

Giuseppe Verdi

Un Ballo in Maschera

CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

PRODUCTION
David Alden

SET DESIGNER
Paul Steinberg

COSTUME DESIGNER
Brigitte Reiffenstuel

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Adam Silverman

CHOREOGRAPHER
Maxine Braham

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts
Libretto by Antonio Somma

Saturday, December 8, 2012, 1:00–4:30 pm

New Production

The production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* was made possible by a generous gift from the **Betsy and Edward Cohen / Areté Foundation Fund for New Productions and Revivals**, and **Daisy and Paul Soros**

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The Metropolitan Opera

2012–13 Season

The 296th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Giuseppe Verdi's

Un Ballo in Maschera

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Conductor
Fabio Luisi

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Count Ribbing (Samuel)
Keith Miller

Cristiano (Silvano)
Trevor Scheunemann

Count Horn (Tom)
David Crawford

Amelia's Servant
Scott Scully

Oscar, the king's page
Kathleen Kim

Amelia, Count
Anckarström's wife
Sondra Radvanovsky*

Gustavo III, King of
Sweden (Riccardo)
Marcelo Álvarez

Count Anckarström (Renato)
Dmitri Hvorostovsky

Judge
Mark Schowalter

Madame Ulrica Arvidsson,
a fortune-teller
Stephanie Blythe *

Saturday, December 8, 2012, 1:00–4:30 pm

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Marcelo Álvarez as Gustavo
and Sondra Radvanovsky
as Amelia in Verdi's
Un Ballo in Maschera.

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**

Fight Director **B.H. Barry**

Musical Preparation **Dennis Giauque, Yelena Kurdina,
Robert Morrison, Carol Isaac, and Alexander Bülow**

Assistant to the Set Designer **Michael V. Moore**

Assistants to the Costume Designer **Irene Bohan and
Carolyn Hoffmann**

Assistant Stage Directors **Laurie Feldman, Jonathon Loy, and
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Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**

Italian Coach **Gildo Di Nunzio**

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Un Ballo in Maschera

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Marcelo Álvarez, Sondra Radvanovsky, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky star in David Alden's new production of Verdi's sweeping drama of intrigue and betrayal. Dolora Zajick and Stephanie Blythe share the role of Madame Ulrica Arvidsson.

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Synopsis

Act I

SCENE 1 Reception room in the royal palace in Stockholm

SCENE 2 Madame Arvidsson's den

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:00 PM)

Act II

An abandoned warehouse

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:05 PM)

Act III

SCENE 1 Count Anckarström's house

Pause

SCENE 2 The king's study

SCENE 3 The ballroom in the royal palace

Act I

Courtiers await an audience with King Gustavo III, including a group of conspirators led by Counts Horn and Ribbing. The king enters. He notices the name of Amelia, wife of his secretary and friend, Count Anckarström, on the guest list for a masked ball, and thinks about his secret love for her. Left alone with Gustavo, Anckarström warns the king of a conspiracy against him, but Gustavo ignores the threat. The young page Oscar tells the king about the fortuneteller Madame Ulrica Arvidsson, who has been accused of witchcraft and is to be banished. Deciding to see for himself, the king arranges for his court to pay her an incognito visit.

In a building by the port, Madame Arvidsson invokes prophetic spirits and tells the sailor Cristiano that he will soon become wealthy and receive a promotion. The king, who has arrived in disguise, slips money and papers into Cristiano's pockets. When the sailor discovers his good fortune, everybody praises Madame Arvidsson's abilities. Gustavo hides as she sends her visitors away to admit Amelia, who is tormented by her love for the king and asks for help. Madame Arvidsson tells her that she must gather a magic herb after dark. When Amelia leaves, Gustavo decides to follow her that night. Oscar and members of the court enter, and the king asks Madame Arvidsson to read his palm. She tells him that he will die by the hand of a friend. Gustavo laughs at the prophecy and demands to know the name of the assassin. Madame Arvidsson replies that it will

be the first person that shakes his hand. When Anckarström rushes in Gustavo clasps his hand saying that the oracle has been disproved since Anckarström is his most loyal friend. Recognizing their king, the crowd cheers him as the conspirators grumble their discontent.

