

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

SAMSON ET DALILA

CONDUCTOR
Sir Mark Elder

PRODUCTION
Darko Tresnjak

SET DESIGNER
Alexander Dodge

COSTUME DESIGNER
Linda Cho

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Donald Holder

CHOREOGRAPHER
Austin McCormick

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Ferdinand Lemaire

Saturday, October 20, 2018

1:00–4:20PM

New Production

The production of *Samson et Dalila* was made possible by a generous gift from the **Gramma Fisher Foundation**, Marshalltown, Iowa, and **H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang, PhD. and Oscar Tang**

Additional funding for this production was received from The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Endowment Fund and William R. Miller

The Metropolitan Opera

2018–19 SEASON

The 234th Metropolitan Opera performance of
CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS'S

SAMSON ET DALILA

CONDUCTOR
Sir Mark Elder

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

SAMSON
Roberto Alagna

ABIMÉLECH
Elchin Azizov

THE HIGH PRIEST OF DAGON
Laurent Naouri

FIRST PHILISTINE
Tony Stevenson*

SECOND PHILISTINE
Bradley Garvin

A PHILISTINE MESSENGER
Mark Schowalter

AN OLD HEBREW
Dmitry Belosselskiy

DALILA
Elina Garanča

Saturday, October 20, 2018, 1:00–4:20PM

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Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Gareth Morrell,
Jonathan C. Kelly, and Bénédicte Jourdois***
Assistant Stage Directors **Mirabelle Ordinaire, Daniel Rigazzi,
and Paula Suozzi**
Fight Director **Thomas Schall**
Prompter **Donna Racik**
Met Titles **Cori Ellison**
Assistant Set Designers **Ann Beyersdorfer, Bryce Cutler, and
Colin McGurk**
Assistant Costume Designers **Richard Lurie and Robert Croghan**
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OFFICIAL TIMEPIECE

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Synopsis

Act I

Gaza, 1150 BCE. Outside the temple of Dagon, the enslaved Israelites are at prayer. Jehovah has turned his face from them in anger—their cities are destroyed, their peoples dispersed. They accuse God of breaking the Holy Covenant sworn to their forefathers. Samson emerges from the crowd and exhorts them to bless God's name: The hour of deliverance is at hand. Abimélech, Satrap of Gaza, and his Philistine guard enter to collect the tribute due from the Israelites. He mocks the captives for trusting in a god who is powerless compared to the great Philistine god Dagon. A vision of hosts of angels inspires Samson, and he rouses the Israelites to revolt. In the ensuing tumult, Samson disarms and kills Abimélech. The High Priest of Dagon enters and gives orders for the revolt to be crushed, but a messenger describes how, under the leadership of their newfound hero, the Israelites are laying waste to the harvest. The high priest curses the race of Israel and their leader and follows the warriors in a tactical retreat to the mountains.

As dawn breaks, the Israelite elders give thanks for their deliverance. An old man solemnly recounts how, having chastised his people for breaking his laws, Jehovah has come to their rescue. He blesses Samson. Dalila and a group of Philistine maidens enter with flowers. Seeking to revive a past love that has grown cold, Dalila urges Samson to follow her to her home in the Valley of Sorek.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:50PM)

Act II

At her home, Dalila anxiously awaits Samson's arrival and invokes the power of love. The high priest appears, seeking to persuade Dalila to betray Samson. He reminds her of Samson's success as the leader of the Israelites' revolt and of his legendary strength—a strength that has only deserted him while in Dalila's arms. The high priest promises wealth as a reward for Samson's capture. She rejects the offer scornfully and says that all she seeks is revenge after Samson's rejection. Together they rejoice that, to satisfy their hate, Samson will fall victim to her power. The high priest reminds Dalila that the fate of the Philistine people rests in her hands and promises to return with reinforcements.

