

JULES MASSENET

# MANON

CONDUCTOR  
Maurizio Benini

PRODUCTION  
Laurent Pelly

SET DESIGNER  
Chantal Thomas

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Laurent Pelly

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Joël Adam

CHOREOGRAPHER  
Lionel Hoche

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
Christian Râth

GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in five acts

Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille, based on the novel *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* by Abbé Antoine-François Prévost

Saturday, October 26, 2019  
1:00–5:05PM

Last time this season

The production of *Manon* was made possible by a generous gift from **The Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund**

*Manon* is a co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London; Teatro alla Scala, Milan; and Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse

# The Metropolitan Opera

2019-20 SEASON

The 279th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
JULES MASSENET'S

## MANON

CONDUCTOR  
Maurizio Benini

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

GUILLOT DE MORFONTAINE  
Carlo Bosi

MANON LESCAUT  
Lisette Oropesa\*

DE BRÉTIGNY  
Brett Polegato

CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX  
Michael Fabiano

POUSSETTE  
Jacqueline Echols

A MAID  
Edyta Kulczak

JAVOTTE  
Laura Krumm

COMTE DES GRIEUX  
Kwangchul Youn

ROSETTE  
Maya Lahyani

AN INNKEEPER  
Paul Corona

LESCAUT  
Artur Ruciński

GUARDS  
Mario Bahg\*\*  
Jeongcheol Cha

Saturday, October 26, 2019, 1:00–5:05PM

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Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Derrick Inouye, Howard Watkins\*,  
Joshua Greene, and Bénédicte Jourdois\***  
Assistant Stage Directors **Gregory Keller and  
Mirabelle Ordinaire**  
Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**  
Prompter **Joshua Greene**  
Met Titles **Jacqueline Jones**  
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Jean-Jacques Delmotte**  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and  
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Costumes executed by **Royal Opera House Production  
Departments, Covent Garden, London; Théâtre du  
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Wig and Makeup Department**

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# Synopsis

## Act I

*France, the end of the 19th century.* The noblemen de Brétigny and Guillot de Morfontaine are having dinner with three young women—Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette—at an inn in Amiens, north of Paris. People gather for the arrival of the coach to Paris, among them Lescaut. He is waiting for his young cousin Manon, who is on her way to enter a convent. The coach arrives, and Manon expresses her exuberant joy about her first journey away from home. Enchanted by her, Guillot offers to take Manon to Paris, but she and his companions laugh at him. Lescaut reproaches Manon for her behavior, which could shame their family. Manon gazes with envy at the elegant clothes of the other women. The young Chevalier des Grieux arrives too late to catch the coach, which has already left. He falls in love with Manon at first sight, and when she tells him that it is her fondness for pleasure that has led her family to send her to a convent, he is determined to rescue her from such a fate. They escape together in Guillot's coach. The returning Lescaut furiously accuses Guillot of having kidnapped his cousin but then learns from the innkeeper that Manon went off with a young man. Guillot, mocked by everyone, swears revenge on the eloping couple.

## Act II

In their humble apartment in the Rue Vivienne in Paris, des Grieux writes to his father for permission to marry Manon. The maid announces visitors: Lescaut and another man, who, she warns Manon, is de Brétigny in disguise. Lescaut, using the argument of family honor offended, berates des Grieux for having abducted Manon. In fact, he is trying to profit by setting her up with de Brétigny. Des Grieux, to prove his honorable intentions, produces his letter. Meanwhile, de Brétigny tells Manon that des Grieux's father is planning to kidnap his own son that evening; however, if she does nothing to prevent it and instead comes to live with de Brétigny, she can have wealth and luxury. After Lescaut and de Brétigny have left, des Grieux goes out to post his letter. Manon realizes that she is unable to resist de Brétigny's offer and bids farewell to her life with des Grieux. Des Grieux returns to find her weeping, but she will not tell him why. He talks of his dream of an idyllic future together in the country. When there's a knock on the door, Manon begs him not to answer it, but he goes. Looking out the window, she sees him being abducted.

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:20PM)

## Act III

On public holiday, a crowd has gathered at the Cours-la-Reine. Manon, now living with de Brétigny and the toast of Paris, praises the pleasures of her luxurious existence. Overhearing a conversation between de Brétigny and the Comte des Grieux, she learns that the count's son, following an unhappy love affair, is about to become a priest and will preach later that day at the seminary of St. Sulpice. Manon doesn't believe that des Grieux could have forgotten her and leaves the festivities to find him.