Act II

That night, Amelia, who has followed Madame Arvidsson's advice to find the herb, expresses her hope that she will be freed of her love for the king. When Gustavo appears, she asks him to leave, but ultimately they admit their love for each other. Amelia hides her face when Anckarström suddenly appears, warning the king that assassins are nearby. Gustavo makes Anckarström promise to escort the woman back to the city without lifting her veil, then escapes. Finding Anckarström instead of their intended victim, the conspirators make ironic remarks about his veiled companion. When Amelia realizes that her husband will fight rather than break his promise to Gustavo, she drops her veil to save him. The conspirators are amused and make fun of Anckarström for his embarrassing situation. Anckarström, shocked by the king's betrayal and his wife's seeming infidelity, asks Horn and Ribbing to come to his house the next morning.

Act III

In his apartment, Anckarström threatens to kill Amelia. She asks to see their young son before she dies. After she has left, Anckarström declares that is it the king he should seek vengeance on, not Amelia. Horn and Ribbing arrive, and Anckarström tells them that he will join the conspirators. The men decide to draw lots to determine who will kill the king, and Anckarström forces his wife to choose from the slips of paper. When his own name comes up he is overjoyed. Oscar enters, bringing an invitation to the masked ball. As the assassins welcome this chance to execute their plan, Amelia decides to warn the king.

Gustavo, alone in his study, resolves to renounce his love and to send Amelia and Anckarström to Finland. Oscar brings an anonymous letter warning him of the murder plot, but the king refuses to be intimidated and leaves for the masquerade. In the ballroom, Anckarström tries to learn from Oscar what costume the king is wearing. The page answers evasively but finally reveals Gustavo's disguise. Amelia and the king meet, and she repeats her warning. Refusing to leave, he declares his love one more time and tells her that he is sending her away with her husband. As the lovers say goodbye, Anckarström stabs the king. The dying Gustavo forgives his murderer and admits that he loved Amelia but assures Anckarström that his wife is innocent. The crowd praises the king's goodness and generosity.



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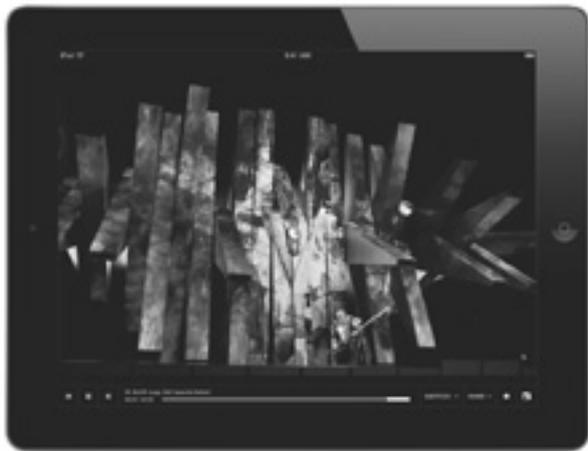
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Pictured: A scene from Robert Lepage's production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, now available in its entirety on Met Opera on Demand.

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Giuseppe Verdi

Un Ballo in Maschera

Premiere: Teatro Apollo, Rome, 1859

Un Ballo in Maschera, one of Verdi's mature operas written between the "trilogy" of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, and *Il Trovatore* and his final works, is a superb drama about the fatal intersection of love and politics. The central story element is plain and direct. A king is in love with his best friend's wife. The husband suspects that his wife has been unfaithful and he decides to kill the king at a masked ball. The story came from history—Sweden's King Gustav III met his death at the hands of a political enemy during a masked ball at the Stockholm Opera House in 1792. French dramatist Eugène Scribe (who also provided the libretto to Verdi's *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*) had written the first operatic version of this historical event for composer François Auber, whose work, *Gustave III*, had been given in Paris in 1833. Scribe's version added the twist of a love triangle, and despite his poetic license with the facts, a number of curious details from the historical story made their way into the libretto: a medium named Ulrica Arvidsson (or Arfvidsson) warned the king about an assassination; he received an anonymous note alerting him of a plot on his life; and the conspirators identified the king by a pink ribbon on the cape of his costume.

