KEVIN PUTS / LIBRETTO BY GREG PIERCE

THE HOURS

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION
Phelim McDermott

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Tom Pye

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Bruno Poet

PROJECTION DESIGNER
Finn Ross

CHOREOGRAPHER
Annie-B Parson

DRAMATURG
Paul Cremo

Opera in two acts

Based on the book by
Michael Cunningham and the
Paramount Pictures film

Saturday, December 10, 2022
1:00–4:05PM

World-Premiere Production

The production of The Hours was made possible by a generous gift from
Robert L. Turner, in memory of his mother,
Suzanne Wilbert Turner

Commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and
The Philadelphia Orchestra

In collaboration with Improbable

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Throughout the 2022–23 season, the Met honors Ukraine and its brave citizens as they fight to defend their country and its cultural heritage.
The Metropolitan Opera
2022–23 SEASON

The seventh Metropolitan Opera performance of
KEVIN PUTS’S

THE HOURS

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

CLARISSA VAUGHAN
Renée Fleming

SALLY
Denyce Graves

MAN UNDER THE ARCH
John Holiday

WALTER
Tony Stevenson*

VIRGINIA WOOLF
Joyce DiDonato

LEONARD WOOLF
Sean Panikkar

BARBARA
Kathleen Kim

LAURA BROWN
Kelli O’Hara

DAN BROWN
Brandon Cedel*

RICHIE
Kai Edgar

RICHARD
Kyle Ketelsen

JULIAN
Atticus Ware

QUENTIN
Patrick Scott McDermott

ANGELICA
Lena Josephine Marano

NELLY
Eve Gigliotti

KITTY
Sylvia D’Eramo*

HOTEL CLERK
John Holiday

LOUIS
William Burden

VANESSA
Sylvia D’Eramo*

MRS. LATCH
Kathleen Kim

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Saturday, December 10, 2022, 1:00–4:05PM
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**Chorus Master**  Donald Palumbo  
**Musical Preparation**  Howard Watkins,* Caren Levine,*  
  Bryan Wagorn,* Dimitri Dover,* and Kensho Watanabe  
**Associate Stage Director**  Peter Relton  
**Assistant Stage Directors**  Christina Franklin,  
  J. Knighten Smit, and Paula Suozzi  
**Stage Director Fellow**  Michelle Cuizon  
**Assistant Costume Designer**  Zeb Lalljee  
**Associate Choreographer**  Elizabeth DeMent  
**English Diction Coach**  Kathryn LaBouff  
**Prompter**  Caren Levine*  
**Additional Casting**  Tara Rubin, CSA, and Spencer Gualdoni  
**Met Titles**  Michael Panayos  
**Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted by**  Bay Productions and Metropolitan Opera Shops  
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**Dyeing by**  Dyenamix Inc., New York  
**Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by**  Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department  

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

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**Met Titles**

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

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The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute Bank of America in recognition of its generous support during the 2022–23 season.
The opera takes place in a single day. Virginia Woolf is in Richmond, England, in 1923. Laura Brown is in Los Angeles in 1949. Clarissa Vaughan is in New York City at the end of the 20th century.

Act I
The chorus, as Virginia's imagination, tinkers with the opening line of the novel that she's working on, Mrs. Dalloway.

Clarissa and her partner, Sally, are preparing for tonight's party celebrating Clarissa's best friend, Richard, a writer who is dying of AIDS. Sally doubts Richard will be well enough to attend, but Clarissa refuses to accept the dire state of Richard's health. She sets out to buy flowers for the party and delights in the wonders of Washington Square, where she is intrigued by the otherworldly singing of the Man Under the Arch. She runs into Walter, a writer who shares Sally's doubts about Richard's health, and invites him to the party.

Virginia Woolf has just woken up, anxious about beginning her new novel. As she watches her husband, Leonard, edit proofs, she reflects on the roles that he plays in her life.

Clarissa enters the flower shop, where she is greeted by a kiss from Barbara the florist. Clarissa escapes into a fantasy of a romance with Barbara. She finds the perfect flowers and leaves to check on Richard.

Virginia finds it hard to start work on her novel, distracted by thoughts of London's bustle, in contrast with the lifeless suburb of Richmond. She manages to keep her depression at bay and starts writing.

In her bed in Los Angeles, Laura Brown is reading the passage from Mrs. Dalloway that Virginia is writing. Laura dreads going downstairs to face her husband, Dan, whose birthday is today, and her young son, Richie. When she enters her kitchen, she tries to convince Dan and Richie that she is fine, but internally she agonizes about her fears and insecurities.