At St. Sulpice, des Grieux has attracted much admiration for his sermon. The count tries to dissuade his son from entering the priesthood in favor of marriage. Des Grieux is adamant but realizes that he can't forget Manon. When she appears, he angrily confronts her. She admits her guilt but begs him to forgive her and to remember their past love. Unable to resist Manon's seduction, des Grieux yields to his feelings and renounces his vows.

## *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:55PM)

## Act IV

Gamblers are gathered at the Hôtel de Transylvanie, among them Guillot and Lescaut. Manon and des Grieux arrive, and she reminds him that his fortune has nearly run out. He accepts Guillot's challenge to play. Manon, Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette consider what money might bring them. Des Grieux wins heavily, but Guillot accuses him of cheating, threatening to inform the count. The police arrive and arrest des Grieux. The count assures his son that he will be released soon. Manon, as his accomplice, is taken away to prison.

## Act V

Des Grieux and Lescaut have come up with a plan to rescue Manon, who has been sentenced to deportation to America, but their paid accomplices have deserted them. Lescaut manages to bribe the guards and leaves Manon and des Grieux alone together. Ill and exhausted, she begs des Grieux to forgive her for the shame that she has brought him. While she recalls their past, he only thinks of their future together. But the rescue has come too late. As des Grieux assures her of his forgiveness and love, Manon dies in his arms.

ALSO ON STAGE



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CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

# ORFEO ED EURIDICE

Mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton portrays one of the great heroes of mythology, in Gluck's operatic adaptation of the classic Orpheus story. The spirited production by choreographer Mark Morris also stars sopranos Hei-Kyung Hong as Euridice and Hera Hyesang Park as Amore, with Mark Wigglesworth conducting.

**OCT** 20mat, 24, 29 **NOV** 1, 4, 7, 10mat

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*Jules Massenet*

# Manon

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*Premiere: Paris, Opéra Comique, 1884*

A quintessentially French tale of a beautiful young woman incapable of choosing between love and luxury, Massenet's *Manon* features one of the truly unforgettable, irresistible, and archetypal characters in opera. While the story is firmly set in class and gender issues of the past, the title heroine is timeless. The lover she can neither forget nor completely commit to is a young chevalier, des Grieux, who is caught in his own struggle between his desires and the expectations of the outside world. The opera triumphs in its portrayal of love within an oppressive (if outwardly gorgeous) society: His father, Manon's cousin, and various men interested in her for their own reasons are always hovering near the lovers. *Manon* has been a success ever since its premiere, championed by a diverse roster of singers who have cherished its dramatic opportunities, exalted style (maintained even when painting a searing portrait of the basest human traits), and ravishing music.

### *The Creators*

Jules Massenet (1842–1912), a French composer wildly popular in his day, was noted for his operas, songs, and oratorios. In recent decades, several of his operas beyond *Manon*, especially *Werther* (1892) and *Thaïs* (1894), have been performed more frequently. His librettists for *Manon* were Henri Meilhac (1831–97) and Philippe Gille (1831–1901). Meilhac also collaborated on the libretto of Bizet's *Carmen*, several of Offenbach's most popular operettas, and a farce that became the basis for Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*. Gille was a dramatist who also worked with Offenbach and co-wrote the libretto to Delibes's *Lakmé*. The pair loosely based their text on Abbé Prévost's (1697–1763) hugely influential novel *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*, which would also inspire Giacomo Puccini a decade later.

### *The Setting*

The opera is set in and around Paris, with familiar landmarks such as the church of St. Sulpice forming important reference points in the plot. The story was originally set in the early 18th century, a time known as the Regency that would become notable for a high level of governmental corruption. The Met's production places the action in the late 19th century, the so-called Belle Époque and the time when the opera was written.

