo numbers there are must be handled by the performers with tasteful understatement to avoid seeming out of place and stalling the crucial momentum. As Verdi himself explained in response to a request for an additional showpiece aria for the soprano who first sang Gilda, “any new number would be superfluous … [and] would make no effect without the right time and place. … My intention was that Rigoletto should be one long series of duets, without arias and finales, because that is how I felt it. If anyone replies, ‘But you could have done this or that or the other,’ I can only say, ‘That may be, but I did not know how to do any better.’” It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Rigoletto’s finest moment is the ingenious Act III quartet, combining the work’s emotional high point with its musical one and achieving a level of perfection matched by few other passages in all of opera.

One is also constantly amazed by Verdi’s inventiveness and ability to unmistakably conjure his desired emotions and impressions while leaving them unspoken. Through evocative scoring (the chorus’s imitation of wind during the storm in Act III), thematic manipulation (the curse leitmotif that is established in the opera’s very first measures and lurks beneath each of its character’s realizations of their fate), and pitch-perfect character painting (the very nature of each personality revealed by their music), Verdi’s score communicates subliminally with the listener. In Act II, for example, “while [Rigoletto] sings and moves us to pity,” musicologist Vincent Godefroy observes, “the orchestra is commenting on his daughter’s experience behind the locked door. … Concentrate on the orchestra and you will hear the rape of Gilda.” Of similar genius is the treatment of “La donna è mobile”—by far the most frequently excerpted bit of Rigoletto. So carefree and charmingly tongue-in-cheek on its own, Verdi’s jaunty little tune is positively slimy in context, and when its distant strains return in the final scene to transform Rigoletto’s bloodthirsty gloating to horrible dread, the effect is viscerally sickening. These musical masterstrokes, resonating with the listener on a subconscious and primal level, ensure that Rigoletto will never lose its power to send audiences home feeling profoundly impressed, mentally unsettled, and most likely a bit queasy.

—Jay Goodwin

Jay Goodwin is the Met’s Editorial Director.
The Cast and Creative Team

Daniele Rustioni
CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

**This Season**  
Rigoletto and *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Met; Manon in concert in Lyon and at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Elysées; Falstaff and Rigoletto in Lyon; Macbeth and Otello at Covent Garden; Pagliacci and *L’Elisir d’Amore* in St. Petersburg; Les Troyens, Otello, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Bavarian State Opera; Lucia di Lammermoor in concert at the Salzburg Festival; and concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Orchestre de l’Opéra de Lyon, and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne.

**Met Appearances**  
Aida (debut, 2017).

**Career Highlights**  
This season, he begins his tenure as principal guest conductor of the Bavarian State Opera. He has served as principal conductor the Opéra National de Lyon since 2017 and chief conductor of the Ulster Orchestra since 2019. Between 2014 and 2020, he was music director of the Orchestra della Toscana, where he is currently artistic director. He has conducted all of the major Italian symphony orchestras, as well as many throughout Europe, and has also led productions at La Scala, Staatsoper Berlin, Dutch National Opera, the Paris Opera, Pesaro’s Rossini Opera Festival, and in Aix-en-Provence, Valencia, Venice, Madrid, Stuttgart, Zurich, Tokyo, Rome, and Naples, among others.

Bartlett Sher
DIRECTOR (SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA)

**This Season**  
Rigoletto at the Met and Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s *Intimate Apparel* at Lincoln Center Theater.

**Met Productions**  

**Career Highlights**  
He won a 2008 Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical for *South Pacific* and also received Tony nominations for his work on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *My Fair Lady*, *Oslo*, *The King and I*, *Golden Boy*, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, *Awake and Sing!*, and *The Light in the Piazza*. He won Drama Desk Awards for directing Broadway productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *South Pacific*. He is resident director of Lincoln Center Theater, and from 2000 to 2009, he was artistic director of Seattle’s Intiman Theatre. He has also served as company director for the Guthrie Theater and associate artistic director at Hartford Stage. He has created productions at Staatsoper Berlin, La Scala, the Salzburg Festival, English National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, and New York City Opera, and he recently directed the film adaptation of J.T. Rogers’s *Oslo* for HBO, which received two Emmy nominations.
Michael Yeargan
SET DESIGNER (DALLAS, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON  
Rigoletto at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS  
Since his 1993 debut designing the sets and costumes for Ariadne auf Naxos, he has designed the sets for Porgy and Bess, Roméo et Juliette, Nico Muhly's Two Boys, L'Elisir d'Amore, Le Comte Ory, Les Contes d'Hoffmann, Don Giovanni, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Otello, and the world premiere of John Harbison's The Great Gatsby, and the sets and costumes for Così fan tutte and Floyd's Susannah.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  
He won Tony Awards for his work on South Pacific and The Light in the Piazza and Drama Desk Awards for South Pacific, Awake and Sing!, and The Light in the Piazza. On Broadway, he has created more than two dozen productions, including My Fair Lady, Oslo, Fiddler on the Roof, The King and I, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, and Seascap. A longtime professor of design at the Yale School of Drama, he has also designed productions at La Scala, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin, Dutch National Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera Australia, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, LA Opera, and the Glimmerglass Festival, among others.