Clarissa, irritated by Sally's doubts about Richard's health, wonders whether Sally is the best match for her. Virginia realizes that a character in her novel must die, but she isn't sure who. Laura struggles with her anxiety while baking Dan's birthday cake with Richie. On her way to Richard's, Clarissa stops at the corner where, years ago, she ended their nascent romantic relationship, wondering if she made the right decision. When she arrives at Richard's, she finds him frail and forgetful. He tells her that he can't face the party, but she snaps at him, telling him that he needs to try harder. He confides that sometimes he still imagines them as lovers.
In Laura’s kitchen, her anxiety escalates as she tries to bake the cake with Richie. Virginia asks her cook, Nelly, whether she believes that a young woman could start off the day joyfully and then decide to kill herself. This leads Virginia into a suicidal fantasy foreshadowing the way that she’ll eventually end her own life. Laura’s neighbor Kitty visits and tells Laura that she might have cancer. Laura escapes into a romantic fantasy about Kitty which ends with her actually kissing Kitty as she consoles her. Virginia, too anxious to write, decides to head out into the world.

Clarissa returns home to find Sally busily preparing for the party, but she has a gnawing feeling that something’s wrong with Richard and heads back toward his apartment. Virginia debates whether she should take the train to London or end her life in the river. Laura, feeling suffocated, drops Richie with the sitter and drives off toward Pasadena. The three women are united in their need to escape and in their terror of what they might find.

**Intermission** (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:30PM)

**Act II**

Laura has found herself on a bed in a hotel room, armed with a bottle of pills and *Mrs. Dalloway*. She doesn’t know whether she’ll kill herself or read her book. Starting to read, she conjures up Virginia, who is seen at the edge of the river—perhaps to commit suicide? Virginia is momentarily distracted by the voice of the Man Under the Arch and by the arrival of Leonard, who says he was convinced that this time he’d find her dead, and he’d have to tell her sister Vanessa that he had failed.

Arriving outside Richard’s apartment, Clarissa finds Louis, Richard’s ex-boyfriend, debating whether or not to visit him. He recalls the formative summer that the three of them spent in Wellfleet, triggering a flashback depicting the closeness Clarissa and Richard shared, a closeness which excluded Louis.

Virginia, back in her studio, hears children’s voices and wonders if she’s losing her mind. In her garden, she finds her sister Vanessa and her three children holding a funeral service for a dying bird. As Virginia manically makes a grave for the bird, Vanessa realizes the severity of her sister’s illness. In the hotel room, Laura castigates herself for considering suicide and contemplates returning home.

Clarissa enters Richard’s apartment to find him on his window ledge. She tries to convince him to come down, and he explains that all he wanted was to write something that might touch someone. He tells Clarissa he loves her.
Laura brings herself to leave the hotel and head back home.

Virginia, at the bird grave, realizes her sanity is slipping.

As the connections among the characters become clear, Clarissa, Laura, and Virginia find themselves in a space that transcends time and place, where they can finally perceive one another.

—Paul Cremo

If you or someone you know is considering self-harm or suicide, help is available from the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988 or visiting 988lifeline.org.
**In Focus**

**Kevin Puts**

**The Hours**

*Premiere: Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, March 2022 (concert version, performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra); Metropolitan Opera House, New York, November 2022 (staged production)*

A compelling new opera about three women in different times and places—and the spaces between them that both separate and connect them—*The Hours* is based on the Pulitzer Prize–winning novel by Michael Cunningham and the Academy Award–winning film adaptation that followed. Both the book and the film make heavy reference to an earlier novel, Virginia Woolf's 1925 *Mrs. Dalloway*, which forms a sort of parallel background narrative: Over the course of the opera, Woolf is writing the novel, Laura Brown is reading it, and Clarissa Vaughan is seemingly reenacting its plot, shifted to late-20th-century Manhattan. The opera uses Woolf's and Cunningham's magisterial prose as a departure point from which to explore ambiguities and fluidities that cry out for musical expression.

**The Creators**

Kevin Puts (b. 1972) is an American composer, especially noted for his four symphonies, large-scale orchestral works, and numerous concerti. His first opera, *Silent Night*, was awarded the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Music. Playwright, lyricist, and fiction writer Greg Pierce (b. 1978) created the libretto for *The Hours*, adapting the novel by American author Michael Cunningham (b. 1952), who was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and PEN/Faulkner Award for his work. Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), whose *Mrs. Dalloway* figures prominently in *The Hours*, was an English novelist, essayist, critic, and publisher. She is widely considered one of the most important English-language writers of the 20th century and an important pioneer in the genre of stream-of-consciousness narrative.

