

GIUSEPPE VERDI

NABUCCO

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

PRODUCTION
Elijah Moshinsky

SET DESIGNER
John Napier

COSTUME DESIGNER
Andreane Neofitou

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Howard Harrison

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR
J. Knighten Smit

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Temistocle Solera, based on the play *Nabuchodonosor* by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu

Monday, December 12, 2016
7:30–10:15PM

First time this season

The production of *Nabucco* was made possible by a generous gift from **Bill Rollnick and Nancy Ellison Rollnick**

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The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from the Estate of Francine Berry

The Metropolitan Opera

2016-17 SEASON

The 58th Metropolitan Opera performance of
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

NABUCCO

CONDUCTOR
James Levine

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

ZACCARIA, HIGH PRIEST OF THE HEBREWS
Dmitry Belosselskiy

ISMAELE, NEPHEW OF SEDECIA, KING OF JERUSALEM
Russell Thomas

FENENA, NABUCCO'S DAUGHTER
Jamie Barton

ABIGAILLE, SLAVE, BELIEVED TO BE
NABUCCO'S ELDEST DAUGHTER
Liudmyla Monastyrska

ANNA, ZACCARIA'S SISTER
Danielle Talamantes

NABUCCO
Plácido Domingo

HIGH PRIEST OF BAAL
Sava Vemić DEBUT**

ABDALLO, OFFICER OF THE KING OF BABYLON
Eduardo Valdes

This performance
is being broadcast
live on Metropolitan
Opera Radio on
SiriusXM channel 74
and streamed at
metopera.org.

Monday, December 12, 2016, 7:30-10:15PM



A scene from
Verdi's *Nabucco*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Dan Saunders, J. David Jackson,**
Carol Isaac, and Bryan Wagorn*
Assistant Stage Director **Eric Einhorn**
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**
Italian Coach **Gildo Di Nunzio**
Prompter **Carol Isaac**
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**
Assistants to the Set Designer **Sue Jenkinson DiAmico,**
Alan Bain, and Derek Norman
Assistant to the Costume Designer **Elise Napier**
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** Member of the
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KAIJA SAARIAHO / LIBRETTO BY AMIN MAALOUF

L'AMOUR DE LOIN

DEC 1, 6, 10mat, 14, 17 eve, 21, 24 mat, 29

The Metropolitan Opera presents the New York premiere of one of the most acclaimed operas of recent years, Kaija Saariaho's mesmerizing *L'Amour de Loin*, in a spellbinding new production by Robert Lepage. Susanna Mälkki conducts.

Tickets from \$27

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Synopsis

Act I: *Jerusalem*

Jerusalem, 6th century BC. The Israelites are praying for help against Nabucco (Nebuchadnezzar), King of Babylon, who has attacked them and is vandalizing the city. Zaccaria, their high priest, reassures his people that the Lord will not forsake them. As the Israelites leave, Ismaele, nephew of the King of Jerusalem, is left alone with Nabucco's daughter Fenena, whom the Hebrews hold hostage. The two fell in love during Ismaele's imprisonment in Babylon, and Fenena helped him escape and followed him to Jerusalem. They are interrupted by the sudden appearance of Fenena's half-sister, Abigaille, and a band of disguised Babylonian soldiers. Abigaille, who is also in love with Ismaele, tells him that she can save his people if he will return her love, but he refuses. The Israelites rush back into the temple in a panic. When Nabucco enters with his warriors, Zaccaria confronts him, threatening to kill Fenena. Ismaele disarms the priest and delivers Fenena to her father. Nabucco orders the destruction of the temple.

Act II: *The Impious One*

Nabucco has appointed Fenena regent while he is away leading his campaign. Abigaille, back in the royal palace in Babylon, has found a document saying that she is not the king's daughter but the child of slaves. Foreseeing a future in which Fenena and Ismaele will rule together over Babylon, she swears vengeance on Nabucco and Fenena. The High Priest of Baal arrives with news that Fenena has betrayed them and freed the Israelite prisoners. He offers the throne to Abigaille and proposes to spread the rumor that Nabucco has fallen in battle.

