

RICHARD STRAUSS

# SALOME

CONDUCTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION  
Claus Guth

SET DESIGNER  
Etienne Pluss

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Ursula Kudrna

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Olaf Freese

PROJECTION DESIGNER  
rocafilm/  
Roland Horvath

CHOREOGRAPHER  
Sommer Ulrickson

DRAMATURG  
Yvonne Gebauer

MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in one act

Libretto adapted by the composer, based on  
Hedwig Lachmann's German translation of  
the play by Oscar Wilde

Friday, May 2, 2025  
8:00–9:50PM

New Production

The production of *Salome* was made possible  
by a generous gift from **The Berry Charitable  
Foundation; The Sybil B. Harrington  
Endowment Fund; and Daisy M. Soros, in  
memory of Paul Soros**

Additional support was received from Mr. and Mrs.  
Michael Corey

Throughout the 2024–25 season, the Met  
continues to honor Ukraine and its brave  
citizens as they fight to defend their country  
and its cultural heritage.

# The Metropolitan Opera

2024–25 SEASON

The 165th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
RICHARD STRAUSS'S

## SALOME

CONDUCTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

NARRABOTH  
Piotr Buszewski

PAGE  
Tamara Mumford\*

SOLDIERS  
Harold Wilson  
Richard Bernstein

JOCHANAN  
Peter Mattei

CAPPADOCIAN  
Jeongcheol Cha

SALOME  
Elza van den Heever

SERVANT  
Scott Scully

HEROD  
Gerhard Siegel

HERODIAS  
Michelle DeYoung\*

JEWS  
Bille Bruley  
Thomas Capobianco  
Alex Boyer  
Bernard Holcomb  
Robert Pomakov

NAZARENES  
Le Bu\*  
Yeongtaek Yang\*\*

CHILD SALOME  
Manon Fleur Antonio  
Kate Lellos Doherty  
Hardy  
Vienna Judith Martinez  
Willow McConnaughy  
Louisa Pancoast

HEROD'S DOUBLE  
Devin Richey

Salome is presented  
without intermission.

Friday, May 2, 2025, 8:00–9:50PM



A scene from  
Strauss's *Salome*

Musical Preparation Donna Racik, Derrick Inouye,  
Jonathan C. Kelly, Dimitri Dover,\* and Israel Gursky  
Assistant Stage Directors Dylan Evans, Paula Suozzi, and  
Paula Williams

Stage Director Fellow Alexi Ortega Chavez

Intimacy Direction Katherine M. Carter

German Diction Coach Marianne Barrett

Prompter Donna Racik

Met Titles Christopher Bergen

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Costumes constructed by Metropolitan Opera Costume

Department and The Costume Shop, Chicago

Masks constructed by Werkstattkollektiv, Berlin

Wigs and makeup constructed and executed by Metropolitan  
Opera Wig and Makeup Department

**This production uses haze and smoke effects.**

The Met's Æolian-Skinner pipe organ used in this performance  
was renovated thanks to a Wyncote Foundation grant from  
Frederick R. Haas.

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the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones  
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\* Graduate of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

\*\* Member of the  
Lindemann Young Artist  
Development Program

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### Met Titles

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press the red button once again. If you have questions please ask an  
usher at intermission.

# Synopsis

At King Herod's palace, the young captain Narraboth admires the princess Salome. A Page warns Narraboth that terrible things might happen if he continues to stare at the princess. The voice of Jochanaan, John the Baptist, is heard from the cistern, where he is kept prisoner, proclaiming the coming of the Messiah, and two soldiers comment on the prophet's kindness and Herod's fear of him.

Salome enters, disgusted by her stepfather, Herod, and bored by his guests. Jochanaan's voice is heard again, cursing the sinful life of Salome's mother, Herodias. Salome asks about the prophet. The soldiers refuse to let her speak with him, but Narraboth, unable to resist her, allows her to descend into the cistern. At first terrified by his appearance, Salome quickly becomes fascinated with Jochanaan's body, asking him to let her touch his hair, his skin, and finally his lips. Jochanaan rejects her forcefully. Narraboth, who can't bear to see Salome's desire for another man, stabs himself. Salome doesn't notice. Beside herself with excitement, she continues to beg for Jochanaan's kiss. The prophet tells her to save herself by seeking Christ and curses Salome as she ascends from the cistern.

