

Gaetano Donizetti

L'Elisir d'Amore

CONDUCTOR
Maurizio Benini

PRODUCTION
Bartlett Sher

SET DESIGNER
Michael Yeargan

COSTUME DESIGNER
Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNED BY
Jennifer Tipton

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in two acts
Libretto by Felice Romani

Saturday, October 13, 2012, 1:00–3:45 pm

New Production

The production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* was made possible by a generous gift from The Monteforte Foundation, in honor of Wim Kooyker

The Metropolitan Opera
2012–13 Season

The 273rd Metropolitan Opera performance of

Gaetano Donizetti's

**L'Elisir
d'Amore**

Conductor

Maurizio Benini

CAST IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Giannetta

Anne-Carolyn Bird

Nemorino

Matthew Polenzani

Adina

Anna Netrebko

Sergeant Belcore

Mariusz Kwiecien *

Doctor Dulcamara

Ambrogio Maestri

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANIST

Robert Morrison

Saturday, October 13, 2012, 1:00–3:45 pm

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Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Fight Director **B.H. Barry**
Musical Preparation **Jane Klaviter, Robert Morrison, Gareth Morrell, Howard Watkins, and Liora Maurer**
Assistant Stage Directors **Gregory Keller, Gina Lapinski, and Louisa Muller**
Stage Band Conductor **Jeffrey Goldberg**
Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**
Met Titles **Cori Ellison**
Assistants to the Costume Designer **David Newell and Ryan Park**
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**
Costumes constructed by **Angels the Costumiers, London; Das Gewand GmbH, Düsseldorf; Brian Hemseth, New York; Seams Unlimited, Racine, Wisconsin; and Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**
Wigs executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig Department**

This production uses gunshot effects.

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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Latecomers will not be admitted during the performance.

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

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Synopsis

Act I

Italy, 1836. While peasants rest from work, Nemorino, a young villager, watches the beautiful farm owner Adina read a book. He loves her but wonders if she is now beyond his reach. The peasants ask Adina what her book is about, and she tells them the story of how Tristan won the heart of Isolde by drinking a magic love potion. A drum roll announces the arrival of Sergeant Belcore and his men. He promptly introduces himself to Adina and asks her to marry him. Adina declares that she is in no hurry to make up her mind but promises to think over the offer. Left alone with Nemorino, Adina tells him that his time would be better spent in town, looking after his sick uncle, than hoping to win her love. Or he should do as she does: change her affections every single day. Nemorino reminds her that one can never forget one's first love.

Dulcamara, a traveling purveyor of patent medicines, arrives in the village advertising a potion capable of curing anything. When the doctor has finished his routine, Nemorino shyly asks if he sells the elixir of love described in Adina's book. Dulcamara claims he does and pulls out a bottle of Bordeaux. Though it costs him his last ducat, Nemorino buys it and immediately drinks it; Dulcamara explains that he has to wait until the next day for results (by which time Dulcamara will be gone). When Adina appears, Nemorino begins to feel the effect of the "potion." Certain he will be irresistible to her the next day, he feigns cheerful indifference. To punish him, Adina flirts with Belcore. The order arrives for the sergeant to return immediately to his garrison, and Adina agrees to marry him at once. Shocked, Nemorino begs her to wait one more day, but she ignores him and invites the entire village to her wedding. Nemorino desperately calls for the doctor's help.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:15 PM)

Act II

At the pre-wedding feast Adina and Dulcamara entertain the guests with a barcarole. Adina wonders why Nemorino is not present. She doesn't want to sign the marriage contract until he appears. Meanwhile, Nemorino asks Dulcamara for another bottle of the elixir. Since he doesn't have any money with him, the doctor agrees to wait at the inn for an hour so Nemorino can borrow the cash from someone. Belcore is bewildered that Adina has postponed the wedding. When Nemorino tells him that he needs money right away, the sergeant persuades him to join the army and receive a volunteer bonus of 20 scudi. Having bought more of the elixir, Nemorino returns to find himself besieged by a group of girls. Unaware of the news that his uncle has died and left him a fortune, he believes the elixir is finally taking effect. Adina enters, feeling responsible for

Nemorino's enlistment, but when she sees him with the other girls, she reacts jealously. Nemorino and the girls leave, and Dulcamara boasts to Adina about the power of his elixir, offering to sell her some as well. She replies that she will win Nemorino in her own fashion.