Zaccaria hopes to persuade the Babylonians to give up their false idols. The Levites accuse Ismaele of treachery, but Zaccaria announces that he has been pardoned for saving a fellow Israelite—the newly converted Fenena. A messenger warns Fenena that the king is dead and her life is in danger. Before she can escape, the High Priest of Baal arrives with Abigaille and the Babylonians, who proclaim Abigaille ruler. She is about to crown herself when, to the astonishment of all, Nabucco appears. He takes the crown from her and declares himself not only king but god. At this, a thunderbolt strikes him down. Abigaille, triumphant, retrieves the crown for herself.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:45 PM)

Act III: *The Prophecy*

The Babylonians hail Abigaille as their ruler. The High Priest urges her to have the Israelites killed, but before she can give the order, Nabucco appears in a state of half-madness. Alone with him, Abigaille tricks him into signing the death warrant for the captive Israelites. Fenena, she says, must also die. When Nabucco starts

to look for the document proving Abigaille's ancestry, she produces it and tears it to pieces. He pleads in vain for Fenena's life.

On the banks of the Euphrates, the Israelites remember their lost homeland. Zaccaria tells them they will overcome captivity and obliterate Babylon with God's help.

Act IV: The Broken Idol

Nabucco, locked in his apartments by Abigaille, watches Fenena and the Israelites being led to execution. He prays to the god of Israel for forgiveness, pledging to convert himself and his people. His sanity restored, he summons his soldiers to regain the throne and save his daughter.

The Israelites are about to be executed. Fenena prays to be received into heaven when Nabucco rushes in and stops the sacrifice. Nabucco announces his conversion and frees the Israelites, telling them to return to their native land and rebuild their temple. Israelites and Babylonians are united in praising God. Abigaille, full of remorse, has taken poison and dies, confessing her crimes and praying to the god of Israel to pardon her.

Giuseppe Verdi

Nabucco

Premiere: Milan, Teatro alla Scala, 1842

Verdi's third opera, a stirring drama about the fall of ancient Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Nabucco) and the Hebrews' subsequent exile in Babylon, was a spectacular hit at its premiere and catapulted the 28-year-old composer to international fame. The story of the premiere is famous: Following the death of his first wife and the disastrous reception of his previous work, the comedy *Un Giorno di Regno*, a disillusioned Verdi had decided to quit composing. He is said to have changed his mind when he saw the text written by Temistocle Solera for *Nabucco*. Inspired, he set to work and created an opera that would become a sensation and launch his career. The music and the composer himself were subsumed into a surge of patriotic fervor culminating in the foundation of the modern nation of Italy. Specifically, the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves in Act II ("Va, pensiero"), in which the Israelites express their longing for their homeland, was singled out as the nexus of Verdi's art and the country's aspirations for unity. It has come to stand for that exciting era in Italian history, the Risorgimento, or "Resurgence," and was long considered a sort of unofficial national anthem. Some of the history surrounding these events and Verdi's role in them has been called into question by recent scholarship, but there is little doubt that "Va, pensiero" gripped audiences from the very first performance. Six decades later, Arturo Toscanini conducted the piece at Verdi's state funeral in Milan, leading the vast forces of orchestras and choruses from all over Italy. The stories surrounding the creation of *Nabucco* have sometimes obscured the musical qualities of the opera itself. It faded from the repertoire after its initial success and was little known for decades. But what struck audiences more than 150 years ago has again impressed contemporary listeners as dynamic and exhilarating.

The Creators

In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theater, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. Temistocle Solera (1815–1878) was a professional librettist and, early in his career, a composer of moderate success. He also provided Verdi with the librettos for his first opera, *Oberto*, and the subsequent *I Lombardi*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *Attila*.

The Setting

Solera's libretto takes some liberties with biblical history, and all of the characters other than the title role are dramatic inventions. But the story as a whole stays close to events as they are related in Jewish scriptures: primarily Jeremiah, as well as 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Daniel, and the Psalms (the words to "Va, pensiero" are a paraphrase of Psalm 137, "By the waters of Babylon"). The first act takes place around the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC, with the remainder of the opera set in various locations in the city of Babylon.

The Music

The score, with its contrasts of the dynamic and the serene, provides an ideal frame for the personal and communal aspects of the drama. The chorus is assigned a major role, giving voice to a wide spectrum of feelings, from terror at the beginning to despair, faith, and finally bright hope. It also interacts superbly with the soloists: the Act II, Scene 2 ensemble, "S'appressan gl'istanti," is a masterful depiction of the counterpoint of private and public emotion. Abigail's wild character is sharply drawn from her first entrance: a recitative covering a range of two octaves, with a pair of high Cs in the subsequent trio. Rather than depicting a character that goes mad, as in so many other operas, Abigail's music reflects a personality that embodies madness through sheer malice. The opera contains a brief mad scene for the title character, but Verdi gives more emphasis to Nabucco's return to sanity in his poignant Act IV aria "Dio di Giuda." The aria is a prayer, one of a number in the opera: Fenena sings a serene one in Act IV, while the Hebrew priest Zaccaria has several prayers of varying moods—including a rousing opening-scene solo and a stately one full of faith and grandeur in Act II, Scene 2. The supreme example of operatic prayer, of course, is found in "Va, pensiero." The simplicity of the choral melody and the unity of the vocal line (there is no harmonization until about halfway through) perfectly encapsulate the communal sentiment.

