

ALBAN BERG

# WOZZECK

CONDUCTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION

William Kentridge

CO-DIRECTOR

Luc De Wit

PROJECTION DESIGNER

Catherine Meyburgh

SET DESIGNER

Sabine Theunissen

COSTUME DESIGNER

Greta Goiris

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Urs Schönebaum

GENERAL MANAGER

Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer, based on the play *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner

Saturday, January 11, 2020

1:00–2:50PM

New Production

The production of *Wozzeck* was made possible by a generous gift from **Robert L. Turner**

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Salzburg Festival; the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto; and Opera Australia

# The Metropolitan Opera

2019-20 SEASON

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*Wozzeck* is presented without intermission.

The 73rd Metropolitan Opera performance of  
ALBAN BERG’S

## WOZZECK

CONDUCTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

THE CAPTAIN  
Gerhard Siegel

THE FOOL  
Brenton Ryan

WOZZECK  
Peter Mattei

A SOLDIER  
Daniel Clark Smith

ANDRES  
Andrew Staples

A TOWNSMAN  
Gregory Warren

MARIE  
Elza van den Heever

MARIE’S CHILD  
Eliot Flowers

MARGRET  
Tamara Mumford\*

PUPPETEERS  
Andrea Fabi  
Gwyneth E. Larsen

THE DOCTOR  
Christian Van Horn

ACTORS  
Frank Colardo  
Tina Mitchell

THE DRUM-MAJOR  
Christopher Ventris

APPRENTICES  
David Crawford  
Miles Mykkanen

STAGE PIANO SOLO  
Jonathan C. Kelly

Saturday, January 11, 2020, 1:00–2:50PM

This afternoon's performance is being transmitted live  
in high definition to movie theaters worldwide.

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Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Video Control **Kim Gunning**  
Assistant Video Editor **Snezana Marovic**  
Musical Preparation **Caren Levine\***, **Jonathan C. Kelly**,  
**Patrick Furrer**, **Bryan Wagorn\***, and **Zalman Kelber\***  
Assistant Stage Directors **Gregory Keller**, **Sarah Ina Meyers**,  
and **J. Knighten Smit**  
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**  
Stage Band Conductor **J. David Jackson**  
Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**  
German Coach **Marianne Barrett**  
Prompter **Caren Levine\***  
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painted by **Salzburg Festival Workshops** and  
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Costumes constructed by **Salzburg Festival Workshops**  
Additional costumes by **Metropolitan Opera Costume**  
**Department**  
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**Wig and Makeup Department**

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# Synopsis

## Act I

*Germany, before the First World War.* The soldier Wozzeck is working for the captain. The officer urges him to work more slowly, then tells him that he is a good man but lacks morality because he has an illegitimate child. Wozzeck replies that virtue is a luxury not meant for the poor.

Wozzeck and a fellow soldier, Andres, are carrying firewood in the fields. Wozzeck is frightened by visions: He hears noises and imagines the sinking sun as a fire setting the earth aflame. Suddenly, all is quiet.

Marie, who is the mother of Wozzeck's child, and her neighbor Margret watch a military band pass by outside their window. Marie admires the handsome drum-major, and Margret mocks her. Alone with her young son, Marie sings him a lullaby. Wozzeck arrives and tells her about his visions, which he sees as an omen of evil things to come. Marie tries to comfort him, but he rushes off to the barracks without looking at his son. Overwhelmed by her own fears, Marie runs out of the room, leaving the child.

Wozzeck visits the doctor, who pays him to act as a subject in his pseudo-scientific research. Full of self-delusion about making a grand scientific discovery, the doctor asks Wozzeck about his diet. Wozzeck again brings up his visions, which the doctor dismisses as mere imagination.

On the street outside her door, the drum-major makes advances toward Marie. She resists at first, then gives in to him.

## Act II

Marie is admiring the earrings that the drum-major has given her. When Wozzeck enters, she tries to hide them, then claims that she found them in the street. Wozzeck is suspicious. He gives her the money that he has earned and leaves. Marie is overwhelmed by remorse.

The captain and the doctor meet in the street and talk morbidly of sickness and death. When Wozzeck passes by, they taunt him with allusions to Marie's infidelity. Shocked, Wozzeck asks them not to make fun of the one thing in the world that is his. Then, he rushes off.

Wozzeck confronts Marie with his suspicions and tries to force her to confess. He is about to hit her, but she remains defiant, telling him that she'd rather have a knife in her belly than his hand on her.

Two drunken apprentices amuse the crowd in a beer garden. Wozzeck enters and sees Marie and the drum-major on the dance floor. A fool approaches Wozzeck and tells him that he smells blood. Wozzeck has a vision of people waltzing while covered with blood.

The same evening in the barracks, Wozzeck wakes to nightmarish memories of what happened in the beer garden. The drum-major enters, drunk, and boasts about his conquest. The two men fight, and Wozzeck is knocked down.

### Act III

Alone with her child, Marie reads from the Bible, first about the adulteress who was forgiven, then about Mary Magdalene. She begs God for mercy.

Marie and Wozzeck are walking together near a pond. Marie wants to hurry back to town, but Wozzeck makes her stay with him. He makes ironic remarks about her fidelity. When she attempts to escape, he draws a knife and kills her.

Wozzeck is drinking in a tavern, shouting wildly, and dancing with Margret. When she notices blood on his arm, he is unable to explain where it has come from and rushes out.

