

PETER TCHAIKOVSKY

IOLANTA

AND

BÉLA BARTÓK

BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE

CONDUCTOR

Valery Gergiev

PRODUCTION

Mariusz Treliński

SET DESIGNER

Boris Kudlička

COSTUME DESIGNER

Marek Adamski

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Marc Heinz

CHOREOGRAPHER

Tomasz Wygoda

VIDEO PROJECTION DESIGNER

Bartek Macias

SOUND DESIGNER

Mark Grey

DRAMATURG

Piotr Gruszczyński

GENERAL MANAGER

Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR

James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

Fabio Luisi

Iolanta

Lyric opera in one act

Libretto by Modest Tchaikovsky,
based on the play *King René's Daughter*
by Henrik Hertz

Bluebeard's Castle

Opera in one act

Libretto by Béla Balázs, after a fairy tale
by Charles Perrault

Saturday, February 14, 2015

12:30–3:45PM

New Production

The productions of *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*
were made possible by a generous gift from
Ambassador and Mrs. Nicholas F. Taubman

Additional funding was received from Mrs. Veronica Atkins;
Dr. Magdalena Berenyi, in memory of Dr. Kalman Berenyi;
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Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera and
Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera

The Metropolitan Opera

2014-15 SEASON

The 5th Metropolitan Opera performance of
PETER TCHAIKOVSKY'S

IOLANTA

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This performance is also being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 74.

CONDUCTOR
Valery Gergiev

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MARTA
Mzia Nioradze

DUKE ROBERT
Aleksei Markov

IOLANTA
Anna Netrebko

VAUDÉMONT
Piotr Beczala

BRIGITTE
Katherine Whyte

LAURA
Cassandra Zoé Velasco

BERTRAND
Matt Boehler

ALMÉRIC
Keith Jameson

KING RENÉ
Ilya Bannik

IBN-HAKIA
Elchin Azizov

Saturday, February 14, 2015, 12:30–3:45PM

The Metropolitan Opera

2014-15 SEASON

The 29th Metropolitan Opera performance of
BÉLA BARTÓK'S

BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE

This performance is being broadcast live over The Toll Brothers–Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network, sponsored by Toll Brothers, America's luxury homebuilder®, with generous long-term support from The Annenberg Foundation, The Neubauer Family Foundation, the Vincent A. Stabile Endowment for Broadcast Media, and contributions from listeners worldwide.

There is no Toll Brothers–Metropolitan Opera Quiz in List Hall today.

This performance is also being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 74.

CONDUCTOR
Valery Gergiev

CAST

JUDITH
Nadja Michael

BLUEBEARD
Mikhail Petrenko

Saturday, February 14, 2015, 12:30–3:45PM

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Chorus Master (*Iolanta*) **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation (*Iolanta*) **Robert Morrison, Irina Soboleva, and Natalia Katyukova**
Musical Preparation (*Bluebeard's Castle*) **Linda Hall, Robert Morrison, and Carol Isaac**
Assistant Stage Directors (*Iolanta*) **Peter McClintock, Stephen Pickover, and Yefim Maizel**
Assistant Stage Directors (*Bluebeard's Castle*) **Peter McClintock and Paula Williams**
Stage Band Conductor **Jeffrey Goldberg**
Language Coach (*Bluebeard's Castle*) **Craig Rutenberg**
Met Titles **J. D. McClatchy**
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Wig and Makeup design by **Waldemar Pokromski**
Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

The production of *Bluebeard's Castle* uses strobe effects.

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Met Titles

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Synopsis

Iolanta

Iolanta is blind. She lives a secluded life and is treated like a doll. A long time ago her father, King René, hid her from the world and placed her in the care of simple people, Martha and Bertrand. His greatest concern is for his daughter never to find out she is blind. He also doesn't want the news of Iolanta's blindness to reach Robert, her future husband. Iolanta is convinced that eyes are only for crying. But she is becoming anxious and has some vague presentiments.

Alméric arrives at Iolanta's dwelling, announcing a visit from the King and a famous Moorish physician. The doctor's diagnosis is clear: Iolanta must be told of her disability before treatment can begin. René says no.