**The Setting**

The tripartite setting of the opera is an essential aspect of its story. The first locale is Richmond, a quiet suburb of London where Virginia Woolf lived with her husband, Leonard, as she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1923. Leonard ran Hogarth Press (which published Sigmund Freud, among other notables) from this house. The quiet of the area was meant to aid Virginia’s already precarious mental health, but she found the stillness oppressive. The second setting is Los Angeles in 1949, where Dan and Laura Brown are struggling to conform
to a proper mid-century American suburban life and raise their child, Richie. The third setting is Manhattan at the end of the 20th century, where Clarissa Vaughan is preparing to throw a party for the poet Richard who faces the late stages of AIDS and the dementia that frequently accompanied it.

The Music
In adapting Cunningham’s novel, Puts sought to follow the shifting perspectives between the heroines while maintaining their separate dimensions—an ambition that can be uniquely accomplished with the tools of opera. The music for and around each of the heroines has a distinct style: a stripped-down quality for Woolf, with harmonic shifts mirroring her fraught mental instability; an appropriately light-pop sensibility for the oppressive suburban conformity surrounding Laura Brown; and a rich, colorful soundscape for Clarissa that evokes the vibrancy of urban New York City and alludes to contemporary film and Broadway composers. Initially, these worlds exist as separate musical entities, but over the course of the opera, they transcend the boundaries of time and space and increasingly overlap, culminating in a climactic trio for the three women that encapsulates their diversities and commonalities. The score similarly attaches character aspects to their music—for instance, Richard’s shadowy perception of his world as compared to the perkier sounds of characters who are less in conflict with their environments than the lead characters. The fluidity of time and point of view is depicted largely by the orchestra, which provides a connective tissue between the voices and shows Puts’s experience as a symphonic composer. The chorus expresses “real” voices (the people on the streets of Manhattan) as well as ephemeral ones (the inner thoughts and anxieties of the three women, as well as the literally resonating lines of Woolf’s prose in her novel, notably the stentorian opening line, “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,” sung in fragments and close harmonies throughout the opening scenes).

Met History
This season’s performances mark the first fully staged production of The Hours, following the opera’s premiere in a concert version with the Philadelphia Orchestra in March 2022. Met Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who also led the concert premiere, conducts a cast that stars sopranos Renée Fleming and Kelli O’Hara and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato in a staging by Phelim McDermott.
A Note from the Librettist

_The Hours_ takes place in a single day. The year shifts between 1923, 1949, and the late 1990s, but the hours push on until night. My name is Greg Pierce and I wrote the libretto for _The Hours_. I’d like to tell you about a single day in the creation of our opera.

**10:30AM (on October 17, 2022)**

It’s the first day of rehearsal at the Met. We are in a studio that’s so far underground we are basically spelunking. We start with Virginia Woolf’s first scene, and Joyce DiDonato is already on fire—running her fingers across walls, dashing to her chair, exploring the objects on her desk, making the room her own. Having never worked with Joyce, I’m astonished by how tactile she is. Did she start out as a dancer? She and Sean Panikkar do the first Virginia-Leonard scene three times, finding all kinds of new textures. Even though I’m married to an actor, I’m astounded that someone as self-assured as Joyce can instantly morph into someone who’s so uncomfortable in her sweater, in her studio, in her mind.

**11:45AM (on March 16, 2021)**

Composer Kevin Puts and I have just boarded a plane in Cincinnati. It’s a bad moment in the pandemic, and Covid vaccines have just become available but most of us aren’t old enough to get them yet. We’ve just heard the entire first draft of our opera sung by the freakishly talented students at Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. They performed it masked, distanced, and behind plexiglass shields like opera warriors. Kevin and I both think the final scene needs to be expanded, but we don’t how to do it yet. We are sitting a few rows apart, madly texting ideas before takeoff. I hit send too early. Kevin is confused, thinking I want everyone to sing the whole scene twice. Years later, in a seminar, Kevin’s students will be astonished that any part of a Met opera was written by texting.

**12:15PM (on June 16, 2018)**

I am in a hotel room in Minneapolis surrounded by decrepit wood paneling. I am waiting for a call from Kevin, whom I’ve never met. He calls. He tells me he admires _Fellow Travelers_; I tell him I admire _Silent Night_. He tells me that he and Renée Fleming came up with the idea of an _Hours_ opera, and Peter Gelb is enthusiastic, and since so many people read the book and saw the film, he wants to do something totally different—to take advantage of what opera does best. We start riffing on how the chorus could be more than just townspeople. We are talking fast—interrupting each other and apologizing. Though this phone call is technically my job interview, years later we both recall it as our first work session.
12:40PM (on January 24, 2021)
Kevin and I have flown to Houston to meet for the first time with director Phelim McDermott and designer Tom Pye who are about to open Aida there. While sitting on a bench waiting for their rehearsal to end, a bizarre turkey-like bird struts by—neither of us can identify it. In the meeting, Phelim draws a cone on a piece of paper and describes a concept of three levels of how we experience reality. This idea will radically influence how we proceed with our rewrites.

