

RICHARD WAGNER

# TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

CONDUCTOR  
Sir Simon Rattle

PRODUCTION  
Mariusz Trelński

SET DESIGNER  
Boris Kudlička

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Marek Adamski

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Marc Heinz

VIDEO PROJECTION DESIGNER  
Bartek Macias

CHOREOGRAPHER  
Tomasz Wygoda

GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR  
Fabio Luisi

Opera in three acts

Libretto by the composer

Saturday, October 8, 2016  
12:00–5:00PM

New Production

The production of *Tristan und Isolde* was made possible by a generous gift from the **Estates of Alan and Ruth Broder**

Additional funding for this production was received from **Marina Kellen French** and the **Gamma Fisher Foundation, Marshalltown, Iowa**

Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera, Festival Hall Baden-Baden, Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera, and China National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) Beijing

The Metropolitan Opera  
2016-17 SEASON

The 459th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
RICHARD WAGNER'S

**TRISTAN  
UND ISOLDE**

CONDUCTOR  
Sir Simon Rattle

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

A SAILOR'S VOICE  
Tony Stevenson

A SHEPHERD  
Alex Richardson

ISOLDE  
Nina Stemme

A STEERSMAN  
David Crawford

BRANGÄNE  
Ekaterina Gubanova

YOUNG TRISTAN  
Jonathan O'Reilly

KURWENAL  
Evgeny Nikitin

TRISTAN  
Stuart Skelton

ENGLISH HORN SOLO  
Pedro R. Díaz

MELOT  
Neal Cooper

KING MARKE  
René Pape

Saturday, October 8, 2016, 12:00-5:00PM

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KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

Stuart Skelton and  
Nina Stemme in  
the title roles of  
Wagner's *Tristan  
und Isolde*

Dramaturgs **Piotr Gruszczyński** and **Adam Radecki**  
Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Robert Morrison**, **Gareth Morrell**,  
**Carol Isaac**, and **Jonathan C. Kelly**  
Assistant Stage Directors **Gina Lapinski**, **Peter McClintock**,  
and **Stephen Pickover**  
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**  
German Coach **Marianne Barrett**  
Prompter **Carol Isaac**  
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**  
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**Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
Costumes executed by **Teatr Wielki Polish National Opera,**  
**Warsaw**; and **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**  
Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera**  
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Opera

2016-17 SEASON



A scene from *Don Giovanni*

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OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE

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# Synopsis

## Act I

A warship on the sea. On board are Isolde and her companion, Brangäne. Isolde has been captured in Ireland and is now being escorted by Tristan to Cornwall, whose ruler (and Tristan's foster-father), Marke, she is to marry. Mortified to be a captive, Isolde does not want the ship to reach its destination. She is unable to understand why Tristan is delivering her to Marke instead of marrying her himself. She calls his heroism and nobility into question and accuses him of cowardice. She then sends Brangäne to arrange a meeting with Tristan. Intent on performing his duties as an officer, Tristan declines, and his aide, Kurwenal, brusquely dismisses Brangäne and alludes to the death of Morold. In confidence, Isolde tells Brangäne how she had saved Tristan's life and treated his wounds when he washed up on the shores of Ireland after having killed her betrothed, Morold. Assuming the name of Tantris, Tristan surrendered himself to Isolde's care, and she fell in love with him, even though she eventually realized that he had slain Morold. Humiliated at being rebuffed, Isolde now craves revenge. She asks Brangäne to prepare poison that she intends to give Tristan in a drink of vengeance. The warship approaches its destination. Isolde finally manages to speak to Tristan, and they have a bitter conversation in which she brings up all his misdeeds. Tristan remains impassive and keeps his emotions in check. As the ship approaches the shore where Marke awaits his bride-to-be, Tristan drinks the potion Isolde offers him, fully aware that it is poisoned. Isolde does likewise. But the flasks have been switched: Brangäne has given them a love potion instead. As the ship sails into the harbor, Tristan and Isolde fall under its spell and confess their love for each other. Isolde's last words before being brought before Marke are, "Must I live?"

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:20 PM)

## Act II

Marke is away. Aboard the empty ship, Isolde is eagerly looking forward to a secret rendezvous with Tristan, who is to appear when the lights go out. Brangäne is apprehensive and tries to dissuade Isolde from seeing her lover, but Isolde disregards her warnings. At the appointed signal, Tristan arrives. After the initial rapture of their reunion, they begin a long conversation. Tristan expresses his belief that love cannot find true fulfillment in the daylight—this can only happen at night: "We have dedicated ourselves to the night!" Brangäne, standing on the lookout, warns them that day is about to break. Faced with the inevitability of their parting, the lovers resolve to die: "Let day give way before death!" They are discovered by Melot, who has brought Marke along in order to expose Isolde's infidelity. Devastated by Tristan's disloyalty, Marke accuses

him of having sullied his honor. Tristan pays no heed to Marke's reproaches and implores Isolde to set off into the night with him. She agrees. After a struggle with Marke's men, Tristan is wounded and collapses.