Robert and Vaudémont appear at Iolanta's house. They are overawed—the place seems to hide a secret, danger, they feel threatened. They meet Iolanta, not knowing who she is. Robert doesn't realize she is his betrothed, whom he doesn't want to marry because he loves someone else. Vaudémont is enchanted with the girl while Robert is worried by this mysterious place. Enthralled with Iolanta's beauty, Vaudémont asks her to give him a red rose as a keepsake. Iolanta hands him a white one, twice. Vaudémont realizes that she can't see. Iolanta has no idea what it means to see, she isn't aware what she is missing. King René catches Vaudémont talking to Iolanta and is furious with him for revealing the secret to her. With no will of her own, Iolanta doesn't even know whether she wants to be able to see—she will do anything her father tells her. This only confirms the doctor's words that without an inner desire, no change is possible. To awaken her desire to regain her sight, the King threatens that if the treatment fails Vaudémont will be killed. Iolanta is healed and her father consents to her marriage to Vaudémont. But regaining her sight doesn't bring Iolanta the expected deliverance. Blinded by the world, she can't believe that the people she loves look the way they do. Her love for Vaudémont and the wedding ceremony subdue her fears. Will it be forever?

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:05 PM)

Bluebeard's Castle

Judith has come to live with Bluebeard, having left her family home and her peaceful, ordered existence. Bluebeard's secret mesmerizes her—she knows the terrifying rumors, she fears she may be on a road of no return, yet she decides to enter his home. The door closes. Judith confesses her love for Bluebeard, believing that it will change him and light up his gloomy

Synopsis CONTINUED

home. She repeats her profession of love like a mantra as she demands that the doors to seven rooms be opened. The first one is a torture chamber, the second an armory. These rooms fill her with terror. The next doors conceal a treasury and a garden. Then Bluebeard shows his empire to Judith. She sees blood everywhere: on jewels, weapons, flowers. She doesn't want to defer to Bluebeard who says, "Love me" and "Ask no questions." Judith responds that she does love him and wants him to open up to her, reveal his inner self, uncover his fears. She demands that all the doors be opened. The sixth door, which conceals a sea of tears, is where Judith reaches the limit of knowledge. That leaves the seventh door. Behind it is a space beyond life, on the border of life and death. There are concealed Bluebeard's previous wives. Passing through the seventh door, Judith joins them. She is made a part of Bluebeard's space forever. The circle of her journey closes. Or, perhaps it closed a long time ago, when she first met Bluebeard?

Peter Tchaikovsky

Iolanta

Premiere: Mariinsky Theater, St. Petersburg, 1892

Tchaikovsky's final opera was commissioned by St. Petersburg's Imperial Theatres as part of a double bill with a new ballet—which became *The Nutcracker*. Although *Iolanta*, unlike its companion piece, has remained relatively unknown outside of Russia, it is prime operatic Tchaikovsky and overdue for discovery by the world at large. Based on a Danish play, the opera is a romantic fantasy about the blind daughter of a king. Ignorant of her affliction, she is kept prisoner by her father, but eventually must face the truth of who she is before she can experience both sight and love. The story's abstract psychological underpinnings are explored through Tchaikovsky's unique gift for ravishing lyricism, making *Iolanta* both intellectually fascinating and musically accessible.

The Creators

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) enjoyed tremendous fame during his lifetime as a composer of symphonic music and ballets. Today, his operas have also achieved a steadily growing popularity, both in Russia and around the world, with *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades* firmly established in the repertoire. His brother Modest (1850–1916) also worked with him on the libretto for *The Queen of Spades*. The source for *Iolanta* was the play *King René's Daughter* by the Danish poet Henrik Hertz (1797–1870), written in 1845 and highly popular throughout the 19th century.

The Setting

A largely fictionalized account of the life of Yolande, daughter of René d'Anjou, Count of Provence and King of Naples, the story originally takes place in mid-15th-century France. The Met's new production is set in an unspecified space visually inspired by the films noirs of the 1940s.

The Music

The score of *Iolanta* contains a wealth of instantly recognizable Tchaikovskian melody, beginning with the opening scene and the title character's first solo. Free of form rather than a textbook aria, it is still so lyrical that it has enjoyed a separate life on Russian concert stages. The Moorish doctor's solo is painted with exotic strains and has reminded some commentators of the Arabian Dance from *The Nutcracker*. *Iolanta* and Vaudémont's expansive love duet is also exemplary romantic Tchaikovsky—its main theme will reappear at the opera's conclusion sung by all the characters in a general expression of joy. Reflecting the story's subject matter of blindness and vision, one of the score's most instantly notable features is its highly sophisticated use of colors in both the orchestral and the vocal writing.

