Opera in four acts
Libretto by Édouard Blau, Paul Milliet, and Georges Hartmann, based on the novel Die Leiden des jungen Werther by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Saturday, March 15, 2014, 1:00–3:40 pm

New Production
Last time this season

The production of Werther was made possible by a generous gift from Elizabeth M. and Jean-Marie R. Eveillard

Major funding was received from Rolex

Additional funding was received from The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc.; the Gramma Fisher Foundation, Marshalltown, Iowa; and The Gilbert S. Kahn & John J. Noffo Kahn Foundation
The 81th Metropolitan Opera performance of

*Jules Massenet’s*

Werther

Conductor
Alain Altinoglu

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Charlotte
Sophie Koch

Sophie
Lisette Oropesa*

The Bailiff
Jonathan Summers

CHILDREN
Hans
Richard Hausman
Gretel
Helena Abbott
Karl
Seth Ewing-Crystal
Clara
Kiki Porter
Fritz
Daniel Katzman
Max
Thomas White

Johann
Philip Cokorinos

Schmidt
Tony Stevenson*

Werther
Jonas Kaufmann

Brühlmann
Christopher Job

Käthchen
Maya Lahyani

Albert
David Bižić

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

Saturday, March 15, 2014, 1:00–3:40 pm
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**Musical Preparation** Dennis Giauque, Jane Klaviter, Denise Massé, J. David Jackson, and Carrie-Ann Matheson

**Assistant Stage Directors** Jonathon Loy, J. Knighten Smit, and Paula Williams

**Assistant to the Costume Designer** Irene Bohan

**Met Titles** Sonya Friedman

**Children’s Chorus Director** Anthony Piccolo

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**Projection Programmer** Paul Vershbow

**Projection Photography** Ruppert Bohle

**Projection Design Associates** Bo Eriksson and Sage Carter

**Projection Research** Anya Klepikov and Mary Recine

**Animation** Maureen Selwood with Manuel Barenboim

**Stock photography** Samuel Orr

This production uses gunshot effects.

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

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices.

**Met Titles**

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LEE BROOMFIELD / METROPOLITAN OPERA
Prelude
A mother dies. The family mourns. The seasons pass.

Act I  The Home of the Bailiff
Wetzlar, Germany, early July. The newly widowed Bailiff is, oddly, rehearsing a Christmas carol with his young children on a warm summer evening. Since the death of his wife, his eldest daughter, Charlotte, has been looking after the family. Two of his drinking friends stop by and discuss the young poet Werther, who is to escort Charlotte to a ball that evening. They also ask about Charlotte’s absent fiancé, Albert. After they have gone into the house, Werther appears and reflects on the beauty of nature. Charlotte returns, dressed for the ball, and Werther watches as she gives the children a treat and then leaves them in the care of Sophie, her 15-year-old sister. Deeply touched by the idyllic scene, Werther departs with Charlotte. The Bailiff sets off to join his friends at the inn and Sophie remains alone as night falls. She is surprised by the arrival of Albert, who has returned after a long absence. They talk happily of his impending marriage to Charlotte and go off into the house.

Charlotte and Werther dance at the ball, entranced by each other.

In the moonlight, they return from the ball. Werther praises Charlotte’s beauty and devotion to her family; she remembers her mother. Werther passionately declares his love for her and they are about to kiss when the Bailiff calls out from the house that Albert is back. The spell is broken. Charlotte admits that he is the man she promised her dying mother to marry. Werther is devastated.

Pause

Act II  The Linden Trees
It is late September and the 50th anniversary of the Pastor’s marriage is being celebrated in the village. Charlotte and Albert have been married for three months. Werther has maintained a friendship with them but is tormented by the idea that Charlotte belongs to another man. Albert tells him that he understands why Werther is so depressed: he knows all too well what it would mean to lose her. Werther assures him that he only feels friendship for them both. Sophie enters and happily invites Werther for a dance but he evades her. When Charlotte appears he cannot prevent himself from speaking of his love and recalls their first meeting. Charlotte reminds him of her duties as a wife. For both of their sakes, she says, he must leave town and not return until Christmas. Alone, Werther gives in to his despair, musing on the idea of suicide. Sophie
returns to invite him to the festivities but he brusquely replies that he is departing forever and rushes off, leaving her in tears. When Sophie passes on the news, Albert realizes that Werther is still in love with Charlotte. The celebration for the wedding anniversary begins.