1:15PM (on October 4, 2019)
Over tuna melts at Cosmic Diner in Hell’s Kitchen, Kevin hands me his headphones, hits Go on his laptop, and plays me the first three minutes of music he’s written for The Hours—the prologue. Despite the corny pseudo-instruments of his composition software, the music is ominous, shimmering, mystical. I’m ecstatic. It tells me straight away what sound-world we’re in, and I have a thought about where it might reappear in Act II. I also have the thought, If I get tuna on his laptop, will I ruin a Met opera?

1:30PM (on July 10, 2018)
Kevin and dramaturg Paul Cremo and I are having enchiladas at Rosa Mexicano across the street from the Met. Kevin and I have an idea for how to end Act I and I am trying to perform it for Paul. I’m not singing, I’m just repeating the only sentence I’ve written for that moment so far. And I am over-gesticulating, trying to play all three main characters plus the curtain. When I’m done, Paul says, “I got chills.” And I think, If he got chills while seeing it performed this badly, it might work. For the next three years, we will work extremely closely with Paul, tracking a thousand story details through countless drafts of our opera.

1:45PM (on May 5, 2020)
I am lying on the floor of my kitchen in the Catskills. I call Kevin to tell him that my 70-year-old mother went to the doctor’s with a stomach ache and found out she has stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Later, Kevin will tell me that on the day of that phone call, he’d been writing the music for the moment in Act I when Laura Brown’s neighbor Kitty tells her, “I have to go into the hospital for a couple of days … it’s some kind of growth.”

2:15PM (on March 28, 2022)
Renée tells us that she’s curious about aspects of Clarissa’s history that don’t appear in the current draft of the libretto, which is heavily focused on Clarissa’s fraught relationship with her friend Richard. This inspires us to rethink Clarissa’s Act I aria, “Here on this corner.” The aria changes structurally, thematically, and harmonically. Seven months later we will hear Renée sing the new version in a
subterranean Met studio. Renée sounds magnificent, of course, and since we are sitting at a table right in front of her, it feels like a private concert of our work. Kevin and I keep looking at each other in disbelief.

3:30PM (on April 23, 2022)
I meet novelist Michael Cunningham for the first time in Washington Square, where Scene 2 takes place. He is extremely warm, dapper, and curious about how operas get made. He assures me that he has no interest in passing judgement or weighing in, he’s just thrilled it’s all happening. He tells me about his love affair with Washington Square. I tell him that in a previous draft, “Michael Cunningham” made an appearance but we had to cut him, sorry. He laughs and says he understands. As I walk home via Fifth Avenue (passing the block where Clarissa stops into the flower shop), I realize how terrified I’ve been that Michael Cunningham, one of my literary idols since my Oberlin College days, might hate what we’ve done with his novel.

4:35PM (on July 7, 2022)
During a dance workshop in a bowels-of-the-earth Met studio, Annie-B Parson has just choregraphed the moment when Virginia approaches the river. Kevin and I, who for years could not imagine how dance would work in this opera, are mesmerized. It seems like we’re watching a single sheet of billowing satin rather than a group of people walking toward us. In this moment we realize that dance will be an essential part of the storytelling. And that water and the qualities of its movement will guide the flow of our narrative. And that Annie-B is a genius. Three months later, I will read her new book The Choreography of Everyday Life and it will make my commute to rehearsal seem like a dance.

6:05PM (on March 21, 2022)
My mother dies. It is one day after the final Hours concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra. My sister Heather and I are sitting on her bed as light streams through her massive windows. A few hours later, I will email Kelli O’Hara and Kevin to tell them that the sublime music from Act II when Laura is sitting on her bed is running through my head and making me think my mom is drifting off to a better place. Kelli’s voice is nothing short of angelic in this moment and I’m grateful that’s it’s on repeat in my ear. From here on in, everything in our opera will take on new meaning for me.

7:15PM (on March 18, 2022)
Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts The Hours for the first time with the Philadelphia Orchestra, wearing a floral shirt in honor of the story’s central motif. His off-the-charts enthusiasm for this piece is enough to calm the anxious writers’ nerves.
He tells us that his friend told him he looked like an octopus while conducting this opera, as though he were floating through Kevin’s music.

11:25 PM (on November 22, 2022)
I am at the opening night party after the Met premiere of The Hours, hiding behind my mask and my husband. I think about how Clarissa’s day, and Mrs. Dalloway’s day, and Laura Brown’s day, and Peter Gelb’s day, and Kevin Puts’s day, and Michael Cunningham’s day, and my day are all heading towards a party. Truthfully, I am writing this program note on November 8, 2022, so opening night hasn’t happened yet. So I can only imagine the conversation I’ll have with someone—maybe a student?—who’s just seen the opera. What do I hope she’ll say? Maybe something like, “I really loved the music. I hope there’s a recording—I want to hear it again. Everyone was so good. It makes me want to read the book again and see the movie again and to actually read Mrs. Dalloway which I was supposed to do last semester. To be honest, today was a hard day. I won’t go into it but a lot happened. But coming to the Met and seeing this opera at the end of my day reminded me that it’s worth it to just push on through, you know? ‘Cause maybe it’s the hard days that connect us.” Or whatever she wants to say.