The Creators

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) created 28 operas in a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Antonio Somma (1809–1864) was a lawyer, playwright, and theater manager. Verdi did not write another opera with him, although he kept Somma busy working on a libretto based on *King Lear*, a project that was never completed.

The Setting

This opera suffered from the interference of censors of the Kingdom of Naples, who objected to the depiction of a royal assassination on the stage. Somma offered a revised libretto, moving the action to colonial Boston. When the censors demanded still more changes, Verdi abandoned his contract with the theater and took the piece to Rome (just ahead of the police and a lawsuit), where he managed to have the opera produced with Somma's revisions. The Boston setting, despite its odd incongruities, became the opera's standard version well into the second half of the 20th century. In recent years, the original Swedish setting has often been restored, as in the previous and the current Met production.

The Music

The score of *Ballo* is remarkable for its economy and beautiful melodic expression. In addition to supporting the singers, the orchestra adds its own commentary: the repeating chords in the ballroom scene that ends the opera are a masterpiece of tension mounting beneath an elegant veneer. All of the leading roles have solos that are among Verdi's best. Among them are the soprano's haunting "Morrò, ma prima in grazia" in the first scene of Act III, followed by the great baritone aria "Eri tu." The tenor has several spotlight solos, ranging in tone from the deliberately showy "Dì tu, se fedele" in Act I to the introspection of the extended study scene in Act III. This opera also features two voice types infrequently used by Verdi, a contralto for the fortuneteller Madame Arvidsson and a coloratura soprano as the page Oscar (in what is also unusual for Verdi, a trouser role). Some of the most remarkable passages of the score, however, are given to multiple voices: the love duet in Act II is perhaps Verdi's most overtly passionate; the Act I ensemble, "E scherzo od è follia," is built on contrasting layers of eeriness, fear, and nonchalance. The unforgettable, subdued laughing chorus at the end of Act II drips with sneering disdain. Act III's ingenious opening scene builds from a solo narrative to a quintet in which the various emotions of the protagonists—guilt, revenge, and giddy anticipation of the upcoming masked ball—merge into a single extraordinary stream of music.

Un Ballo in Maschera at the Met

The opera was first heard at the Met in 1889, sung in German and starring Lilli Lehmann. Arturo Toscanini conducted a new production in 1913 with the unbeatable trio of Emmy Destinn, Enrico Caruso, and Pasquale Amato. Another production was unveiled on opening night 1940, featuring Zinka Milanov (who performed the role of Amelia 30 times through 1956) and Jussi Björling. Marian Anderson sang Ulrica eight times in 1955 and 1956, effectively ending the color barrier for African-American singers at the Met. A new production in 1962 marked the company debut of Nello Santi, conducting Leonie Rysanek, Carlo Bergonzi (33 performances as Riccardo/Gustavo through 1983), and Robert Merrill (56 performances as Renato/Anckarström from 1955 to 1976). In 1980, Giuseppe Patanè conducted a new staging by Elijah Moshinsky, with the leading roles sung by Katia Ricciarelli, Luciano Pavarotti (31 performances as Riccardo/Gustavo through 1997), and Louis Quilico. Pavarotti also starred in the 1990 premiere of Piero Faggioni's production, opposite Aprile Millo, Elena Obraztsova, and Juan Pons, with James Levine on the podium. Other notable appearances over the past decades include sopranos Martina Arroyo, Montserrat Caballé, Leontyne Price, and Deborah Voigt; mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar; tenors Jan Peerce, Richard Tucker, and Plácido Domingo; and baritones Sherrill Milnes and Leo Nucci. David Alden's new production, conducted by Fabio Luisi, opened November 8, 2012.