### *The Music*

Massenet's score captures the drama of his most memorable heroine with deft craftsmanship, expressive vocal and orchestral writing, and an almost unparalleled level of sensuality. A solo violin accompanies the first meeting of the lovers—this melody will become their main love theme. There is no shortage of passion, perhaps most notably in des Grieux's Act III aria "Ah! fuyez, douce image," in which he struggles with his longing for Manon. But much of the music's passion is different from what one would expect in an Italian opera, or even a more earthy French work such as *Carmen*. Some of the most dramatically (and erotically) charged passages rely on the simplest effects; the quivering of the violins, for example, when the lovers finally touch in the St. Sulpice scene is a brief musical detail, but it is as voluptuous as anything in opera. Likewise, many of the solos rely on subtlety and delicate colors for their effect; the refinement of both Manon's "Adieu, notre petite table" and des Grieux's "En fermant les yeux" (known as "Le Rêve," or "The Dream") in Act II create a sense of breathless wonder and suspended time. Massenet also achieved a convincing mood of nostalgia with faux-Baroque touches, particularly in Manon's famous Gavotte in the first scene of Act III, "Obéissons quand leur voix appelle," a paean to the joys of youth whose reflection of the past functions on both personal and historical levels.

### *Met History*

*Manon* premiered at the Met in 1895 with Sibyl Sanderson in the title role. The California-born diva was a favorite of Paris audiences and of Massenet himself, who had written the title role of *Thaïs* for her the year before. Polish tenor Jean de Reszke sang des Grieux, and French bass Pol Plançon was the count. Geraldine Farrar and Enrico Caruso led the cast of a new production in 1909. Twenty years later, the legendary Joseph Urban designed another new staging that featured Lucrezia Bori and Beniamino Gigli. The Brazilian soprano Bidú Sayão was a favorite Manon in 22 performances from 1937 through 1952. Licia Albanese (11 performances) and Victoria de los Angeles (15 performances) were the most popular interpreters of the title role through the 1950s, with Giuseppe Di Stefano and Nicolai Gedda among the great tenors singing des Grieux during this period. New productions by Günther Rennert (with Anna Moffo, Gedda, and Giorgio Tozzi) and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle (featuring Catherine Malfitano, Dénes Gulyás, and Ferruccio Furlanetto) followed in 1963 and 1987, respectively. Julius Rudel conducted Renée Fleming and Marcello Giordani in eight performances of the Ponnelle production in 1997, and Jesús López-Cobos led Fleming and Marcelo Álvarez in 2005. The current production, by Laurent Pelly, opened in 2012, with Fabio Luisi conducting Anna Netrebko and Piotr Beczala. During the 2014–15 season, Diana Damrau and Vittorio Grigolo appeared as the young lovers.

## Program Note

Set in Paris during spirited but turbulent times, Massenet's *Manon* explores the constant discrepancy between wealth and poverty, duty and desire. The idealistic Chevalier des Grieux and his beloved Manon are caught between these poles and are powerless to survive. Des Grieux's fevered dreams of a simple life fade before his eyes as Manon is imprisoned for impropriety. But rather than turning to po-faced morality, Massenet preserves the lovers' touching idealism right through to the opera's final bars. Composed for Paris's popular Opéra Comique, Massenet wanted to make this hand-me-down tale more accessible, more tangible for his 1880s audience. So instead of patronizingly portraying the lovers as a foolish couple, the composer's rich melodies and harmonic eloquence make us realize why they dared to dream.

Born in St. Étienne in southeastern France, Massenet moved to Paris with his family when he was just a child. The establishment of the Second Empire in 1852 and the great urban transformation heralded by Baron Haussmann created a heady artistic and social city. Thrown into a world where grand opéra turned to opéra comique, when Wagnerism was at its height, and when Baudelaire and absinthe mixed together in an intoxicating cultural cocktail, Massenet was gifted an extraordinary apprenticeship. Although initially reluctant to try his hand at composition, he won first prize in the esteemed Prix de Rome in 1863. When he returned from further studies in Italy, Paris welcomed him back with open arms.

While Massenet's legacy would ultimately surpass those of operatic peers such as Saint-Saëns, Delibes, Lalo, Fauré, and Duparc, he was a slow starter. The eventual success of *Le Roi de Lahore* (premiered at the Opéra National's extravagant new Palais Garnier in 1877) brought Massenet to wider attention. Offers came in from various collaborators and theaters, including the increasingly chic Opéra Comique. Based at the Salle Favart, just off one of Haussmann's new boulevards, this rival for the Opéra National's claims on the city's operatic legacy prided itself on more realistic work. Bizet's *Carmen* had set the trend in 1875, with many wishing to follow in its stamping footsteps. Formally less strict than the Opéra National, the Opéra Comique employed dialogue, dancing, and well-known tales. It fostered a new brand of theatrical realism that paved the way for verismo and Puccini at the turn of the century.