### *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:00 PM)

## Act III

Tristan lies in a coma with Kurwenal watching over him. The sound of a familiar old tune brings him out of his slumber. Bewildered by his return to the waking world, Tristan speaks of his experiences while unconscious: "I was where I had been before I was, and where I am destined to go, in the wide realm of night." As his life gradually slips away, Tristan embarks upon an inward journey. He recalls traumatic events—including the death of his parents, whom he never knew—which have caused him to lose faith in the rituals of day and in the possibility of fulfillment in the light of day. Kurwenal tells Tristan that he has summoned Isolde to look after him once more. Delirious, Tristan sees Isolde running toward him with a promise of love and redemption. When Isolde's ship appears on the horizon, he tears off his bandages and rushes toward her. He dies in her arms, and she is left alone in the care of Marke and Brangäne. Racked with guilt, Marke tries, along with Brangäne, to draw Isolde back to the realm of day and life, but she expires in a rapture of ecstatic love.

—Piotr Gruszczyński

(Reprinted courtesy of Festival Hall Baden-Baden)

*Richard Wagner*

# Tristan und Isolde

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*Premiere: Court Theater, Munich, 1865*

Wagner's breathtaking meditation on love and death holds a unique place in the opera world. It is based on an ancient myth, extremely popular in various forms throughout medieval Europe, about the illicit love of a knight and the wife of his king. A love potion triggers a passion too great to be bound by the rules of conventional society and ultimately stronger than death itself. To explore this well-trod territory, Wagner created a drama in which daily reality is dismissed as an illusion, while truths about life, love, and death are revealed as if in a fever dream. The music for this journey has astounded, amazed, infuriated, and inspired audiences since it was first heard, and the title roles are acknowledged as among the most extraordinarily demanding in opera. The vocal challenges, the sumptuous symphonic scale of the orchestral writing, and the mystical nature of the story, with its opportunities for creative visual design, make this awe-inspiring work a phenomenon of the repertory.

*The Creator*

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was the complex, controversial creator of music-drama masterpieces that stand at the center of today's operatic repertory. Born in Leipzig, Germany, he started out in the tradition of German Romantic opera and became an artistic revolutionary who reimagined every supposition about music and theater. Wagner wrote his own libretti and insisted that words and music were equals in his works. This approach led to the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or "total work of art," combining music, poetry, architecture, painting, and other disciplines, a notion that has had an impact on creative fields far beyond opera.

*The Setting*

The three acts of the opera are originally set, respectively, aboard ship on the Irish Sea, in Cornwall (southwestern Britain), and in Brittany (northwestern France). The many versions of this story, from various corners of Europe, all pay homage to the Celtic ambience and probable origin of the tale, and the drama utilizes several key themes associated with ancient Celtic culture: mysticism, knowledge of the magic arts, an evolved warrior code, and a distinctly non-Christian vision of the possibilities of the afterlife. The Met's new production places the action in a contemporary wartime setting.

### *The Music*

Volumes have been written about the influential score of *Tristan*. The music is built on the idea of a great yearning, irresistible and self-perpetuating, that cannot be fulfilled in this life. This is first expressed in the orchestra by a single chord in the third measure and conveyed using chromatic modulations, which build without resolving. The famed “Tristan chord” tells us that many of the opera’s ideas will be presented by the orchestra, which plays a unique role in this work. (It is not only the lead vocal roles that are challenging: some of the finest orchestral musicians in the world once dismissed this work as unplayable.) The prelude sweeps the listener into an ecstatic yet tortuous world of longing. The vocal parts are of unique stature. The soprano immediately establishes her presence in a grueling Act I narrative, full of pride, anger, and repressed love. The second act is dominated by the extended encounter of the two leads. Starting off in a frenzy (including two high Cs for the soprano), it transforms into an otherworldly atmosphere that seems suspended in time. The pace builds in growing waves of distinctly erotic music, only to be stopped short by the arrival of Isolde’s husband. In Act III, the tenor and soprano each have huge solo moments. The tenor’s punishing narratives at the beginning of the act require exceptional musicianship and sheer stamina. Isolde’s is the last voice we hear: her famous Liebestod (“Love death”) ends with a final octave leap that concludes this unique musical-dramatic journey.