Samson, racked with remorse and indecision, finally arrives. Dalila pleads with him not to resist her love, but he answers that, having been chosen by God to lead his people, he has sworn in return to break the ties of their affection. Dalila insists that she worships a yet more powerful god, Love, and recalls the sweet hours that they have spent together. Samson's resistance is broken. To her love song, he reaffirms with rapture that he still loves her. As a storm draws near,

Dalila, now certain of his submission, changes her strategy. She is jealous of Samson's devotion to Jehovah, and commands that, to prove his love, he must reveal the secret of his God-given strength. The storm breaks overhead, and in it, Samson hears the warning voice of God. He prays, once more, for strength. Dalila contemptuously accuses him of cowardice. After a moment of agonized hesitation, Samson gives in to her. Philistine soldiers enter stealthily. Dalila calls for them, and Samson cries out that he has been betrayed.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:10PM)

Act III

Blinded, his hair shorn, Samson turns a mill wheel in a dungeon in Gaza. Hearing the voices of his brethren accusing him of having betrayed them for a woman's love, he sings of his remorse and prays that God may spare his people and punish him alone. He blesses the divine hand that has struck him.

As dawn breaks, the Philistines revive their orgiastic worship of Dagon. A child leads Samson to the temple. The high priest mocks the fallen hero, and Dalila reminds Samson of their night of passion. The high priest sarcastically challenges the compassionate Jehovah to restore his servant's sight and pours scorn on Israel's weakness. Samson breaks out in fury: How can God permit such blasphemy? Dalila and the high priest prepare the sacrifice, and the latter orders Samson to join them. Samson instructs the child to guide him to the pillar of Dagon. He prays for strength to avenge his God and himself and, with his power restored, brings the temple crashing down.

Camille Saint-Saëns

Samson et Dalila

Premiere: Grand Ducal Theater, Weimar, 1877

The source of this popular opera is a single chapter in the biblical Book of Judges: Samson, a judge (a pre-monarchic leader) of the ancient Israelites, fights valiantly against the Philistines, enemies of his people, until Delilah seduces him and shears off his hair, the secret to his superhuman strength. The Philistines capture and blind him, then bring him to a crowded temple. Praying to God for one final moment of strength, Samson pulls down the pillar to which he is bound and causes the temple to collapse, killing everyone inside, including himself. The brevity of this source material did nothing to prevent it from becoming one of the world's great stories of love (or at least passion)—as well as the archetypal depiction of a man betrayed by an immoral woman. Saint-Saëns's opera, along with other artistic renderings across multiple genres, has had an important role in the popularization of this tale. Despite tepid success early on, *Samson et Dalila* eventually conquered the operatic world and has proven itself a magnificent evening of theater.

The Creators

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) was a leading figure of the French musical world throughout his life, successful as an organist, pianist, conductor, and prominent music commentator in addition to his work as a composer. Audiences today also remember him as the creator of the famous “Organ” Symphony and such popular orchestral pieces as the *Danse Macabre* and *The Carnival of the Animals*. While he composed several operas, only *Samson et Dalila* has remained in the standard repertory. Ferdinand Lemaire (1832–1879), a poet who married a cousin of Saint-Saëns's and made his most lasting impression with this work, contributed to the libretto.

The Setting

The opera, like the biblical tale, takes place in the city of Gaza, a capital of ancient Philistia, and in the Valley of Sorek, in the foothill country toward Jerusalem. The time is around 1150 BCE.

The Music

The score of this opera teems over with color and dramatic aptitude and is a worthy compendium of Saint-Saëns's diversified genius. The composer had originally toyed with the idea of adapting the story into an oratorio, and his career as a preeminent organist gave him the ability to make dramatic statements

using many of the techniques of church music (fugues, plainchant, and so forth all appear at key moments in the score). Portions of the opera, including Dalila's seduction aria "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix" and the extraordinary ballet sequence in the final scene—the Bacchanale—are known well beyond the opera house. The central love story is expressed with all the powers of French Romantic sensuality. Throughout the opera, the score brilliantly animates all the powerful and diverse colors in the iconic story, from the lurid to the exotic, the crass, the sensual, and even the sublimely spiritual, and the lead characters that Saint-Saëns created have provided generations of star tenors and mezzo-sopranos some of their greatest triumphs. Dalila's "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix" is a masterpiece of eroticism in music with its downward-sloping lines, whereas Samson's true nature of piety and repentance is apparent in his Act III, Scene 1 solo as he toils, blinded, at the grist mill (heard both literally and as an echo of psychological remorse in the orchestra). These strong contrasts, often accompanied by the mordant wit for which Saint-Saëns was noted in his writings and conversation, are the score's greatest feature. Samson's "muscular" piety is in sharp relief to the vulgarity and corruption of the Philistine Abimélech; the Philistine priestesses' fertility dance is as light and charming in its exoticism as the subsequent storm music is menacing; and the genuine spirituality—the Hebrews' plainchant chorus in Act I demonstrates Saint-Saëns's fluency in sacred music—is an antidote to the tinselly vulgarity of the Philistines' temple music, which includes triangle and bells, and in which commentators have noted direct references to the successful but vapid commercial music of Saint-Saëns's Parisian rivals.