**Intermission**  *(AT APPROXIMATELY 2:20 PM)*

**Act III  Albert’s House**
Christmas Eve. Charlotte obsessively re-reads Werther’s letters, admitting to herself that she still loves him as much as he loves her. Sophie arrives and tries to cheer her up, but Charlotte gives in to her despair. Suddenly Werther appears, utterly desolate. Together they evoke tender memories of playing the piano and reading poetry together. Werther tells her that he’s still in love with her and that she must admit that she loves him. He becomes increasingly wild and she becomes fearful, torn between giving in to him and escaping from him. He struggles with her, then kisses her. She panics and runs from the room, telling him they will never meet again. Left without hope, Werther declares she has delivered a sentence of death and leaves. Albert returns, knowing that Werther has come back. He questions Charlotte as a servant hands him a note from Werther: he is going on a long journey and asks to borrow Albert’s pistols. Albert orders his wife to hand them over. As soon as Albert leaves the room, Charlotte rushes off to save Werther.

**Interlude  Christmas Eve**
Charlotte runs through the snow to Werther’s room. Werther contemplates suicide, writes a letter and abandons it. He uses one of Albert’s pistols to shoot himself.

**Act IV  The Death of Werther**
Charlotte finds Werther mortally wounded in his study. He asks her not to call for help, happy to finally be united with her. She admits that she has loved him since they first met. Werther dies in her arms as the children’s Christmas carol is heard outside.
In Focus

**Jules Massenet**

**Werther**

Premiere: Vienna Court Opera, 1892

One of opera’s greatest depictions of impossible love, *Werther* is based on one of the most influential masterpieces of European literature. Goethe’s novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, was a sensation when it appeared in 1774. Composed as a series of letters and partly inspired by the author’s own experiences, it tells the story of a melancholy poet whose love for a married woman and general disaffection with the world lead to his suicide. The archetype of the artistic, brilliant, and doomed young man rebelling against the political and social establishment has resonated through the ages in literature, theater, film, and music. Massenet’s idea to set Goethe’s story as an opera a century after the book appeared must have struck audiences as a curious choice. *Werther* was no longer incendiary or even controversial. Yet the composer saw its operatic potential, particularly in the psyche of the title hero and the unspoken emotional undercurrents of his character. It’s a tour-de-force role, with unique musical and dramatic challenges that have made it a prized challenge for many great tenors for more than a century.

**The Creators**

Jules Massenet (1842–1912), a French composer wildly popular in his day, was noted for his operas, songs, and oratorios. His somewhat sentimental style lost popularity in the early 20th century, with only *Manon* (1884) maintaining a steady place in the repertory. Several of his other operas, including *Werther* and *Thaïs* (1894), have been performed more frequently in the last few decades. Three writers collaborated on the *Werther* libretto: Édouard Blau (1836–1906), a dramatist and librettist who also worked with Bizet and Offenbach; Paul Milliet (1855–1924), a dramatist active in Paris; and Georges Hartmann (1843–1900), a librettist and music publisher who sometimes used the pen name Henri Grémont. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) is the preeminent figure of German literature and the author of *Faust*. He was also a well-regarded authority on philosophy, art, and especially music.

**The Setting**

The novel and opera are set in a small town near Frankfurt, Germany, in the late 18th century. The Met’s new production moves the action to Massenet’s time.