### *Met History*

The Met presented the American premiere of *Tristan* in 1886, with Anton Seidl conducting Albert Niemann and Lilli Lehmann in the leading roles. Seidl also led a new production in 1895 featuring the foremost Wagnerian stars of the day: the brothers Edouard and Jean de Reszke and the American sensation Lillian Nordica. In the early years of the 20th century, Gustav Mahler and Arturo Toscanini each conducted new productions, with Mahler making his Met debut on New Year’s Day, 1909. Joseph Urban designed a 1920 production, which lasted until 1959 and was the setting for many memorable Met performances: the dream team of Lauritz Melchior (128 performances as Tristan from 1929 to 1950) and Kirsten Flagstad (73 Isolde from 1935 to 1951) dominated this opera in their time. Helen Traubel made 44 appearances as Isolde from 1942 to 1953. The 1959 production, conducted by Karl Böhm, featured the Met debut of Birgit Nilsson, the preeminent Isolde of her time. Erich Leinsdorf led Nilsson and Jess Thomas in the next new production in 1971. The following staging by Dieter Dorn was unveiled in 1999, with James Levine conducting Ben Heppner and Jane Eaglen as the leads. Mariusz Trelieński’s new production opens the Met’s 2016–17 season, with Nina Stemme and Stuart Skelton in the title roles and Sir Simon Rattle on the podium.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: LEONTYNE PRICE AS CLEOPATRA IN BARBER'S *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*, 1966  
PHOTO: METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES

LEONIE RYSANEK AND BIRGIT NILSSON IN *ELEKTRA*, 1966  
PHOTO: FRANK DUNAND/METROPOLITAN OPERA GUILD

TESTING OF THE NEW MET'S STAGE LIFTS, 1966  
PHOTO: METROPOLITAN OPERA ARCHIVES

## THE NEW MET

This season, Founders Hall (on the Concourse level) is home to *The New Met*, a pair of exhibitions celebrating the Metropolitan Opera's 50th anniversary in its current home at Lincoln Center. The north hall features imagery of the nine new productions that premiered in the new Met's inaugural 1966-67 season, including breathtaking photos of Leontyne Price as the title heroine of *Antony and Cleopatra* (which opened the new house), Cecil Beaton's extraordinary costumes for *La Traviata*, starring Anna Moffo, and dazzling designs by Marc Chagall for *Die Zauberflöte*. The south hall focuses on the architecture and construction of the new house, as well as offering a gripping video of the behind-the-scenes preparations for opening night in 1966.

*The New Met* runs in Founders Hall all season. For more 50th-anniversary content, visit [metopera.org/met50](http://metopera.org/met50).

## Program Note

In December 1854, Richard Wagner wrote to his friend Franz Liszt: “But since I’ve never in my life enjoyed the true happiness of love, I intend to erect a further monument to this most beautiful of dreams, a monument in which this love will be properly sated from beginning to end; I have planned in my head a *Tristan and Isolde*, the simplest, but most full-blooded musical conception.” It was also in this letter that Wagner announced his discovery of Arthur Schopenhauer and his philosophy of the denial of the will. “[He] has entered my lonely life like a gift from heaven. . . . I have found a sedative which has finally helped me to sleep at night; it is the sincere and heartfelt yearning for death: total unconsciousness, complete annihilation, the end of all dreams—the only ultimate redemption,” he explained to Liszt.

It was no accident that *Tristan* and Schopenhauer should seem to suddenly appear in Wagner’s life at the same time. When Wagner wrote that letter, he was in desperate straits. He was exiled from Germany for his part in a middle-class uprising in Dresden in 1848–49, and that such insurrections had been crushed throughout Europe was a bitter blow. For neither the first nor the last time, he was also in a precarious financial situation, able to live in Switzerland only with the help of wealthy friends. His marriage was deteriorating. Since the premiere of *Lohengrin* four years earlier, the musical world had heard nothing new from him. He had written the libretto of all four parts of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, as well as the music for its opening work, *Das Rheingold*, but as he worked his way through composing *Die Walküre*, he began to understand just what a lengthy process it would be to finish just that installment of the tetralogy. Getting the entire *Ring* on stage, given the enormous forces involved, must have begun to seem like an improbable folly.