Met History

The opera had its first performance at the Met in 1895, with the title roles taken by Francesco Tamagno (Verdi's first Otello) and Eugenia Mantelli. Many mezzo-sopranos have made memorable impressions as Dalila at the Met, including Risë Stevens (32 performances between 1940 and 1958), Grace Bumbry (1971–72), Shirley Verrett (1981–90), Olga Borodina (1998–2006), and Denyce Graves (1998–2005). Among the great tenors who have appeared as Samson include Enrico Caruso (33 performances from 1915 to 1920), Giovanni Martinelli (1922–37), Ramón Vinay (1949–56), Mario Del Monaco (1958), Jon Vickers (1965–87), and Plácido Domingo (33 performances from 1990 to 2001). Darko Tresnjak's new production, which marked the fourth time that the opera has opened the Met season, stars Roberto Alagna and Elīna Garanča in the lead roles, with Sir Mark Elder conducting.

Program Note

In 1867, when Camille Saint-Saëns became fascinated with the Old Testament story of the Hebrew superhero Samson and his downfall at the hands of the alluring Philistine priestess Delilah, he initially decided to create an oratorio on the subject. However, when he asked Ferdinand Lemaire, a young poet/dramatist from Martinique who had recently married into his wife's family, to help him with the text, Lemaire was aghast. "An oratorio!" he exclaimed. "No, let's make it an opera!" Lemaire set to work at once on the libretto, using Voltaire's treatment of the story prepared in 1732 for a planned opera by Rameau that never materialized.

Between 1867 and 1869, the composer worked sporadically on his new opera (he had only previously written one other), starting with Dalila's Act II seduction of Samson. But when he learned that censors, historically objecting to the adaptation of religious subjects for the operatic stage, would never permit it to be performed at the Paris Opera, he nearly gave up on the project. In 1872, however, Saint-Saëns went to Weimar to visit Franz Liszt, who played through the largely completed Act II at the piano. He begged the Frenchman to finish the opera and pledged to have it staged in Weimar. Liszt honored his promise, and *Samson et Dalila* received its premiere—in a German translation—there at the Grand Ducal Theater on December 2, 1877, ten years after Saint-Saëns started composing. Over the next five years, the opera acquired increasing acclaim and ultimately arrived at the Paris Opera, in French, in 1892.

In its final operatic form, *Samson* retains strong elements of its original oratorio conception. The prominent role the chorus plays throughout Act I—first as the Hebrews, then as the Philistines—strongly ties it to the oratorio tradition. And Lemaire and Saint-Saëns chose to portray Samson primarily as a religious leader, not as the Rambo-like action figure described slaying his enemies by the thousands in the earlier chapters of the Book of Judges. His vulnerability is on display far more than his superhuman strength.

Saint-Saëns was an extremely learned and cosmopolitan composer whose music here brilliantly synthesizes many influences, including Gregorian chant, Bach, the French grand-opera style of Meyerbeer, and the Italian Romantic language of Rossini and Verdi. To this, he added a fascination with the exotic music of North Africa and the Middle East, to which he was exposed while living, off and on, in the French colony of Algeria. Thus, the music of the Philistines and especially the Arabic colors of the Act III Bacchanale were strongly influenced by memories he'd absorbed in Algiers.