Herod appears, looking for the princess and commenting on the strange look of the moon. When he slips in Narraboth's blood, he suddenly panics and has hallucinations. Herodias angrily dismisses his fantasies, but Herod's attentions are now focused on Salome. He offers her food and wine, but she rejects his advances. From the cistern, Jochanaan resumes his tirades against Herodias, who demands that Herod turn the prophet over to the Jews. Herod refuses, maintaining that Jochanaan is a holy man who has seen God. His words spark an argument among the Jews about the true nature of God, and two Nazarenes talk about the miracles of Jesus. As Jochanaan continues to accuse her, Herodias demands that he be silenced.

Herod asks Salome to dance for him. She refuses, but when he promises to give her anything she wants, she makes him swear to keep his word and agrees. Ignoring her mother's pleas to stop, Salome dances for her stepfather. Herod is horrified when Salome asks for her reward—the head of Jochanaan on a silver platter. Herod instead offers her riches, half of his kingdom, even the holy curtain of the temple, but Salome won't be dissuaded and insists he fulfill his oath. Herod finally relents, and as the executioner descends into the cistern, Salome anxiously awaits her prize. Salome descends into the cistern, where she finds a decapitated Jochanaan. She passionately addresses him, finally kissing his lips. Herod orders his soldiers to kill Salome, before collapsing to the ground.

*Richard Strauss*

# Salome

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*Premiere: Hofoper, Dresden, 1905*

Richard Strauss was catapulted to international fame and notoriety with this incendiary and powerful opera. The story derives from a brief, stark account in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew: A young princess of Judea dances for her stepfather, Herod, and chooses as her reward the head of the prophet John the Baptist. This subject captured the imaginations of many visual artists, from Botticelli (1488) to Gustave Doré (1865), but the full possibilities of the tale were perhaps best realized in Oscar Wilde's play (1891). Originally conceived as a star vehicle for the great actress Sarah Bernhardt, Wilde's drama boldly merged the story's latent themes of erotica, dementia, necrophilia, and religious inspiration. It was banned from public performance in several countries. To realize Wilde's vision as an opera, Strauss created a vast orchestral canvas built around a title role of gargantuan vocal, dramatic, and physical demands. That said, Strauss's score is honed into a single musical and dramatic sweep of slightly more than an hour and a half. The result is a work with the grandeur of Wagner's epics told with the focus and emotional punch of the short Italian verismo operas. *Salome's* first audiences were not only appalled by the depraved story unfolding on the stage but also by the harsh sounds of the orchestra (which are matched by moments of intense beauty). *Salome* is a rare instance of a succès de scandale that retains all the vitality of its initial appearance.

### *The Creators*

Richard Strauss (1864–1949) composed an impressive body of orchestral works and songs before turning to opera. After two early failures, Strauss created a theatrical sensation with *Salome*, and the balance of his long career was largely dedicated to the stage. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), the Irish novelist, poet, and playwright, was one of the defining characters of the Victorian era. Strauss used a German translation of Wilde's play by Hedwig Lachmann (1865–1918), an author and poet who also translated works by Edgar Allan Poe, Honoré de Balzac, and Rabindranath Tagore.

### *The Setting*

The opera takes place during the reign of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, in the first century C.E. This season's new production updates the setting to the turbulent early years of the 20th century, when scientific and technological advances, bold new avenues of intellectual inquiry, and rapid social change drove society to discard the prudish, repressive mores—and the stability—of the Victorian era.