Nemorino, having noticed a tear on Adina's cheek when she saw him with the girls, feels sure that she cares for him. When she returns to tell him that she has bought back his enlistment papers, he again feigns indifference. Finally, she confesses she loves him. Belcore appears to find the two arm in arm and takes his leave, declaring that thousands of women await him elsewhere. Dulcamara reveals to the crowd the news of Nemorino's inheritance and brags about how his miraculous potion can make people fall in love and even turn poor peasants into millionaires.

Gaetano Donizetti

L'Elisir d'Amore

Premiere: Milan, Teatro alla Canobbiana, 1832

Since its premiere more than a century and a half ago, *L'Elisir d'Amore* has been among the most consistently popular operatic comedies. The story deftly combines comic archetypes with a degree of genuine character development rare in works of this type. Considering the genre, the story's ending is as much a foregone conclusion as it would be in a romantic comedy film today. The joy is in the journey, and Donizetti created one of his most instantly appealing scores for this ride. The music of *Elisir* represents the best of the bel canto tradition that reigned in Italian opera in the early 19th century, from funny patter songs to rich ensembles to wrenching melody like the famous tenor aria "Una furtiva lagrima."

The Creators

Bergamo-born Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) wrote more than 60 operas, plus orchestral and chamber music, in a career abbreviated by mental illness and premature death. Many of his works disappeared from public view after his death. Critical and popular opinion of his huge opus has grown considerably over the past 50 years beyond the ever-popular *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the comic gems *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Don Pasquale*. Felice Romani (1788–1865) was the official librettist of Milan's Teatro alla Scala and worked with many of the most popular Italian composers of the time. He collaborated with Donizetti on several of his best-known operas, including *Anna Bolena* and *Lucrezia Borgia*, and provided Vincenzo Bellini with all but two of his librettos. For *Elisir*, Romani adapted an earlier French libretto by Eugène Scribe (1791–1861), *Le Philtre*, originally set by the composer Daniel Auber (1782–1871). Scribe was a prolific dramatist whose work was influential in the development of grand opera. He provided librettos for such composers as Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Verdi.

The Setting

The opera is set in a small village in rural Italy. Some early editions indicate a location in Basque country. The important fact is that it's a place where everyone knows everyone and where traveling salesmen provide a major form of public entertainment. The Met's new production sets the action in 1836, when the Risorgimento, the movement for Italian independence, was beginning to gather momentum.

The Music

What separates *L'Elisir d'Amore* from dozens of charming comedies composed around the same time is not only the superiority of its hit numbers, but the overall consistency of its music. The bass's entrance aria, the comic patter song "Udite, udite, o rustici," is funny, difficult, and establishes the doctor as slimy but ultimately harmless and rather likeable. This persona is explored further in his Act II duet with Adina, where he parodies a rich old Venetian man becoming foolish over a pretty young girl. The framework of this duet is a barcarole, a sailing song typical for Venice and usually set in 6/8 time. Changing the meter to 2/2 time accentuates the rickety old man's clumsiness in his attempts at gallantry. This sort of sly humor is a hallmark of the score, which maintains a prominent and insightful connection between the music and the unfolding romance. The tenor's Act I solo "Adina, credimi" gives us a mere glimpse of the man he will become later in the opera. When this finally begins to happen in Act II's showstopping aria "Una furtiva lagrima," it is much more than an excuse for a gorgeous melody: the aria's variations between major and minor keys in the climaxes are one of opera's savviest depictions of dawning consciousness, as the hero simultaneously accepts the possibility of love and his own power of self-assertion.