At the pond, Wozzeck searches for the knife and throws it into the water. Suddenly, he imagines that the moon will reveal his crime. He wades farther into the water to hide the knife in a safer place and to wash the blood off his hands. The doctor and captain, passing by, hear him drown.

Neighbor children playing in the street tell Marie's son that his mother is dead. He does not understand and keeps singing and playing.



### Berg on Demand

Looking for more music by Alban Berg? Check out **Met Opera on Demand**, our online streaming service, to enjoy other outstanding performances from past Met seasons—including two gripping radio broadcasts of *Wozzeck*, conducted by James Levine, and the 2015 *Live in HD* transmission of William Kentridge's riveting production of *Lulu*. Start your seven-day free trial and explore the full catalog of more than 700 complete performances at [metoperaondemand.org](http://metoperaondemand.org).

*Alban Berg*

# Wozzeck

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*Premiere: Staatsoper, Berlin, 1925*

One of the emblematic achievements of the thriving artistic forces in Germany and Austria during the brief period between world wars, *Wozzeck* was a sensation and a scandal at its premiere. Remarkably, it has lost none of its power to fascinate, shock, and engage audiences, and its status as one of the defining musical works of the 20th century has not blunted its vitality. *Wozzeck* is the drama of a common soldier who, through relentless dehumanization and systematic humiliation, is driven to insanity and the murder of his mistress. Its subject matter resonated with the German public traumatized by the First World War and its aftermath, but the work's scope reaches far beyond that, making it a monument to the alienation and angst of modern life. Berg's score encapsulates the artistic ideals of Expressionism in music—emphasizing the unseen and the subconscious by focusing on the symbolic rather than the concrete. The characters' highly charged, exaggerated words and music reveal the drama's inner truth.

### *The Creators*

Among the most visionary and influential composers of the 20th century, Alban Berg (1885–1935) came of age amid an explosion of artistic and intellectual creativity in Vienna. His vocal and instrumental writing merges the revolutionary techniques of Arnold Schoenberg with the grandeur of such late Romantic composers as Gustav Mahler. *Wozzeck* is the only opera Berg completed; *Lulu* was left unfinished at the time of his premature death. The libretto is Berg's own close adaptation of the play *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner (1813–1837). Büchner, who was a natural scientist and whose small oeuvre of dramatic and prose works became extremely influential after his early death, found inspiration for *Woyzeck* in an actual incident in 1821. He even based some of the dialogue on the historic *Woyzeck*'s actual words, as recorded in the medical inquiry prior to his trial for murdering his mistress.

### *The Setting*

Berg did not specify a time or location for the opera. The background of Büchner's play has led to the assumption of Leipzig, Germany, circa 1821 as an appropriate setting, but the work's ideas are universal. In his new production, William Kentridge places the action in the more immediate lead-up to the First World War.

## *The Music*

Atonality and whole-tone composition coexist in Berg's score with moments of romanticism and melody. The vocal writing ranges from pure speech to declaimed speech with musical inflections to melodic singing. Recurring motifs occur but not in the strict Wagnerian sense of a musical phrase attached to a specific character or idea. The motifs in *Wozzeck* are often fragments of lines or even rhythms. There are suggestions of familiar sounds, such as the Military March (Act I, Scene 3) and the music of the tavern (Act III, Scene 3), but the music is distorted, creating a sense of parody. To provide a structural framework for his largely atonal composition, Berg used traditional musical forms as the basis for each act and scene, although most of these are not apparent when listening to the music. (The grotesque, pseudo-scientific world of the doctor, for example, is reflected in a passacaglia, a form whose most notable feature is a fixed, recurring bass line or theme running through the piece.) Among the most striking moments of the score—in fact, of the entire operatic repertoire—is the orchestral interlude following the scene of Marie's murder (labeled "Invention on a pitch"): an enormous orchestral crescendo builds on the single note B, interrupted by a crashing chord and a rhythm played on the bass drum. A second crescendo on B suddenly vanishes as the curtain rises and the action resumes. Berg himself famously warned against mistaking the musicological intricacy of the score for the opera's central point: "However thorough one's knowledge of the opera's musical forms," he said, "from the curtain's rise until its final fall no one in the audience should think of the various fugues, inventions, suite and sonata movements, variations, and passacaglias. Everyone should be filled only with the idea of the opera, an idea that far transcends the individual fate of *Wozzeck*."

## *Met History*

The Met premiere of *Wozzeck* in 1959 featured Karl Böhm conducting Hermann Uhde (who sang 10 performances through 1961) and Eleanor Steber (8 performances through 1961). This production was revived several times through 1989, with Geraint Evans (1969), Peter Glossop (1974), and José van Dam (1980) among the artists featured in the title role and Evelyn Lear (1969) and Anja Silja (1980) among notable Marias. Hildegard Behrens appeared as Marie in 15 performances from 1985 through 1999. James Levine first conducted the opera in 1974 and led 43 performances through 2011. A 1997 production directed by Mark Lamos and designed by Robert Israel premiered with Levine conducting Falk Struckmann and Maria Ewing in the lead roles. Franz Grundheber sang the title role in three performances in 1999. This same production was later revived in 2005, 2011, and 2014. Among the singers who have appeared in some of the demanding smaller roles are Kurt Baum, Justino Díaz, Richard Cassilly, Franz Mazura, James King, Donald McIntyre, and Graham Clark. During the 2019–20 season, Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin leads a new production by William Kentridge, starring Peter Mattei in the title role and Elza van den Heever as Marie.