### *The Music*

From the opening measure, featuring two clarinets slithering up the scale, the score announces itself as exotic, iconoclastic, and thoroughly compelling. Much of the work's magic comes from the orchestra pit: Strauss indicated an orchestra of 105, including an organ, castanets, xylophone, harmonium, and heckelphon (a lower-ranged member of the oboe family that was invented the year before *Salome* premiered). The famous Dance of the Seven Veils occurs about two-thirds of the way through the opera and is also frequently performed as a set piece in concerts. Most of the orchestra's other notable passages are more integrated into the surrounding score than the dance, but are no less memorable. The first appearance of Jochanaan (John the Baptist) from his cistern dungeon is an orchestral sunburst. The moment when Salome waits for his beheading sounds supremely creepy: Four double basses pinch a note between thumb and forefinger while hitting the string with their bows. Yet for all the wonder in the orchestra, the opera is uniquely demanding on the singers: The leaps and bounds of Herod's vocal line convey mental derangement; Jochanaan's brief appearances convince us of his ability to inspire both erotic and religious passion. But it is the title role that makes or breaks this opera. Her lines stretch from the highest to the lowest ranges of the female voice, working with and sometimes against the huge orchestra. In its musical and dramatic challenges, it stands as one of the most demanding roles in opera.

### *Met History*

The Met premiere of *Salome* in 1907, presented at the end of the evening after a long concert of operatic highlights, was a historic occasion for several reasons. The great Wagnerian diva Olive Fremstad took the title role, and the glittering audience included Giacomo Puccini (who remained fascinated, if baffled, by the work throughout his life). Many of those present recognized the revolutionary grandeur of the music, but critics and key Met board members deemed the opera so morally and musically outrageous that it was withdrawn after that single performance. *Salome* returned to the repertory in 1934 and was performed several times throughout the next decade. The opera was a sensation in 1949 with the Bulgarian soprano Ljuba Welitsch in the title role. Through the end of the 1950s it was standard to perform *Salome* as part of a double bill, with the most frequent (if unlikely) partner piece being Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. After Welitsch, notable interpreters of the title role at the Met have included Inge Borkh, Birgit Nilsson, Leonie Rysanek, Grace Bumbry, Hildegard Behrens, Catherine Malfitano, and Karita Mattila. Among the remarkable conductors to have led performances have been Dimitri Mitropoulos, Karl Böhm, Erich Leinsdorf, and James Levine. This season, director Claus Guth makes his company debut with a production starring Elza van den Heever as Salome and Peter Mattei as Jochanaan, conducted by Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

## Program Note

From Botticelli in the 15th century and Dürer in the 16th to Picasso and Klimt in the 20th, painters have been fascinated by the personality of Salome. But before Richard Strauss came along in the early years of the 20th century, only Alessandro Stradella with his *San Giovanni Battista* (1675) and Jules Massenet with his *Hérodiade* (1881) had dealt on a large musical scale with the biblical story of the young princess whose dancing so pleased her stepfather, Herod Antipas, that he promised her any reward she might care to name. Prompted by her mother, Herodias, she asked for the head of the itinerant evangelist John the Baptist. Herod had imprisoned him for his blasphemous claim to be preparing the way for God's appearance on Earth, and for his denunciation of Herodias's marriage to Herod as "incestuous" (because her first husband, Salome's father, was Herod's half-brother). Herod, though reluctant to grant his stepdaughter's bloodthirsty request, kept his promise. The executioner, St. Mark records, "brought his head in a charger and gave it to the damsel: And the damsel gave it to her mother."

This is as far as the biblical narrative (which never names Salome) takes us. Oscar Wilde's play *Salomé*, written in French in 1891–92 as a vehicle for Sarah Bernhardt and published with the celebrated illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley, improved on the legend by introducing the motif of sexual obsession—Salome's for John and Herod's for her—and by inventing Herod's order that Salome should be killed by his soldiers, rather as one might put down a mad dog. Wilde's interest reflected that of several 19th-century writers, who found in the subject elements of religio-eroticism more in tune with the spirit of the time than the usual biblical themes. In addition, Wilde had a detailed knowledge of paintings of Salome. Only those by Gustave Moreau fully satisfied him. "Her lust must needs be infinite, and her perversity without limits," was Wilde's view. "Her pearls must expire on her flesh."