Massenet was an opportunistic composer, and the suggestion from one of the Opéra Comique's directors to write an opera based on Abbé Prévost's famous novel *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et du Manon Lescaut* suited him perfectly. There was not a person alive in France who didn't know the story. The book had already been adapted as an opera by Daniel Auber and as a popular sung drama in the early 1850s. But what had been a previously moderate success became Massenet's calling card. It was a bold choice. Being the people's opera house, the Opéra Comique also guarded common morality, and the story of Manon Lescaut was a distinctly salacious tale. So, rather than emphasizing the sexual aspects, Massenet and his team created a story of lost innocence.

Unlike Auber's opera or Puccini's passionate *Manon Lescaut* (first heard in 1893), Massenet's *Manon* is about a world at odds joined by young love. A chance meeting on the road to Paris sets in train a whole series of romantic and ultimately tragic episodes. Des Grieux comes from a strict, moralistic background, while Manon's cousin Lescaut introduces her to a world of gambling, sex, and alcohol. The magnetism of that carefree life is immediately apparent in Massenet's score, the trish-trashy jangle of the tambourine and the endless stream of Baroque-inspired dances characterizing glorious vanity. Bright major keys and chirruping sweethearts—Poussette, Javotte, and Rosette, all with interchangeable names and identical dotted music—stand out against des Grieux's ardent melodies.

That disparity is immediately apparent in the overture. A fizzy prelude gives way to an amorous middle section representing the young lovers. Des Grieux's first entrance in Act I similarly shifts us from those lurid tones to a balmy string-led accompaniment featuring the young man's cello theme. It is a style that returns at the beginning of the second act and later in his passionate Act III aria "Ah! fuyez, douce image." But however insistent he is, des Grieux is unable to keep Manon, his "sphinx étonnant"—mysterious, astonishing sphinx—to himself. A last desperate plea—"En fermant les yeux" in Act II—mimics the brighter keys of her world but is futile. Des Grieux's commitment and Manon's flightiness finally clash in the third act. The first scene is a riot of color and celebration. Manon is in her element, greeted by fame and fortune (all provided by the unctuous Monsieur de Brétigny). Massenet cruelly highlights the artificiality of her success with a deliberately formulaic opening scene. Manon shows off with florid bel canto excess in "Je marche sur tous les chemins" and her pert gavotte "Obéissons quand leur voix appelle." The ensuing ballet apes the old world of grand opéra. Reality finally comes home to roost in the next scene.

The soberness of St. Sulpice—an austere basilica on the other side of the Seine—is a great shock after the festive atmosphere of the Cours-la-Reine. Having been rejected by Manon, des Grieux has placed himself as far from her as he can. Throughout the scene, Massenet charts a much more realistic course. As dialogue unfolds between des Grieux and his father, the music slowly moves into recitative and then into the count's "Épouse quelque brave fille." Left alone, des Grieux is disconsolate. Although "Ah! fuyez, douce image" sounds like a hymn, it recalls the lovers' passionate music. Praying to God, des Grieux dutifully follows the tread of a distant organ, but he soon breaks out of those liturgical constraints. When the curtain rises on Act IV, desire has won and we are back in Manon's world of gambling and drink. Des Grieux is out of his depth, Manon has broken de Brétigny's rules, and the lovers are destined to ruin. Formerly jolly music mocks their choices, and Act V is a doom-laden recollection of what has gone before.

So who is to blame for this tragedy? Certainly not des Grieux, but neither is Manon. Although Massenet's morality remains clear throughout the opera,

there is a touching note of regret that runs through every word that the lovers sing. From Manon's stumbling first entrance—marked "moitié larmes, moitié sourires" ("half tears, half smiles") in the score—to the heartbreaking "Adieu, notre petite table," she is clearly no femme fatale. Manon is merely dazzled by the bright lights and the big city, the kind of girl that Massenet would have seen sitting in the gallery at the Opéra Comique—an aspect that is underlined in director Laurent Pelly's updating of the tragedy to the time of the opera's composition. But however affectionate the score, Manon's journey from innocent girl to destitute courtesan is extreme, with Massenet's eschewal of high drama emphasizing that tragedy. The original Opéra Comique audience may have professed righteous indignation at the lovers' lot but, moved by Massenet's tender melodies, they would also have felt profound sympathy, as we do today. In the heroine's final words, "Et c'est là l'histoire de Manon Lescaut!"—"And that is the story of Manon Lescaut!"