ALSO ON STAGE



KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA

THE GERSHWINS'

# PORGY AND BESS

BY GEORGE GERSHWIN, DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD,  
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## Program Note

Alban Berg began preliminary work on *Wozzeck* in 1914 as World War I approached, then returned his full attention to the opera in 1917, as the conflagration raged. His experience of those years of conflict left an indelible mark on the score. Like many of his peers, including his former teacher Arnold Schoenberg, he served in the Austro-Hungarian Army, having been conscripted in August 1915. Considered fit for service, “like everybody else, without even being examined,” Berg began military training in Vienna before moving to Bruck an der Leitha, in Lower Austria, in October 1915.

Positioned on the Hungarian border, Bruck had been at the heart of military operations in the Habsburg lands since the Napoleonic Wars. It was a deeply foreboding place, which fellow cadet Jaroslav Hašek captured vividly in his 1923 novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*.

In the men’s huts, the soldiers shivered with cold, and in the officers’ quarters, they were opening the windows because of overheating. [...] Down in Bruck an der Leitha shone the lights of the Imperial and Royal factory for tinned meat. Here they worked day and night and processed various kinds of offal. Because the wind blew from that quarter toward the alley in the military camp, it brought with it the stink of rotten sinews, hooves, trotters, and bones, which all went into the tinned soup.

Writing to his wife, Berg described the place as “hell” and quickly became ill due to primitive sanitary arrangements, as well as the hard beds and the perpetual winds off the Hungarian plain. By November, he had been consigned to the Reserve Hospital, following a complete physical breakdown. When he was examined the next day, Berg was found to have “bronchial asthma” and was consequently returned to Vienna, where he worked at the War Ministry for the rest of the conflict.

His experiences, not least those medical examinations, would have reminded Berg of a play he had seen in May 1914, just a month before the decisive assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo: Georg Büchner’s fragmentary drama *Woyzeck*. Written in 1837 and left incomplete upon Büchner’s death the same year, the play surfaced after Austrian author Karl Emil Franzos discovered the manuscript in 1875 and released his edition four years later.

Editing the play had not been easy, given Büchner’s miniscule handwriting and the bleaching of the ink over time—hence the misspelling of the protagonist’s name as *Wozzeck* (preserved by Berg). What had not faded, however, was the work itself. Offering a bold hybrid of naturalism and expressionism, the play, based on the downfall of a real-life Leipzig soldier, gained an avid following among the literary cognoscenti of the fin de siècle, including Gerhard Hauptmann and Frank Wedekind, as well as, later, Bertolt Brecht. The first production took

place in Munich in 1913, with Vienna receiving the play the following year.

Berg, a voracious theatergoer since his teenage years, was present at the Vienna premiere, as recalled by his friend, the writer Paul Elbogen in 1981:

They played the drama for three hours without the smallest interruption in complete darkness. Indescribably excited and enthusiastic, I stood up amidst wild applause and met Alban Berg a few steps behind me. He was deathly pale and perspiring profusely. "What do you say?" he gasped, beside himself. "Isn't it fantastic, incredible?" Then, already taking his leave, "someone must set it to music."

Berg's response to the play was as much intellectual as it was emotional. "It is not only the fate of this poor man, exploited and tormented by all the world, that touches me so deeply," he wrote to Anton Webern, "but also the unheard-of intensity of mood in each individual scene."

Berg took his libretto directly from Paul Landau's revised 1909 edition of the play. He duly preserved Landau's sequence of scenes, formulated out of the pile of papers Büchner had left behind, but also decided to omit passages in which ideas were repeated. All this Berg annotated directly into his copy of the play, complete with a cast list, voice types, and a "Scenarium," detailing the division of the 15 scenes over three almost equal acts.

The composition itself, however, was much more challenging. "The problem," Berg wrote, "became more musical than literary and had to be solved by the laws of musical structure rather than by the rules of dramaturgy." And so he invoked a whole host of established musical forms: five character pieces for Act I; a five-movement symphony for Act II; and six inventions for Act III. Though these processes may seem to indicate a level of abstraction and distance from the expressive emotion of the drama, Berg's lifelong fascination with symmetry, palindromes, and retrogrades emphasizes instead his strong personal attachment to *Wozzeck*.

By the summer of 1918, he confided in Webern that he was finally making progress with the score and to his wife Helene that he had, at last, found the right musical expression for one of *Wozzeck's* key entrances. Berg's confidence, however, proved premature; three years later, in June 1921, he wrote that Act III, Scene 1, "still won't quite come." Perhaps Schoenberg, who sent an encouraging letter at the time, had been right in his initial skepticism. "I was greatly surprised when this soft-hearted, timid young man had the courage to engage in a venture which seemed to invite misfortune," he explained: "to compose *Wozzeck*, a drama of such extraordinary tragedy that seemed forbidding to music."

Ever the teacher, Schoenberg nonetheless admitted that Berg succeeded—the score was finally completed in April 1922—because of his former pupil's unwavering faithfulness to his ideas (just as he had been faithful to Schoenberg). And yet, as Bernard Grun noted in his edition of the composer's letters to

his wife, “Berg wanted to compose *Wozzeck* without Schoenberg’s personal influence and was afraid that if Schoenberg returned to Vienna, he would expect to be continually shown the score as it progressed—which Berg would find impossible to refuse.” Distance, thanks to Schoenberg’s own military service and postwar travels, gave Berg the space he required and the completion of *Wozzeck* became an act of personal release.