Wilde's play, banned in England, was first staged in 1896 in Paris, while its author was in jail. The first German production took place in Breslau in 1901, in a translation by one "Dr. Kisper." Another German translation, by Hedwig Lachmann, was sent to Richard Strauss by the young Viennese writer Anton Lindner, who offered to convert it into an opera libretto. Strauss asked for some sample scenes but was not impressed by them. He had already detected operatic possibilities in Lachmann's text as it stood. The opening line, "Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht!" ("How beautiful the Princess Salome is tonight"), immediately suggested music to him. His copy of the translation contains musical ideas jotted down hastily alongside crucial lines. When he eventually saw the play on the stage in Berlin (where he was conductor of the Court Opera) in November of 1902, in Max Reinhardt's production of Lachmann's translation, he had already made a number of sketches for an opera. Salome was played by the great actress Gertrud Eysoldt, whose striking performance was immortalized in Lovis Corinth's well-known painting.

Strauss shortened the Wilde–Lachmann text by about one third, eliminating some subsidiary episodes and reducing the floridity of the imagery. He also significantly

shifted the balance of the play. Wilde's central character was Herod. Strauss's, indisputably, is Salome—"a 16-year-old princess with the voice of Isolde," he called her. He completed the musical sketch during his 1904 summer holiday and finished the full score on June 20, 1905. The last part to be written was the Dance of the Seven Veils, often decried as the weakest feature of the opera but more justly defined as a brilliantly effective, self-contained tone poem, its music wheedling, kittenish, teasing, and ultimately demoniacal, as Strauss lashes the waltz rhythm into a frenzy.

Strauss awarded the first performance to Dresden, where the conductor Ernst von Schuch had earned Strauss's gratitude for the successful launching of his satirical opera *Feuersnot* in 1901. The composer warned Schuch that the singers of the three principal roles of Salome, Herod, and Jochanaan (the Hebrew name for John the Baptist) would need three months to learn their parts. He had misgivings about the casting of Dresden's buxom Wagnerian soprano Marie Wittich as the slim, youthful Salome but decided that the vocal demands of the role overrode the visual. At the first piano rehearsal, all except one of the singers returned their parts in protest to the conductor. The exception was Czech tenor Carl Burrian (Herod), who already knew his by heart. This shamed his colleagues into reluctant action. Later, when Wittich realized the full extent of the "perversities" the director had devised for her, she threatened to go on strike, protesting, "I won't do it, I'm a decent woman." As a result, Strauss informed Schuch that he would reserve the first performance for him only until December 9. After that, Arthur Nikisch in Leipzig or Gustav Mahler in Vienna could have it. The premiere was given on the deadline date and was an overwhelming success: The audience demanded 38 curtain calls. But the critics abused it as immoral and cacophonous.

The so-called "immorality" of *Salome* led to censorship problems in several countries. Strauss was bluffing Schuch because, although Mahler was anxious to conduct the opera in Vienna, his intention had provoked a warning shot from the Court Opera censor as early as September of 1905. But Mahler persevered resolutely; after reading the score, he wrote to Strauss, "Every note is right! ... I shall leave no stone unturned and shall never flag in championing this incomparable, thoroughly original masterpiece." Mahler first saw *Salome* in Berlin in 1907, when he attended two performances within a few days. "One of the greatest masterpieces of our time," he wrote to his wife. "It is the voice of the 'earth-spirit' speaking from the heart of genius." This was Mahler's way of saying that he recognized that the opera's subject was sex. But the censors denied him the chance to conduct it (its first Vienna performance, by a visiting company from Breslau, was given in 1907 at a theater not under the court censor's control). At one point, Mahler hinted to Strauss that he might threaten to resign his directorship of the Court Opera over *Salome*, which brought the noble response: "We need an artist of your determination, your genius, and your outlook in such a position too badly for you to put anything at stake on *Salome's* account. In the end, we shall attain our ends without this!" *Salome* was not performed at the Vienna State Opera until 1918.

