

Antonín Dvořák

Rusalka

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION
Otto Schenk

SET DESIGNER
**Günther
Schneider-Siemssen**

COSTUME DESIGNER
Sylvia Strahammer

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Gil Wechsler

CHOREOGRAPHER
Carmen De Lavallade

STAGE DIRECTOR
Laurie Feldman

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Lyric fairy tale in three acts

Libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil,
based on the fairy tale *Undine*
by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué

Saturday, February 8, 2014, 1:00–4:50 pm

The production of *Rusalka* was made possible by
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The Metropolitan Opera

2013–14 Season

The 25th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Antonín Dvořák's

Rusalka

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

Conductor
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

First Wood Sprite
Dísella Lärusdóttir

Hunter
Alexey Lavrov**

Second Wood Sprite
Renée Tatum*

The Prince
Piotr Beczala

Third Wood Sprite
Maya Lahyani

Gamekeeper
Vladimir Chmelo

Water Gnome,
Rusalka's father
John Relyea

Kitchen Boy
Julie Boulianne

Rusalka, a water nymph
Renée Fleming

The Foreign Princess
Emily Magee

Ježibaba, a witch
Dolora Zajick

Saturday, February 8, 2014, 1:00–4:50 pm

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Renée Fleming in
the title role of
Dvořák's *Rusalka*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Steven Eldredge, Paul Nadler,
Carol Isaac, and Miloš Repický**
Assistant Stage Director **Stephen Pickover**
Stage Band Conductor **Roger Malouf**
Czech Transliteration **Yveta Synek Graff**
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Synopsis

Time: Legendary

Act I

A meadow by the edge of a lake

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:00 PM)

Act II

The garden of the Prince's castle

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:20 PM)

Act III

The meadow by the lake

Act I

The water nymph Rusalka sits sadly by the water as wood nymphs sing and dance. When her father, the Water Gnome, asks why she is unhappy she tells him that she fell in love with a human—the Prince—when he came to swim in the lake. Now she wants to become human herself and live on land to be with him. Horrified, the Water Gnome tells her that humans are evil and full of sin. When Rusalka insists, claiming they are full of love, he says she will have to get help from the witch Ježibaba, then sinks back into the lake in despair. Rusalka calls on the moon to tell the Prince of her love. Ježibaba arrives and agrees to turn Rusalka into a human—but warns her that if she doesn't find love she will be damned and the man she loves will die. Also, by becoming mortal, she will lose her power of speech. Convinced that her feelings for the Prince can overcome all spells, Rusalka agrees and Ježibaba gives her a potion to drink. As dawn breaks, the Prince appears with a hunting party and finds Rusalka by the lake. Even though she won't speak to him, he is captivated by her beauty and leads her away to his castle. From the lake, the voices of the Water Gnome and the other water nymphs are heard, mourning the loss of Rusalka.

Act II

At the Prince's castle, the Gamekeeper and the Kitchen Boy talk about the approaching wedding of the Prince and his strange new bride, whose name nobody knows. The Prince enters with Rusalka. He wonders why she is so cold toward him but remains determined to win her. A Foreign Princess, who has come for the wedding, mocks Rusalka's silence and reproaches the Prince for ignoring his guests. The Prince sends Rusalka away to dress for the ball and escorts the Princess into the castle for the beginning of the festivities.

In the deserted garden, the Water Gnome appears from the pool. Rusalka, who has become more and more intimidated by her surroundings, rushes from the castle in tears. Suddenly recovering her voice, she begs her father to help her, telling him that the Prince no longer loves her. The Prince and the Princess come into the garden, and the Prince confesses his love for her. When Rusalka intervenes, rushing into his arms, he rejects her. The Water Gnome warns the Prince of the fate that awaits him, then disappears into the pool with Rusalka. The Prince asks the Princess for help but she ridicules him and tells him to follow his bride into hell.