As he finished *Walküre* and started on *Siegfried*, music for the new *Tristan* continued to bubble to the surface. In December 1856 he wrote to a friend: “For the moment, music without words . . . in the shape of a melodic thread which, though I fain would have quitted it, kept on spinning itself, so that I could have spent the whole day developing it.” It was not until April 1857 that he actually drafted the prose scenario for *Tristan* that he would later refine and then use as a libretto, which he finished that September.

Wagner had always seen drama in terms of music. Throughout his life, he often told friends who questioned some unclear—or even contradictory—plot element in his libretti, “When you hear the music, you will understand.” But with *Tristan*, he went even further. In this case, it was not the story’s words that first encapsulated the drama and then inspired the music, but the opposite: the emotions and drama of *Tristan und Isolde* first came to Wagner as *music*. It was only after some of the key musical elements had appeared, and been worked out to some degree, that he then produced the libretto and set to work in earnest composing the opera, leaving aside *Siegfried* to be finished at a later date.

Wagner's main source for the libretto was Gottfried von Strassburg's poetic version of the ancient Celtic myth, which appeared about 1210. The poem—which was left unfinished, at 19,548 lines in length, at Strassburg's death—has an enormous cast of characters, and the sprawling story includes numerous digressions depicting medieval courtly life with all its intrigues and pageantry. But Wagner was not interested in a musical setting of the colorful medieval story. He is not concerned with the outer situations of the lovers, but with the story's deep psychological aspects. As Wagner explained it, "I have rejected the exhaustive detail which a historical poet is obliged to employ so as to clarify the outward development of his plot, to the detriment of a lucid exposition of its inner motives, and I trusted myself to the latter alone. Life and death, the whole meaning of the outer world, here hang on nothing but the inner movements of the soul."

The English poet W. H. Auden summed up the crux of the story: "The love [Tristan and Isolde] feel for each other is religiously absolute, i.e., each is the other's ultimate good so that not only is sexual infidelity inconceivable, but all other relations to other people and the world cease to have any significance. Yet, though their relation is the only value that exists for them, it is a torment, because their sexual desire is only the symbolic expression of their real passion, which is the yearning of two souls to merge and become one, a consummation which is impossible so long as they have bodies, so that their ultimate goal is to die in each other's arms."

In the opera, Wagner provides just enough plot detail to explain how Tristan and Isolde found themselves in their situation, while primarily concentrating on their inner world. The composer is quite capable of writing essentially a cappella parts for the singers, with only orchestral punctuation, when he wants the specific words to be clearly understood by the audience. But there are also times—after the lovers drink the potion in Act I or in much of the duet in Act II—when the individual words are lost in a torrent of sound and become simply another element in the music's emotional outpouring. When Brangäne sings her warning to the lovers from high in the tower, the individual syllables of her words are sometimes stretched out to such a degree that they become unintelligible, but the overall effect is magical.

Numerous books have been written about how Wagner used the "melodic thread" of his leitmotifs to weave one of the greatest scores in music history—how an opera that begins with a musical phrase depicting aching desire evolves symphonically, through endless melody and the use of unresolved chromatic harmony and dissonance that was unprecedented at the time, to the transfiguration of the soul and the achieving of highest bliss, all conveyed by some of the most ravishingly beautiful music ever written.

The oft-repeated tale that Wagner composed *Tristan* to forever memorialize his love affair with Mathilde Wesendonck—the wife of the composer's wealthy

patron, who provided the Wagner family with financial assistance and housing at his Zurich estate for about a year beginning in April 1857—is not true. Instead, the composer's immersion in the opera predisposed him to recreate its emotions in his outer life, and thus the affair with Wesendonck. It is unknown whether the affair was ever consummated, but in any case, it put an enormous strain on the marriages of both participants.

When Wagner started working on *Tristan* in earnest, he thought the project would be a quick moneymaker. He imagined in another letter to Liszt in June 1857 that “[*Tristan*’s] modest dimensions will facilitate a performance of it, and I shall produce it in Strasbourg a year from today. . . . I may safely assume that a thoroughly practicable work such as *Tristan and Isolde* will soon bring in decent revenues and keep my head above water.” In fact, the score was not finished for more than two years, and early attempts to give the opera—first in Karlsruhe and then in Vienna—came to nothing. Wagner’s detractors declared the piece unperformable.

It was only when Bavaria’s King Ludwig II summoned Wagner to Munich in 1864, discharging his debts and awarding him a generous annual salary, that the composer was given the necessary resources to get *Tristan* on stage. But its bad luck continued; the announced premiere had to be postponed because the Isolde had become hoarse. Finally, on June 10, 1865, *Tristan* was given for the first time. After a few more performances, the husband and wife team who had sung *Tristan and Isolde*, Malvina and Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, returned to their home theater in Dresden, where Ludwig suddenly died, age 29—more evidence of a “*Tristan* curse,” according to Wagner’s enemies.