The opera’s pumping heart is to be found in Berg’s juxtaposition of the 15 scenes and the orchestral interludes. The audience’s emotions constantly shift between the ostensible objectivity of the former, characterized by the music’s atonality and the brutal concision of the text, and the more subjective commentaries of the latter. Throughout, Berg uses dissonance for its power to shock, challenging our aural resistance—dramatic violence begets musical violence—but he also leads us by the hand, telling us when we should be appalled and when we should reach out to the poor folk pictured therein. That is certainly the case with what he had found as the initially tricky opening to Act III, which developed into a tableau of unbearable solo-string and voice-led poignancy.

As well as pitying Marie, the focus of that scene, Berg clearly saw himself in *Wozzeck*. The soldier’s eerily visionary moments, gazing at the moon or rooting through the toadstools, may well echo the composer’s own interests in the occult. And Berg’s experiences of life as a soldier, of course, provided another crucial link, as he wrote to his wife in August 1918: “There is a bit of me in his character, since I have been spending these war years just as dependent on people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, in fact humiliated. Still, perhaps, but for this, that musical expression wouldn’t have occurred to me.” Consequently, Berg included musical ciphers in *Wozzeck*’s medical examination: In parallel to the Doctor’s initial A–E-flat (written in German as A and Es, or S), which some have seen to represent the overly dogmatic Arnold Schoenberg, *Wozzeck*’s first words revolve around A and B-flat, for Alban Berg (B-flat is written as B in German), looking ahead to similar self-portraits in the composer’s *Lyrische Suite* and, as Alwa, in *Lulu*.

It is entirely because of Berg’s “soft-hearted” approach that the opera proved so potent. Someone more hard-hearted might not have imbued the adaptation with the same level of self-identification, manifest in both its music and structural finesse. Berg had registered his horror at the drama while finding expression for it, using his own humiliation during the war to artistic ends. But as *Wozzeck* turns from submission to mortal violence in Act III, Berg and his protagonist part ways. Appalled by *Wozzeck*’s actions, Berg duly registers his dismay at the soldier’s world.

The final two episodes in the drama provide that commentary. First comes an intense, Mahlerian interlude (based on an earlier piano piece), which Berg described in his 1929 “lecture on *Wozzeck*”:

## Program Note CONTINUED

This interlude is to be understood as an “Epilogue” following Wozzeck’s suicide, as a confession of the author who now steps outside the dramatic action on the stage. Indeed, it is, as it were, an appeal to humanity through its representatives, the audience. From a musical standpoint, this final orchestral interlude represents a thematic development of all the important musical ideas related to Wozzeck.

Its predominantly tonal language, centered on the tragic key of D minor—just as each of the other scenes in Act III revolves around an individual musical element—provides a direct bridge between “the author” and humanity’s “representatives.” Furthermore, the reiteration of the opera’s most crucial leitmotifs, including Wozzeck’s “Wir arme Leut” (“Poor folk like us”), blaring out, fortissimo, on the trombones, binds the audience to the drama’s tragic outcome. And then, seeing Wozzeck and Marie’s child alone, taunted by his own peers, we are all too aware that history will repeat itself.

In just 90 minutes, Berg’s first opera brings together the individual and the collective, the subjective and the objective, in vertiginous synthesis. And that fusion allows Büchner’s tale to speak as effortlessly to his own time and to the hostilities that decided the ruination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—as well as the treacherous interwar years in which it first appeared—as it does to the world today. Berg’s “appeal to humanity” has lost none of its power, even if its warning often falls on deaf ears.

—Gavin Plumley

*Gavin Plumley specializes in the music and culture of Central Europe, notably Berg’s life and works, appears frequently on BBC Radio 3, and is the commissioning editor of English-language programme notes for the Salzburg Festival.*

# The Cast and Creative Team



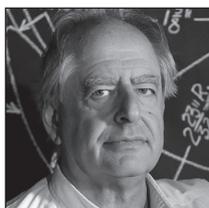
**Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck*, *Turandot*, *Werther*, and the New Year's Eve Gala at the Met; Met Orchestra Concerts at Carnegie Hall, where he is a Perspectives Artist; *Fidelio* in concert in Montreal; *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in concert in Paris; Schubert's *Winterreise* with Joyce DiDonato in Quebec and New York; and numerous concert appearances in North America and Europe.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 2009 debut leading *Carmen*, he has conducted nearly 100 performances of 11 operas, including *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *La Traviata*, *Elektra*, *Parsifal*, and *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is in his second season as the Met's Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music Director. 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. He has also led performances in Baden-Baden and at the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, and Salzburg Festival.