Iolanta at the Met

This production marks the opera's Met premiere.

Béla Bartók

Bluebeard's Castle

Premiere: Royal Opera House, Budapest, 1918

Bartók's only opera is an intense psychological journey, a powerful drama of inner emotion, and a tour de force for two singers (and the orchestra). Loosely based on Charles Perrault's late-17th century fairy tale, it tells the grotesque story of a rich and powerful man, suspected of having murdered several wives, who brings a new bride to his castle. In Bartók's version, the bride, Judith, prods Bluebeard to open seven doors, each of which reveals an aspect of Bluebeard's life, material possessions, and, by extension, his mind. With the opening of the final door, Judith is engulfed in his dark subconscious—and possibly dead, although she remains Bluebeard's dominant love ideal. By the time the opera was written, the Perrault tale had become a metaphor for contemporary psychological questions: How well can two people know each other? How much should they attempt to find out? While such an approach, almost completely without conventional "action," could easily have resulted in an overly didactic treatment, Bartók's music makes the opera a thrilling journey. The score lives on, yet not quite beyond, the jagged edges of tonality. Like the subconscious and the dream world it depicts, it sounds familiar enough to not be experienced as abstract, yet foreign and disturbing enough to create a feeling of unease. It is a unique achievement in opera, and a great challenge to the performers and production team.

The Creators

Béla Bartók (1881–1945) was a Hungarian composer and an important pioneer in the field of ethnomusicology. During the first decades of his life, he was better known for his work in collecting and analyzing folk music than for his own compositions. He fled fascism to settle in New York City in 1940. At the time of his death from leukemia, his stature as a composer was beginning to be recognized internationally. Born Herbert Bauer of German-Jewish parents, Béla Balázs (1884–1959) was a writer and poet based in Hungary who later became an influential film critic. He originally created the libretto of *Bluebeard's Castle* for his friend, composer Zoltán Kodály. French writer Charles Perrault (1628–1703) is considered the father of the fairy tale. His *Stories or Tales from Times Past* (better known by their subtitle, *Tales of Mother Goose*), contain the first literary versions of *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Ridinghood*, and others.

The Setting

The libretto indicates nothing more specific than a massive, dark castle hallway with seven doors. No time period or geographical location is given. In this production, *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* are set in a similar physical environment.

The Music

Musicologists delight in analyzing the score of *Bluebeard's Castle*, but the opera is remarkable for its ability to make a direct and powerful impression on anyone. The music is closely linked to the Hungarian text, and yet gives it an acoustic power that transcends the strictly syntactic meaning. It speaks to the emotions as well as to the intellect. Each of the scenes, represented by each of the seven doors of Bluebeard's castle, has a prevalent key: beginning in F sharp, moving to a bright C major (the most distant key, tonally, from F sharp, expressed in a glorious outpouring of melody) in the fifth scene, and returning to the subdued F sharp at the end. The whole drama is contained within this sequence: loneliness with a glimpse of the lost opportunity for love and light. Much of the title character's vocal line is declamatory and indeed without much color or range. Its power lies in its dramatic delivery. Conversely, Judith's music covers a wider range. The underlying intention is clear: she is attempting to break away from his stifling presence. The music of *Bluebeard's Castle* makes a universal tale of human relationships from a symbolist psychological study. The opera opens with a spoken prologue, in which the audience is invited to question whether what they're about to see is really happening or takes place in their imagination.

Bluebeard's Castle at the Met

The opera received its Met premiere in English as part of a summer season in 1974, in a double bill with Puccini's comedy *Gianni Schicchi*. Sixten Ehrling conducted David Ward and Shirley Verrett in a production by Bodo Igesz. A new staging in 1989, also in English, paired the work with Arnold Schoenberg's monodrama *Erwartung*. Jessye Norman starred in both, with Samuel Ramey as Bluebeard and James Levine conducting. Ramey and Levine reunited for two concert performances, sung in Hungarian, given by the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and in Newark, New Jersey, in 2000, with Anne-Sofie von Otter as Judith. Mariusz Treliński's new production, which opened January 26, 2015, marked the opera's first staged Met performances in the original language.