Act I

A brief but highly effective prelude establishes an atmosphere of oppression and suffering. Heavy thuds at the bottom of the orchestra reinforce the B minor key, and a writhing, entrapped pattern above symbolizes the Hebrews' servitude. This leads directly into the Hebrew chorus's supplication to God for deliverance.

This very dignified sacred music slowly becomes more animated as the Hebrews question whether God has broken His covenant with them.

Shifting from despair to optimism, Samson silences their cries, proclaiming that deliverance is at hand. His exhortation reaches its climax with an ecstatic ode, intensified by harps and brass, in which he urges them to have faith and raise their arms against the Philistines.

An opportunity to heed his command arrives immediately as the blustering Philistine satrap of Gaza, Abimélech, strides onto the scene, his brutal nature revealed by snarling low brass and mocking woodwinds. His insults enflame Samson, and again harps swell the hero's rhapsodic plea for victory; the chorus joins him in this splendid melody. In an instant, Samson slays Abimélech—the only revelation of his superhuman strength we will see until the opera's end.

After slow, ascending chords announce daybreak, the older Hebrew men sing a chorus mostly in an unaccompanied unison harkening back to Gregorian chant. The minatory bass voice of the Old Hebrew, accompanied by a steady, ritualistic instrumental tread, joins them. Despite *Samson et Dalila's* reputation as a grand spectacle, this is one of many sections of the opera in which its composer makes a powerful impression through utmost musical restraint.

The plucking of harps then introduces a quite different and totally feminine musical world: that of the beautiful Dalila and her fellow priestesses of Dagon. And after Dalila's first words of welcome to the conquering hero, we hear Samson weakening musically as he sings chromatically descending phrases very unlike the vigorously straightforward and virile music he has sung up to now. Their duet expands into an urgent trio when the Old Hebrew warns Samson against temptation.

The flagrantly French ballet sequence, wafted by on gossamer threads of winds and strings, introduces us to the first of Dalila's three great arias, "Printemps qui commence." Again, Saint-Saëns offers beautiful restraint rather than operatic display: Dalila's rhythmically supple lines remain in a moderate range. This is seduction at its most understated yet also irresistible.

Act II

If Act I was oratorio-like and dominated by large choral forces, Act II at Dalila's home is intimate—featuring only three characters—and entirely operatic in style. Throughout the act, we hear in the orchestra the approach of the thunderstorm that will explode at its end. It is as much a psychological storm as a meteorological one as Samson is finally broken mentally and physically. All this is previewed in the prelude, which introduces a swirling motive of gathering clouds and menace.

Dalila's second aria, "Amour! viens aider ma faiblesse," reveals her personality with the gloves off. Her music sheds the curvaceous femininity of Act I and is now ferocious in its determination, closing with a formidable low A-flat.

The following scene with the high priest is a dueling duet between two fierce personalities. Dalila repeats phrases from her aria, emphasizing her confidence that this night she will succeed. Their scene closes with a forceful duet of vengeance, which resembles the kind of thrilling tenor-baritone scenes found in Verdi's *Don Carlo* and *Otello*.

Backed by heroic brass, Samson arrives, returning to his strong, visionary form of Act I. But this strength is short-lived.

Dalila's "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix" has rightfully become the opera's most famous aria. Propelled by a tremulous orchestral ostinato of sexual excitement, its lines unfold in smooth curves rising to the melting chromatic descent of "Ah! réponds." In the second verse, the swirling storm motive returns, and Samson turns the aria into an impassioned duet.

As the storm rages around them, a frenzied struggle between the two erupts in which Dalila demands Samson's secret. He resists, and indeed he never reveals it on stage: The audience only knows that it has been discovered when Dalila cries out for the Philistine soldiers.

Act III

Act III, Scene 1 returns to the world of sacred oratorio. Samson languishes under imprisonment by the Philistines. After an anguished prelude, Samson voices his grief and guilt over his downfall. An unseen chorus of Hebrews singing in both subdued chant and a hectoring fugato rebukes him.

An orchestral interlude with plaintive echoes of Dalila's "Printemps qui commence" changes the scene to the interior of the Temple of Dagon. The Bacchanale conjures an Arabian atmosphere through extensive use of the Hijaz mode (a common scale type in Arabic music), and its opening oboe solo imitates the improvisatory freedom of Middle Eastern music and specifically the muezzin's call to prayer. Thundering drums create exotic conflicts within this orgasmic, over-the-top dance music.