*Tristan* broke so much new ground, both musically and dramatically, that few people who saw it remained indifferent to its lure. For decades, it was as reviled as it was adored. Clara Schumann, by this time a widow, saw it in September 1875. “It was the most disgusting thing I have ever seen or heard in my life,” she wrote in her diary. “To be forced to see and hear such crazy lovemaking the whole evening, in which every feeling of decency is violated and by which not just the public but even musicians seem to be enchanted—it is the saddest thing I have experienced in my entire artistic life.”

Whether one likes *Tristan* or not, its influence reaches far beyond the opera house. Poetry, literature, painting, and theater have all been impacted by it. For many composers after Wagner, it was the one work whose shadow they most struggled to escape. In performance, *Tristan und Isolde* can easily seem to be the pinnacle of sweeping Romanticism, its endless melody a great duet between the singers on stage and the surging orchestra, everything driving inexorably to the final resolution at the climax of what is now known as Isolde’s *Liebtestod*. But that overarching power is achieved only because Wagner was so meticulous in constructing every nuance of his score.

## Program Note CONTINUED

The prelude to Act III, for example, with its haunted sense of desolation, is built on the last four notes of the opening phrase of the prelude to Act I, the essence of desire, subliminally suggesting the relationship between desire and despair and musically tying together the two acts. And the orchestral music that accompanies the entrance of King Marke and his men in Act II, trapping the lovers, is a grotesque parody of the music that accompanied Tristan's headlong dash into Isolde's arms earlier in the act.

In his autobiography, conductor Sir Georg Solti tells of visiting Richard Strauss, who wanted to talk about *Tristan*. The elderly composer pointed out that the very last chord of the opera is played by every instrument in the orchestra except the English horn. Wagner uses the English horn to represent desire, and with the death of both Tristan and Isolde, desire has ended. One tiny touch, unnoticed in performance, but it is indicative of the way Wagner spun his initial "melodic threads" into an exquisite musical tapestry that stands among the supreme masterpieces of Western civilization.

—Paul Thomason

*Paul Thomason, who writes for numerous opera companies and symphony orchestras in the U.S. and abroad, has contributed to the Met's program books since 1999.*

## The Cast and Creative Team



### Sir Simon Rattle

CONDUCTOR (LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met, *Tosca* at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, and *La Damnation de Faust* and *Kát'a Kabanová* at the Berlin Staatsoper, in addition to extensive orchestral performances with the Berliner Philharmoniker and with orchestras around the world.

**MET APPEARANCES** *Pelléas et Mélisande* (debut, 2010)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Berliner Philharmoniker, and beginning in 2017, will become Music Director of the London Symphony Orchestra. He was Artistic Director of the Salzburg Easter Festival from 2003 to 2012, and from 1980 to 1998, he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, and then Music Director, of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. His opera performances in recent years have included Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Vienna State Opera, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and with the Berlin Philharmonic for the Aix-en-Provence Festival and Salzburg Easter Festival; *Pelléas et Mélisande* at London's Barbican, Covent Garden, and the Berlin Staatsoper; *From the House of the Dead* and *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Berlin Staatsoper; and *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Manon Lescaut*, and *Die Zauberflöte* at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden.



### Mariusz Treliński

DIRECTOR (WARSAW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met; *Iolanta* and *Madama Butterfly* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater; and *Eugene Onegin*, *La Traviata*, *Die Tote Stadt*, and *Madama Butterfly* at Polish National Opera.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He worked extensively in theatre and film before achieving prominence in opera in 1999 with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the Polish National Opera, where he is now artistic director. His many productions there have included *Turandot*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Iolanta*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *Powder Her Face*. Through original productions and revivals of his work from Warsaw, he has worked at many of the world's leading opera houses: St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater (Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, Szymanowski's *King Roger*), Washington National Opera (*Andrea Chénier* and *La Bohème*), Israeli Opera (*The Queen of Spades*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Orfeo ed Euridice*), Prague's National Theatre (*Salome*), Welsh National Opera (*Manon Lescaut* and Henze's *Boulevard Solitude*), Brussels's La Monnaie (*Manon Lescaut*), and Festspielhaus Baden-Baden (*Tristan und Isolde*).