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Frieda Hempel as Adina in Donizetti's
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Anna Netrebko as Adina, 2012-13 season
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Anna Netrebko in *L'Elisir d'Amore*

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Program Note

One of Giuseppe Verdi's favorite projects during the 1850s—and indeed through most of the rest of his life—was an operatic adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It was an idea the composer had long cherished, but—pragmatic man that he was, and wise in the ways of the Italian theater—he knew it would not be an easy opera to cast, and he was prepared to wait for the unusual, ideal occasion. Perhaps not surprisingly, it never came. In the meantime, in the spring of 1855, Verdi wrote to Antonio Somma, the lawyer-playwright who had been working on the *Lear* libretto, and asked him for suggestions for a less demanding and ambitious project: "Could you find another story for me, which you would then write at your leisure? A story that is beautiful, original, interesting, with beautiful situations, and impassioned: passions above all!"

Somma first suggested Matthew Lewis's then-famous novel *The Monk*, but Verdi rejected it: "I want a story of feelings, not a spectacle." And before the librettist could find anything suitable, Verdi himself settled on a story: the assassination of the Swedish king Gustav III. Beautiful, interesting, impassioned, yes; but hardly original. Eugène Scribe had written the first operatic version of the historical event for François Auber, whose work, *Gustave III*, had been given in Paris in 1833. Ten years later the same story had served Saverio Mercadante for *Il Reggente*, the libretto considerably refashioned by the Neapolitan Salvatore Cammarano, Verdi's respected collaborator for *Luisa Miller* and *Il Trovatore*.

Somma obediently set to work, though he asked one favor of Verdi: "If you don't mind, I would like to remain anonymous.... Thus I will write with greater freedom." The poet at that time wanted to keep out of the public eye; a few years before, in 1848–49, he had participated actively in the rebellion against the Austrians in Venice, and he was under police surveillance. Naturally, he wanted to avoid putting his name on a libretto involving the killing of a monarch.

When he learned that Verdi was going to compose the opera for Naples, Somma may well have foreseen that the subject would encounter difficulties with the stern censors of the Bourbon regime there. As, in fact, it did. In October of 1857, when work had been in progress for some weeks, Verdi sent an outline of the libretto to Vincenzo Torelli, the San Carlo secretary, for submission to the authorities. Early in November the subject was firmly rejected. Verdi had come up against censorship almost from the outset of his career, and some of his most enduring works—among them *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*—had come into being only after bouts, even pitched battles, with the political authorities.

At first Verdi did not take the rejection seriously. He imagined a few concessions on his part would resolve the problem, and he wrote to Torelli: "It won't be difficult to transfer the setting elsewhere and change the names.... Too bad! To have to renounce the elegance of a court like that of Gustave III... Poor poets and poor composers!"

So he began by altering the opera's title, calling it *La Vendetta in Domino* (or, "Revenge in [a Domino] Disguise"). This, however, was not enough. In

fact—as the San Carlo management carefully refrained from telling Verdi—the authorities were opposed to the subject in any form. Finally, as a special favor to the composer, they sent him a list of required, indispensable changes. Verdi responded in an angry letter to Somma: “I’m in a sea of troubles!” He went on to list the demands the authorities had made if the opera was to be saved at all: the king had to be a private gentleman, not a sovereign of any kind; the wife of Count Anckarström was to become his sister; there would be no ball; there would be no drawing of lots for the privilege of killing the protagonist; and there would be no murder on stage.

It’s hard to imagine what the opera we know as *Un Ballo in Maschera* might have been if Verdi had been made of less stern stuff. But worse was to come. When Verdi rejected these demands, the Neapolitans found a poet of their own, who confected a new libretto to fit Verdi’s music. Titled *Adelia degli Adimari*, it was a cumbersome tale of Guelphs and Ghibellines, in which Oscar was not a page but a warrior, and Gustavo disguised himself not as a fisherman but as a hunter, making his barcarole completely incongruous.

In the end, Verdi—who had arrived in Naples as his contract stipulated—was threatened with jail. He managed to get out of the city, with his score in his suitcase, only by promising to come back the following year. Actually, it was not until 1872 that he returned to the city.

Instead, the next season, he was in Rome, where the censors were a bit more accommodating: the papal authorities worried less about regicide and more about other immoralities. After further discussions and revisions, the opera was allowed, but as Verdi wrote the taxed Somma, “The locale should be moved outside of Europe. What would you say to North America at the time of the English domination?”