**The Music**

The conflict between expression and repression that forms the essence of the novel is depicted brilliantly in Massenet’s score. The composer’s gift for elegant melody is
immediately apparent, but it’s the deployment and placement of these melodies that raise the opera to its impressive dramatic level. Werther’s invocation of nature at the beginning of Act I sounds like a love aria: the character’s transference of sensual longings onto the cosmos will prove unsustainable and ultimately fatal. Surprisingly, there’s no actual love duet for Werther and Charlotte. Instead, her measured description of her mother’s death in Act I prompts Werther’s great declaration of love, the juxtaposition of these two solos revealing his burgeoning fascination with death. Charlotte’s solo scene in Act III evolves from a chilling depiction of her wrestling the desire to re-read Werther’s letters to the release of emotion in the aria “Va! Laisse couler mes larmes” (featuring an unusual and evocative saxophone solo). Werther’s subsequent aria, the famous “Pourquoi me réveiller,” encapsulates Charlotte’s dilemma in even more direct musical terms: it’s a recitation of his poetic translations that allows him to state covertly what he is forbidden to say plainly. The opera includes no chorus, concentrating all attention on the solo roles. The children’s Christmas carol frames the action: at the beginning, as they are practicing the music in the summer, the song is out of alignment with the season and feels vaguely disturbing. It only becomes “correct” at the end, as Werther dies on Christmas Eve, fulfilling his destiny. Massenet’s use of the orchestra is often light and spare, but with a wide palette of color. Much of the tone remains dark, with the emphasis on low instruments, especially woodwinds. The cascade of sound in the brief orchestral passages, most notably the opening bars of the prelude and the intermezzo between Acts III and IV, are gripping depictions of emotion.

Werther at the Met

Werther was first produced by the Met on tour, in Chicago in 1894, starring Jean de Reszke and Emma Eames. Another production, with Geraldine Farrar as Charlotte, premiered at the New Theatre in New York in 1909 and arrived at the Met the following year—as an opener for the ballet Coppélia, featuring the company debut of ballerina Anna Pavlova. Werther was not seen again until 1971, when Alain Lombard conducted a production by Paul-Emile Deiber that starred Enrico Di Giuseppe (replacing an ailing Franco Corelli) and Christa Ludwig. Corelli took the title role in the remaining 16 performances that season. Other notable performers to appear in that staging include Elena Obraztsova, Régine Crespin, Tatiana Troyanos, Frederica von Stade, Vesselina Kasarova, Plácido Domingo, Alfredo Kraus, Neil Shicoff, and Roberto Alagna. In 1999, Thomas Hampson sang the title part in an alternate version of the score (prepared by Massenet in 1902) that recasts the role for baritone, opposite Susan Graham as Charlotte. Richard Eyre’s new production premiered on February 18, 2014, starring Jonas Kaufmann and Sophie Koch.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was only 24 years old when his novel Die Leiden des jungen Werther (“The Sorrows of Young Werther”) was published in 1774. Within a few months it had swept through Europe, creating a furor and making Goethe an international celebrity. Its young hero seemed to be everywhere. There were Werther scarves, Werther plates and teacups, Werther fireworks, Werther wallpaper, Werther parasols. Young men wore blue dress coats, yellow waistcoats, and jackboots to emulate him and carried crystal vials of their own tears to show they felt deeply.

The book is a series of letters from Werther to his friend Wilhelm detailing his overwhelming passion for a young woman named Charlotte, who is engaged to another man, and the deepening despair that eventually leads to his suicide. (A narrator appears only at the very end to tell the story of Werther’s last days.) It has been called the first great tragic novel and is a marvelous example of the artistic movement known as Sturm und Drang (“Storm and Drive,” or “Urge”). It was banned in some areas because authorities were afraid it condoned—or even glorified—suicide. (While there were a few copycat suicides, the stories of “waves” of suicides seem to be exaggerated.) Religious authorities were also not pleased with the book’s unabashed pantheism.

Werther was written in six weeks between January and March 1774. One of the reasons the book rings so true is because it is more than slightly autobiographical. Shortly after Goethe arrived in Wetzlar in 1772 he met Charlotte Buff at a country dance and fell in love with her. She was already engaged to Johann Christian Kestner and was not pleased when Goethe once kissed her, immediately informing her fiancé, and treating Goethe coolly for several days. A few weeks later Goethe left Wetzlar. That same year their mutual friend Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem, in despair after falling in love with a married woman, committed suicide with pistols he borrowed from Charlotte’s fiancé. Goethe poured it all into Werther, later admitting he shot his hero to save himself.