L'Elisir d'Amore at the Met

The 1904 Met premiere of *L'Elisir d'Amore* starred Marcella Sembrich and Enrico Caruso, whose interpretation of the role of Nemorino became legendary. He sang it 32 times at the Met. Beniamino Gigli appeared as Nemorino in 11 performances from 1930 to 1932, and Ferruccio Tagliavini starred in 15 performances from 1948 to 1962. A popular new production by Nathaniel Merrill, designed by Robert O'Hearn, premiered in 1960 with Fausto Cleva conducting Elisabeth Söderström and Dino Formichini. Other tenors who have appeared in the opera include Nicolai Gedda (11 performances from 1961 to 1968), Alfredo Kraus (7 performances, 1968 and 1991), Roberto Alagna (9 performances, 1996–99), and especially Luciano Pavarotti, who sang Nemorino 49 times between 1973 and 1998. Sarah Caldwell conducted five performances of *L'Elisir* in 1978, with Judith Blegen as Adina and Pavarotti and José Carreras sharing the role of Nemorino. Pavarotti also starred in the 1991 premiere of a new production directed by John Copley, opposite Kathleen Battle, who appeared as Adina 30 times between 1988 and 1993. Other sopranos who have starred in the opera include Bidú Sayão (18 performances, 1941–50), Roberta Peters (16 performances, 1961–73), Renata Scotto (8 performances, 1965–72), and Ruth Ann Swenson (26 performances, 1988–2006). Among the many star basses who have sung the role of Dulcamara are Ezio Pinza (14 appearances, 1930–33), Fernando Corena (53 performances, 1960–78), and Paul Plishka (47 performances, 1989–99). Bartlett Sher's new production, starring Anna Netrebko, Matthew Polenzani, Mariusz Kwiecien, and Ambrogio Maestri, opened the Met's 2012–13 season on September 24, 2012.

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Johan Botha and
Renée Fleming in *Otello*

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Program Note

“Music for the Italians is a sensual pleasure and nothing more,” sniffed Hector Berlioz after walking out of one of the first performances of *L’Elisir d’Amore*, irritated by the noisy, inattentive audience (par for the course in early-19th-century Italy). “For this noble expression of the mind they have hardly more respect than for the art of cooking. They want a score that, like a plate of macaroni, can be assimilated immediately, without having to think about it....”

Such comments might be expected from the creator of the ambitious epic *Les Troyens* (also in this season’s Met repertory). But what the French composer failed to recognize was that the Italians have always respected both the culinary and musical arts as essential parts of their culture.

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) was the most prolific as well as the most masterful Italian composer of the first half of the 19th century. His output—more than 60 operas, plus a slew of orchestral and chamber works, piano pieces, songs, and sacred music—was astounding, even in an era in which composers churned out commissions at high speed. Early on, the impoverished Donizetti formed the habit of tackling every commission that came his way, no matter the fee or the venue. Though he was 21 when he saw the first of his operas premiere (*Enrico di Borgogna*, in 1817 at Venice’s Teatro San Luca), it would take 12 more years and 30 more operas for Donizetti to score his breakthrough success with *Anna Bolena*, at the Teatro Carcano in Milan in 1830.

L’Elisir d’Amore was a hastily concocted work by any standards. Biographer William Ashbrook speculated that Donizetti landed the assignment just ten (or quite possibly fewer) weeks before the projected premiere, after another composer had failed to deliver a commissioned opera to impresario Alessandro Lanari, who had leased Milan’s Teatro Canobbiana for the 1832 spring season. Donizetti seemed energized, even exhilarated, by the pressing deadline, and perhaps also inspired by the prospect of besting his slightly younger archrival Vincenzo Bellini’s recent smash hit, *La Sonnambula*, performed at the Teatro Carcano in 1831. This minimal timetable for creating an opera, inconceivable nowadays, was entirely feasible during the bel canto era, when composers relied on boilerplate forms and structures, and recycling portions of one’s earlier works was the norm.

Donizetti’s collaborator was Felice Romani (1788–1865), the leading Italian librettist of the day, with whom Donizetti had previously worked on *Anna Bolena* and three other operas. With more than 100 librettos to his credit, Romani was as prolific as Donizetti and purportedly penned the text for *L’Elisir d’Amore* in a mere eight days. Donizetti then completed the opera in anywhere from two to four weeks, depending on which biographer you believe.