Act III

Rusalka sits by the lake once again, lamenting her fate. Ježibaba appears and mocks her, then hands her a knife and explains that there is a way to save herself: she must kill the Prince. Rusalka refuses, throwing the weapon into the water. When her sisters reject her as well, she sinks into the lake in despair. The Gamekeeper and the Kitchen Boy arrive to ask Ježibaba for help. The Prince, they say, has been bewitched by a strange wood girl he was going to marry. Enraged, the Water Gnome rises from the lake, saying that it was the Prince who deceived Rusalka. Terrified by the supernatural sight, the two run away. The wood nymphs enter, singing and dancing, but when the Water Gnome explains to them what has happened to Rusalka, they fall silent and disappear.

The Prince, desperate and half crazy with remorse, emerges from the forest, looking for Rusalka and calling out for her to return to him. She appears from the water, reproaching him for his infidelity, and explains that now a kiss from her would kill him. Accepting his destiny, he asks her to kiss him to give him peace. She does, and he dies in her arms. Rusalka asks for mercy on his soul and disappears into the water.

Antonín Dvořák

Rusalka

Premiere: National Theater, Prague, 1901

The only opera by the great Czech composer Antonín Dvořák that has (so far) gained an international following, *Rusalka* is in many ways a definitive example of late Romanticism. Folklore, evocations of the natural and the supernatural worlds, and even a poignant interpretation of the idea of a love-death are all contained in this very human fairy tale. The opera tells of a water nymph (the title character) who longs to become human so she can win the love of a prince. The story has a strong national flavor as well as universal appeal, infused by the Romantic supernaturalism of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's novella *Undine* (previously set as an opera by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tchaikovsky, and others) and Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. The opera was written for the National Theater in Prague, an institution with a mission to develop Czech consciousness and patriotism during a time when the country was subjected to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The composer's national consciousness, the folkloric ambience of the piece, and the fact that it's written in Czech have all assured the opera's popularity with the Czech public, for whom it is considered a national treasure.

The Creators

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) was a Czech composer celebrated during his lifetime for his chamber, choral, and symphonic music. His many works to achieve international popularity include the String Quartet No. 12, "The American," the Piano Trio No. 4, "Dumky," the Requiem, the Slavonic Dances, the Cello Concerto, and nine published symphonies. Dvořák was especially popular in London and in New York, where he served for a while as director of the short-lived National Conservatory of Music. It was here that Dvořák experienced African-American and Native American music, some of which would influence his most successful composition, the Symphony No. 9, "From the New World." Yet he also composed nine operas, including *Rusalka*, and was puzzled that his success as a symphonic composer prevented him from being taken seriously as an opera composer beyond his native Bohemia. Jaroslav Kvapil (1868–1950) was a Czech author and poet. He wrote the libretto for *Rusalka* before meeting Dvořák, who became enthusiastic about the work when the director of the National Theater in Prague showed it to him.

The Setting

The opera takes place in an unspecified fairy-tale setting. Contrasting unspoiled and “honest” nature (the woods and lake of the framing acts) with corrupt human culture (the Prince’s palace in Act II) was a favorite theme of Romantic artists.

The Music

The orchestral score of *Rusalka* is magically evocative, particularly for the passages depicting the forest and the lake in Acts I and III. The delicacy of these moments has led some critics to label Dvořák’s writing “impressionistic.” These scenes are effectively contrasted with the bright brass flourishes depicting the glittering court of the prince. The vocal writing is built around emotional outbursts riding waves of orchestral sound, notably in the final confrontation between the hero and heroine: rather than a standard duet with both characters singing at once, each of them sings straightforward phrases that capture the irreconcilable states of these estranged characters. As opposed to some of his contemporaries, Dvořák did not shy away from writing arias and set pieces where the flow of the drama warranted. Besides the soprano’s ravishing “Song to the Moon,” famous from concerts and recitals long before the rest of the opera was known outside of the Czech world, there is the mezzo’s humorous Act I solo and even a straightforward (though ironic) bridal chorus in Act II. Additional contrast, expressed in a folkloric style, is provided by the servants in Act II. These various strands—impressionist, stately, rustic—are interwoven throughout the opera to illustrate the many dimensions of the story.