Catherine Zuber
COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  
Rigoletto at the Met, Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s Intimate Apparel at Lincoln Center Theater, Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Mrs. Doubtfire on Broadway.

MET PRODUCTIONS  

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  
Among her many accolades are eight Tony Awards, an Olivier Award, and four Drama Desk Awards. Her nearly 60 Broadway credits include Moulin Rogue!, My Fair Lady, Oslo, The King and I, Golden Boy, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, The Royal Family, South Pacific, The Coast of Utopia, Awake and Sing!, Seascap, and The Light in the Piazza. A 2016 inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame, her work has also appeared at La Scala, the Salzburg Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, Dutch National Opera, English National Opera, Opera Australia, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, and in the HBO film Oslo.
The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

THIS SEASON Maddalena in Rigoletto for her debut and Olga in Eugene Onegin at the Met, the title role of Carmen at the Bavarian State Opera, Eboli in Don Carlo in Marseille, Adalgisa in Norma in Barcelona, and a concert with Cecilia Bartoli at the Vienna State Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Arsace in Semiramide at Pesaro’s Rossini Opera Festival; Carmen at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre and in Turin, Reggio Emilia, and Oviedo; Maffio Orsini in Donizetti’s Lucrezia Borgia in Bergamo; Preziosilla in La Forza del Destino at the Paris Opera; and Eboli in Las Palmas. She has also sung Isabella in L’Italiana in Algeri in Barcelona; Malcolm in La Donna del Lago in Marseille and at the Rossini Opera Festival; Olga at the Canadian Opera Company; Carmen in Zurich, Hong Kong, Palermo, Hamburg, and at Atlanta Opera; Bradamante in Handel’s Alcina at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Zurich; Isabella, Ulrica in Un Ballo in Maschera, Mistress Quickly in Falstaff, Olga, Carmen, and Lydia Tchoukovskaïa in the world premiere of Bruno Mantovani’s Akhmatova at the Paris Opera; Ascanio in Berlioz’s Benvenuto Cellini in Rome; and Dalila in Samson et Dalila and Adalgisa in Valencia.

Donald Holder
LIGHTING DESIGNER (CROTTON-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK)

MET PRODUCTIONS Porgy and Bess, Samson et Dalila, Otello, Nico Muhly’s Two Boys, and Die Zauberflöte (debut, 2004).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been nominated for 13 Tony Awards, winning in 2008 for South Pacific and 1998 for The Lion King. His numerous Broadway credits include Tootsie, Kiss Me, Kate, Straight White Men, My Fair Lady, M. Butterfly, Anastasia, Oslo, Fiddler on the Roof, The King and I, among many others. Television and film projects include Smash (NBC-Dreamworks), Oceans Eight (Warner Brothers), The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel (Amazon Studios), and Spirited (Apple Studios). He has also designed lighting for Rigoletto at Staatsoper Berlin, Porgy and Bess at English National Opera and Dutch National Opera, Faust in Baden-Baden, Jake Heggie’s Moby-Dick and Todd Machover’s Death and the Powers at the Dallas Opera, Elliot Goldenthal’s Grendel at LA Opera and the Lincoln Center Festival, Salome at St. Petersburg’s Mariinsky Theatre, and Carmen at LA Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and currently serves as head of lighting design at the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Varduhi Abrahamyan
MEZZO-SOPRANO (MARSEILLE, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON Maddalena in Rigoletto at the Met and Paradise Square on Broadway.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Arsace in Semiramide at Pesaro’s Rossini Opera Festival; Carmen at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre and in Turin, Reggio Emilia, and Oviedo; Maffio Orsini in Donizetti’s Lucrezia Borgia in Bergamo; Preziosilla in La Forza del Destino at the Paris Opera; and Eboli in Las Palmas. She has also sung Isabella in L’Italiana in Algeri in Barcelona; Malcolm in La Donna del Lago in Marseille and at the Rossini Opera Festival; Olga at the Canadian Opera Company; Carmen in Zurich, Hong Kong, Palermo, Hamburg, and at Atlanta Opera; Bradamante in Handel’s Alcina at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Zurich; Isabella, Ulrica in Un Ballo in Maschera, Mistress Quickly in Falstaff, Olga, Carmen, and Lydia Tchoukovskaïa in the world premiere of Bruno Mantovani’s Akhmatova at the Paris Opera; Ascanio in Berlioz’s Benvenuto Cellini in Rome; and Dalila in Samson et Dalila and Adalgisa in Valencia.
THIS SEASON  