The text of *L’Elisir d’Amore*, like most of the librettos of Romani and his contemporaries, was adapted from an existing work, in this case Eugène Scribe’s

French libretto for Daniel François Auber's opera *Le Philtre* (1831), in turn adapted from Silvio Malaperta's Italian play *Il Filtro*. (By curious coincidence, the same French baritone, Henri-Bernard Dabadie, portrayed the arrogant soldier in the premieres of both the Auber and Donizetti operas.) Romani changed and Italianized the characters' names, editorializing along the way: Adina is a Hebrew-derived name meaning "lovely" or "slender"; Belcore and Dulcamara are, literally, Italian for "Handsome-heart" and "Bittersweet" ("Dulcamara" is also a synonym for bittersweet nightshade, a traditional homeopathic remedy used to treat a host of ailments). And the name of Nemorino, the hero, is a diminutive of the Latin *nemo*: i.e., he's "Little Nobody."

Though Romani left most of Scribe's situations intact, he tempered the French frothiness with soulful Italian pathos. To that end, he added several key passages which have no analogues in Scribe's text, most notably Nemorino's desperate plea "Adina, credimi" in the Act I finale and Adina's heartfelt but oblique confession of love, "Prendi, per me sei libero," in Act II. Another addition was made at Donizetti's insistence, entirely against Romani's will: the opera's beloved hit tune, "Una furtiva lagrima." Donizetti was certainly vindicated; the opera is now unimaginable without this show-stopping, game-changing romanza of poignant self-revelation. A stunningly simple strophic aria that dignifies both Nemorino and his obbligato partner, the unlikely bassoon, it renders *Elisir* a rare tenor vehicle amid the forest of diva-driven bel canto operas.

L'Elisir d'Amore is a sweeter, gentler work than most of its opera buffa counterparts, including the comedies of Rossini and Donizetti's own later, pricklier *Don Pasquale* (1843). Donizetti termed his sentimental comedy a melodramma giocoso as opposed to an opera buffa like *Pasquale*, surely sensing that this tale demanded empathic sighs as well as hearty laughter from its audiences. The music of *Elisir* seamlessly embraces both melting romantic cavatinas and madcap patter songs, mock-military marches and passionate protestations.

Yet the easy appeal of *L'Elisir d'Amore* transcends even its seductive musical charms. Like so many other operas that remain central to the standard repertory, its essentially timeless plot is rooted in myth. This mythic resonance has rendered *L'Elisir d'Amore* ripe for countless revisionist stagings, in settings that include a modern-day golf resort and a 1950s diner in the American Southwest. Though the villagers who populate the opera are Donizetti's contemporaries (plunked inexplicably in the Basque Country), their roots are clearly traceable to ancient Roman comedy by way of commedia dell'arte, the low-comic, improvisational street theater of the Renaissance. The two lower-voiced males are stock figures of these genres: Sergeant Belcore is the quintessential "miles gloriosus," or swaggering soldier, and Dulcamara the stereotypical cagey quack doctor. Nemorino is the classic Pierrot pining for the love of his wily, fickle Colombina (Adina). But while Belcore and Dulcamara bluster through the action and remain

happily clueless, Romani and Donizetti allow Nemorino and Adina to learn and grow, underpinning the rollicking antics with genuine pathos.

Another potent mythical aspect of *Elisir* is its focus on a supposed love potion. The concept of capturing a love object through magical means can be traced back to the ancient Greco-Roman world, up through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through the present day, in both pagan and Christian traditions. Tales of love potions, successful and not, have cut a long and wide swath through legend, art, and literature, from the Greek myth of Heracles and Deianira to the Irish story of Tristan and Iseult, which Adina roundly mocks in Act I of *Elisir* but Nemorino takes rather more seriously. In 1840, Richard Wagner arranged Donizetti's *Elisir* for solo piano; it's a subversive pleasure to imagine that this experience gave him some big ideas.

Despite Donizetti's dissatisfaction with his opening-night cast—a German soprano, a stammering tenor, a French baritone “not worth much,” and “a buffo with the voice of a goat,” according to the composer—the premiere of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, on May 12, 1832, was an unalloyed triumph. Donizetti's teacher and mentor, the German émigré composer Johann Simon Mayr, proudly pronounced the work “inspired throughout with joy and happiness,” and both critics and audiences concurred.