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2014-15 SEASON

A scene from Carmen

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Program Note

Only two decades separate the composition of *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*. Yet during these years, the music of fin-de-siècle Romanticism sounded the last gasps of a philosophy that was rapidly being made obsolete by the efforts of a diverse generation of radical younger composers. That, at least, is the narrative we're usually told. In fact, the shift toward modernism was not nearly so clean-cut or abrupt.

For all its Romantic traits, Tchaikovsky's operatic swan song points ahead to a newly evolving sensibility in Russian art. According to Roland John Wiley, a leading authority on the composer, *Iolanta* "continued his experiment with new theater." Its proto-Symbolist elements make *Iolanta* "a forebear" of works like *Pelléas et Mélisande* (which Debussy began composing just a few months before Tchaikovsky's death in 1893).

Pelléas in turn left its mark on Béla Bartók when he undertook his first (and only) opera, *Bluebeard's Castle*, in 1911. In terms of its dramatic outlook, the Hungarian's work shares with *Iolanta* a Symbolist focus on psychic action, on what Bartók's librettist termed the "ballad of inner life." *Bluebeard's Castle* in this sense provides a stimulating counterpart to *Iolanta*, which is receiving its first-ever performances at the Met with this production. Both operas re-enact archetypal journeys, but in opposite directions: in *Iolanta*, a journey from darkness into the light, from captivity to liberation, which is then followed by *Bluebeard's* reversal of this "progress."

A few months before setting to work on the composition of *Iolanta* in 1891—a task that was preceded by his much-touted journey to New York for the grand opening of Carnegie Hall—Tchaikovsky laid out his artistic credo as an opera composer: "Only those subjects can warm me in which real living people, feeling as I do, are participating." It's not difficult to imagine how the predicament of a sensitive protagonist unable to understand the condition that sets her apart from her companions—a condition that has tacitly been agreed to be kept secret—might have attracted the homosexual Tchaikovsky's sympathy. And for all the grandeur of its ballroom scenes, the earlier *Eugene Onegin* had paved a genuinely innovative path toward a new style of intimately lyric drama that finds its echoes particularly in the opening scene of *Iolanta*. That style was enabled precisely by the composer's identification with *Onegin's* vulnerable heroine, Tatiana.

As a result of the huge success in 1890 of another Pushkin-inspired opera, *The Queen of Spades*, Tchaikovsky was commissioned by the director of the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg to compose a special double bill consisting of a one-act opera followed by a two-act ballet. In other words, *Iolanta* was in fact originally conceived as an opening act to be "completed" by an additional work. The project was delayed for a season, and at its premiere in December 1892, *Iolanta* received a more favorable reaction overall than its companion piece, *The Nutcracker*. Since then, however, overfamiliarity has dimmed our appreciation of how the ballet challenged its first audiences as a strange and unconventional work: "a mimed

first act with child principals to the near-exclusion of virtuoso dancing” and “a final act with no plot resolution and almost nothing but dancing” (Wiley). *Iolanta* has meanwhile remained a rarity outside Russia; even its reception there was long distorted through the bowdlerization by Soviet cultural police. Scandalized by the preeminence of religious imagery in the text, they watered down what Wiley describes as the libretto’s “spiritual intensity.”

Iolanta’s source is *King René’s Daughter*, a play from 1845 by the Danish-Jewish poet and playwright Henrik Hertz (1797–1870). Tchaikovsky first encountered the play, which enjoyed widespread success across Europe in the second half of the 19th century, in a Russian translation in the early 1880s and later recalled that the subject enchanted him “because of its poetical quality, originality, and abundance of lyrical moments.”

Eventually the composer’s brother Modest—who had previously penned the text for *The Queen of Spades*—crafted a libretto that heavily reworked the original drama. Hertz’s play was a work of Romanticized history based loosely on actual royal figures from the late Middle Ages in Provence. Modest Tchaikovsky’s streamlined version brings the spirit of the narrative even closer to that of a timeless fairy tale, turning the garden in which the princess is confined and protected into an ambiguous paradise that is also a kind of nightmarish prison of ignorance and of threats to outsiders.