Met History

Nabucco did not appear at the Met until a production by Günther Rennert opened the 1960–61 season. Thomas Schippers conducted Cornell MacNeil, Leonie Rysanek, and Cesare Siepi in the leading roles. Despite a popularity surge at the time in what were then the lesser-known works of Verdi (with *Macbeth* receiving its Met premiere in 1959 and *Ernani* and *Simon Boccanegra* returning in new productions around the same time), *Nabucco* again fell from the repertory for several more decades. The current production by Elijah Moshinsky is only the second in Met history. It was unveiled in 2001, with James Levine conducting a cast led by Juan Pons, Maria Guleghina, and Samuel Ramey.

Program Note

Nabucco is known as Verdi's first hit, but it also is a great deal more than that. Often, early works by great composers—Wagner's *Symphony in C*, Puccini's *Le Villi*, Debussy's *Printemps*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*—offer glimpses of the artist to come, but *Nabucco* already has many of Verdi's signatures: soaring melody, monumental choruses, treacherous arias, and relentless narrative drive. The intimacy and musical unity of *Aida*, Verdi's later depiction of an enslaved people, are not yet present, but Verdi's mastery of choruses decidedly is, so much so that *Aida*'s choruses are modelled on those in *Nabucco*. The swaying, mysteriously inspirational "Va, pensiero" quickly became one of the most popular choruses in the repertory, so enduringly associated with Verdi that it was played at his funeral by Toscanini in 1901 with thousands of people singing.

Nabucco also announced Verdi's skill with instrumental color, even if his orchestration had not attained the individuality of his mature works: the sonorous trombones and exquisite oboe solo in the overture, the haunting wind-band funeral march for Fenena, the chamber-like string ensemble for Zaccaria's "Vieni, o Levita!," and the imposing brass chorale announcing the last scene of Act II are just a few examples. Elegant woodwind figurations, especially for flute, caress nearly every aria. The sizzling strings and rattling percussion have a Rossini-like frisson. In his early period, Verdi was as afflicted with Rossini-fever as anyone; indeed, Rossini's oratorio-like opera *Mosè in Egitto* from 1818 was one of his models for *Nabucco*. Verdi also knew when to make the orchestra vanish, as in the rapt a *cappella* chorus at the end of the opera, "Immenso Jehova."

How *Nabucco* came to exist is a story that sounds—and in some of its details, almost surely is—too good to be true. Verdi's second opera, *Un Giorno di Regno*, premiered at La Scala in 1840 and was such a miserable flop that Verdi, already traumatized over the deaths of his wife Margherita and their two children, vowed to abandon his musical career. Then a chance street encounter with La Scala's impresario, Bartolomeo Merelli, changed his life. Merelli had a new libretto called *Nabucco* and convinced Verdi to peek at it. Troubled with insomnia, Verdi read it late at night, randomly opening the pages to the text of "Va, pensiero"—"Go, thoughts, on wings of gold." Like the thunderbolt in Act II of the opera, it struck him instantly: "*Nabucco* was racing though my head!" he wrote. "I could not sleep: I got up and read the libretto, not once, not twice, but three times, so that in the morning, you might say, I knew Solera's whole libretto from memory." Even so, Verdi's depression was so profound that he had to force himself to write the piece: "One day, one line; one day, another; now one note, now a phrase ... little by little, the opera was composed."

The libretto by Temistocle Solera—whose career included stints as circus performer, advisor to Queen Isabella of Spain, and personal courier for both Napoleon III and the Khedive of Egypt—is based loosely on the Old Testament

and primarily on *Nabuchodonosor*, a French play from 1836 that was the basis for an Italian pantomime ballet, the costumes and sets of which were reused by Merelli in *Nabucco* to save money. Solera had assisted Verdi with the libretto for his first opera, *Oberto*, and later wrote the libretti for *I Lombardi*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and *Attila*.