On behalf of everyone who worked on The Hours, I hope you enjoy it.

Warmly,
Greg Pierce
GIUSEPPE VERDI

AIDA

Rising star soprano Michelle Bradley sings the soaring title role of Verdi’s grand Egyptian drama, headlining a cast that also features mezzo-sopranos Olesya Petrova and Anita Rachvelishvili as Amneris and tenor Brian Jagde as Radamès. Paolo Carignani conducts Sonja Frisell’s spectacular production, which will be presented for the final time this season.

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The Cast and Creative Team

Kevin Puts
COMPOSER (ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI)

Career Highlights Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his debut opera, *Silent Night*, composer Kevin Puts has been commissioned and had his works performed by leading organizations around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and many more, and has collaborated with world-class artists including Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and Marin Alsop, among others. His oeuvre encompasses a wide variety of pieces, with a special emphasis on large-scale orchestral and choral works, including four symphonies and numerous concerti, as well as the operas *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Elizabeth Cree*. He has been a member of the composition faculty at the Peabody Institute since 2006 and also served as director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. Notable recent highlights include performances of his multimedia song cycle *The Brightness of Light* at LA Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago and the world premiere of his triple concerto *Contact* with Time for Three and the Florida Orchestra, with subsequent performances by the Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and Sun Valley Summer Symphony.

Greg Pierce
LIBRETTIST (SHELBURNE, VERMONT)

Career Highlights Greg Pierce is a playwright, librettist, and lyricist based in New York City. He wrote the libretto for the opera *Fellow Travelers* with composer Gregory Spears, based on the novel by Thomas Mallon, which premiered at Cincinnati Opera. With composer Nico Muhly, he wrote the opera-film *The Glitch*, commissioned by Catapult Opera. He has written two musicals with composer John Kander, *The Landing* and *Kid Victory*, which was co-produced by the Vineyard Theatre and Signature Theatre. His play *Slowgirl* was the inaugural play of Lincoln Center’s Claire Tow Theater (LCT3). His play *Her Requiem*, a Lincoln Center Theater commission, was also produced by LCT3. His play *Cardinal* was commissioned and produced by Second Stage Theater. *The Quarry*, written with composer Randal Pierce, was commissioned and produced by Vermont Stage Company. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, co-written with director Stephen Earnhart, based on the novel by Haruki Murakami, premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival. He has received fellowships from the Edward F. Albee Foundation, Yaddo, Djerassi Institute, New York Public Library, and Baryshnikov Arts Center. He has a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.F.A. in creative writing from Warren Wilson College.

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin  
CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

**This Season** The Hours, Lohengrin, Terence Blanchard’s Champion, and La Bohème at the Met; concerts with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and on tour in Paris, London, and Baden-Baden; and concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Orchestre Métropolitain.

**Met Appearances** Since his 2009 debut leading Carmen, he has conducted nearly 150 performances of 17 operas, including Don Carlos, Tosca, Matthew Aucoin’s Eurydice, Blanchard’s Fire Shut Up in My Bones, Wozzeck, Turandot, Dialogues des Carmélites, Pelléas et Mélisande, La Traviata, Elektra, Parsifal, and Der Fliegende Holländer.

**Career Highlights** He is in his fourth season as the Met’s Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music Director and has increasingly focused on supporting the creation of new works. He has served as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012 and artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2018, he became honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director for ten seasons, and in 2016, he was named an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Between 2008 and 2014, he was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Phelim McDermott  
DIRECTOR (MANCHESTER, ENGLAND)

**This Season** The Hours at the Met and Tao of Glass at Carolina Performing Arts and NYU Skirball.

**Met Productions** Philip Glass’s Akhnaten and Satyagraha (debut, 2008), Così fan tutte, The Enchanted Island, and the 125th Anniversary Gala.