Iolanta’s progression toward enlightenment suggests an affinity with *The Magic Flute* by Tchaikovsky’s idol Mozart—indeed, the destined couple *Iolanta* and Vaudémont must endure a trial of their own before they can be officially united—yet there is an implicit dark side beyond the physical/spiritual ailment afflicting the heroine (the connection is emphasized by the insightful Moorish physician Ibn-Hakia). Like Sarastro, *Iolanta*’s father King René’s motives in trying to protect his daughter are not free of ambiguity. For Treliski, her blindness serves “as a pretext” that allows René “to protect her from confronting other people and to keep her for himself.” In this way the fairy-tale dimension of the story acquires an “extremely bitter” edge—“like the fairy tales by Oscar Wilde or some by Andersen.”

Modest Tchaikovsky’s libretto neatly telescopes the narrative into an exposition explaining *Iolanta*’s situation and the potential of a treatment offered by Ibn-Hakia (almost half the opera), which is followed by the love scene with Vaudémont, the confrontation with René, and the resolution through a ritual-like staging of the cure. Translated into musical dramaturgy, the first half consists of more or less conventionally shaped numbers and accompanied recitative, while the opera culminates in a sequence of complex extended scenes. The latter, observes Wiley, feature a “Wagnerian” approach to musical-dramatic coherence.

Tchaikovsky harbored an intensely ambivalent attitude toward the German master, who cast a powerful spell on his fellow Russians above all in the guise of Symbolist ideas (more through his theories than his actual music). “I find

unbearable Wagnerian subjects which have nothing human in them," declared Tchaikovsky. It was around the time he discovered *King René's Daughter* that he also made his first encounter with *Tristan und Isolde*, which repulsed him. While composing *Iolanta*, Tchaikovsky wrote to a friend that he had found a subject "with which I will prove to the entire world that the lovers in the final scenes of operas should live, and that this is a real truth."

Yet if Tchaikovsky intended *Iolanta* to stand as an "anti-*Tristan*," he deliberately evokes the very music of *Tristan* in his introduction (perhaps by way of parody, as biographer David Brown suggests): scored for English horn and low woodwinds alone, the opening of *Iolanta* is tonally unmoored, its chromatic groping an emblem of *Iolanta's* presentiments of a sphere beyond her knowledge. Moreover, her encounter with Vaudémont on one level echoes the sexual awakening of the newly vulnerable Brünnhilde in Wagner's *Ring*, who has just been made aware of her humanity by Siegfried. *Iolanta's* final illumination—a rare "happy ending" in Tchaikovsky—is, however, "revoked" by the pessimistic trajectory of the great work to come, some of the sound world of which is already anticipated by the opera's score: the Sixth Symphony, or Pathétique.

"Music and drama are the agents of expression of the undefinable areas of life," declared Béla Balázs, Bartók's collaborator not only for *Bluebeard's Castle* but for the ballet *The Wooden Prince*, whose successful premiere in 1917 led to the belated first complete performance of *Bluebeard* at the Royal Opera in Budapest in 1918. Bartók had composed *Bluebeard* in 1911, incentivized by a national opera competition for Hungarian composers (which he lost). Aside from a few tinkering (and another competition entry), the score lay dormant until Bartók rewrote the ending in anticipation of the premiere.

Balázs (born Herbert Bauer, 1884–1949), a former roommate of Bartók's friend and associate Zoltán Kodály who shared interests with these pioneering fellow Hungarians and even joined the two composers on some of their field expeditions in search of authentic folk music. In *Bluebeard's Castle* we can already find his preoccupation with a deeper, Symbolist-infused reality for which music was the ideal complementary vehicle. In the Prologue the poet invites us to wonder whether the events about to unfold are happening inside our imaginations, "behind the curtain of our eyelids."

The dark but irresistible allure of Duke Bluebeard is apparent in the ongoing variants of the legend surrounding him—from the serial killer of the fairy tale codified by Charles Perrault to Hitchcock's *Rebecca* and his cameo appearance in Stephen King's *The Shining*. Particularly in the treatment by Balázs and Bartók, Bluebeard's fascination lies in his association with the inevitable inscrutability of those we need more than anyone to know. As in *Iolanta*, secrets carry a metaphysical weight here: they are key to both operas' parallel situations "of women in the shadow of a very strong, dominant male figure," as Treliński describes it.