The instant success of *Nabucco*, performed 67 times in its debut year of 1842 alone, made Verdi a force to be reckoned with, both artistically and politically. The impact of *Nabucco* on its early audiences is hard to exaggerate. Still occupied by the Austrian army, the Milanese were deeply moved by the struggle for liberation at the heart of the story. It is easy to forget that opera was once intimately engaged with the causes and controversies of the day. The passions ignited in recent years by John Adams's *Nixon in China* and *The Death of Klinghoffer*, aberrations in our less politically contentious operatic culture, actually reflect more the rule than the exception over the course of opera's long history. *Nabucco's* narrative involves Babylonians and Hebrews, but the allegorical transfer to Austrians and Italians was not difficult to make. As Verdi biographer George Martin puts it, "Va, pensiero" was "the perfect expression of a people's longing for freedom." Verdi became indelibly associated with the Risorgimento movement and gradually became a political as well as musical hero.

The *Nabucco* commission went to Verdi only because German composer Otto Nicolai had turned down what he thought was excessively violent material. Verdi mitigated the grimness and raised the inspirational ante by creating a startling counterpoint between the violence of the narrative and the high spirits of the music, especially in the big choral numbers. Examples include the final scene in Act I and the opening of Act III, in which the destruction of the temple and the installation of a murderous ruler are set against some of Verdi's most scintillating numbers. Even the dark moment when Nabucco signs a death warrant for the Hebrews is given an ingratiating tune colored by bright woodwinds.

Also softening the harsh material is a surprise happy ending, accomplished mainly by having everyone on the Babylonian side convert to Judaism: first Fenena, then her father, and finally the villain, Abigaille—just in time, after poisoning herself. These conversions get the narrative out of the bind it finds itself in after a series of seemingly intractable betrayals and blasphemies: Ismaele and Fenena betray their respective religions by becoming lovers, and continue to do so through much of the opera; Abigaille imprisons her father, tries to murder her sister, and attempts to wipe out the Hebrews after promising to spare them. But it is Nabucco, suffering from intense hubris, who digs himself into the deepest hole, not only by acting like a god, but declaring he *is* God—never a good idea, especially when God can smite you with lightning, which he immediately does to Nabucco by way of Verdi's chromatic bolt. Nabucco's decision to embrace Jehova and renounce the God of Baal not only restores his sanity after he has wandered mad, Lear-like, about the stage, but saves the

Israelites and returns them to Judah, their homeland.

Converting to the Hebrew God brings musical rewards as well as political ones. Nabucco finally gets to sing a proper aria, his deranged mind cured along with his scrambled melodic line. Fenena, after nearly being martyred, delivers a final aria of fitting heavenliness. And Abigaille, with a sensuous cello-harp underpinning, sings her most lyrical aria just before dying.

Verdi follows the rule practiced by dramatists from Shakespeare to Hitchcock: make the villain at least as compelling and complex as the hero, if not more so. Abigaille is an arch-villain who tries to steal her sister's lover, destroy her family, and wipe out an entire people, but her horrified discovery that she is a slave rather than a child of royalty creates an intense internal struggle matched by what Verdi gives her to sing—the most treacherous and virtuosic vocal passages in the opera. Her aria at the beginning of Act II moves compellingly from self-abnegation (“I’m worse than a slave”) toward a fierce resoluteness to attain the throne, vowing that royalty will someday take orders “from a humble slave.”

She also sings nostalgically about the past, recalling better days and a “lost enchantment,” creating an ironic parallel to the Hebrews she means to destroy. *Nabucco* is about redemption and conversion, but also about memory and the limits of nostalgia. “Va, pensiero,” a soulful plea to remember the homeland, is the first in a pair of dueling choruses. Immediately after its inspiring appearance, Zaccaria bursts in and demands that the Hebrews break out of their chains and look to the future, calling down a gruesome prophecy on Babylon replete with hyenas and serpents perching “upon skulls and bones.” Here, in “Oh, chi piange? ... Del futuro nel buio discerno,” the chorus rises to a crescendo as aggressive as “Va, pensiero” is gentle. Gentleness and militancy both play an integral part in the fight against hatred.

In its depiction of hate, oppression, and liberation, *Nabucco* gradually became known as the “Jewish opera,” an antidote to the anti-semitism of Wagner and Wagnerism. Verdi, of course, was not Jewish, but he was not tied to Catholicism either. Like Berlioz, Brahms, and Fauré, he was an agnostic (in 19th century parlance, a “freethinker”) who wrote great religious music; his Requiem is as fervent as the hymns in *Nabucco*. We might recall T. S. Eliot’s statement that in literature, one should be able to feel what it is like to have a religious experience even if one is not religious, an insight that clearly holds true in music as well, for composers as well as audiences.