**William Kentridge**

DIRECTOR (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** *Lulu* and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** A prolific visual artist, animator, filmmaker, and stage director, he has recently created productions of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* with Handspring Puppet Company, *Wozzeck* at Opera Australia and the Salzburg Festival, *Die Zauberflöte* in Tokyo, and *Lulu* in Rome and at English National Opera. Other recent projects include *To What End* as part of Times Square's Midnight Moment series, *The Head and the Load* at the Park Avenue Armory, *Notes on a Model Opera* at Johannesburg's Goodman Gallery, and *The Refusal of Time*, made for Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, which has also been seen at MAXXI in Rome, New York's Metropolitan Museum, and in Boston, Perth, and Kyoto. In 2014, his staged version of Schubert's *Winterreise* opened at the Vienna Festival, followed by performances at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Holland Festival, and Lincoln Center's White Light Festival. He was recently awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts by Yale University, received an Honorary Doctorate in Literature from the University of Cape Town, and was appointed Honorary Academician of London's Royal Academy.

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JONATHAN TICHLER/MET OPERA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

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## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Luc De Wit

CO-DIRECTOR (BRUSSELS, BELGIUM)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** *Lulu* and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is an actor, director, and drama teacher, but since 1995, he has focused mainly on directing operas. Since 2005, he has collaborated with William Kentridge and often directs revivals of his productions, including *Die Zauberflöte* (originally at Brussels's La Monnaie), Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, *The Nose*, *Lulu*, and Büchner's *Woyzeck*. In 2012, he worked with Kentridge and composer Philip Miller on the chamber opera *Refuse the Hour*. The following year, he worked as movement director on Guy Cassier's production of *Götterdämmerung* at Staatsoper Berlin and La Scala, and that same year, he co-directed *Die Zauberflöte* with Pierrick Sorin in Lyon. In 2017, he co-directed *Wozzeck* with Kentridge at the Salzburg Festival, and in 2018, he collaborated with the director on *The Head and the Load* at London's Tate Modern and the Park Avenue Armory. He also teaches regularly at theater and music-theater colleges and has given workshops for actors, singers, directors, and set designers. He currently teaches at the École Lassaad International School of Theatre in Brussels.



### Catherine Meyburgh

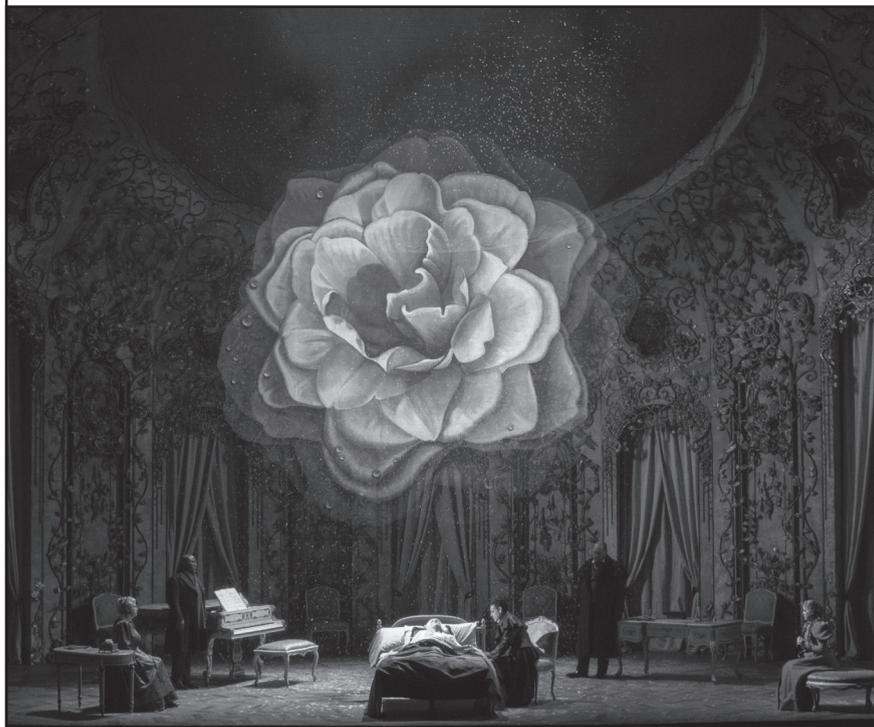
PROJECTION DESIGNER (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met.

**MET APPEARANCES** Projection Designer for *Lulu* and Video Composer and Editor for *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She is a film maker and projection designer and has collaborated with William Kentridge on video projections for *The Head and the Load* (Park Avenue Armory and London's Tate Modern), *Wozzeck* (the Salzburg Festival and Opera Australia), *The Refusal of Time* (for Documenta 13 in Germany and seen in numerous cities on tour), *Die Zauberflöte* (Brooklyn Academy of Music, Tokyo, Brussels, Paris, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and La Scala), Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria*, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, *Zeno at 4 AM*, and *Lulu* (Dutch National Opera). She collaborated with composer Philip Miller and artist Gerhard Marx on *REwind: A Cantata for Voice and Tape and Testimony* (Venice Biennale 2013). She has worked in film as a director, producer, editor and/or co-director for more than 20 years on projects including *Dying for Gold*, *Kentridge and Dumas in Conversation*, *The Glow of White Women*, *The Gugulethu Seven*, *Angola: Saudades from the One Who Loves You*, *Sophiatown*, *Yizo Yizo*, *Heartlines*, *Taste of Rain*, and *Gugu and Andile*.

ALSO ON STAGE



MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

GIUSEPPE VERDI

# LA TRAVIATA

Two extraordinary sopranos—Aleksandra Kurzak and Lisette Oropesa—share the role of Verdi's beloved heroine Violetta, in Michael Mayer's sumptuous staging. The remarkable rotating cast also features Dmytro Popov, Piero Pretti, Quinn Kelsey, and Luca Salsi, with Karel Mark Chichon and Bertrand de Billy on the podium.