## Boris Kudlička

SET DESIGNER (RUŽOMBEROK, SLOVAKIA)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met and *Otello* at Covent Garden.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since 1999, he has collaborated with opera directors including Keith Warner, Dale Duesing, and, most notably, Mariusz Treliński. His work with Mr. Treliński includes set design for productions of *Madama Butterfly*, Szymanowski's *King Roger*, *Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Andrea Chénier*, *La Bohème*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Boris Godunov*, *Iolanta*, Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Salome*, and *Die Tote Stadt*, all of which have been staged at the Polish National Opera and at major opera houses including those in Brussels, Berlin, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Prague, Washington, Los Angeles, Frankfurt, and Valencia, and at festivals in Edinburgh, Hong Kong, and Baden-Baden. He has also designed sets for films, theater productions, and concerts, and has received numerous awards, including the Polish Gloria Artis Medal from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the Gold Medal at the Prague Quadrennial.



## Marek Adamski

COSTUME DESIGNER (WARSAW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met and *Die Tote Stadt* at Polish National Opera.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** A fashion designer, stylist, and costume designer, he has created costumes for a number of productions including Moniuszko's *Halka* (Polish National Opera), Schiller's *Nathan the Wise* (National Theatre Warsaw), *The Devils*, *The Death Star*, and *The Pelikan, or Farewell to Meat*. His work with director Mariusz Treliński includes *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for Polish National Opera and the Met, and *Salome* and Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* for Welsh National Opera. As an artist, his photographs and collages have been seen at the Nova Polska Exhibition in Lille, France, and at Poland's Inspirations Festival of Visual Arts.



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MOZART

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## Marc Heinz

LIGHTING DESIGNER (AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met and Eugeniusz Knapik's *Moby Dick* at the Polish National Opera.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has worked with Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Brussels's Royal Flemish Theatre, Antwerp's Royal Dutch Theatre, Holland Festival, and the Vienna Festival, among many others. He recently designed lighting for a production of Verdi's *Aida* for a large-scale stadium show in Paris and an arena show for the world tour of DJ Armin van Buuren. His work for television and special events includes productions of the musicals *Shrek*, *Hairspray*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fame*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oliver!*, *Blood Brothers*, *Grease*, *Legally Blonde*, *Footloose*, *Flashdance*, *Putting It Together*, and *Sweeney Todd*. He has collaborated with directors including Keith Warner, Andreas Kriegenburg, Herbert Wernicke, Mariusz Trelński, Petrika Ionescu, Pierre Audi, Amon Miyamoto, Guy Cassiers, Alize Zandwijk, Wilfried Minks, Frank van Laecke, Jos Thie, Barbara Wysocka, and Ken Caswell.



## Bartek Macias

VIDEO PROJECTION DESIGNER (CRACOW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** A multimedia video artist, animation director, and visual effects supervisor, he has worked on numerous films, theater productions, television shows, and commercials. In 2011, he received a gold award at the Advertising Festival in the design category for his video mapping, seen in the Polish Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai Expo. He is a founder of the Lunapark group, which brings together artists from different domains of the audio-visual arts. Since 2011, he has worked with director Mariusz Trelński and set designer Boris Kudlička on numerous projects. His work in opera includes *Salome*, *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *The Devils of Loudun*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Turandot*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, among others.



PHOTO: MARTY SOHL/METROPOLITAN OPERA

ROSSINI

# *L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI*

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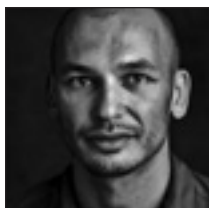
**OCT 4, 7, 12, 15 eve, 20, 22 eve, 26, 29 eve**

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James Levine conducts this comedy of a feisty Italian girl turning the tables on her bumbling captors via Rossini's blend of madness and fun, with mezzo-soprano Elizabeth DeShong in the title role.

Tickets from \$25

[metopera.org](http://metopera.org)



## Tomasz Wygoda

CHOREOGRAPHER (KIELCE, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** A dancer, actor, teacher, and choreographer, he has performed in productions by Jacek Łumiński and Conrad Drzewiecki (Poland), Henrietta Horn (Germany), Jonathan Hollander (U.S.), and Paul Clayden (U.K.), and choreographed productions by Michał Zadara, Mikołaj Grabowski, Jan Peszek, Monika Pęcikiewicz, Wiktor Rubin, and Maja Kleczewska. He was in charge of stage movement for George Tsypin's production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Mariinsky Theatre. A frequent collaborator of Mariusz Treliński, he has worked with him on productions of *La Bohème* (Washington National Opera), *Turandot* (Polish National Opera), *Boris Godunov* (Vilnius, PNO), *Aleko* and *Iolanta* (Mariinsky Theatre), *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Bratislava's Slovak National Theatre, PNO). Recent engagements include *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Rihm's *Jakob Lenz*, Moniuszko's *Halka*, and Dusapin's *Medeamaterial* (PNO), *Manon Lescaut* (PNO, Brussels, Cardiff), *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* (PNO and the Met), Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* (Welsh National Opera), and *Salome* (Prague's National Theatre).