**Rosa Feola**  
SOPRANO (CASERTA, ITALY)  

Gilda in *Rigoletto* at the Met and Covent Garden, Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Zurich, Fiorilla in Rossini’s *Il Turco in Italia* at La Scala, Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Bavarian State Opera and in Turin, Norina in *Don Pasquale* in Hamburg, and Violetta in *La Traviata* and a concert at Naples’s Teatro di San Carlo.  

**MET APPEARANCES**  
Gilda (debut, 2019).  

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  
She has sung Gilda at the Bavarian State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ravenna Festival, and in Rome, Zurich, Turin, and Savona. Other recent performances include Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, and Vienna State Opera; Susanna in Wolf-Ferrari’s *Il Segreto di Susanna* in Genoa; Violetta in Savona; Ilia in *Idomeneo* in Rome; Sandrina in Mozart’s *La Finta Giardiniera* and Fiorilla in Zurich; Musetta in *La Bohème* and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at the Bavarian State Opera; Adina in *L’Elisir d’Amore*, Norina, and Ninetta in Rossini’s *La Gazza Ladra* at La Scala; Dircé in Cherubini’s *Médée* at the Salzburg Festival; the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Basel; and Amina in *La Sonnambula* in Beijing and Muscat.

**Piotr Beczała**  
TENOR (CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE, POLAND)  

The Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* at the Met, Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Zurich, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Bavarian State Opera, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the Staatskapelle Dresden, and recitals throughout Europe and South America.  

**MET APPEARANCES**  

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  
Recent performances include Edgardo, des Grieux, and the title role of *Werther* in Zurich; Jontek in Moniuszko’s *Halka* and Werther at the Polish National Opera; the title role of *Lohengrin* and the Prince at the Vienna State Opera; Jontek in Vienna; Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller* in Barcelona and in concert at the Salzburg Festival; and Lohengrin at the Bayreuth Festival. He has also appeared at Staatsoper Berlin, Deutsche Oper Berlin, La Scala, Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among others.

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

**Quinn Kelsey**
BASS (HONOLULU, HAWAII)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of Rigoletto and Marcello in La Bohème at the Met, Count di Luna in Il Trovatore and Rigoletto in Zurich, Amonasro in Aida in Dresden, and the title role of Falstaff at the Santa Fe Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Germont in La Traviata, Amonasro, Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor, Count di Luna, Peter in Hansel and Gretel, Marcello and Schaunard (debut, 2008) in La Bohème, and Monterone in Rigoletto.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has sung Rigoletto at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Paris Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, English National Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, the Norwegian National Opera, in Frankfurt, and in concert at Hawaii Opera Theatre. Recent performances include Marcello at Palm Beach Opera, Scarpia as part of Opera Philadelphia’s The Drama of Tosca, the Duke of Nottingham in Roberto Devereux at LA Opera, Miller in Luisa Miller at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ford in Falstaff at the Dallas Opera, Rodrigo in Don Carlo at Washington National Opera, and Amonasro in Orange. He was the 2015 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

**Andrea Mastroni**
BASS (MILAN, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** Sparafucile in Rigoletto at the Met, Bluebeard in Bluebeard’s Castle in Novara and Iesi, Plutone in Monteverdi’s Orfeo at the Vienna State Opera, and concerts in Berlin and Paris.

**MET APPEARANCES** Sparafucile (debut, 2017).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has also sung Sparafucile at the Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, and in Verona, Hamburg, Madrid, Zurich, Palermo, Genoa, and Bergamo. Recent performances include Ferrando in Il Trovatore in concert in Naples, Creon and the Messenger in Stravinsky’s Oedipus Rex in concert at Italy’s Festival dei Due Mondi, Selim in Rossini’s Il Turco in Italia at the Glyndebourne Festival, Tiresias in Oedipus Rex in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, Rocco in Fidelio in Oviedo, the King of Scotland in Handel’s Ariodante in Valencia, Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte and Silvano in Cavalli’s La Calisto in Madrid, and Pallante in Agrippina at Covent Garden, in Munich, and in concert with Il Pomo d’Oro. He has also sung the title role of Don Giovanni in Verona, Sarastro in Hamburg, Garibaldo in Rodelinda on tour with Le Concert d’Astrée, Timur in Turandot in Madrid, Mustafá in L’Italiana in Algeri in Toulon, and Angelotti in Tosca at the Salzburg Festival.