Balázs fine-tuned the story into a minimalist drama virtually bereft of external event, borrowing his sense of pacing from the Symbolist sensibility found, for example, in Maurice Maeterlinck's opaque, elusive *Pelléas et Mélisande*—like *Bluebeard's Castle*, a text originally written as a stand-alone play and subsequently repurposed as an opera libretto.

The significance of the words is ensured through Bartók's faithful reflection of the natural accentuation of the Hungarian in his largely spare, declamatory vocal settings in place of ingratiating arias. (The only moment in which Judith and Bluebeard sing together is at the culmination, where the effect is ironically at a far remove from a duet, for each character has now entered upon a separate zone.) Balázs's verse employs a traditional Magyar ballad meter of eight-syllable lines replete with hypnotic repetitions and questions that often trail off into silence. At times the vocal lines give off an archaic, timeless, folk-like impression that intriguingly clashes with the composer's modernist (at times almost atonal) harmony.

In contrast to its "chamber" cast of two sung roles, Bartók's emotionally vibrant score calls for an enormous orchestra. This is allotted a central role in enacting for us what Judith "sees" revealed and gives voice to the third main character: the castle itself. Bartók uses his palette of colors and timbres with expert discretion to evoke distinct musical worlds, from the glitter of gold to the tender pastoral of Bluebeard's "secret garden" to the unsettling sonorities of the Lake of Tears.

Unifying all this diversity are recurrent thematic ideas that are closer to poetic symbols than leitmotifs, such as the piquant dissonance associated with blood. Through his overall tonal plan, Bartók also traces a transition from darkness to light, but back again to darkness: the palindromic arch that he made into a structural signature in so many instrumental works as well. The opera begins quietly in the shadowy gloom of F-sharp minor, which becomes its final destination. But at the score's near-exact midpoint, when Judith opens the fifth door, Bartók deploys the full arsenal of his orchestra in a brassy blaze of C major. This "light-filled" sonority recalls the dawn music of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by one of Bartók's early models, Richard Strauss; even more, it pivots the harmonic center a full tritone from the opera's framing F-sharp—the most tonally "distant" pairing of keys in the classical Western system.

But, as Bluebeard proclaims, "light can turn to darkness." When Judith finally does come to know her husband, the reality proves to be even more chilling than the rumors, and she takes up her part in the fated pattern: midnight to fill out the day's cycle.

—Thomas May

The Cast and Creative Team



Valery Gergiev

CONDUCTOR (MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Met, *Salome* and *Eugene Onegin* in St. Petersburg with the Mariinsky Opera, *Cinderella* with the Mariinsky Ballet on tour at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and concerts with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and Mariinsky Orchestra (including at Carnegie Hall).

MET APPEARANCES *Otello* (debut, 1994), *Eugene Onegin*, *The Nose*, *Parsifal*, *Die Walküre*, *Salome*, *The Queen of Spades*, *The Gambler*, *Don Carlo*, *La Traviata*, *War and Peace*, *Khovanshchina*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Boris Godunov*, *Mazeppa*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Le Rossignol*, and *Oedipus Rex*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is music director of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre (where he oversees the orchestra, ballet, and opera), principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, and artistic director of the Stars of the White Nights Festival and the Moscow Easter Festival. The Ossetian conductor is also principal conductor of the World Orchestra for Peace, founder and artistic director of St. Petersburg's New Horizons Festival, Rotterdam's Gergiev Festival, the Mikkeli International Festival, and Israel's Red Sea Festival.



Mariusz Treliński

DIRECTOR (WARSAW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is artistic director of Warsaw's Teatr Wielki–Polish National Opera. Recent productions include *Turandot*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Manon Lescaut* (co-production with Brussels's La Monnaie and Cardiff), *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for Polish National Opera, and Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* for Welsh National Opera. He worked extensively in theatre and film before moving to opera in 1999 with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the Polish National Opera. Subsequent opera productions include *Otello* (PNO), *Don Giovanni* (Los Angeles Opera), *The Queen of Spades* (Berlin, Tel Aviv), *Andrea Chénier* and *La Bohème* (Washington National Opera), Szymanowski's *King Roger* (St. Petersburg, Edinburgh Festival), *Boris Godunov* (Vilnius), *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Bratislava), *Iolanta* and Rachmaninov's *Aleko* (St. Petersburg, Baden-Baden Festival), *Eugene Onegin* (Valencia, Bologna), and *La Traviata* (PNO, Savonlinna Festival).