And so Gustavo became Riccardo, and the brilliant royal court was moved from Stockholm to Boston. In all this, Verdi was able to save what most mattered to him: the sparkling atmosphere around the fun-loving, romantic ruler, including the pert page; the undercurrent of superstition and fatalism that acts as contrast to the superficial frivolity; the baritone’s intense private drama as friendship turns to hate and jealousy to murderous vengeance. And, central to all, the thwarted love, culminating in the tormented duet, where expressions of total devotion are punctuated by urgent pleas for renunciation, all in a context of guilt and mortal fear. (The current Met production restores both the original setting and the historical names.)

The late Massimo Mila, one of Italy’s most acute and original music critics, in his book on the composer refers to *Un Ballo in Maschera* as Verdi’s great love poem and actually mentions it in the same breath with Wagner’s *Tristan*. Certainly, to the modern unprejudiced listener, the two operas are on the same plane of greatness; and there is no doubt that both are focused on love. But the intense obsessiveness of the Wagnerian pair—trapped, enclosed in their passion—is in interesting contrast with the love of Gustavo and Amelia, which

is only rarely seen divorced from its social context. This is a love between responsible people. And it prompted one of Verdi's richest and most varied scores. The surge of passion begins to swell with Gustavo's first aria (an aside, it must be remembered; a confidence to the audience, as the ruler ignores his court). After the conflict of the duet, there are two inner conflicts of the two lovers, the paired renunciations. And for every nuance of emotion the composer finds one of his musical hues, those *tinte* that were his essential ingredients.

The bigger musical picture sets chorus against principals, basso conspiracy against the coloratura loyalty of the page. The minor characters—the faithful sailor, the half-crazed but honest and concerned soothsayer—are secondary only in the length of their music, not in their significance. And the real mariner, Christiano, makes another contrast with the feigned seaman of Gustavo himself.

Somma, whose successfully performed plays demonstrate a real theatrical gift, in this assignment was little more than the versifier of the composer's ideas, like Piave before and after him and like most Verdi librettists until Boito. But Somma had at least one idea of his own. In a letter written fairly early in their collaboration, he suggested to Verdi that the soprano's part be enhanced. She should have a whole scene to herself, he wrote: "I would shift [after the opening scene] to her boudoir. Thus the audience would make her acquaintance there, before the witch's kitchen. This boudoir, if you like, has...at the back a loggia open over a vast horizon.... Amelia, seated on the loggia, is playing her harp and singing a song that refers generically to the desires of a loving heart."

The librettist had a more conventional mind than Verdi, who sensibly rejected this pedestrian idea; and so our introduction to Amelia happens as the composer envisioned it: rapid, essential. Amelia—and the opera—come straight to the point. Still, there is nothing in the whole opera that is not essential. Verdi is not single-minded. The focal conflict is given a three-dimensional context: power inspires Anckarström's loyal devotion as subject as well as friend. But it also inspires envy and hatred. And the sweet, silvery line of Oscar's adolescent affection is balanced by the dark, bass interjections of the conspirators. There is also laughter in the opera: the hero's incredulous chuckles at the dire prophecies of the soothsayer, and the conspirators' cruel hilarity at the predicament of Anckarström and Amelia. In his correspondence with his librettists, Verdi frequently asked them to introduce some humor—black, bitter humor—into the starkest, most relentless scenes.

In *Ballo* the situations the characters find themselves in can shift abruptly; and the characters themselves can change. This is an opera of transformations, and perhaps, after all the various versions of the title, the final one is the best, for the opera is a dance of death. The players twice in the course of the story are required to don fancy disguises. They are all used to masks, and when they put them aside, or when a veil falls and reveals a truth, reality proves to be unbearable.

—William Weaver

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The Cast and Creative Team



Fabio Luisi

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Les Troyens*, *Aida*, and Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met; *Don Carlo* at La Scala; *Jenůfa*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Bellini's *La Straniera* at the Zurich Opera; and concerts with the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, the Vienna Symphony, and Philharmonia Zürich.