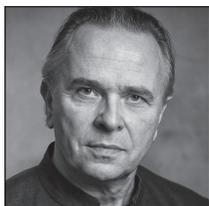
After cruelly mocking Samson, the high priest and Dalila lead the ceremony to invite Dagon's flames onto their altar; author and musicologist Ralph Locke calls this hymn "a fascinating mix of Bach and Offenbach." Despite the splashy additions of cymbals and glockenspiel, this is essentially a lively version of a Baroque contrapuntal ensemble, with the high priest and Dalila singing in perfect canon.

We can hear Samson's strength already returning in his final mighty prayer, and with a ringing high B-flat, he brings down the Temple of Dagon on himself and the entire assembly, in what is surely opera's most dazzling dénouement.

—Janet E. Bedell

Janet E. Bedell is a frequent program annotator for Carnegie Hall, specializing in vocal repertoire, and for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and many other institutions.

The Cast and Creative Team



Sir Mark Elder

CONDUCTOR (HEXHAM, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* at the Met, appearances with the Hallé, and guest conducting engagements with leading orchestras around the world.

MET APPEARANCES *Rusalka*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Tannhäuser*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Mefistofele*, *Otello*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 1988).
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2000, he has been music director of the Hallé. He was music director of English National Opera from 1979 to 1993, principal guest conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra from 1992 to 1995, and music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra from 1989 to 1994. He has also held positions as principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the London Mozart Players. Recent operatic credits include *Siegfried* at the Edinburgh International Festival, Donizetti's *L'Ange de Nisida* in concert in London, *Carmen* at the Paris Opera, *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Hallé, and *Semiramide* in concert at the BBC Proms. He has also appeared at Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Bayreuth Festival, San Francisco Opera, Dutch National Opera, and with the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic, among many others.



Darko Tresnjak

DIRECTOR (ZEMUN, YUGOSLAVIA)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* for his debut at the Met, the world premiere of Poul Ruders's *The Thirteenth Child* at the Santa Fe Opera, and *The Engagement Party* and *The Flamingo Kid* at Hartford Stage.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Among his numerous accolades are the 2014 Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards for *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder* and the 2015 Obie Award for *The Killer*. Since 2011, he has served as the artistic director of Hartford Stage, where he has directed *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*, among many others. Additional credits include John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, and Ullman's *Der Zerbrochene Krug* at LA Opera; *The Merchant of Venice* at the Theatre for a New Audience and Royal Shakespeare Company; *Titus Andronicus* at the Stratford Festival; *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Women* at the Old Globe; *Heartbreak House* and *Amphitryon* at the Huntington Theater Company; *The Two Noble Kinsmen* at the Public Theater and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre; *Twelfth Night* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at Williamstown Theatre Festival; and *Anastasia* on Broadway, National Tour, and at Stuttgart's Palladium Theater and Madrid's Teatro Coliseum.



Alexander Dodge

SET DESIGNER (BERN, SWITZERLAND)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* for his debut at the Met, William Bolcom's *Dinner at Eight* at Wexford Festival Opera, and the world premiere of Poul Ruders's *The Thirteenth Child* at the Santa Fe Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has designed numerous productions for Broadway, including *Anastasia* (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder* (Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations), *Present Laughter* (Tony Award nomination), *Old Acquaintance*, *Butley*, and *Hedda Gabler*. His operatic credits include the world premiere of *Dinner at Eight* and *Così fan tutte* at Minnesota Opera, John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* at LA Opera, *La Rondine* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy* at the Glimmerglass Festival, *Il Trittico* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Lortzing's *Der Waffenschmied* in Munich, *Lohengrin* in Budapest, and *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Würzburg. His designs for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* have appeared at La Jolla Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse, and on tour in Japan and Germany. He has also created productions at the Old Globe Theatre, Hartford Stage, Guthrie Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, and Williamstown Theatre Festival, among many others.