Boris Kudlička

SET DESIGNER (RUŽOMBEROK, SLOVAKIA)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

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*, *Rachmaninov's Aleko*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Manon Lescaut*, and *Bluebeard's Castle*, all of which have been staged at the Polish National Opera and at major opera houses including those in Brussels, Berlin, Moscow, St. Petersburg, 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 *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

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 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.



Marc Heinz

LIGHTING DESIGNER (AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met.

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, Petrica Ionescu, Pierre Audi, Amon Miyamoto, Guy Cassiers, Alize Zandwijk, Wilfried Minks, Frank van Laecke, Jos Thie, Barbara Wysocka, and Ken Caswell.



Tomasz Wygoda

CHOREOGRAPHER (KIELCE, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

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 Tsybin's production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Mariinsky Theatre. A frequent collaborator of director Mariusz Trelński, 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), and *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 Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* (Welsh National Opera).

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The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Bartek Macias

VIDEO PROJECTION DESIGNER (CRACOW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

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 audiovisual arts. Since 2011 he has worked with director Mariusz Trelński and set designer Boris Kudlička on numerous projects. His work in opera includes *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.



Mark Grey

SOUND DESIGNER (VIENNA, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *The Merry Widow*, *Iolanta*, and *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTION *Doctor Atomic* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent projects include sound design for Weinberg's *The Passenger* for Houston Grand Opera and Lincoln Center Festival, *Oklahoma!* and *The Sound of Music* for Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Adams's *El Niño* and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. He also designed sound for *The Death of Klinghoffer* for his debut at English National Opera, *The Bonesetter's Daughter* at the San Francisco Opera, and (as sound designer and artistic collaborator) for Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls*. Additional performances include works at Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall, London's Royal Albert Hall and Barbican Centre, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. He designed the sound for the world premiere of *Doctor Atomic* at the San Francisco Opera in 2005. He made his Carnegie Hall debut as a composer in 2003, and has been commissioned by Brussels's La Monnaie to write an opera based on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, scheduled to premiere in spring 2016.



Piotr Gruszczyński

DRAMATURG (WARSAW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle* for his debut at the Met and *Salome* for Prague's National Theatre.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A theater critic and dramaturg, he has worked regularly with Warsaw's Nowy Teatr and director Krzysztof Warlikowski since 2008. He is co-author of several adaptations of recent productions by Warlikowski including *(A)pollonia*, *Un Tramway* (co-production with Paris's Odéon Theatre), *The End*, *African Tales by Shakespeare*, and *Warsaw Cabaret*. He has also worked as an opera dramaturg with director Mariusz Treliński on productions including *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Bratislava, Warsaw, Tel Aviv), *La Traviata* (Warsaw), and *Turandot* (Warsaw). He is currently creating an adaptation of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* scheduled to premiere during next summer's RuhrTriennale in Germany.



Anna Netrebko

SOPRANO (KRASNODAR, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and the title role of *Iolanta* at the Met, Lady Macbeth in Rome, the title role of *Anna Bolena* at the Vienna State Opera and in Zurich, and Mimi in *La Bohème* at Covent Garden.

MET APPEARANCES The title roles of *Anna Bolena*, *Manon*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, Natasha in *War and Peace* (debut, 2002), Donna Anna and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Mimi and Musetta in *La Bohème*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and Elvira in *I Puritani*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Violetta in *La Traviata* and Mimi at the Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and Covent Garden; Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Salzburg Festival and Covent Garden; the title role of *Giovanna d'Arco* at the Salzburg Festival; Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Gilda with Washington National Opera; Lucia and Juliette with Los Angeles Opera; Micaëla in *Carmen*, Mimi, and Manon with the Vienna State Opera; and numerous roles with St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre.



Nadja Michael

SOPRANO (BERLIN, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Met, Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Marietta in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* in Warsaw and at Brussels's La Monnaie.

MET APPEARANCES Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* (debut, 2012).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She sang the title role of *Salome* for her 2009 U.S. debut at the San Francisco Opera and has since appeared as Iphigénie in *Iphigénie en Tauride* at Brussels's La Monnaie, Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salome in Hamburg, in the title role of Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, as Marie in *Wozzeck* at the Staatsoper Berlin, and in the title role of Cherubini's *Médée* for her 2012 debut at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.