MET APPEARANCES *Don Giovanni*, *Manon*, *La Traviata*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Elektra*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Tosca*, *Lulu*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Die Ägyptische Helena*, *Turandot*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005), and the *Ring* cycle.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is principal conductor of the Met, chief conductor of the Vienna Symphony, and general music director of the Zurich Opera. He made his La Scala debut last season with *Manon*, his Salzburg Festival debut in 2003 leading Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* (returning the following season for *Die Ägyptische Helena*), and his American debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago leading *Rigoletto*. He also appears regularly with the Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Berlin's Deutsche Oper and Staatsoper.



David Alden

DIRECTOR (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for the Netherlands Opera, *Peter Grimes* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the Canadian Opera Company.

MET PRODUCTION *Fidelio* (debut as stage director, 1980).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent engagements include *La Finta Giardiniera* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, *Kát'a Kabanová* in Lisbon, *Luisa Miller* in Lyon, *Pelléas et Mélisande* in St. Louis, Chabrier's *L'Étoile* in Frankfurt, Handel's *Deidamia* for the Netherlands Opera, *Billy Budd* for English National Opera, *Maometto II* in Santa Fe, *Alcina* in Bordeaux, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Washington National Opera. He won the South Bank Show Award for *Peter Grimes* and the Olivier Award for *Jenůfa* at English National Opera (the latter a production that was shared with Houston Grand Opera and Washington National Opera) and received the Bavarian Theatre Prize for Individual Artistic Achievement, honoring his long-time relationship with Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Paul Steinberg

SET DESIGNER (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent productions include Handel's *Deidamia* and Cavalli's *L'Ercole Amante* (Amsterdam), *Don Giovanni* (New York City Opera), *Pelléas and Mélisande* (St. Louis), and *La Finta Giardiniera* (Vienna's Theater an der Wien). He has also created sets for *Billy Budd*, *Peter Grimes*, and *Lulu* for English National Opera; *Falstaff* and *La Calisto* for Covent Garden; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Wozzeck*, and *Turandot* for Welsh National Opera; and *Arabella* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* for Opera North. Additional credits include *Rinaldo*, *Rodelinda*, *Orlando*, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Munich), *Il Trovatore* (Bregenz Festival), *Lohengrin* (Bastille Opera), *Tannhäuser* (Tokyo and Barcelona), *Il Turco in Italia* (Berlin's Statsoper), Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and *Paul Bunyan*, *Acis and Galatea*, and Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* (New York City Opera), and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Chicago). Future projects include *L'Amour de Trois Oranges* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), *La Pêrichole* directed by Christopher Alden (New York City Opera), and *Der Rosenkavalier* (Glyndebourne).



Brigitte Reiffenstuel

COSTUME DESIGNER (MUNICH, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Il Trovatore* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTION *Il Trovatore* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has designed costumes for Covent Garden that include *Falstaff* (also for La Scala), *Adriana Lecouvreur* (also for Barcelona, Vienna, and the Paris Opera), *Faust* (also in Lille, Monte Carlo, Trieste, and Valencia) and *Elektra*; for English National Opera, that include *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Peter Grimes* (also Oviedo, De Vlaamse Opera, and Deutsche Oper Berlin), *Tosca*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (also for Göteborg Opera, Washington National Opera, and Canadian Opera) and *Boris Godunov*; for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, including *Giulio Cesare* (also in Chicago and Lille); and for Opera North, including *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth* (also New Zealand Opera), and *Il Trovatore* (also Opera Ireland). Additional work includes *Don Giovanni* (La Scala), *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, and *Madama Butterfly* (Santa Fe), *Il Trovatore* (San Francisco, Chicago), *Don Carlo* (Frankfurt), *Billy Budd* and *The Makropulos Case* (Chicago), *Lulu* (Munich), *Semele* (Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées), and *Macbeth* (Houston, Chicago). Future productions include a Verdi triple bill in Hamburg and *The Queen of Spades* in Zurich.