But what sets the book apart from being just a tawdry tale is the voice it gave a generation in rebelling against what it saw as the overly rational intellectualism of the Enlightenment. “I am so happy, dear friend, so completely sunk in the sensation of sheer being,” Werther writes in one of the first letters. In him the younger generation found a champion who reveled in emotion, who believed in the supreme importance of an individual’s feelings. Rather than the established aristocracy of birth, he valued a democratic aristocracy of spirit that could be found in anyone, regardless of social status. Not everyone was charmed. W.H. Auden derided Werther as “a complete egoist, a spoiled brat, incapable of love because he cares for nobody and nothing but himself and having his way at whatever cost to others.” Still, there is something admirable about Werther’s ability to be so attuned to the beauties of nature, to take enormous delight in
the simple things like watching children at play. And there’s genuine tragedy in the loss of a life that often brings so much pleasure to people around him.

Jules Massenet (1842–1912) was not the first composer to turn Goethe’s novel into an opera, but his is the only one to hold a place in the repertoire. In his autobiography, he spins a wonderful story about visiting Wetzlar on his way back from seeing Parsifal at Bayreuth. His companion (his publisher Georges Hartmann) slipped him “a book with a binding yellow with age. It was the French translation of Goethe’s romance.” The two men went into a beer hall where Massenet was disgusted by “the thick, foul air laden with the bitter odor of beer. But I could not stop reading those burning letters.” After reading the scene “where keen anguish threw Werther and Charlotte into each other’s arms after the thrilling reading of Ossian’s verses,” Massenet declares, “Such delirious, ecstatic passion brought tears to my eyes. What a moving scene, what a passionate picture that ought to make! It was Werther, my third act.”

In fact, by the time Massenet saw Parsifal in 1886, he had already been at work on Werther for several years, albeit with interruptions for other projects like Manon. Four years earlier on a trip to La Scala to see Massenet’s opera Hérodiade, the composer, Hartmann, and Paul Milliet decided on an opera based on Goethe’s novella for which Milliet would write the libretto. (On the score’s title page the libretto is credited to Milliet, Hartmann, and Édouard Blau.) Massenet finished the piece in 1887 and offered it to Léon Carvalho for the Opéra Comique. Carvalho promptly turned it down, saying it was too gloomy for Paris. In fact, it took another five years before Werther finally reached the stage—and then it was given in German. Following the huge success of Manon in Vienna, the management of the Court Opera asked Massenet for a new work and he suggested the still-unperformed Werther. At the premiere on February 16, 1892, Werther was the famous tenor Ernest Van Dyck (acclaimed for the title roles of Wagner’s Lohengrin and Parsifal) and Charlotte was Marie Renard, Vienna’s Manon. When Werther was finally presented in Paris two years later it was not very successful. Not until the revival at the Opéra Comique in 1903 did it get the acclaim it deserves. (In 1902 Massenet rewrote the title role for the famous baritone Mattia Battistini, a version given at the Met in 1999 with Thomas Hampson as Werther.)

There are several significant differences between the novel and the opera, all of which increase the opera’s dramatic and emotional tension. The novel takes place over the course of 18 months, but the opera compresses this time to six months, from July to December, which allows the story to begin in the bright sunshine of summer and to end in the dark of winter. In the novel Werther knows that Charlotte is engaged before ever seeing her, while in the opera the two meet, Werther declares his love, and Charlotte is clearly attracted, all before he
learns she has a fiancé. (Werther’s reaction to realizing she is already promised is the honorable “Remain true to that vow.”) In the novel Charlotte’s mother clearly hopes her daughter will marry Albert, but the deathbed vow to do so is a creation of the opera’s librettists, as is Albert’s obvious knowledge that Werther plans to kill himself with the borrowed pistols.

Charlotte’s younger sister Sophie is a much bigger presence in the opera than in the novel. By making her 15 years old, rather than 11, the librettists elevate her to being a viable foil for both Werther (with whom she’s in love in the opera) as well as her sister. Sophie’s sparkling music deftly describes her personality, but she’s no shallow Pollyanna. She sees very clearly what’s going on and does all she can to help avoid the final tragedy.

In the 1890s George Bernard Shaw was a music critic in London and a fierce partisan of Wagner’s music. But he admired the “frank naturalness” of Massenet’s Werther with its “engaging force and charm of expression.” He pointed out that though Massenet “is not exactly a creator in harmony or orchestration, yet in both he has a lively individual style. At all events, he has succeeded in keeping up the interest of a libretto consisting of four acts of a lovelorn tenor who has only two active moments, one when he tries to ravish a kiss from the fair [Charlotte], and the other when he shoots himself behind the scenes.”