Elchin Azizov

BARITONE (BAKU, AZERBAIJAN)

THIS SEASON Ibn-Hakia in *Iolanta* for his debut at the Met and Rachmaninov's *The Bells* with Washington's National Symphony.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has recently sung the High Priest in *Samson et Dalila* with the Rome Opera, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* in Limoges, Amonasro in *Aida* in Santiago, Ibn-Hakia with Vienna's Theater an der Wien, Germont in *La Traviata* with Berlin's Komische Oper, Scarpia in *Tosca* with the Bolshoi Opera, and Gryaznoy in *The Tsar's Bride* in New York with the Bolshoi Opera during last summer's Lincoln Center Festival. He has been a principal soloist with the Bolshoi since 2008, where his roles include Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Ibn-Hakia, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, and the title roles of *Prince Igor*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Macbeth*, and *Don Giovanni*.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Ilya Bannik

BASS (NIKOLAEV, UKRAINE)

THIS SEASON King René in *Iolanta* for his debut at the Met and Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* and a concert with St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been a soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre since 2009 and has recently appeared there as the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Baron Trombonok in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Count Ribbing in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*. He has also sung Timur in *Turandot*, Sarastro, and King René with the Welsh National Opera, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* in Genoa, the First Nazarene in *Salome* at Paris's Bastille Opera, Gremin at Edmonton Opera, and the Emperor in Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol* with the Canadian Opera Company, Aix-en-Provence Festival, Lyon Opera, and Dutch National Opera.



Piotr Beczala

TENOR (CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Vaudémont in *Iolanta* and Gustavo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met, the Prince in *Rusalka* and the Duke in *Rigoletto* at the Vienna State Opera, the title role of *Faust* at the Paris Opera, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at Covent Garden.

MET APPEARANCES Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, des Grieux in *Manon*, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*, the Prince, Faust, Rodolfo, and the Duke (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, the Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Vaudémont, and the Prince at the Salzburg Festival, the Duke at Covent Garden and La Scala, the title role of *Werther* in Frankfurt and Munich, Faust and the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Vienna State Opera, and Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Milan, Munich, and Berlin. He has also sung Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and Roméo in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, Jeník in *The Bartered Bride* with the Paris Opera, Vaudémont in Vienna and Moscow, and Lenski at Paris's Bastille Opera and for his 2004 U.S. debut with the San Francisco Opera.



Aleksei Markov

BARITONE (VIBORG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Robert in *Iolanta*, Count Anckarström in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Germont in *La Traviata* at the Met and Marcello in *La Bohème* at the San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Valentin in *Faust*, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Shchelkalov in *Boris Godunov*, Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades*, Prince Andrei in *War and Peace* (debut, 2007), and Marcello.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has recently sung Robert in Madrid, Count di Luna at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and the Duke of Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Count Anckarström in Zurich. He has also sung Robert at the Salzburg Festival, Scarpia in *Tosca* in Frankfurt, Count di Luna in Bordeaux, Gryaznoi in *The Tsar's Bride* at Carnegie Hall with the Opera Orchestra of New York, and the title role of *Eugene Onegin* in Zürich, Lyon, and Monte Carlo. He joined the Mariinsky Theatre in 2008 and has since appeared with the company in a number of leading roles, both in St. Petersburg and on tour in Berlin, London, Tokyo, Rotterdam, Baden-Baden, and New York.



Mikhail Petrenko

BASS (ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Met, Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* with the Mariinsky Theatre on tour, Hunding and Fafner in the *Ring* cycle at the Vienna State Opera, and Pimen in a concert performance of *Boris Godunov* with the Mariinsky Orchestra at London's Barbican Centre.

MET APPEARANCES Marshal Davout, Tikhon, and Bolkonsky's Valet (debut, 2002) in *War and Peace*, Prince Galitsky in *Prince Igor*, Pimen, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Pistola in *Falstaff*, and Hunding.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust* with the Netherlands Opera, Philip II in *Don Carlo* at the Verbier Festival, Orest in *Elektra* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* and Hunding at La Scala and the Staatsoper Berlin, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* at Paris's Bastille Opera, Philip II with the Netherlands Opera, and Leporello in *Juan*, a feature film by Kasper Holten based on *Don Giovanni*.

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