Adam Silverman

LIGHTING DESIGNER (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent productions include *Hamlet* directed by Ian Rickson at the Young Vic; Enda Walsh's *Misterman* starring Cillian Murphy at the National Theatre and St. Ann's Warehouse; *Adriana Lecouvreur* for Covent Garden; *Julius Caesar*, *Billy Budd*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Peter Grimes*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *The Makropulos Case* for English National Opera; *Deidamia* and *L'Ercole Amante* for the Netherlands Opera; *Partenope* for Opera Australia; *My Fair Lady* at Paris's Châtelet; and Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre's *Rian*, *Helen and Hell*, *The Rite of Spring*, and *Giselle*. Additional productions include *Aida* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Tannhäuser* for San Francisco Opera; *The Queen of Spades* for Munich's Bavarian State Opera; *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage* at the National Theatre; the premiere of Joanna Laurens's *Five Gold Rings* for the Almeida Theatre; the musical *Beauty and the Beast* for the Royal Shakespeare Company; *The Cider House Rules* for Atlantic Theatre Company; *Power Plays* for Manhattan Theatre Club; and *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* on Broadway.



Maxine Braham

CHOREOGRAPHER (NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera* for her Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Her choreography and movement direction includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mariinsky Theatre); *Billy Budd*, *Peter Grimes*, *Kat'á Kabanová*, and *Luisa Miller* (English National Opera, Vlaamse Opera, and in Warsaw, Lyon, and Lisbon); *Macbeth*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Otello* (Covent Garden and Dallas Grand Opera); *Manon Lescaut* (Parma); *Susannah* and *La Vestale* (Wexford Festival Opera); *No Mean City*, *Cinderella*, and *Desire Under the Elms* (Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow); *Armide* and *Candide* (Buxton Festival Opera); *La Traviata* (Malmö Opera); *Rigoletto*, *Figaro's Wedding*, and *Kat'á Kabanová* (Scottish Opera); and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Queen Elizabeth Hall, London). Directing credits include *Don Juan* at Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow; Bizet's *Le Docteur Miracle* at Wexford Festival Opera; *The Strangler* at the Barbican Centre's Martinu Festival; and Goldoni's *Il Campiello* at Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and Royal College of Music. As a dancer she has performed with Lloyd Newson's DV8, Second Stride, Rosemary Butcher, Adventures in Motion Pictures, and Random Dance companies, Gloria Theatre Company, Opera Circus, English National Opera, English Bach Festival, and at Covent Garden.



Stephanie Blythe

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MONGAUP VALLEY, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, and Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at the Met, and a U.S. tour culminating in a recital at Carnegie Hall.

MET APPEARANCES More than 150 performances of 25 roles including Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Eduige in *Rodelinda*, Amneris in *Aida*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Ulrica, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*, Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*, and the Alto Solo in *Parsifal* (debut, 1995).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Azucena for her debut at the San Francisco Opera and in concert for her debut with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Baba the Turk at Covent Garden, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* at the Arizona Opera, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* at the Pittsburgh Opera, Isabella in *L'italiana in Algeri* and Carmen in Seattle, Azucena and Mistress Quickly at Covent Garden, Isabella in Philadelphia and Santa Fe, and Cornelia and Mistress Quickly at the Paris Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Kathleen Kim

SOPRANO (SEOUL, KOREA)

THIS SEASON Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met, Chiang Ch'ing in a concert performance of John Adams's *Nixon in China* for her debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Barcelona's Liceu.

MET APPEARANCES Chiang Ch'ing, Olympia, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has recently appeared as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* for her debut with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Oscar with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Melissa in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* with Central City Opera, and Poppea in *Agrippina* with Boston Lyric Opera. She has also sung the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Sarasota Opera, the Fairy in Massenet's *Cendrillon* with Opéra de Lille, and Fire, Princess, and the Nightingale in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* at the Glyndebourne Festival.



Sondra Radvanovsky

SOPRANO (BERWYN, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met and the Vienna State Opera, Aida in Munich, Tosca in Los Angeles, and her role debut as Maria Stuarda in Bilbao.