**JAN** 10, 14, 18mat, 23, 26mat, 31 **FEB** 3, 7, 26, 29 **MAR** 5, 9, 13, 19

Tickets from \$25 | [metopera.org](https://metopera.org)

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Sabine Theunissen

SET DESIGNER (BRUSSELS, BELGIUM)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met, *The Head and the Load* in Johannesburg, *La Végétarienne* in Seoul and Liège, and *Waiting for the Sibyl* in Stockholm.

**MET APPEARANCES** *Lulu* and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She studied architecture in Brussels and Seville and since 1995, has been a set assistant at Brussels's La Monnaie, where she has worked on productions including *Il Turco in Italia*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Khovanshchina*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Otello*, *La Cenerentola*, *Tosca*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Così fan tutte*, Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (directed by William Kentridge), *Alceste*, and *Giulio Cesare*, among many others. From 1992 to 1994, she was a set assistant at La Scala working on productions of *Don Carlo*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Fedora*, and Weber's *Oberon*. Recent work includes *Wozzeck* at Opera Australia and the Salzburg Festival, *Waiting for the Sibyl* in Rome, *The Head and the Load* at London's Tate Modern, *Lulu* in Rome and at English National Opera, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (directed by Hélène Theunissen) in Brussels. She has also designed exhibitions in New York, Beijing, Seoul, Barcelona, Brussels, Sydney, London, Cape Town, Stockholm, and Copenhagen, among others.



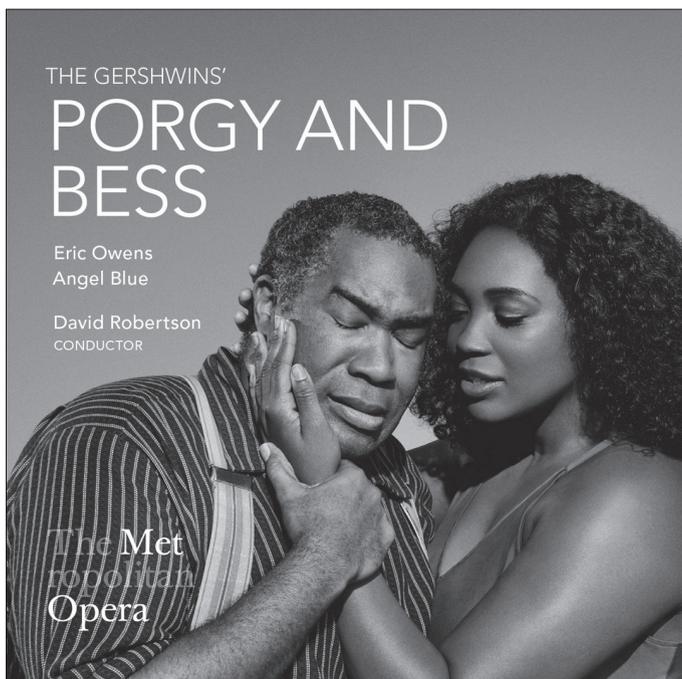
### Greta Goiris

COSTUME DESIGNER (GLABBEEK, BELGIUM)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met and *Don Carlos* in Antwerp.

**MET APPEARANCES** *Lulu* and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

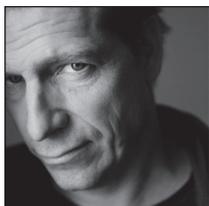
**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Her work with director Jacques Delcuverrie includes costumes for *Rwanda 1994* and *Anathème* for the Avignon Festival and *La Grande Imprecation*, *La Mère*, *Andromaque*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *La Mouette* for the National Theatre in Brussels. Among her collaborations with Dutch director Johan Simons are costumes for *Fidelio* at the Paris Opera, *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Salzburg Festival, *Radetzky marsch* at Vienna's Burgtheater, *Sentimenti* and *Life is a Dream* for Germany's Ruhrtriennale, *Hannibal* for the Stuttgart State Theatre, *Bacchanten* for Brussels's Kunsten Arts Festival, and *Oresteia* for Amsterdam's Toneelgroep. In 2016, she created costumes for Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*, directed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, at the Bavarian State Opera. In 2008, she created costumes for *Naar Damascus*, directed by Pierre Audi. At Brussels's La Monnaie, she designed costumes for Francesco Provenzale's opera *La Stellidaura Vendicante*, directed by Philippe Sireuil, and in 2005, she created costumes for William Kentridge's staging of *Die Zauberflöte*, which has been seen at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, La Monnaie, and in Aix-en-Provence and Tokyo.



# “SHEER SONIC GRANDEUR”

—WALL STREET JOURNAL

Recorded earlier this season, the Met’s landmark production of *Porgy and Bess* is now available on a three-CD set. Eric Owens and Angel Blue headline the Gershwins’ great American opera, with David Robertson conducting. CDs can be purchased at the Met Opera Shop, located near the box office, or online at [metoperashop.org](http://metoperashop.org).