## Ekaterina Gubanova

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

**THIS SEASON** Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* and Amneris in *Aida* at the Met, the title role of *Carmen* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Fidès in Meyerbeer's *Le prophète*, and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Barcelona.

**MET APPEARANCES** Eboli in *Don Carlo*, Jane Seymour in *Anna Bolena*, Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and Hélène Bezukhova in *War and Peace* (debut, 2007).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Azucena at the Paris Opera; Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at the Berlin Staatsoper, La Scala, and at the BBC Proms; Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* at the Berlin Staatsoper; Amneris in *Aida* at the Vienna State Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, and St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater; Brangäne at the Paris Opera, the festivals of Munich, Baden-Baden, and Rotterdam, and in Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and Madrid; Adalgisa in *Norma* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera and in Barcelona; Eboli at La Scala; Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold* in Salzburg; and Cassandra in *Les Troyens* at the Edinburgh Festival.



PHOTO: KRISTIAN SCHULLER/METROPOLITAN OPERA

ROSSINI

# GUILLAUME TELL

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**OCT** 18, 21, 25, 29 mat **NOV** 2, 5 eve, 9, 12 mat

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Rossini's epic telling of the William Tell fable returns to the Met stage after an absence of more than 80 years, in a new production by Pierre Audi. Gerald Finley sings one of his signature roles as Tell, the revolutionary on a quest for freedom. Fabio Luisi conducts.

Tickets from \$27

[metopera.org](http://metopera.org)

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### Nina Stemme

SOPRANO (STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN)

**THIS SEASON** Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met, Brünnhilde in the complete *Ring* cycle in Stockholm, the title role of *Elektra* at the Bavarian State Opera, Kundry in *Parsifal* and Elektra at the Vienna State Opera, and Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* in Dresden.

**MET APPEARANCES** The title roles of *Elektra*, *Turandot*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (debut, 2000).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Brünnhilde in the complete *Ring* cycle with Washington National Opera, the Vienna State Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and at the BBC Proms; Isolde at the Bayreuth Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival, and in Paris, Munich, and Zurich; Elektra with the Vienna State Opera and the Deutsche Oper Berlin; the title role of *Salome* in Stockholm, Zurich, and at the BBC Proms; *Turandot* in Zurich and with the Bavarian State Opera; and Alicia Hauser in the world premiere of Hans Gefors's *Notorious* in Göteborg. She has also appeared at the festivals of Salzburg, Savonlinna, Lucerne, and Bregenz, and at La Scala and the Teatro San Carlo in Naples.



### Evgeny Nikitin

BASS-BARITONE (MURMANSK, RUSSIA)

**THIS SEASON** Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met, Ramfis in *Aida* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater, the Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Madrid, Ruprecht in Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* at the Bavarian State Opera, Scarpia in *Tosca* at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, and Jochanaan in *Salome* in Amsterdam.

**MET APPEARANCES** Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Rangoni in *Boris Godunov*, Orest in *Elektra*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*, Creon/The Messenger in *Oedipus Rex*, and Dolokhov in *War and Peace* (debut, 2002).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Klingsor at the Munich Festival and in Madrid; the Dutchman at the Mariinsky Theater, the Bavarian State Opera, and in Paris, Tokyo, and Barcelona; Telramund in *Lohengrin* at the Bavarian State Opera, the Munich Festival, and in Amsterdam; Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* at the Vienna State Opera and in Valencia; the title role of *Boris Godunov* at the Mariinsky Theater; Scarpia at the Vienna State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Mariinsky Theater; Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina* at the Vienna State Opera and the Mariinsky Theater; and Jochanaan in Zurich.

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**ROKU SAMSUNG**

PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA  
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## René Pape

BASS (DRESDEN, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met, the Bavarian State Opera, and the Bayreuth Festival; Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Berlin Staatsoper, Paris Opera, and Munich Festival; King Philip in *Don Carlo* at the Berlin Staatsoper and in Zurich; King Henry in *Lohengrin* at the Paris Opera; and Landgraf Hermann in *Tannhäuser*, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*, and Banquo in *Macbeth* at the Berlin Staatsoper.