—Jack Sullivan

A specialist in 19th- and 20th-century American literature, music, and film, Jack Sullivan has published six books and is chair of the English department at Rider University.

The Cast



James Levine

CONDUCTOR (CINCINNATI, OHIO)

THIS SEASON In his 46th season at the Met, his first as Music Director Emeritus, he conducts *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Nabucco*, and *Idomeneo*, the latter two of which will be transmitted live in HD.

MET HISTORY Since his 1971 company debut leading *Tosca*, he has conducted more than 2,500 performances at the Met—more than any other conductor in the company's history. He became the Met's Music Director in 1976, a position he held for four decades, and was the company's Artistic Director from 1986 until 2004. Of the nearly 90 operas he has led at the Met, 13 were company premieres (including *Stiffelio*, *I Lombardi*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *La Cenerentola*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Erwartung*, *Moses und Aron*, *Idomeneo*, and *La Clemenza di Tito*). He also led the world premieres of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* and Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*. He founded the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program in 1980, and returned Wagner's complete *Ring* to the repertoire in 1989 (in the first integral cycles in 50 years at the Met). He and the MET Orchestra began touring in concert in 1991, and he has led the ensemble in performances around the world, including at Expo '92 in Seville, in Japan, across the US, and throughout Europe.



Jamie Barton

MEZZO-SOPRANO (ROME, GEORGIA)

THIS SEASON Fenena in *Nabucco* and Ježibaba in *Rusalka* at the Met, Waltraute and Second Norn in *Götterdämmerung* at Houston Grand Opera, Eboli in *Don Carlo* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Fricka in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, and Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She was the winner of the 2015 Richard Tucker Award and the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, and was a 2007 winner of the Met's National Council Auditions. She has recently sung Fenena at Covent Garden and the Seattle Opera, Adalgisa at the LA Opera and San Francisco Opera, Waltraute at the Washington National Opera, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* in Frankfurt, Elizabeth Proctor in Robert Ward's *The Crucible* at Glimmerglass Opera, Giovanna Seymour with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* with Houston Grand Opera, and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* with the Cincinnati Opera. She has also appeared at Japan's Saito Kinen Festival, with Opera Memphis, the Bavarian State Opera, Canadian Opera Company, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis.



Liudmyla Monastyrska

SOPRANO (KIEV, UKRAINE)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Aida* and Abigail in *Nabucco* at the Met, the title role of *Tosca* at the Paris Opera and Berlin Staatsoper, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Abigail at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, and Munich Opera Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the title roles of *Tosca* and *Aida* (debut, 2012).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She made her stage debut in Kiev as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* in 1996 and made her debut in the West in the title role of *Tosca* at Deutsche Oper Berlin in 2010. Since, she has sung *Aida* at the Paris Opera and Vienna State Opera, Abigail and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* at Covent Garden, *Tosca* and *Aida* at the Houston Grand Opera, and Abigail, Santuzza, and *Aida* at La Scala. She has also sung Odabella in *Attila* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* and Lady Macbeth at the Berlin Staatsoper, and Santuzza at the Salzburg Easter Festival.



Dmitry Belosselskiy

BASS (PAVLOGRAD, UKRAINE)

THIS SEASON Ramfis in *Aida* and Zaccaria in *Nabucco* at the Met, the title role of *Boris Godunov* at the Bavarian State Opera and Moscow's Bolshoi Theater, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* at the Bolshoi Theater, Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, King Philip in *Don Carlo* in Florence, and Ramfis at the Salzburg Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, de Silva in *Ernani*, and Zaccaria in *Nabucco* (debut, 2011).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A tour of Asia and Moscow with La Scala as Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* and bass soloist in Verdi's Requiem; Fiesco at Bavarian State Opera, Berlin Staatsoper, and in Rome and Tokyo; Boris Godunov, King Philip, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Zaccaria at the Bolshoi Theater; Zaccaria at the Vienna State Opera, Salzburg Festival, La Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Tokyo; Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* at the Houston Grand Opera; Talbot in *Giovanna d'Arco* at La Scala; the title role of *Attila* at the Theater an der Wien; Oroveso in *Norma* with Washington National Opera; and Vladimir in *Prince Igor* in Zurich.