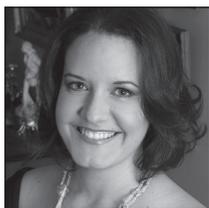
## Urs Schönebaum

LIGHTING DESIGNER (MUNICH, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** *Wozzeck* at the Met, the world premiere of Chaya Czernowin's *Heart Chamber* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the world premiere of *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* at the Bavarian State Opera

**MET APPEARANCES** *Lulu* and *The Nose* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** His work includes nearly 150 productions at theaters including Paris's Bastille Opera, Palais Garnier, Comédie Française, and Théâtre du Châtelet; Covent Garden; Brussels's La Monnaie; Opera de Lyon; Berlin's Staatsoper, Schaubühne, and Deutsches Theater; Munich's Bavarian State Opera and Residenztheater; Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre; Oslo's Det Norske Teatret; Rome Opera; Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre; Beijing's NCPA and Poly Theater; the Sydney Opera House; Dutch National Opera; Madrid's Teatro Real; as well as festivals in Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Bayreuth, and Vienna. He regularly works with directors William Kentridge, Thomas Ostermeier, Pierre Audi, Michael Haneke, La Fura dels Baus, and Sacha Waltz and was a longtime collaborator of Robert Wilson. He designed and directed Mathis Nitschke's *Jetzt, What Next?*, and *Happy Happy* in Montpellier, and he created the set and lighting design for Ginastera's *Bomarzo* in Madrid and the 15-hour Stockhausen cycle *Aus Licht* for Amsterdam's Holland Festival.



## Elza van den Heever

SOPRANO (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** Marie in *Wozzeck* at the Met, Julia in Spontini's *La Vestale* in Vienna, the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Dutch National Opera and in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonore in *Fidelio* in concert with the Orchestre de Paris, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Zurich, Verdi's Requiem with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the Bavarian State Opera, and a Met Orchestra concert at Carnegie Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Elizabeth I in *Maria Stuarda* (debut, 2012), and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the title role of *Norma* and Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in Frankfurt, Chrysothemis at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Elsa at the Vienna State Opera, Leonore in Zurich, the title role of *Alcina* at the Santa Fe Opera, and *Norma* at the Dallas Opera and Canadian Opera Company. Between 2008 and 2013, she was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt.

# DECODING DESIRE



Rhiannon Giddens

"Aria Code," the hit podcast from the Met and WQXR, is back for a second season—and this time, the theme is desire in all its forms.

When the Met and WQXR decided to collaborate last season on the creation of a new podcast, the idea was to explore some of opera's greatest arias and allow people to hear them in a whole new way. In "Aria Code," top opera stars would talk through the process of learning, rehearsing, and performing some of the best-known arias in the repertoire, from Tosca's "Vissi d'arte" to Violetta's "Sempre libera" to Rodolfo's "Che gelida manina"—with noted actors, writers, psychologists, scientists, and other expert guests providing additional color commentary.

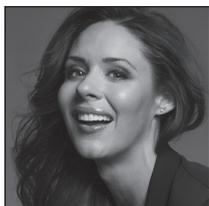
Little did the companies expect, however, that "Aria Code" would become a podcast sensation. "I didn't know that I needed an opera podcast in my life until I heard the trailer for 'Aria Code,'" declared *The New Yorker*. "An elegantly constructed, effortlessly listenable series."

The *New York Times* agreed, calling the podcast "luminous ... A major event and a gift."

This month, the series returns, once again hosted by the Grammy Award-winning (and opera-trained) folk singer Rhiannon Giddens. The first episode features superstar diva Anna Netrebko talking about Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene from Verdi's *Macbeth*, which the soprano performed memorably earlier this season. But it's not just Netrebko who weighs in on the murderous queen; none other than Dame Judi Dench also shares her thoughts on the motivations and machinations of this timeless character.

The *Macbeth* episode is the first of ten new installments, which will also look at moments from *Porgy and Bess*, *Turandot*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and others, featuring such Met stars as Renée Fleming, Christine Goerke, and Eric Owens. The hope is that opera lovers will continue to find their favorite works illuminated, while newcomers will discover that opera is, indeed, for them. Or, as *The New Yorker* put it in their review of the series, "It encourages fandom through substance, by showing us the art itself." **M**

Listen to Seasons 1 and 2 on your desktop or phone at [ariacode.org](http://ariacode.org).



## Tamara Mumford

MEZZO-SOPRANO (SANDY, UTAH)

**THIS SEASON** Margret in *Wozzeck* at the Met and concert appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since her 2006 debut as Laura in *Luisa Miller*, she has sung 175 performances of 19 roles, including Flosshilde in the *Ring* cycle, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* and *Die Zauberflöte*, the Pilgrim in Kaija Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin*, Smeaton in *Anna Bolena*, Margret, Pauline in *The Queen of Spades*, the Third Secretary in John Adams's *Nixon in China*, Mavra Kuzminichna / Matryosha in *War and Peace*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Queen Gertrude in the world premiere of Poul Ruders's *The Thirteenth Child* at the Santa Fe Opera and the title role of Rossini's *Tancredi* with Teatro Nuovo. She has also appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, Dallas Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Glimmerglass Festival, Gotham Chamber Opera, and in concert with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, and Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar, among others. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Peter Mattei

BARITONE (PITEÅ, SWEDEN)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Wozzeck* at the Met, Schubert's *Winterreise* at Carnegie Hall and in Frankfurt, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with Portugal's Gulbenkian Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 2002 debut as the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, he has sung nearly 150 performances of nine roles, including the title roles of *Don Giovanni* and *Eugene Onegin*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, and Shishkov in *From the House of the Dead*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *Don Giovanni* at the Vienna State Opera; Amfortas, Shishkov, and Eugene Onegin at the Paris Opera; and Eugene Onegin in Zurich. He has also sung Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* in Zurich; the Count at the Vienna State Opera; Amfortas at the Royal Swedish Opera; Eugene Onegin at the Vienna State Opera, Salzburg Festival, and in Umeå, Sweden; Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni*, and Shishkov at La Scala; Wolfram at Staatsoper Berlin and La Scala; and the title role of *Billy Budd* in Frankfurt and Gothenburg, Sweden.