Rusalka at the Met

Rusalka came to the Met in 1993, in the current production with John Fiore conducting the Slovak soprano Gabriela Beňačková in the title role and a cast that also included Neil Rosenshein, Janis Martin, Dolora Zajick, and Sergei Koptchak. Ben Heppner sang the Prince for five performances in that original run. Renée Fleming first took on the title role in 1997 and returned to it in 2004 and most recently in 2009, with Aleksandrs Antonekno making his Met debut as the Prince, Stephanie Blythe as Ježibaba, Christine Goerke as the Foreign Princess, and Jiří Bělohlávek conducting.

Program Note

On the whole Dvořák had excellent relations with his critics and audience, but he was somewhat irked to find that he had been typecast as an instrumental composer, as this outburst from 1904 reveals: "In the last five years I have written nothing but operas...I consider opera the most suitable form for the nation... I am viewed as a composer of symphonies and yet I proved long years ago that my main bias is towards dramatic creation." He was certainly correct: after returning home to Bohemia from the United States in 1895 he had written nothing but program music and opera with the exception of two string quartets. In fact, his final symphony, the great "From the New World" of 1893, was at least half a tone poem, based as it was on Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*.

Dvořák was determined to do for Czech national music what he had so successfully done in New York. He wrote four symphonic poems based on legends as well-known to Czech audiences as Longfellow's poem was to Americans, and finished his output of program music with the autobiographical "Hero's Song." But even this was not enough for Dvořák in his attempts to reach an audience. A symphony or symphonic poem might only be programmed for one or two performances a year, while an opera, on the other hand, might be played many times. So Dvořák turned exclusively to opera for the remainder of his life. The first of these new works, *The Devil and Kate*, was a traditional village opera, with peasants and folk dances. It was a success, but Dvořák continued to look for a subject that would be, somehow, even more quintessentially Czech, and by the paradox of national music could thus achieve a universal status. That subject was *Rusalka*.

The events that led to the creation of *Rusalka* coalesced in 1900, when a composer in search of a libretto found a librettist in search of a composer. Dvořák had always been fascinated by legends (the word "Legenda" appears like a leitmotif through his works and sketches) and was particularly attracted to the stories of K.J. Erben, basing works such as "The Spectre's Bride" and almost certainly his *Legends* on the works of that writer. Beginning in 1896 Dvořák wrote a series of four tone poems on Erben's rather ghoulish tales and experimented with musical narrative.

The young poet Jaroslav Kvapil (1868–1950) was also deeply attached to Erben's stories: "I got my inspiration in the land of Andersen, on the island of Bornholm, where I was spending my summer holidays. The fairytales of Karel Jaromir Erben and Božena Němcová accompanied me to the seashore. And there merged in Andersen's fairytales, the love of my childhood days, and the rhythm of Erben's ballads, the most beautiful Czech ballads." His libretto, entitled *Rusalka*, had been finished in 1899, but he could not find any takers among his composer friends Josef B. Foerster, Josef Suk, and Oskar Nedbal, who were engaged with other projects. Through the newspapers he heard that Dvořák was looking for a new libretto, and Dvořák had apparently heard about Kvapil's work from friends. The composer read it and was entranced.

Possessed of a libretto that satisfied his needs, Dvořák, as was his custom, completed the work in a relatively short time. The first draft of the opening act was begun on April 22, 1900, and the work was completed (mostly at Dvořák's country home, Vysoká) by the end of November, seven months later.

One of the essential qualities of *Rusalka* is the way in which it alternates lyrical scenes with striking moments of conflict. The former, invoking nature and its inhabitants and creating a kind of woodland pastoral, include the choruses of wood nymphs and Rusalka's "Song to the Moon." These opening scenes, draped in forest and water images, may disguise the fact that almost all the characters are engaged in a complex series of struggles. In order to create a series of charged encounters, Kvapil adapted the story shrewdly. For example, in his version of the legend the Princess becomes an interloper pure and simple, and her controlled hysteria is part of what distracts the Prince. Ježibaba is truly a witch from an Erben ballad, both a real human woman and a spell-caster, an operatic combination of the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Her enigmatic interaction with Rusalka is an animating feature of the drama.