Massenet accomplishes this by writing a score that is never less than interesting, and is often riveting. Though there are excerptable arias, the drama flows so smoothly, and the orchestral fabric is so seamless, that some early critics labeled it Wagnerian. Massenet unites the opera in several ways. It begins and ends with the children singing their Christmas carol. As the drama progresses he occasionally repeats—but always slightly changes—music heard earlier. For instance, the gossamer music (known as “Clair de lune”) that accompanies the return of Werther and Charlotte to her home in Act I when Werther first declares his love, returns in Act III when he reminds her of that magical moment. And, most devastatingly, it reappears in the final scene when Charlotte finally admits her love to the dying Werther.

Given the sometimes overwhelming emotions inherent in the drama, it would have been easy for Massenet to descend into bathos. But he never pushes things too far, so the emotions, no matter how intense, always ring true. Yes, Werther is known for his melancholy and, ultimately, his despair, but Massenet also gives him amply opportunity to show his delight in nature and with simple ordinary life. Charlotte, too, is a multi-dimensional character torn between the romantic passion she shares with Werther and the stable married life Albert offers. How many other operas actively celebrate both middle-class domestic contentedness and explosive illicit romantic passion? No wonder some critics see Werther as Massenet’s masterpiece.

—Paul Thomason
The Cast and Creative Team

Alain Altinoglu
CONDUCTOR (PARIS, FRANCE)

This Season  Werther at the Met, Salome in Zurich, and Simon Boccanegra, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera.

Met Appearances  Otello, Faust, and Carmen (debut, 2010).

Career Highlights  His recent opera projects include Der Fliegende Holländer at the Zurich Opera and in concert at London’s Royal Albert Hall, Henri Rabaud’s Mârouf, Savetier du Caire at Paris’s Opéra Comique, and Un Ballo in Maschera at the Orange Festival. He has also led Faust at the Paris Opera and Vienna State Opera, Falstaff at the Vienna State Opera, Massenet’s Cendrillon at Brussels’s La Monnaie, Rigoletto in Cologne, Prokofiev’s The Love for Three Oranges at the Paris Opera, Don Giovanni at Covent Garden and the Paris Opera, Faust at the Berlin State Opera, and Falstaff at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Additional engagements include appearances with the Berlin Staatskapelle, Orchestre National d’Île de France, and Orchestre National de Lyon, and at the San Francisco Opera, Salzburg Festival, and Buenos Aires’s Teatro Colón.

Richard Eyre
DIRECTOR (DEVON, ENGLAND)

This Season  Werther at the Met and The Pajama Game in London’s West End.

Met Production  Carmen (debut, 2009).

Career Highlights  His productions include Mary Poppins and Private Lives in London’s West End and on Broadway and Racing Demon, Vincent in Brixton, Amy’s View, and The Crucible on Broadway. He has also directed La Traviata at Covent Garden, Le Nozze di Figaro at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, The Observer for London’s National Theatre, The Last of the Duchess for Hamstead Theatre, Quartermaine’s Terms in the West End, A Flea in Her Ear at the Old Vic, and Les Mains Sales, Hedda Gabler, and The Dark Earth and the Light Sky at the Almeida Theater. He was director of London’s National Theatre from 1988 to 1997 and has received numerous awards for his work in theater, television, and film. He was knighted in 1997 and made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2011.
Rob Howell
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  Werther at the Met and Matilda the Musical on Broadway.  
MET PRODUCTION  Carmen (debut, 2009).
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  He has worked extensively for London’s National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and for theatres in London’s West End and on Broadway. Opera credits include The Turn of the Screw for Welsh National Opera and Sophie’s Choice for Covent Garden. He has received numerous Olivier Award and Tony Award nominations and has been awarded Olivier Awards for best set design in 2000 (Troilus and Cressida, Vassa, and Richard III) and 2006 (Hedda Gabler). In 2013 he won Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Olivier, and Tony Awards for Matilda the Musical. Additional Broadway credits include Ghost the Musical, The Norman Conquests, and Boeing-Boeing. Productions with director Richard Eyre include The Observer, The Last Cigarette, The Reporter, and Hedda Gabler.