TIM FITZSIMMONS/AP

# BLACK VOICES AT THE MET

All season long, the Met hosts a special exhibition that pays tribute to the extraordinary contributions of black artists on the company's historic stage. Featuring nearly 170 archival photographs, newspaper clippings, costume designs, and more, *Black Voices at the Met* recounts a fascinating 120-year story showcasing the groundbreaking careers of such prominent singers as Marian Anderson, Robert McFerrin, Mattiwilda Dobbs, and Leontyne Price.

*Black Voices at the Met* is open now through the end of the 2019–20 season in Founders Hall, located on the Concourse level.

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



**Gerhard Siegel**

TENOR (TROSTBERG, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** The Captain in *Wozzeck* at the Met; Florestan in *Fidelio* in Chemnitz, Germany; Piet vom Fass in Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* in Dresden; Mime in the *Ring* cycle at the Paris Opera; and Scrivener in *Khovanshchina* at Staatsoper Berlin.

**MET APPEARANCES** Mime (debut, 2004), the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Herod in *Salome*, and the Captain.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in concert at Switzerland's Verbier Festival; Mime in Budapest, Dresden, Chemnitz, and in concert at the Edinburgh International Festival; Siegmund in *Die Walküre* in concert in Augsburg, Germany; the Witch and Mime at Covent Garden; Herod in *Salome* in Graz, Zurich, and at the Hungarian State Opera and Staatsoper Berlin; Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* in concert with the Cleveland Orchestra; and the Captain at the Salzburg Festival. He has also sung Herod in Stuttgart, at the Vienna State Opera, and in concert at the Verbier Festival; Tristan in Gelsenkirchen, Germany; Mime at the Bayreuth Festival and in Barcelona and Cologne; and the Captain at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, and in Stuttgart and Madrid.



**Andrew Staples**

TENOR (LONDON, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Andres in *Wozzeck* for his debut at the Met, the title role of *Idomeneo* at Staatsoper Berlin, Tichon in *Kát'a Kabanová* in Rome, Nicías in *Thaïs* in concert with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romand, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the Hamburg International Music Festival.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Tichon, Froh in *Das Rheingold*, Jaquino in *Fidelio*, Flamand in *Capriccio*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Artabenes in Arne's *Artaxerxes*, and Narraboth in *Salome* at Covent Garden; Jonathan in Handel's *Saul* in Vienna; Fenton in *Falstaff* in concert in Paris and with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra; Faust in *La Damnation de Faust* at New Zealand Opera; Narraboth in concert at Switzerland's Verbier Festival; and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also appeared at the Salzburg Festival and Lucerne Festival; in Prague, Brussels, and Hamburg; and with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, among others.

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Christian Van Horn

BASS-BARITONE (ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** The Doctor in *Wozzeck*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, and the New Year's Eve Gala at the Met; Claggart in *Billy Budd* and Silva in *Ernani* at San Francisco Opera; Walter in *Luisa Miller* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Creon in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* in concert with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Publio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Colline, the title role of *Mefistofele*, Julio in Thomas Adès's *The Exterminating Angel*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pistola in *Falstaff* (debut, 2013).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Zoroastro in Handel's *Orlando* at San Francisco Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Bavarian State Opera, Narbal in *Les Troyens* at the Paris Opera, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Opera Philadelphia, the Emperor in Stravinsky's *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* at the Canadian Opera Company, and Méphistophèlès in *Faust* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also sung Melisso in Handel's *Alcina* and Raimondo at the Santa Fe Opera, Oroveso in *Norma* at the Dallas Opera, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at LA Opera, and Escamillo and Narbal at Lyric Opera of Chicago.



### Christopher Ventris

TENOR (LONDON, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** The Drum-Major in *Wozzeck* at the Met; Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Royal Danish Opera; Siegmund in *Die Walküre* in Madrid and Lisbon, at the Icelandic Opera, and in concert with the Dresden Philharmonic; and the title role of *Parsifal* in Hamburg.

**MET APPEARANCES** Steva in *Jenůfa* (debut, 2003).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Tristan in Brussels; Siegmund, Max in *Der Freischütz*, the title role of *Lohengrin*, Parsifal, and Andrey Khovansky in *Khovanshchina* at the Vienna State Opera; Florestan in *Fidelio* in Hamburg; and Paul Ackermann in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Zurich. He has also sung the title role of *Peter Grimes* in Zurich and at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Parsifal at the Bayreuth Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, San Francisco Opera, and in Zurich; Max at La Scala; Siegmund at the Bayreuth Festival and Washington National Opera; the title role of Wagner's *Rienzi* at the Salzburg Festival; the title role of *Tannhäuser* at the Paris Opera; Lohengrin in Geneva, Madrid, and at the Dallas Opera; Florestan at Washington National Opera; and Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Geneva, Madrid, and Brussels.