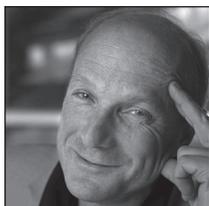
Linda Cho

COSTUME DESIGNER (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* for her debut at the Met, *Wild Goose Dreams* at the Public Theater, *Lifespan of a Fact* on Broadway, *The Flamingo Kid* at Hartford Stage, *Ever After* at the Alliance Theatre, *Life After* at the Old Globe, and a world premiere by Michelle

Dorrance at American Ballet Theatre's 2018 Fall Gala.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS In 2014, she received both the Tony Award and Henry Hewes Design Award for her work on *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, and in 2017, she was nominated for Tony, Outer Critics Circle, and Drama Desk Awards for *Anastasia* on Broadway. Her extensive body of work includes productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford Shakespeare, Hong Kong Performing Arts Center, LA Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Manhattan Theatre Club, Theatre for a New Audience, Second Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Goodspeed Opera, among many others. Between 2008 and 2011, she served as the American costume design curator for the International Prague Quadrennial and is currently on the advisory committee for the American Theatre Wing.



Donald Holder

LIGHTING DESIGNER (CROTON-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* at the Met, *Porgy and Bess* at English National Opera, *Kiss Me*, *Kate* on Broadway, and *Rigoletto* at Staatsoper Berlin.

MET APPEARANCES *Otello*, Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*, and *Die Zauberflöte*

(debut, 2004).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been nominated for 13 Tony Awards, winning in 2008 for *South Pacific* and in 1998 for *The Lion King*. His numerous Broadway credits include *Straight White Men*, *My Fair Lady*, *M. Butterfly*, *Anastasia*, *Oslo*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Father*, and *The King and I*, among many others. He has also designed lighting for *Carmen* and the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *The End of the Affair* at Houston Grand Opera, *Faust* in Baden-Baden, Heggie's *Moby-Dick* and Todd Machover's *Death and the Powers* at Dallas Opera, Elliot Goldenthal's *Grendel* at LA Opera and the Lincoln Center Festival, Muhly's *Dark Sisters* at the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the world premiere of *Two Boys* at English National Opera, *Salome* at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, and *Carmen* at LA Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. He is currently head of lighting design at the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts.



Austin McCormick

CHOREOGRAPHER (SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON *Samson et Dalila* at the Met and numerous performances with Company XIV.

MET APPEARANCES *Rusalka* (debut, 2017).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is the founder, choreographer, and artistic director of Company XIV, creating immersive performances fusing Baroque dance, burlesque, opera, circus, and sumptuous design. He recently opened Théâtre XIV, a permanent venue in Brooklyn to house his opulent troupe. He has been nominated for Drama Desk Awards in the categories of best choreography and unique theatrical experience. He won the Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Grant from Opera America for new directors in opera and has won a New York Innovative Theatre Award for best choreography. His work in opera includes *Orfeo et Euridice* at Opera Columbus, Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* at Gotham Chamber Opera, and *La Traviata* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Canadian Opera Company, and Houston Grand Opera. He holds a BFA from the Juilliard School and is a graduate of the Conservatory of Baroque Dance.



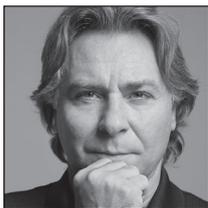
Elina Garanča

MEZZO-SOPRANO (RIGA, LATVIA)

THIS SEASON *Dalila* in *Samson et Dalila* at the Met, *Didon* in *Les Troyens* at the Paris Opera, *Santuzza* in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Vienna State Opera, Verdi's *Requiem* in Baden-Baden, and a Met Orchestra concert at Carnegie Hall.

MET APPEARANCES Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Sara in *Roberto Devereux*, the title role of *Carmen*, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito*, the title role of *La Cenerentola*, and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Dalila at the Vienna State Opera, Léonor de Guzman in Donizetti's *La Favorite* and *Carmen* at the Bavarian State Opera, Santuzza at Covent Garden, and Eboli in *Don Carlo*, *Carmen*, and Santuzza at the Paris Opera. She has also sung Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Barcelona, at the Bavarian State Opera, and in concert in Geneva and Baden-Baden; Charlotte in *Werther* at the Paris Opera; *Carmen* and Romeo at Covent Garden; *Carmen*, Charlotte, and Octavian at the Vienna State Opera; *Carmen* at La Scala and in Valencia; Octavian, Léonor de Guzman in concert and Romeo at Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Charlotte and Léonor de Guzman in concert at the Salzburg Festival.