**Career Highlights** He has been performing and directing since 1984. In 1996, he co-founded the theater company Improbable, for whom he has produced a number of productions, including the Obie Award-winning 70 Hill Lane, Lifegame, Animo, Coma, Spirit, The Hanging Man, Theatre of Blood (in collaboration with London’s National Theatre), Panic, Beauty and the Beast (a co-production with One of Us), and Shockheaded Peter (which also won an Olivier Award). His operatic credits include Glass’s Satyagraha, The Perfect American, and Akhnaten (which won the 2017 Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production) and Aida at English National Opera; Aida at Houston Grand Opera; Akhnaten at LA Opera; and Helmut Lachenmann’s Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern at Spoleto Festival USA. He directed My Neighbour Totoro, currently at the Barbican, for Improbable / the Royal Shakespeare Company / Studio Ghibli.
Tom Pye
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER (LINCOLN, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  The Hours at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS  Philip Glass's Akhnaten, Così fan tutte, Eugene Onegin (debut, 2013), and John Adams's The Death of Klinghoffer.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Opera credits include Aida, Akhnaten, Henze's Elegy for Young Lovers, The Death of Klinghoffer, Eugene Onegin, Vaughan Williams's Riders to the Sea, and the world premiere of Julian Anderson's Thebans at English National Opera; Aida in Geneva and at Houston Grand Opera; Akhnaten at LA Opera; The Turn of the Screw and the world premiere of Judith Weir's Miss Fortune at Covent Garden; the world premiere of Matthew Aucoin's Crossing at American Repertory Theater; The Cunning Little Vixen at the Glyndebourne Festival; Death in Venice at La Scala; and Britten's The Rape of Lucretia at the Bavarian State Opera. He has designed numerous productions on Broadway, in the West End, at London's National Theatre and Royal Court Theatre, and for the Joffrey Ballet and Atlanta Ballet. Recent screen credits include both seasons of HBO's Gentleman Jack, the BBC / PBS's To Walk Invisible, Disney+'s The Ballad of Renegade Nell, and Nippon TV's presentation of My Neighbour Totoro, in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Improbable.

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Bruno Poet
LIGHTING DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  The Hours at the Met, Salome at Houston Grand Opera, La Bohème at Washington National Opera, and Bad Cinderella on Broadway.

MET PRODUCTIONS  Philip Glass's Akhnaten (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  He was nominated for Tony and Drama Desk Awards for Tina on Broadway. Productions in the West End include Tina, Miss Saigon (also on Broadway), and From Here to Eternity, and for London's National Theatre include Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Treasure Island, Frankenstein (winning a 2012 Olivier Award), Morning to Midnight, Timon of Athens, and Travelling Light. He has lit world tours for Björk, Pet Shop Boys, and Sigur Rós, and Billie Eilish's concert at the Steve Jobs Theater. Work in opera includes productions at the Glyndebourne Festival, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Staatsoper Berlin, Bregenz Festival, Royal Danish Opera, Norwegian National Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, Opera Australia, Opera North, Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Madrid, Barcelona, Vienna, Monte Carlo, Stockholm, Geneva, Verona, and Strasbourg. He has also designed for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Old Vic, West Yorkshire Playhouse, London's Royal Ballet, and Scottish Dance Theatre, among others.
GIUSEPPE VERDI

RIGOLETTO

Speranza Scappucci conducts Verdi’s timeless tragedy, with baritones Michael Chioldi and Luca Salsi alternating as the cursed title jester. Soprano Lisette Oropesa takes the stage as his daughter, Gilda, alongside tenors Benjamin Bernheim and Stephen Costello as the Duke of Mantua.

DEC 8, 11 mat, 14, 17 mat, 20, 23, 29

Tickets from $25 | metopera.org
Finn Ross
PROJECTION DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  The Hours and Die Zauberflöte at the Met and Bob Fosse’s Dancin’ and Back to the Future: The Musical on Broadway.

MET PRODUCTIONS  John Adams’s The Death of Klinghoffer and Eugene Onegin (debut, 2013).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  He has contributed to numerous productions on Broadway, including Jagged Little Pill, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (for which he won a Drama Desk Award), Mean Girls, Frozen, American Psycho (for which he won a Drama Desk Award), The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (for which he won Tony and Drama Desk Awards), Betrayal, and All My Sons. He also shared the 2014 Olivier Award for Best Lighting Design with Tim Lutkin for Chimerica and shared the 2013 Olivier Award for Best Set Design with Bunny Christie for The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. He has designed for numerous theater productions in the West End and across the United Kingdom, as well as at English National Opera, Dutch National Opera, La Scala, the Glyndebourne Festival, Opera North, Scottish Opera, the Bregenz Festival, and in Vienna, Lyon, and Gothenburg.