Most notable, though, is the relationship between Rusalka and the two primary male characters in the opera: the Water Gnome (Vodník) and the Prince. In other versions of the legend the Water Gnome is either a disagreeable character or merely benign. In *Rusalka* he is a fascinating personality; teased by the nymphs as a kind of "dirty old man," he is nonetheless deeply sympathetic to the woes of Rusalka, and at least part of the time functions as a Greek chorus, intoning "Běda, Rusalka, běda" ("Alas, Rusalka, alas"), reminding the heroine and the audience of her cruel fate. Perhaps most interesting is the interaction between Rusalka and the Prince. Rendered mute by Ježibaba in a fateful compromise, Rusalka is in reality only part human. Despite her deep love for the Prince, she cannot give him the passion he needs. The Prince is not simply an inconstant lover, punished by the spirit world for his philandering, but rather a victim of an inevitable series of consequences stemming from a supernatural agreement he never accepted or understood.

The musical conception of the opera reflects this interaction between conflict and evocation. At its core is a series of flexible leitmotifs, standing for both specific and highly general states. We hear many of them in the overture, which opens with a figure that introduces us to the enchanted world. Next we hear the central theme of the work, Rusalka's motive, which appears in dozens of permutations. In the second act, for example, it is the basis for a ballet, while in the last act it becomes a funeral march for the Prince. Dvořák was already working with this idea during his American years. The motif is a common melodic type that can be easily linked with the notion of reaching for something,

attaining it for an instant, and then falling back (the main theme of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* is a longer version of the same type of motif). The third motif introduced in the overture is taken from the Hunter's song of Act I. It is simple, ardent, and triadic, a rich contrast to Rusalka's more ambitious material; associated with the Prince, it suggests his straightforward passion and implies his inability to fully understand the complexity of his companion. We also hear a motif made up of 32nd notes, sliding up to four repetitions of the highest note. This strange and disturbing idea will interrupt Rusalka's famous "Song to the Moon" and reappear constantly throughout the work to remind us of the dissonance that lies ahead. The overture concludes with a slow chromatic descent, which perhaps suggests the inexorable pull of the waters or even fate itself. Its most striking appearance occurs just after the death of the Prince, when it is accompanied by the Water Gnome's tormented call.

There are two other widely used motives. The first is introduced at the beginning of Act I, just as the nymphs are coming out to play, and becomes associated both with them and with Ježibaba, while the passionate four-note figure that ends the act is associated with uncontrollable desire—it wells up and accompanies the final scene, as well.

These motives become part of a continuous accompaniment, gorgeously orchestrated, out of which striking set pieces occasionally appear just as Rusalka appears out of the waters. There are two scenes with the wood nymphs in the first and last acts; the Water Gnome's devastating aria in Act II; Rusalka's three songs; memorable arias and ariettas by the Prince, Ježibaba, and the Princess; and, of course, instrumental marches and dances. In many cases these set pieces are punctuated, interrupted, or subtly accompanied by the range of motives. It is this combination of ongoing orchestral texture and individual "numbers" of great charm that is a distinguishing characteristic of the opera.

By the time Dvořák turned his hand to *Rusalka*, he was a most experienced composer and one of his special gifts was the ability to command many different musical dialects. One delightful feature of the opera is the manner in which these numerous sub-styles interact. Dvořák was always mad for Wagner, and echoes of *Tannhäuser* and other operas can be heard in his symphonies, tone poems, and chamber works. We know that he had many discussions about Wagner in New York in the early 1890s with his friend Anton Seidl, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic who premiered the symphony "From the New World." Not only does the overall musical conception of *Rusalka* owe a great deal to Wagner, but several of its motives are decidedly Wagnerian, most notably the slow, chromatically descending theme. Yet the singing of the wood nymphs in Act I, the opening of Act II, and the Act II wedding chorus feature a different style entirely, closer to the *Slavonic Dances* than to *Lohengrin*, while a certain

modal lyricism heard both in Ježibaba's Act I song (sounding remarkably like the song of Jirka the Shepherd in *The Devil and Kate*) and the Act III song of the wood nymphs recalls Dvořák's "American" style.