The opera's popularity has never waned. Between 1838 and 1848 it was the most frequently performed opera in Italy. At a major La Scala revival in 1900 conducted by Arturo Toscanini, it became the career-launching signature opera of the immortal tenor Enrico Caruso. Even today, *Elisir* ranks number 13 on the Internet database Operabase's list of the most-performed operas worldwide, and according to Opera America, the national service organization for opera, it is one of the 20 most oft-produced operas in the United States. *Elisir* also boasts a bulging catalogue of audio and video recordings.

All of this was handily prophesied by the Italian critic Francesco Pezzi at that hurriedly cooked-up world premiere. He wrote in *La Gazzetta Privilegiata di Milano*:

The musical style of this score is lively, brilliant, truly of the buffo nature. The shading from buffo to seria takes place with surprising graduations and the emotions are handled with the musical passion for which the composer of *Anna Bolena* is famous. The orchestration is always brilliant and appropriate to the situation; it reveals a great master at work, accompanying a vocal line now lively, now brilliant, now impassioned. To lavish greater praise on the composer would be unfair to the opera; his work does not need exaggerated compliments.

—Cori Ellison

The Cast and Creative Team



Maurizio Benini

CONDUCTOR (FAENZA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Le Comte Ory* at the Met, *Tosca* at Covent Garden, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Oslo, *Stiffelio* in Monte Carlo, and *Don Carlo* in Toulouse.

MET APPEARANCES *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Norma*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* (debut, 1998), *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Luisa Miller*, *Don Pasquale*, and *Faust*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He made his conducting debut at Bologna's Teatro Comunale with Rossini's *Il Signor Bruschino* and his debut at La Scala in 1992 with *La Donna del Lago*. At La Scala he has since led *Don Carlo*, *Pagliacci*, *Don Pasquale*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Sonnambula*. He has also conducted *La Scala di Seta*, *L'Occasione Fa il Ladro*, and *Le Siège de Corinthe* at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival; *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Attila*, *Luisa Miller*, and *Faust* at Covent Garden; Rossini's *Zelmira* at the Edinburgh Festival; and *Don Carlo* in Barcelona.



Bartlett Sher

DIRECTOR (SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON New production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and revivals of *The Barber of Seville* and *Le Comte Ory* at the Met, and *Golden Boy* for Lincoln Center Theater.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Le Comte Ory*, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He received a 2008 Tony Award for *South Pacific*, 2009 Tony nomination for *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, 2006 Tony nomination for *Awake and Sing!*, and 2005 Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations for *The Light in the Piazza*, all for Lincoln Center Theater, where he is currently resident director. At Seattle's Intiman Theatre (where he was artistic director from 2000 to 2010) he has directed *Richard III*, *Three Sisters*, *Our Town*, and the world premieres of Lucas's *The Singing Forest* and Holden's *Nickel and Dimed*. He also directed the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* for English National Opera. His staging of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* for New York's Lucille Lortel Theatre was also seen at Stratford, England. He made his operatic debut in 2003 with Levy's *Mourning Becomes Electra* in a joint production between the Seattle Opera and New York City Opera.



Michael Yeargan

SET DESIGNER (DALLAS, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON New production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and revivals of *Otello*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *Le Comte Ory* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS Set designer for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, and the world premiere of Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*; set and costume designer for *Ariadne auf Naxos* (debut, 1993), *Così fan tutte*, and *Susannah*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS World premieres include Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* for San Francisco Opera; *Central Park*, a triptych of one-acts, for Glimmerglass Opera and New York City Opera; Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* for Houston Grand Opera; and Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera. Theater credits include *The Light in the Piazza* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards), *South Pacific* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Awake and Sing!*, and *Seascape* with Lincoln Center Theater, and Rudnick's *Regrets Only* for Manhattan Theatre Club. He has also designed sets for Wagner's *Ring* cycle for Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera.



Catherine Zuber

COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON A new production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and revivals of *Le Comte Ory* and *The Barber of Seville* at the Met, *Golden Boy* for Lincoln Center Theater, and *An Enemy of the People* for Manhattan Theatre Club.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2006), *Doctor Atomic*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Broadway work includes *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, *Born Yesterday*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *South Pacific* (Tony Award), *The Coast of Utopia* (Tony Award), *The Light in the Piazza* (Tony Award), *Seascape*, *Awake and Sing!* (Tony Award), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Royal Family* (Tony Award), *Oleanna*, *A Man for All Seasons*, and *Dinner at Eight*, among many others. Work in opera includes *Carmen* and Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* for English National Opera, *Roméo et Juliette* for the Salzburg Festival and at La Scala, and Wagner's *Ring* cycle for Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera.