MET APPEARANCES She has sung more than 125 performances, including Tosca, Aida, Luisa Miller, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Lina in *Stiffelio*, Elvira in *Ernani*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Roxane in Alfano's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto* (debut, 1996).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS The title role of *Suor Angelica* in Los Angeles, Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* in Washington, Roxane, Lina, and Leonora at Covent Garden, *Hélène* in *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* and Elisabeth in *Don Carlo* with the Paris Opera, *Hélène* and Manon Lescaut at the Vienna State Opera, Roxane at La Scala, and Aida, Amelia, Elvira, Leonora, and the title role of Floyd's in Chicago. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Marcelo Álvarez

TENOR (CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA)

THIS SEASON King Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met and La Scala, Andrea Chénier in Turin, Enzo in *La Gioconda* at the Paris Opera, and the Verdi Requiem in Naples.

MET APPEARANCES Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Radamès in *Aida*, Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, Alfredo in *La Traviata* (debut, 1998), the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, des Grieux in *Manon*, the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Don José in *Carmen*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since his European Debut in 1995 as Elvino in *La Sonnambula* at Venice's La Fenice, he has sung in virtually all the world's leading theaters, first in lyric roles including the Duke, Alfredo, Edgardo, Faust, Romeo, and Hoffmann, as well as the title role of *Werther* (which he has sung in London, Vienna, and Munich), then gradually transitioning into lirico spinto repertoire. Recent engagements include Cavaradossi, Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller*, and the Italian Singer at La Scala, Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* and Andrea Chénier at the Paris Opera, Radamès at Covent Garden, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Cavaradossi in Turin, Cavaradossi and King Gustavo at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Manrico in Parma, Zurich, and the Arena di Verona.



Dmitri Hvorostovsky

BARITONE (KRASNOYARSK, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Anckarström in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* at the Met, the title role of *Eugene Onegin* with the Vienna State Opera, a recital at Carnegie Hall, and concerts and recitals throughout Europe and in Russia.

MET APPEARANCES Don Carlo in *Ernani*, Germont in *La Traviata*, *Simon Boccanegra*, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades* (debut, 1995), Valentin in *Faust*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Eugene Onegin*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He appears regularly at major opera houses throughout the world, including Covent Garden, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Buenos Aires's Teatro Colón, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Mariinsky Theatre. Among his most notable roles are Eugene Onegin, Don Giovanni, Rodrigo, Germont, Rigoletto, Anckarström, and Francesco in *I Masnadieri*. He has also been heard in concert with the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and Rotterdam Philharmonic, among many others.

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Pierre Boulez, composer and leader of the avant-garde who, for better or worse, molded the shape of music that was to come; former music director of the New York Philharmonic; and conductor emeritus of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, remains the greatest living interpreter of 20th-century music and a man of his convictions.

Ben Finane: When playing Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, what are your musical priorities?

Pierre Boulez: Exactly the same. First, you have to clarify the texture to see what is important, what is less important, how the form of the work goes, to be very clear with yourself about it, and then to understand the style—the style of Mozart is not the style of Wagner, and so forth. To understand that music is not just a line, a historical line—there are conjunctions between composers. And what's interesting, if you make programs, is to make programs that make sense and are not a simple accumulation of pieces, one after another, which have absolutely no relationship. I don't say that you must absolutely make something too rigid—certainly not—but sometimes [you need] a contrast, a contrary conjunction between the works. I find that this is also the conductor's responsibility, that he shows that contemporary music is not something totally separate from the rest, but in continuity with what comes before, a continuity which is not always apparent, but if you think more, you see this type of continuous relationship.

BF: Are there 20th-century works that you believe will remain in the repertoire and others that will not stick around?

PB: I must say that when I was young and made my choices as to what I considered important music of the 20th century, I would make the same choices now. I ask myself, "If this composer hadn't existed, would the musical language be the same?" ... Other composers, maybe they were composing some interesting things, but not so influential in the definition of the musical language of the 20th century. And for me, that's the criterion, the litmus test. But that's my test. I know that I disagree with a lot of people on Shostakovich, whom I don't find terribly important. I don't find him more important than Hindemith or Holliger, where you take the heritage of the Symphony but you don't bring anything which changes. And I find that terribly important, the language as an evolution: you are part of this evolution or not. For me that's really the thing that's yes or no.