Rusalka's "Song to the Moon" is composed of at least four different stylistic strands. As an introduction we hear stock late-19th-century "water sounds" from the harp. The first part of the aria is a kind of modal pastoral, tinted with archaic folk gestures. The most conspicuous section, featuring the heartrending upward leap, involves one of Dvořák's favorite compositional gambits, a seemingly straightforward chord progression into which is inserted a "surprise" inflection, which in this case lends the aria its especially bright and shimmering quality. Finally, the two stanzas of the aria are separated by one of the main leitmotifs of the work, the ascending chromatic motive that can be linked to the "spooky" moments in German Romantic opera. This aria is a microcosm of the opera as a whole, for instead of making us conscious of multiple styles coexisting uneasily, their interaction creates a powerful effect and a unified impression.

Dvořák's *Rusalka* is a combination of *Die Zauberflöte*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. Like Mozart's work, *Rusalka* has a rich and diverse musical language made up of interrelated yet distinctive dialects. The sprites remind us of the Three Ladies in their playfulness and lush sonority. As in Shakespeare's comedy, Dvořák was able to create an otherworldly atmosphere, a coherent portrait of a unique fairyland into which human beings stumble at their peril. Finally, like *Tristan*, *Rusalka* is a tale of love and death, of unquenchable passion, inevitability, and reconciliation.

From its first performance, on March 31, 1901, *Rusalka* was an enormous success in the Czech lands, and so it remains to this day. Although there have been some successful foreign productions, it has become customary to consider *Rusalka* and other Dvořák operas as quintessentially "Czech" works, a notion that is slightly true and mostly false. While there is no doubt that Kvapil's version of the story differs from that of Gerhart Hauptmann, Hans Christian Andersen, and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, it is inappropriate to ascribe the differences entirely to some hypothetical "national imagination." Dvořák's *Rusalka* is no more exclusively Czech than *Don Giovanni* is German. What the opera does reflect are Dvořák's personal solutions to questions of musical style and dramatic structure, his deep love of nature (which is not an exclusively Czech characteristic), and the composer's sense that artistic universality can best be achieved through the elevation of essentially local elements. Thus *Rusalka* is at once Czech, Slavic, European, and, of course, deeply human. The ideal of "Czechness" is a figment of our imagination, albeit a tantalizing one. It is harmless so long as we realize that the tragic character of *Rusalka* is not merely a bit of local Czech color, but rather a great and memorable personage on the world stage.

—Michael Beckerman



Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Rusalka* at the Met, and engagements with the Philadelphia Orchestra (including a concert at Carnegie Hall), Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker, and London Philharmonic Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES *La Traviata*, *Faust*, *Don Carlo*, and *Carmen* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has conducted *Roméo et Juliette* and *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburg Festival, *Roméo et Juliette* at La Scala, *Rusalka* at Covent Garden, and *The Makropulos Case*, *Turandot*, and *Don Carlo* at the Netherlands Opera. He is currently Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Principal Guest Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Orchestre Métropolitain.



Renée Fleming

SOPRANO (ROCHESTER, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON The title roles of *Rusalka* at the Met and *Arabella* at the Salzburg Easter Festival, Blanche Dubois in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* with the Los Angeles Opera, and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Vienna State Opera and in concert in Washington with the National Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Title roles of *Rodelinda*, *Armida*, *Thaïs*, *Manon*, *Arabella*, and *Susannah*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the Marschallin, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 1991) and *Capriccio*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Rosina in the world premiere of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Imogene in *Il Pirata*, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and Marguerite in *Faust*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses, is a recipient of the National Medal of Arts and four Grammy Awards, and was awarded the titles of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. She was a 1988 winner of the Met's National Council Auditions and is currently Creative Consultant for Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The Cast CONTINUED



Emily Magee

SOPRANO (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON The Foreign Princess in *Rusalka* for her debut at the Met, the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Covent Garden, the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Vienna State Opera, and Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* in Zurich.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* in Zurich, the title role of *Tosca* in Dresden and at the Vienna State Opera, the Empress at La Scala, Chrysothemis in *Elektra* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Foreign Princess at the Salzburg Festival and in Barcelona. She has also sung Marietta in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* at the Vienna State Opera and San Francisco Opera, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Hamburg, Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Florence, Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* at Covent Garden, and the title role of *Jenůfa* at La Scala. Additional roles include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in Munich, the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Essen, Elettra in *Idomeneo* in Tokyo and Zurich, and the title role of *Daphne* in Hamburg.