—Gavin Plumley

*Gavin Plumley, commissioning editor of English-language program notes for the Salzburg Festival, appears frequently on BBC Radio 3 and has written for newspapers, magazines, and opera and concert programs worldwide.*



## Manon on Demand

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ALSO ON STAGE



MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

# LA BOHÈME

Two of opera's most compelling artists, Ailyn Pérez (pictured) and Matthew Polenzani, share the Met stage for the first time, as the bohemian lovers at the heart of Puccini's classic tragedy. Marco Armiliato conducts Franco Zeffirelli's romantic staging—a timeless audience favorite.

**OCT 25, 30 NOV 2, 5, 9, 14, 17 mat, 21**

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## The Cast



### Maurizio Benini

CONDUCTOR (FAENZA, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *Manon* and *Maria Stuarda* at the Met, *Il Pirata* in Madrid, *La Traviata* at Covent Garden, and *Nabucco* at Dutch National Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 1998 debut conducting *L'Elisir d'Amore*, he has led more than 200 performances of 15 operas, including *Semiramide*, *I Puritani*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Don Pasquale*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Maria Stuarda*, *La Cenerentola*, *Norma*, *Faust*, *Luisa Miller*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Traviata*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *Il Trovatore* in Madrid and at the Paris Opera; *La Sonnambula* in concert in Zurich; *Rigoletto* in Buenos Aires; *Falstaff*, *Luisa Miller* in concert, and *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Monte Carlo; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Dutch National Opera; and *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* at Covent Garden. He has also conducted *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Toulouse; *Anna Bolena* and *Norma* in Seville; *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in Zurich; *Nabucco* at Covent Garden; Catalani's *La Wally* in Monte Carlo; *Il Trovatore* at Dutch National Opera; Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* at the Bavarian State Opera; *La Scala di Seta*, *L'Occasione Fa il Ladro*, and *Le Siège de Corinthe* at Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival; and *Maria Stuarda* in Barcelona.



### Lisette Oropesa

SOPRANO (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Manon* and *Violetta* in *La Traviata* at the Met, *Ophélie* in *Hamlet* in concert at Washington Concert Opera, *Rosina* in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Paris Opera, the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Bavarian State Opera, *Violetta* in Madrid, *Carmina Burana* in Paris, and *Konstanze* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Glyndebourne Festival.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since her 2006 debut as a *Woman of Crete* in *Idomeneo*, she has sung more than 125 performances of 16 roles, including *Gretel* in *Hansel and Gretel*, *Sophie* in *Werther*, *Nannetta* in *Falstaff*, *Gilda* in *Rigoletto*, and *Susanna* in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include *Violetta* at Greek National Opera and in Verona, *Amalia* in Verdi's *I Masnadieri* at Savonlinna Opera Festival and La Scala, *Norina* in *Don Pasquale* at Pittsburgh Opera, *Isabelle* in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* in concert in Brussels, the title role of *Rodelinda* in Barcelona, and *Gilda* in Rome. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and was the 2019 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.

## The Cast CONTINUED



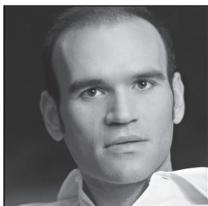
### Carlo Bosi

TENOR (LIVORNO, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** Guillot de Morfontaine in *Manon*, Emperor Altoum in *Turandot*, and the New Year's Eve Gala at the Met; Spoletta in *Tosca* at La Scala; Emperor Altoum in Rome; and Goro in *Madama Butterfly* at Covent Garden.

**MET APPEARANCES** The Abbé de Chazeuil in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Nick in *La Fanciulla del West*, and Dr. Caius in *Falstaff* (debut, 2013).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*, the Messenger in *Aida*, Gastone in *La Traviata*, and Abdallo in *Nabucco* in Verona; Nick in Beijing; the Incredibile in *Andrea Chénier*, Trabuco in *La Forza del Destino*, and Dr. Caius at Covent Garden; Goro at the Glyndebourne Festival and Bavarian State Opera; Dr. Caius in concert in Budapest; the Incredibile at La Scala; Trabuco at Dutch National Opera; and Le Remendado in *Carmen* in Naples. He has also appeared at leading opera companies in Florence, Turin, Monte Carlo, Paris, Palermo, Madrid, Rome, Brussels, Cagliari, Genoa, Parma, Modena, the Canary Islands, Pisa, Seville, and Cosenza.