Peter Mumford
LIGHTING DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON  Werther and Madama Butterfly at the Met. 
MET PRODUCTIONS  Carmen, Peter Grimes, Madama Butterfly (debut, 2006), and the 125th Anniversary Gala.
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Recent opera work includes The Soldier’s Tale for Chicago Symphony, Eugene Onegin for Los Angeles Opera and Covent Garden, and The Midsummer Marriage for Lyric Opera of Chicago. Recent work in theater includes Love and Information for New York Theatre Workshop, King Lear for BAM, King Kong for Global Creatures/Australia, The Seagull on Broadway, Cock at New York’s Duke Theater, Drunk Enough to Say I Love You for the Public Theater, and Stephen Ward, Ghosts, Old Times, Top Hat, Absent Friends, Much Ado about Nothing, The Misanthrope, Carousel, and Fiddler on the Roof on London’s West End. He is currently directing and designing a concert version of Wagner’s Ring cycle for Opera North. He has received Olivier Awards for outstanding achievement in dance (1995) and best lighting (Bacchae, National Theatre, 2003), the 2010 Knight of Illumination Award, and the 2013 Helpmann Award for best lighting for King Kong.

Wendall K. Harrington
VIDEO DESIGNER (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON  Cinderella for Australian Ballet and Opera for La Scala Ballet, both with choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, Mourning Becomes Electra for Florida Grand Opera, Lucia di Lammermoor for Los Angeles Opera, and All the Way on Broadway.
MET PRODUCTION  Bolcom’s A View from the Bridge (Projection Designer, debut, 2002).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  Othello and The Firebird for American Ballet Theatre, the world premiere production of Ricky Ian Gordon’s The Grapes of Wrath for Minnesota Opera, and Philip Glass’s The Photographer at BAM. Work on Broadway includes The Who’s Tommy, Ragtime, Grey Gardens, Driving Miss Daisy, John Leguizamo’s Freak, Company, Paul Simon’s Capeman, and both Amy’s View and Racing Demon with director Richard Eyre. Off-Broadway work includes Angels in America, Hapgood, and Merrily We Roll Along. Concert work includes Bolcom’s Songs of Innocence and Experience, Pete Townshend, Simon and Garfunkel, Chris Rock, The Talking Heads, and the upcoming Guys and Dolls at Carnegie Hall.

Sara Erde
CHOREOGRAPHER (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON  Werther for her choreographic debut and Madama Butterfly as assistant stage director at the Met, Manon Lescaut (directed by Richard Eyre) in Baden-Baden, and La Forza del Destino as associate director for a production by Francesca Zambello at Washington National Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She trained at New York’s Ballet Hispanico with Tina Ramirez and has worked at the Met since 1996 in various capacities including dancer, movement coach, and assistant stage director. Her Met productions include Carmen (in which she assisted choreographer Christopher Wheeldon), Les Troyens, Don Carlo, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, and La Traviata. At Washington National Opera she has worked on stagings of numerous productions including Don Giovanni, La Traviata, Carmen, Manon Lescaut, and Democracy—an American Comedy, and often in collaboration with Plácido Domingo and director/designer John Pascoe. Elsewhere, she has worked on productions of Zorro (The Alliance Theatre), Carmen (Opera Fairbanks), Don Giovanni (Florida Grand Opera), Vivaldi’s Ercole su’l Termodonte (Italy’s Spoleto Festival), Turandot (Quebec Opera), and the ballad opera Flora, an Opera (Spoleto Festival USA).

Sophie Koch
MEZZO-SOPRANO (VERSAILLES, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON  Charlotte in Werther for her debut at the Met, the title role of Gluck’s Alceste at the Paris Opera, Octavian in Der Rosenkavalier at the Vienna State Opera and Salzburg Festival, Mère Marie in Dialogues des Carmélites at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Covent Garden, and the Composer in Ariadne auf Naxos at the Vienna State Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS  She has sung Charlotte at the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, Madrid’s Teatro Real, Covent Garden, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has also sung Cherubino in
Le Nozze di Figaro for her debut at the Vienna State Opera, Rosina in Il Barbiere di Siviglia and Dorabella in Così fan tutte at Covent Garden, the Composer at the Semperoper Dresden, Concepcion in Ravel’s L’Heure Espagnole at the Paris Opera, and Zerlina in Don Giovanni and Fricka in Wagner’s Ring cycle at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera.