Annie-B Parson
CHOREOGRAPHER (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON  The Hours for her debut at the Met and Candide in Lyon.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She has created choreography for pop musicians, television, film, theater, ballet, marching bands, augmented reality, and symphonies. In 1991, she co-founded Big Dance Theater, for whom she has co-created more than 20 works. Her work with Big Dance has been commissioned by the Old Vic, France’s Les Subsistances, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Walker Art Center, and National Theater of Paris, among many others. A frequent collaborator of David Byrne, she made her Broadway debut choreographing his American Utopia in 2019, as well as the film by Spike Lee. She has also contributed to productions at Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival, the Public Theater, London’s National Theater and Royal Ballet, the Martha Graham Dance Company, New York Theatre Workshop, and Soho Repertory Theatre, and she has choreographed tours for singer-songwriters Lorde and St. Vincent. Her awards and honors include the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, an Olivier Award nomination, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two BESSIE Awards, a USA Artist Award, and three NYFA Choreography Fellowships. Her most recent book, The Choreography of Everyday Life, is published by Verso Press.
The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

Paul Cremo
DRAMATURG (SCOTIA, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON  The Hours and Terence Blanchard and Michael Cristofer’s Champion at the Met.  

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  As dramaturg and director of the Met’s Opera Commissioning Program, he has overseen projects developed through the Met / Lincoln Center Theater New Works Program, including Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s Intimate Apparel, produced by Lincoln Center Theater, as well as Met commissions including Matthew Aucoin and Sarah Ruhl’s Eurydice, Kelley Rourke’s English-language Cinderella, Terence Blanchard and Kasi Lemmons’s Fire Shut Up in My Bones, Nico Muhly and Nicholas Wright’s Marnie, Nico Muhly and Craig Lucas’s Two Boys, Jeremy Sams’s The Enchanted Island and English-language version of The Merry Widow, J. D. McClatchy’s English-language adaptation of The Barber of Seville, and Jeremy Sams and Douglas Carter Beane’s English-language version of Die Fledermaus. He is currently supervising development of new operas by Mason Bates, Valerie Coleman, David T. Little, Missy Mazzoli, Jessie Montgomery, Joshua Schmidt, Carlos Simon, Jeanine Tesori, and Joel Thompson, and working with librettists George Brant, Ruby Gerber, Lynn Nottage, Dick Scanlan, Gene Scheer, and Royce Vavrek. He has served on the Tony Awards Nominating Committee and the Pulitzer Prize for Music jury.

Joyce DiDonato
MEZZO-SOPRANO (KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)

THIS SEASON  Virginia Woolf in The Hours at the Met, a concert tour with Il Pomo d’Oro throughout Europe and the United States, Patricia Westertord in Tod Machover’s Overstory Overture at Alice Tully Hall and the Seoul Arts Center, and a residency at Switzerland’s Musikkollegium Winterthur.

MET APPEARANCES  Since her 2005 debut as Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro, she has sung more than 100 performances of 13 roles, including Sesto in La Clemenza di Tito, Adalgisa in Norma, Elena in La Donna del Lago, Sycorax in The Enchanted Island, Isolier in Le Comte Ory, Rosina in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, and the title roles of Agrippina, Cendrillon, La Cenerentola, and Maria Stuarda.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She has appeared with most of the world’s leading opera companies, including the Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, La Scala, Paris Opera, and Salzburg Festival, among many others. She has been nominated for ten Grammy Awards, winning in 2012, 2016, and 2020, and in 2018, she received the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera. She was the 2007 recipient of the Met’s Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.
Renée Fleming
SOPRANO (ROCHESTER, NEW YORK)

This season Clarissa Vaughan in The Hours at the Met; Pat Nixon in John Adams’s Nixon in China at the Paris Opera; Desdemona in Act IV of Otello in concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and in Paris, London, and Baden-Baden; and concert appearances in Chicago, Los Angeles, Vienna, Paris, Amsterdam, and Milan.

Met appearances Since her 1991 debut as the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro, she has sung more than 250 performances of 21 roles, including the Marschallin in Der Rosenkavalier, Hanna Glawari in The Merry Widow, the Countess in Capriccio, Tatiana in Eugene Onegin, Rosina in the world premiere of John Corigliano’s The Ghosts of Versailles, and the title roles of Rusalka, Rodelinda, Armida, Thais, Manon, Arabella, and Susannah.

Career highlights She has appeared at all the world’s leading opera houses, received the National Medal of Arts and four Grammy Awards, was awarded the titles of Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur and Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government, and was nominated for a Tony Award in 2018. She is currently Creative Consultant for Lyric Opera of Chicago and Artistic Advisor-at-Large at the Kennedy Center.

Kelli O’Hara
SOPRANO (ELK CITY, OKLAHOMA)

This season Laura Brown in The Hours at the Met; concerts at Wolf Trap and in New York, Des Moines, and Athens, Georgia; and appearances in HBO’s The Gilded Age and the web series The Accidental Wolf.

Met appearances Despina in Così fan tutte and Valencienne in The Merry Widow (debut, 2014).