Strauss's employer in Berlin, Kaiser Wilhelm II, remarked that *Salome* would do its composer harm. Strauss's famous retort—that the "harm" enabled him to build his villa in Garmisch—betrays how successful the opera was, both as a coruscating and sensational score and as a succès de scandale. Even today, when our sensitivities have been blunted by far worse horrors than the desire of a depraved girl to kiss the mouth of a decapitated prophet, *Salome* has the power to shock and sicken an audience, not only because of its uncanny translation into music of Wilde's fin de siècle decadence but through the graphic and atmospheric magnetism of Strauss's marvelous score. It gives the impression of having been composed in one sustained burst of invention, although structurally it is divided into the sections of a symphonic poem.

Dramatically, the opera is superbly paced, rising to the climax of Salome's final solo, in which all the melodic themes and fragments are drawn together in an orgasmic expression of mounting desire and madness. It is easy to believe that, as has been suggested, this scene was composed first and that the rest of the one-act opera grew from it. Yet it is not Salome's opera alone. The music for Herod, Herodias, and Jochanaan is almost as starkly characterized, while over the whole score, like the moonlight in which the action takes place, a nocturnal luminosity is shed by the masterful orchestration.

The orchestra is, in a real sense, the protagonist in *Salome*. Although more than 100 instruments are required, Strauss only occasionally unleashes their full capacity. Much of the score is light, transparent, and subtly colored. His advice that it should be played "like fairy music by Mendelssohn" is a valuable hint to interpreters. The virtuosity of the scoring of this "scherzo with a fatal conclusion," in Strauss's own words, is dazzling, from the clarinet's opening roulade to the grinding final chords that underline the horror of Salome's violent death. The famous passage for "pinched" high double-bass notes as Salome sighs with anguish while waiting for Jochanaan's head is but one of numerous loci classici of Strauss's ability to create sounds that exactly mirror the dramatic situation. It is the orchestra, like a stream of consciousness, that tells us what is in the characters' minds and hearts even before they know it themselves. Just one example: When Salome's sexual obsession for Jochanaan becomes murderous, the orchestra converts (by distortion) the theme of her longing to kiss his mouth into that of her demand for his head on a silver charger.

—Michael Kennedy

# The Creative Team



**Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome*, Jeanine Tesori's *Grounded*, *Tosca*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Aida*, and *La Bohème* at the Met; concerts with the Met Orchestra and Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall; and concerts with the Orchestre Métropolitain, Philadelphia Orchestra, Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, and Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 2009 debut conducting *Carmen*, he has led more than 200 performances of 24 operas, as well as numerous galas and concerts with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and on tour in Europe and Asia.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is in his sixth season as the Met's Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer Music Director and is Artistic Director of the company's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. He has served as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 2012 and became the orchestra's artistic director in 2023. He has served as artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000; honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, where he was music director for ten seasons, since 2018; honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe since 2016; and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra between 2008 and 2014. He has won five Grammy Awards, of 16 nominations.



**Claus Guth**

DIRECTOR (FRANKFURT, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for his debut at the Met, Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* at the Bavarian State Opera, Mozart's *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto* in Madrid, Handel's *Saul* in Dresden, and *Bluebeard's Castle* and Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* at the Tyrolean Festival Erl.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** One of today's most in-demand stage directors, he first received widespread acclaim when he directed the world premiere of Berio's *Cronaca del Luogo* at the Salzburg Festival, later returning to stage the trilogy of Mozart-Da Ponte operas. Equally comfortable staging established classics and contemporary works, he has since created productions at the Vienna State Opera, Theater an der Wien, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayreuth Festival, La Scala, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival, Dutch National Opera, Paris Opera, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Park Avenue Armory, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Frankfurt, Zurich, Hamburg, Turin, and Naples, among others. He has twice been honored with the prestigious Faust prize. His production of *Jenůfa* at Covent Garden earned an Olivier Award in 2022, his production of Georg Friedrich Haas's *Bluthaus* at the Bavarian State Opera was named Best International Production by Austria's Musiktheaterpreis in 2022, and he received the Oper! Award for Best Director in 2023.