Lisette Oropesa
SOPRANO (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)

THIS SEASON Nannetta in Falstaff and Sophie in Werther at the Met, Amalia in Verdi’s I Masnadieri with Washington Concert Opera, and Carmina Burana with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

MET APPEARANCES She has sung more than 100 performances of 14 roles including Gilda in Rigoletto, Miranda in The Enchanted Island, Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro, Amore in Orfeo ed Euridice, Lisette in La Rondine, Woglinde in Das Rheingold and Götterdämmerung, Dew Fairy in Hansel and Gretel, and Cretan Woman in Idomeneo (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS The title role of Lucia di Lammermoor with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein and Arizona Opera, Ismene in Mitridate with Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, Cleopatra in Giulio Cesare with Michigan Opera Theatre, Susanna at the Ravinia Festival and Santa Fe Opera, Nannetta in Bilbao and with the San Francisco Opera, and Konstanze in Die Entführung aus dem Serail at the Tanglewood Festival, Welsh National Opera, and Pittsburgh Opera. She is a graduate of the Met’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

David Bižić
BASS (BELGRADE, SERBIA)

THIS SEASON Albert in Werther for his debut at the Met, Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro in Geneva, Guglielmo in Così fan tutte with the Paris Opera, Leporello in Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, and Count Almaviva in Le Nozze di Figaro in St. Étienne.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In recent seasons he has sung Schaunard in La Bohème for his debut at Covent Garden, Leporello at Moscow’s Bolshoi Opera and for his U.S. debut with the Los Angeles Opera, Leporello in Valencia and at Paris’s Bastille Opera, and Escamillo in Carmen in Stockholm. He has also sung Publio in La Clemenza di Tito in Avignon, Mathieu in Andrea Chénier with the Bastille Opera, the High Priest in Samson et Dalila in Stockholm, and the Chamberlain in Le Rossignol in Strasbourg.
The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

Jonas Kaufmann
TENOR (MUNICH, GERMANY)

This Season The title role of Werther at the Met, Dick Johnson in La Fanciulla del West at the Vienna State Opera, Mannrico in Il Trovatore and Don Alvaro in La Forza del Destino at Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, des Grieux in Manon Lescat at Covent Garden, and concerts and recitals throughout Europe and in Great Britain, Russia, Australia, and the U.S., including his first Carnegie Hall recital.

MET Appearances The title roles of Faust and Parsifal, Siegmund in Die Walküre, Cavaradossi in Tosca, Don José in Carmen, Alfredo in La Traviata (debut, 2006), and Tamino in Die Zauberflöte.

Career Highlights Recent performances include Parsifal at the Vienna State Opera, Lohengrin at La Scala, the title role of Don Carlo at Covent Garden and the Salzburg Festival, Faust in Vienna, Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur at Covent Garden, and Bacchus in Ariadne auf Naxos, Rodolfo in La Bohème, and Don José at the Salzburg Festival. He has also sung Florestan in Fidelio in Munich and Paris, Werther in Vienna and Paris, des Grieux in Manon in Chicago and Vienna, the Prince in Humperdinck’s Königskinder in Zurich, and Alfredo at the Paris Opera and La Scala. His first performances as Lohengrin in Munich in 2010 were followed by his debut at the Bayreuth Festival in the same role.

Jonathan Summers
BARITONE (MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA)

This Season The Bailiff in Werther at the Met, Carlo in La Forza del Destino with Opera Australia, and Spencer Coyle in Britten’s Owen Wingrave at the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh Festivals.

MET Appearances Marcello in La Bohème (debut, 1988).

Career Highlights He has recently sung Tomsky in The Queen of Spades with Opera North, Mr. Redburn in Billy Budd at English National Opera, Germont in La Traviata with Opera Australia, the Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen with Welsh National Opera, and Balstrode in Peter Grimes in Japan. He has also sung Ford in Falstaff, Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, and Balstrode at Covent Garden, Gunther in Götterdämmerung at the Adelaide Festival, the title role of Adams’s The Death of Klinghoffer at the Edinburgh Festival, and Alfio in Cavalleria Rusticana and Tonio in Pagliacci in Hamburg.

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