Jennifer Tipton

LIGHTING DESIGNER (COLUMBUS, OHIO)

THIS SEASON New productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Maria Stuarda* and a revival of *Il Trovatore* at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Rake's Progress* (debut, 1997).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Work in opera includes *La Traviata* at the Scottish National Opera, directed by David McVicar, and the Wooster Group's *La Didone* at St. Ann's Warehouse; work in dance includes Trisha Brown's *O Composite* for the Paris Opera Ballet and Paul Taylor's *Beloved Renegade* at New York's City Center. Theater includes *Conversations in Tusculum*, written and directed by Richard Nelson, at the Public Theater and Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, directed by Charlie Newell, for Chicago's Court Theater. She teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama and received the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, the Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003, and the Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture in New York City in 2004. In 2008 she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship and a USA "Gracie" Fellowship.



Anna Netrebko

SOPRANO (KRASNODAR, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Met, Mimi in *La Bohème* at La Scala and Lyric Opera of Chicago, Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* with the Vienna State Opera, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Baden-Baden, and concert performances of the title role of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* in Paris, Amsterdam, Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Nürnberg, Prague, Vienna, and Barcelona.

MET APPEARANCES The title roles of *Anna Bolena*, *Manon*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, Natasha in *War and Peace* (debut, 2002), 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, the Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and Covent Garden; Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Salzburg Festival and Covent Garden; Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Gilda with Washington National Opera; Manon at Covent Garden; Lucia and Juliette with Los Angeles Opera; Anna Bolena, Mimi, Manon, and Micaëla in *Carmen* with the Vienna State Opera; and numerous roles with St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre.



Mariusz Kwiecien

BARITONE (KRAKÓW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Met, the title role of Szymanowski's *King Roger* in Bilbao, Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* in Madrid, and Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* at Covent Garden and Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Don Giovanni, Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Kuligin in *Káťa Kabanová* (debut, 1999), Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Haly in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, Bavarian State Opera, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, and Santa Fe Opera; Eugene Onegin with the Bavarian State Opera, Bolshoi Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Warsaw; Count Almaviva at Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera, Glyndebourne Opera, and in Chicago and Madrid; and King Roger with the Paris Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and in Madrid.



Ambrogio Maestri

BARITONE (PAVIA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON Doctor Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Met and Covent Garden; the title role of *Falstaff* with La Scala (both in Milan and on tour in Japan), the Paris Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and the Zurich Opera; the title role of *Nabucco* at La Scala and the Arena di Verona; and Amonasro in *Aida* at the Arena di Verona and in Japan on tour with La Scala.

MET APPEARANCES Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Amonasro (debut, 2004).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has sung Count Anckarström in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*, Iago in *Otello*, and Amonasro at La Scala, the Arena di Verona, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and in Barcelona, Florence, and Rome; the title role of *Rigoletto* at the Paris Opera and in Berlin; Germont in *La Traviata* at La Scala, Venice, Tokyo, Lisbon, Berlin, and the Arena di Verona; and Rolando in *La Battaglia di Legnano*, *Nabucco*, and the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* at the Arena di Verona, Vienna State Opera, and Bavarian State Opera.



Matthew Polenzani

TENOR (EVANSTON, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Met, Werther with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* with the Vienna State Opera, and Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with the San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES More than 250 performances of 29 roles, including Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and Boyar Khrushchov in *Boris Godunov* (debut, 1997).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Covent Garden and with the Paris Opera, Idomeneo in Turin, Tamino with the Vienna State Opera and Los Angeles Opera, Belmonte and Roméo in Chicago, the Duke in *Rigoletto* in Philadelphia, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Vienna and at Paris's Bastille Opera, Nemorino and Don Ottavio in Vienna and Salzburg, and Achille in *Iphigénie en Aulide* in Florence. Recipient of the Met's 2008 Beverly Sills Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.