Dolora Zajick

MEZZO-SOPRANO (SALEM, OREGON)

THIS SEASON Ježibaba in *Rusalka* at the Met, Ortrud in *Lohengrin* in Madrid, and the Princess in *Suor Angelica* in Barcelona.

MET APPEARANCES Over 200 performances including Eboli in *Don Carlo*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (debut, 1988), Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Amneris in *Aida*, the Countess in *The Queen of Spades*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Marfa in *Khovanshchina*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Elvira Griffiths in the world premiere of Picker's *An American Tragedy*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Santuzza in Seville, Adalgisa with Washington National Opera, Azucena with Houston Grand Opera, and Ulrica in Rome and at the Orange Festival. She has also sung Santuzza at the Vienna State Opera, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Houston Grand Opera, the Princess in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Barcelona, Amneris at the Arena di Verona, Léonor in *La Favorite* in Santiago, Eboli with the Vienna State Opera and Los Angeles Opera, Eboli and Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex* at La Scala, and the title roles of Massenet's *Hérodiade* and Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans* in San Francisco.



Piotr Beczala

TENOR (CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* and the Prince in *Rusalka* at the Met, Alfredo in *La Traviata* at La Scala, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Paris, Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* for the San Diego Opera, and the title roles of *Faust* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Vienna State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES The Duke in *Rigoletto* (debut, 2006), the title role of *Faust*, des Grieux in *Manon*, Rodolfo, and Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*.

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



John Relyea

BASS-BARITONE (TORONTO, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Water Gnome in *Rusalka* at the Met, Pagano in *I Lombardi* in Hamburg, and concert engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and Hamburg's NDR Sinfonieorchester.

MET APPEARANCES Colline in *La Bohème*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* (debut, 2000), Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Garibaldi in *Rodelinda*, Giorgio Walton in *I Puritani*, the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, and Méphistophélès in *Faust* and *La Damnation de Faust*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Bertram in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* at Covent Garden and the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera. He has also sung Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of *Bluebeard's Castle* with the Seattle Opera, the Four Villains and Escamillo at the Vienna State Opera, Figaro in Munich, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* and Banquo at Covent Garden, Escamillo at Paris's Bastille Opera, and Colline and Raimondo at Covent Garden and the San Francisco Opera. He is the recipient of the Met's 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leightman.

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

Wireless headsets that work with the Sennheiser Infrared Listening System to amplify sound are available in the South Check Room (Concourse level) before performances. Major credit card or driver's license required for deposit.

BINOCULARS

For rent at South Check Room, Concourse level.



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. Affordable 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 Met 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 at the Metropolitan Opera features creative contemporary American cuisine, and the Revlon Bar offers panini, crostini, and a full service bar. Both are now open two hours prior to the Metropolitan Opera curtain time to any Lincoln Center ticket holder for pre-curtain dining.

Pre-ordered intermission dining is also available for Metropolitan Opera ticket holders. For reservations please call 212-799-3400.



RESTROOMS

Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are located 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 Metropolitan 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 performance 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



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.

In compliance with New York City Department of Health regulations, smoking is prohibited in all areas of this theater.

Patrons are reminded that in deference to the performing artists and the seated audience, those who leave the auditorium during the performance will not be readmitted while the performance is in progress.

The photographing or sound recording of any performance, or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Offenders may be ejected and liable for damages and other lawful remedies.

Use of cellular telephones and electronic devices for any purpose, including email and texting, is prohibited in the auditorium at all times. Please be sure to turn off all devices before entering the auditorium.