**MET APPEARANCES** Nearly 200 performances of 22 roles, including the title role of *Boris Godunov*, Gurnemanz, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, King Philip, Sarastro, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, King Henry, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Orest in *Elektra*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Rocco in *Fidelio*, and the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 1995), as well as a solo recital in 2014.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He appears frequently at all the world's leading opera houses, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as the festivals of Glyndebourne, Bayreuth, and Salzburg. He also appears regularly with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, and Boston Symphony Orchestra, among others.



## Stuart Skelton

TENOR (SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA)

**THIS SEASON** Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Met, the title role of *Lohengrin* at the Paris Opera, Laca in *Jenůfa* at the Bavarian State Opera and Munich Festival, and the title role of *Peter Grimes* at the Bergen National Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Siegmund in *Die Walküre* and the Drum Major in *Wozzeck* (debut 2011).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Tristan at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and English National Opera; the title role of *Parsifal* at the English National Opera and in Zurich; Siegmund at the Bavarian State Opera, Paris Opera, Opera Australia, and Seattle Opera; *Lohengrin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and in Dresden; *Peter Grimes* with the English National Opera and in Tokyo; the Drum Major at Santa Fe Opera; Boris in *Kát'a Kabanová* with English National Opera; Max in *Der Freischütz* at the Bavarian State Opera; and Don José in *Carmen* at the San Francisco Opera, Vienna Volksoper, and Opera Australia.

# Facilities and Services

## THE ARNOLD AND MARIE SCHWARTZ GALLERY MET

Art gallery located in the South Lobby featuring leading artists. Open Monday through Friday, 6pm through last intermission; Saturday, noon through last intermission of evening performances.



## ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM AND BINOCULARS

Wireless headsets, which work with the FM assistive listening system to amplify sound, are available at the coat check station on the South Concourse level before performances. Binoculars are also available for rental at the coat check station on the South Concourse level. The rental cost is \$5. A major credit card or driver's license is required as deposit.



## BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Large print programs are available free of charge from the ushers. Braille synopses of many operas are available free of charge. Please contact an usher. Tickets for no-view score desk seats may be purchased by calling the Metropolitan Opera Guild at 212-769-7028.



## BOX OFFICE

Monday–Saturday, 10am–8pm; Sunday, noon–6pm. The Box Office closes at 8pm on non-performance evenings or on evenings with no intermission. Box Office Information: 212-362-6000.

## CHECK ROOM

On Concourse level (Founders Hall).

## FIRST AID

Doctor in attendance during performances; contact an usher for assistance.

## LECTURE SERIES

Opera-related courses, pre-performance lectures, master classes, and more are held throughout the performance season at the Opera Learning Center. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028.

## LOST AND FOUND

Security office at Stage Door. Monday–Friday, 2pm–4pm; 212-799-3100, ext. 2499.

## MET OPERA SHOP

The Met Opera Shop is adjacent to the North Box Office, 212-580-4090. Open Monday–Saturday, 10am–final intermission; Sunday, noon–6pm.



## PUBLIC TELEPHONES

Telephones with volume controls and TTY Public Telephone located in Founders Hall on the Concourse level.

## RESTAURANT AND REFRESHMENT FACILITIES

The Grand Tier Restaurant features creative contemporary American cuisine, and the Revlon Bar offers panini, crostini, and a full service bar. Both are open two hours prior to the Met Opera curtain time to any Lincoln Center ticket holder for pre-curtain dining. Pre-ordered intermission dining is also available for Met ticket holders. For reservations please call 212-799-3400.



## RESTROOMS

Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are on the Dress Circle, Grand Tier, Parterre, and Founders Hall levels.

## SEAT CUSHIONS

Available in the South Check Room. Major credit card or driver's license required for deposit.

## SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

For information contact the Metropolitan Opera Guild Education Department, 212-769-7022.

## SCORE-DESK TICKET PROGRAM

Tickets for score desk seats in the Family Circle boxes may be purchased by calling the Met Opera Guild at 212-769-7028. These no-view seats provide an affordable way for music students to study an opera's score during a live performance.

## TOUR GUIDE SERVICE

Backstage tours of the Opera House are held during the Met season on most weekdays at 3:15pm, and on select Sundays at 10:30am and/or 1:30pm. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028. Tours of Lincoln Center daily; call 212-875-5351 for availability.

## WEBSITE

[www.metopera.org](http://www.metopera.org)



## WHEELCHAIR ACCOMMODATIONS

Telephone 212-799-3100, ext. 2204. Wheelchair entrance at Concourse level.

The exits indicated by a red light and the sign nearest the seat you occupy are the shortest routes to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run—walk to that exit.

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