### Michael Fabiano

TENOR (MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY)

**THIS SEASON** Chevalier des Grieux in *Manon* at the Met, the title role of *Don Carlo* and Hoffmann in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Paris Opera, Don José in *Carmen* at Staatsoper Berlin, Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Madrid, Don Carlo at Covent Garden, and the opening night gala at Michigan Opera Theatre.

**MET APPEARANCES** Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Faust in *Mefistofele*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Alfredo, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Cassio in *Otello*, and Raffaele in *Stiffelio* (debut, 2010).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Carlo VII in Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* in concert in Madrid, the Duke in *Rigoletto* at Staatsoper Berlin and LA Opera, the title role of *Faust* and the Duke at Covent Garden, the title role of *Werther* and Edgardo at Opera Australia, Rodolfo at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Corrado in Verdi's *Il Corsaro* in Valencia, and Chevalier des Grieux in Bilbao and at San Francisco Opera. He has also sung Rodolfo at Covent Garden, Don José in Aix-en-Provence, and Jean in Massenet's *Hérodiade* in concert at Washington Concert Opera. He was the 2014 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



## Brett Polegato

BARITONE (NIAGARA FALLS, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON** De Brétigny in *Manon* for his debut at the Met, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Lebanon's Al Bustan International Festival of Music and the Performing Arts, and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with Symphony Nova Scotia.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Dorset Opera Festival; Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* at Grange Park Opera; Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* at Irish National Opera; Howie Albert in Terence Blanchard's *Champion* in Montreal; Dr. Joseph Talbot in William Bolcom's *Dinner at Eight* at Wexford Festival Opera; the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Palm Beach Opera; Marcello in *La Bohème* in Victoria, Canada; and Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Vancouver. He has also sung Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* in Rome, Paris, and Bordeaux; Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra* in Victoria; Amfortas in *Parsifal* in concert at Festival de Lanaudière; the world premiere of Jeffrey Ryan's *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation* with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra; Starbuck in Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick*, Lt. Audebert in Kevin Puts's *Silent Night*, and Fritz in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* in Calgary; the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Vancouver; and the title role of *Wozzeck* at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre.



## Artur Ruciński

BARITONE (WARSAW, POLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Lescaut in *Manon* and Marcello in *La Bohème* at the Met, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Monte Carlo and at Covent Garden, the Duke of Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux* in Paris, and Germont in *La Traviata* in Madrid.

**MET APPEARANCES** Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* (debut, 2016) and Germont.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* and Enrico in Madrid; Robert in *Iolanta*, the title role of *Gianni Schicchi*, and Marcello at the Paris Opera; Enrico in Zurich; Francesco in Verdi's *I Masnadieri* in Valencia and Rome; Miller in *Luisa Miller* in concert in Monte Carlo; Marcello in Bilbao; and Germont at San Francisco Opera. He has also sung Marcello in Turin and Naples; Count di Luna in Barcelona and Verona; Enrico in Tokyo and at the Paris Opera; the title role of *Eugene Onegin* and Germont at Covent Garden; the Duke of Nottingham in Geneva; the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Paris Opera; Germont at Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, and in Verona; Eugene Onegin at the Bavarian State Opera and in Warsaw and Bologna; and the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Staatsoper Berlin.



**Kwangchul Youn**

BASS (CHUNG JU, SOUTH KOREA)

**THIS SEASON** Comte des Grieux in *Manon* at the Met; Abimélech in *Samson et Dalila* at Staatsoper Berlin; King Henry in *Lohengrin* in Dortmund, Germany, and Zurich; Ramfis in *Aida* in Barcelona; Jacopo Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* and Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* in Hamburg; and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* at the Salzburg Festival.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since his 2004 debut as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, he has sung nearly 100 performances of 12 roles, including Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Melcthal in *Guillaume Tell*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Talbot in *Maria Stuarda*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 1993 and 2004, he was a member of the ensemble at Staatsoper Berlin, where, in 2018, he was awarded the title of Kammersänger. Recent performances include Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Sarastro, and Banquo in *Macbeth* at Staatsoper Berlin; Jacopo Fiesco and King Henry at the Vienna State Opera; Ferrando at the Bavarian State Opera; and King Marke with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared at the Bayreuth Festival, La Scala, Covent Garden, Korea National Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.