## Etienne Pluss

SET DESIGNER (GENEVA, SWITZERLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for his debut at the Met, *Wozzeck* in Lyon and at the Royal Swedish Opera, *Ariodante* in Strasbourg, *Macbeth* in Frankfurt, and Charpentier's *Louise* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He frequently collaborates with leading directors, including Claus Guth, George Tabori, Lydia Steier, Christof Loy, Enrico Lúbbe, Adriana Altaras, Patrick Schlösser, Richard Brunel, Jetske Mijnsen, and Nadja Loschky. His recent work includes *Don Carlo* and *La Gioconda* in Naples, *On Purge Bébé* in Brussels, *Hamlet* in Berlin, *Giulio Cesare* and *Macbeth* in Frankfurt, *La Rondine* in Zurich, *Turandot* at the Vienna State Opera, *La Vestale* at the Paris Opera, *Samson* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and *Shirine* in Lyon. His designs have also appeared at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, the Bavarian State Opera, the Salzburg Festival, and in opera houses in Nancy, Leipzig, Graz, Hanover, Düsseldorf, and Prague, among others. In 2019, he won a German Faust prize for his work on Claus Guth's production of Beat Furrer's *Violetter Schnee* at Staatsoper Berlin.



## Ursula Kudrna

COSTUME DESIGNER (VIENNA, AUSTRIA)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for her debut at the Met, Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* at the Bavarian State Opera, and *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto* in Madrid.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She was named Costumer Designer of the Year by *Opernwelt* magazine in 2019. A regular collaborator with director Claus Guth, she has designed costumes for his productions of Beat Furrer's *Violetter Schnee* and *The Makropulos Case* at Staatsoper Berlin and *Salome* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. Additional recent credits include *Samson* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, *Khovanshchina* at Staatsoper Berlin, *Turandot* at the Vienna State Opera and Staatsoper Berlin, *Don Carlos* in Geneva, Offenbach's *Barkouf* in Zurich, *Candide* at the Theater an der Wien, and *The Queen of Spades* at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein. She has frequently worked with directors Philipp Stölzl, Lydia Steier, and Jürgen Flimm, and her designs have also appeared at the Komische Oper Berlin, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Berlin's Volksbühne and Maxim Gorki Theater, La Scala, St. Petersburg's Mikhailovsky Theatre, Vienna Festival, Salzburg Easter Festival, and in Dresden, Bern, Bremen, Darmstadt, Oldenburg, Basel, Cologne, Mainz, Weimar, Stuttgart, and Tokyo, among many others.



**Olaf Freese**

LIGHTING DESIGNER (BERLIN, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for his debut at the Met; *Mefistofele* in Dresden; *Sweeney Todd*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, and *Don Giovanni/Requiem* at the Komische Oper Berlin; Kurtág's *Fin de Partie* at Staatsoper Berlin; and *Sweeney Todd* in Strasbourg.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since 2022, he has been artistic director of lighting at the Komische Oper Berlin. He previously served as lighting director at the Schauspiel Hannover (2000–03), Deutsches Theater Berlin (2003–07), and Staatsoper Berlin (2007–20). He has also designed lighting for prominent theaters and opera companies, including the Salzburg Festival, Salzburg Easter Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, Dutch National Opera, Covent Garden, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, and in Hamburg and Tokyo. He regularly collaborates with leading directors, including Claus Guth, Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito, Falk Richter, Friederike Heller, Stefan Herheim, and Vera Nemirova. In 2016, he developed the lighting concept for Lydia Steier's staging of Stockhausen's *Donnerstag aus Licht* at Theater Basel, a production voted Performance of the Year by *Opernwelt* magazine. He also teaches lighting design at the Dresden University of Fine Arts and Hamburg University of Fine Arts.



**rocafilm/Roland Horvath**

PROJECTION DESIGNER (GRAZ, AUSTRIA)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* at the Met, Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* at the Bavarian State Opera, *Hotel Metamorphosis* at the Salzburg Festival, *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the St. Margarethen Festival, *As You Like It* at the Royal Bath Theatre, and *Into the Woods* at the Bridge Theatre.