Career highlights She won a 2015 Tony Award for her performance as Anna Loenowens in The King and I, for which she also received Grammy, Drama League, Outer Critics, and Olivier Award nominations. She was also nominated for Tony Awards for Kiss Me, Kate, The Bridges of Madison County, Nice Work if You Can Get It, South Pacific, The Pajama Game, and The Light in the Piazza, and also appeared on Broadway in Dracula, Sweet Smell of Success, Follies, and Jekyll & Hyde. She received the Drama League’s Distinguished Achievement in Musical Theatre Award in 2019 and was nominated for an Emmy Award for her appearance in The Accidental Wolf. Additional screen credits include 13 Reasons Why, All the Bright Places, Peter Pan Live!, Sex and the City 2, The Key to Reserva, Master of Sex, The Good Fight, Blue Bloods, N3mbers, and Car Talk.

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

William Burden
TENOR (MIAMI, FLORIDA)

THIS SEASON Louis in The Hours at the Met and Pylade in Iphigénie en Tauride with Boston Baroque.

MET APPEARANCES Polonius in Brett Dean’s Hamlet, the King of Naples in Thomas Adès’s The Tempest, Gilbert Griffiths in the world premiere of Tobias Picker’s An American Tragedy, Pelléas in Pelléas et Mélisande, Tybalt in Roméo et Juliette, and Janek in The Makropulos Case (debut, 1996).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has performed in a number of world premieres, including The Hours in concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Jake Heggie’s It’s a Wonderful Life at Houston Grand Opera, Mark Adamo’s The Gospel of Mary Magdalene and Christopher Theofanidis’s Heart of a Soldier at San Francisco Opera, Theodore Morrison’s Oscar at the Santa Fe Opera, and Daron Hagen’s Amelia at Seattle Opera, as well as in the United States premiere of Henze’s Phaedra with the Opera Company of Philadelphia. He has also appeared at the Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, La Scala, Staatsoper Berlin, Dutch National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glimmerglass Festival, LA Opera, Washington National Opera, and New York City Opera, among others.

Brandon Cedel
BASS-BARITONE (HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON Dan Brown in The Hours at the Met, the title role of Don Giovanni at the Atlanta Opera, the title role of Handel’s Hercules in Karlsruhe, Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Glyndebourne Festival, Christ in Bach’s St. Matthew Passion with Music of the Baroque, and the Levite in Handel’s Solomon with the English Concert in Madrid, Los Angeles, London, and New York.

MET APPEARANCES Masetto in Don Giovanni, the Sergeant in Manon Lescaut, a Flemish Deputy in Don Carlo, the Porter in Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk, and a Watchman in Die Frau ohne Schatten (debut, 2013).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He created the role of Dan Brown in the world premiere of The Hours in concert with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Other recent performances include Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Glyndebourne Festival and in Stuttgart, Zuniga in Carmen in concert at Chicago Opera Theater, Don Basilio in Il Barbiere di Siviglia at the Canadian Opera Company, and Masetto at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Between 2016 and 2019, he was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt. He is graduate of the Met’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.
Kyle Ketelsen  
BASS-BARITONE (CLINTON, IOWA)

**This Season**  Richard in *The Hours* at the Met, the title role of Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, and Golaud in * Pelléas et Mélisande* at LA Opera.

**Met Appearances**  Golaud, Escamilllo in Carmen, Mr. Flint in *Billy Budd*, Leporello in Don Giovanni, and Angelotti in Tosca (debut, 2006).

**Career Highlights**  Recent performances include Golaud in Seville, Dr. Dulcamara in L’*Elisir d’Amore* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Bluebeard in *Bluebeard’s Castle* at the Canadian Opera Company, Caspar in Der *Freischütz* at the Bavarian State Opera, and Adahm in Stephan’s *Die Ersten Menschen* at Dutch National Opera. He has also sung Méphistophélès in La Damnation de Faust in concert with Les Siècles; Leporello at the Dallas Opera, Washington National Opera, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and in Hamburg, Lyon, Madrid, and Aix-en-Provence; Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* in concert and Selim in Il Turco in Italia in Zurich; the King of Scotland in Ariodante at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Nick Shadow in The Rake’s Progress at Dutch National Opera and in Aix-en-Provence; Golaud in Paris; and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Barcelona.

Sean Panikkar  
TENOR (BLOOMSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA)

**This Season**  Leonard Woolf in *The Hours* at the Met, the title role of Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, and Golaud in * Pelléas et Mélisande* at LA Opera.


**Career Highlights**  Recent performances include M. K. Gandhi in Philip Glass’s *Satyagraha* at English National Opera, the Migrant in the Salzburg Festival, and Siegfried in *Twilight: Gods* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also sung Dionysus in Henze’s *Die Bassariden* at the Komische Oper Berlin and Salzburg Festival, Jack / Toby Higgins in Weill’s Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny in Aix-en-Provence, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at Pittsburgh Opera, Don José at North Carolina Opera, and M. K. Gandhi at LA Opera.