Roberto Alagna

TENOR (CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON Samson in *Samson et Dalila* and Don José in *Carmen* at the Met; Alfredo in *La Traviata*, the title role of *Otello*, and Don José at the Paris Opera; the title role of *Andrea Chénier* at Deutsche Oper Berlin and Covent Garden; and Rodolfo in *Luisa*

Miller in concert in Monte Carlo.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1996 debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, he has sung more than 125 performances of 16 roles, including Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, the title role of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, Don José, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Manrico in *Il Trovatore* at the Paris Opera; Samson in concert in Paris; Samson, Calàf in *Turandot*, and Otello at the Vienna State Opera; Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Monte Carlo; the Condemned Man in David Alagna's *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné* in Marseille; Radamès in concert in Gstaad, Switzerland; and Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Calàf at Covent Garden. He has also appeared at the Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Salzburg Festival, and in Zurich, Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Orange, and Avignon.



Elchin Azizov

BARITONE (BAKU, AZERBAIJAN)

THIS SEASON Abimélech in *Samson et Dalila* and Ibn-Hakia in *Iolanta* at the Met and Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* and Count Tomsky in *The Queen of Spades* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre.

MET APPEARANCES Ibn-Hakia (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2008, he has been a principal soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre, where his roles have included Ibn-Hakia, Mizgir in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Grigory Gryaznoy in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and the title roles of *Prince Igor*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Macbeth*, and *Don Giovanni*. Recent performances include *Macbeth* in

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

Lyon, Carlo Gérard in *Andrea Chénier* in concert at the Hungarian State Opera, and Ibn-Hakia at the Savonlinna Opera Festival, Polish National Opera, and in Florence. He has also sung Grigory Gryaznoy in Hong Kong and at the Lincoln Center Festival, the title role of *Nabucco* in Montreal, the High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* in Rome, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* in Limoges, Amonasro in *Aida* in Santiago, Ibn-Hakia in Vienna, and Germont in Berlin.

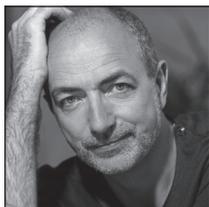


Dmitry Belosselskiy

BASS (PAVLOGRAD, UKRAINE)

THIS SEASON The Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Fafner in the *Ring* cycle, and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* at the Met and Walter in *Luisa Miller* in Barcelona.

MET APPEARANCES Wurm in *Luisa Miller*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco* (debut, 2011), Ramfis, de Silva in *Ernani*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is a principal guest artist at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, where, between 2010 and 2013, he was a soloist. At the Bolshoi, his roles have included the title role of *Boris Godunov*, Philip II in *Don Carlo*, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Zaccaria, King René in *Iolanta*, and Malyuta Skuratov in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*. Recent performances include Philip II in Bologna and Florence, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Vienna State Opera and La Scala, Ivan Susanin in Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* in Frankfurt, the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* at the Paris Opera, Ramfis at the Salzburg Festival, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Boris Godunov at the Bavarian State Opera.



Laurent Naouri

BASS-BARITONE (PARIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON The High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* at the Met, Germont in *La Traviata* in Paris, Agata in Donizetti's *Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali* in Geneva, and Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Finnish National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette*, Pandolfe in *Cendrillon*, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* (debut, 2012). **CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Don Gaspar in Donizetti's *L'Ange de Nisida* in concert in London, Golaud in concert with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the High Priest of Dagon in concert in Paris, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert at Festival Berlioz and the BBC Proms, Ruprecht in Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* and Agata in Lyon, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* in Geneva, and Somarone in Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédicte* and Marquis de Grenvil in the world premiere of Luca Francesconi's *Trompe-la-Mort* at the Paris Opera. He has also appeared at the Bavarian State Opera, La Scala, Dutch National Opera, and in Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, Zurich, Barcelona, and Bordeaux.