**MET PRODUCTIONS** *Carmen* (debut, 2023).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Austrian filmmakers Carmen Zimmermann and Roland Horvath set up their production company, rocafilm, in 2010 to produce videos for operas and plays, as well as documentary films. For the operatic stage, they have collaborated with directors including Claus Guth, Damiano Michieletto, Simon McBurney, Robert Carsen, Luc Bondy, Carrie Cracknell and Rolando Villazón, and their work has appeared at the Vienna State Opera, Park Avenue Armory, La Scala, Dutch National Opera, Paris Opera, Salzburg Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Covent Garden, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Venice, Rome, Valencia, Graz, Cologne, Dresden, and Naples, among others. In December 2020, they collaborated with director Jürgen Flimm on a production of Schiller's *Don Karlos*, *Infant von Spanien* at Schauspiel Köln. They created the documentaries *Between Days and Dreams* in 2011 and *Sister Heart* in 2015.



## Sommer Ulrickson

CHOREOGRAPHER (BERLIN, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for her debut at the Met, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Bielefeld, and *Mitridate, Re di Ponto* in Madrid.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** In 1998, she went to Germany with the Chancellor's Fellowship from the Alexander-von-Humboldt-Foundation. She has worked as choreographer with David Hermann on *Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hans Neuenfels at Staatsoper Berlin in 2018, Daniela Kerck at the Staatstheater Wiesbaden, and in 2024 with Wolfgang Nägele at the Korean National Opera. As a regular collaborator with director Claus Guth, her productions include *Salome* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Jephtha* at Dutch National Opera and the Paris Opera, *Salome* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, *The Makropulos Case* at Staatsoper Berlin, *Doppelgänger* with Jonas Kaufman at Park Avenue Armory in 2023, and *Turandot* at the Vienna State Opera, *Samson* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and *Khovanshchina* at Staatsoper Berlin in 2024. In addition to her work as choreographer, she also directs operas and creates music-theater projects, including most recently *Maria de Buenos Aires* at the Theater Regensburg, which won a Broadway World Award, and *The Art of Being Human* at the Pierre Boulez Saal Berlin / Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg.



## Yvonne Gebauer

DRAMATURG (BERLIN, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** *Salome* for her debut at the Met, Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* at the Bavarian State Opera, *Tosca* in Wiesbaden, Handel's *Saul* in Dresden, and *Maria Stuarda* at the Salzburg Festival. She also serves as concept advisor for *Lulu* in Frankfurt.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** During her two-decade collaboration with Claus Guth, she has contributed to productions of Pascal Dusapin's *Il Viaggio, Dante, La Bohème*, and Handel's *Jephtha* at the Paris Opera; *Don Carlo* in Naples; *The Makropulos Case*, *Khovanshchina*, the world premiere of Beat Furrer's *Violetter Schnee*, Martinů's *Julietta*, and *The Turn of the Screw* at Staatsoper Berlin; *Samson* and *Il Viaggio, Dante* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence; *Jenůfa* at Covent Garden and in Rome; *Semele* at the Bavarian State Opera; Georg Friedrich Haas's *Bluthaus* in Lyon; *Saul* at the Theater an der Wien; *Salome* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre; the world premiere of Chaya Czernowin's *Heart Chamber* and *Salome* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Jephtha* at Dutch National Opera; and the world premiere of Czernowin's *Adama* at the Salzburg Festival. She also works regularly with directors Hans Neuenfels, Kazuko Watanabe, Christof Loy, and Nadja Loschky, among others.

# The Cast



**Piotr Buszewski**

TENOR (WARSAW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Narraboth in *Salome* at the Met, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Zurich, Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Dresden and Rome, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* with the Warsaw Chamber Opera, Stefan in Moniuszko's *Straszny Dwór* at the Polish National Opera, the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Leipzig, Szymanowski's Symphony No. 3 with the Silesian Philharmonic, and Faust in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert with the Łódź Philharmonic.

**MET APPEARANCES** Tamino in *The Magic Flute* and the Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* (debut, 2023).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Cassio in *Otello* in Rome, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* in Leipzig, Alfredo at the Polish National Opera, Fadinard in Rota's *Il Cappello di Paglia di Firenze* in Graz, and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* at San Diego Opera. He has also sung Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, and the Duke of Mantua at the Polish National Opera; the Prince in *Rusalka* in Toulouse; Cassio at Covent Garden; the Chevalier de la Force, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the Duke of Mantua, and Ismaele in *Nabucco* in Hamburg; and the Italian Singer at Staatsoper Berlin.



**Michelle DeYoung**

MEZZO-SOPRANO (GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN)

**THIS SEASON** Herodias in *Salome* at the Met, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Met Orchestra Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, and concerts with the Louisville Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since her 1994 debut as the German Mother in *Death in Venice*, she has sung more than 100 performances of 17 roles, including Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, the Shaman in the world premiere of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, Didon in *Les Troyens*, and the Second Norn in *Götterdämmerung*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** An avid concert singer, she regularly sings with the world's leading orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Berliner Staatskapelle, and the Concertgebouworkest. On the operatic stage, she has appeared at La Scala, the Bayreuth Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, the Paris Opera, English National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and Seattle Opera, among others. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Peter Mattei

BARITONE (PITEÅ, SWEDEN)

**THIS SEASON** Jochanaan in *Salome* and Starbuck in Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick* at the Met and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Bavarian State Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 2002 debut as Count Almaviva, he has sung more than 150 performances of 11 roles, including Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Prince Yeletsy in *The Queen of Spades*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Shishkov in *From the House of the Dead*, and the title roles of *Don Giovanni*, *Wozzeck*, and *Eugene Onegin*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Amfortas at the Royal Swedish Opera, *Wozzeck* in Valencia, *Don Giovanni* at Staatsoper Berlin and Verbier Festival, and Count Almaviva in Dresden and at the Paris Opera. He has also sung *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva, and Eugene Onegin at the Vienna State Opera; Amfortas and Shishkov at the Paris Opera; Eugene Onegin in Zurich and at the Paris Opera; Don Fernando in *Fidelio* and *Don Giovanni* at La Scala; Wolfram at Staatsoper Berlin; and *Don Giovanni* in Zurich.



## Gerhard Siegel

TENOR (TROSTBERG, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** Herod in *Salome* at the Met and in Stuttgart, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier* at La Scala and the Bavarian State Opera, and Mime in *Das Rheingold* at the Paris Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** The Captain in *Wozzeck*, Mime in the *Ring* cycle (debut, 2004), the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Herod.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Valzacchi at the Santa Fe Opera; Herod at the Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, and Bavarian State Opera; Piet the Pot in Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* and Aegisth in *Elektra* at the Vienna State Opera; and the Captain in concert at Verbier Festival. He has also sung the Officer in Hindemith's *Cardillac* at the Vienna State Opera, Mydas in Suppé's *Die Schöne Galathée* in concert with the Munich Radio Orchestra, Herod at the Edinburgh International Festival and in Budapest, Aegisth at Staatsoper Berlin and the Paris Opera, Loge in *Das Rheingold* in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and Scrivener in *Khovanshchina* and the Captain at the Paris Opera. Between 1999 and 2006, he was a member of the ensemble at the Staatstheater Nürnberg.



## Elza van den Heever

SOPRANO (JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Salome* and the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met, a concert with the Met Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Leonore in *Fidelio* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at La Scala, a concert with the Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier, and Elettra in *Idomeneo* at San Francisco Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the title role of *Rodelinda*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, Elettra, Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda* (debut, 2012), and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Julia in *La Vestale* at the Paris Opera, Sieglinde and the Empress in concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Chrysothemis and the Empress in concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Empress at the Vienna State Opera, and Senta at the Santa Fe Opera. She has also sung Salome and Chrysothemis at the Paris Opera, Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and the title role of *Suor Angelica* in Frankfurt, and Elsa in *Lohengrin* at Staatsoper Berlin. Between 2008 and 2013, she was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt.



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