PHOTO: MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

STRAUSS

SALOME

DEC 5, 9, 13, 17 mat, 24 eve, 28

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Tickets from \$25

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Plácido Domingo

TENOR (MADRID, SPAIN)

THIS SEASON He conducts *Don Giovanni* and sings the title role of *Nabucco*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and in the 50th Anniversary Gala at the Met. He also conducts *Tosca* and *Roméo et Juliette* at the Vienna State Opera, *La Traviata* at the Mariinsky Theatre, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the LA Opera, and sings Germont in Valencia and Munich, Rodrigo in *Don Carlos* at the Vienna State Opera, and the title role of *Macbeth* at LA Opera, Berlin Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien, and in Madrid and Beijing.

MET APPEARANCES He has opened the Met season 21 times, sung more than 650 performances of 49 roles, and conducted more than 150 performances with the company since his 1968 debut as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. He made his Met conducting debut in 1984 with *La Bohème* and has returned to lead a total of ten different operas.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS His repertoire includes more than 140 roles, and he has given more than 4,000 performances in opera houses worldwide. In 1993, he founded the international vocal competition Operalia. A prolific recording artist, he is the recipient of 12 Grammy Awards. He is currently General Director of LA Opera and was general director of Washington National Opera from 2003 through June 2011.



Russell Thomas

TENOR (MIAMI, FLORIDA)

THIS SEASON Ismaele in *Nabucco* at the Met, Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* for his debut at the Salzburg Festival, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at LA Opera, Pollione in *Norma* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Canadian Opera Company, Loge in *Das Rheingold* with the New York Philharmonic, Florestan in *Fidelio* with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and Mao in *Nixon in China* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES Tito, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Andres in *Wozzeck*, Foresto and Uldino in *Attila*, the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, and the Herald in *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has made a number of notable debuts in recent seasons, including at Covent Garden as Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra*, Canadian Opera Company in the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and English National Opera as Lazarus in *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. He has also sung the title role of *Don Carlo* and Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Pollione at LA Opera and San Francisco Opera, and Don José in *Carmen* with Canadian Opera Company. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

Facilities and Services

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Art gallery located in the South Lobby featuring leading artists. Open Monday through Friday, 6pm through last intermission; Saturday, noon through last intermission of evening performances.



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Wireless headsets, which work with the FM assistive listening system to amplify sound, are available at the coat check station on the South Concourse level before performances. Binoculars are also available for rental at the coat check station on the South Concourse level. The rental cost is \$5. A major credit card or driver's license is required as deposit.



BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Large print programs are available free of charge from the ushers. Braille synopses of many operas are available free of charge. Please contact an usher. Tickets for no-view score desk seats may be purchased by calling the Metropolitan Opera Guild at 212-769-7028.



BOX OFFICE

Monday–Saturday, 10am–8pm; Sunday, noon–6pm. The Box Office closes at 8pm on non-performance evenings or on evenings with no intermission. Box Office Information: 212-362-6000.

CHECK ROOM

On Concourse level (Founders Hall).

FIRST AID

Doctor in attendance during performances; contact an usher for assistance.

LECTURE SERIES

Opera-related courses, pre-performance lectures, master classes, and more are held throughout the performance season at the Opera Learning Center. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028.

LOST AND FOUND

Security office at Stage Door. Monday–Friday, 2pm–4pm; 212-799-3100, ext. 2499.

MET OPERA SHOP

The Met Opera Shop is adjacent to the North Box Office, 212-580-4090. Open Monday–Saturday, 10am–final intermission; Sunday, noon–6pm.



PUBLIC TELEPHONES

Telephones with volume controls and TTY Public Telephone located in Founders Hall on the Concourse level.

RESTAURANT AND REFRESHMENT FACILITIES

The Grand Tier Restaurant features creative contemporary American cuisine, and the Revlon Bar offers panini, crostini, and a full service bar. Both are open two hours prior to the Met Opera curtain time to any Lincoln Center ticket holder for pre-curtain dining. Pre-ordered intermission dining is also available for Met ticket holders. For reservations please call 212-799-3400.



RESTROOMS

Wheelchair-accessible restrooms are on the Dress Circle, Grand Tier, Parterre, and Founders Hall levels.

SEAT CUSHIONS

Available in the South Check Room. Major credit card or driver's license required for deposit.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

For information contact the Metropolitan Opera Guild Education Department, 212-769-7022.

SCORE-DESK TICKET PROGRAM

Tickets for score desk seats in the Family Circle boxes may be purchased by calling the Met Opera Guild at 212-769-7028. These no-view seats provide an affordable way for music students to study an opera's score during a live performance.

TOUR GUIDE SERVICE

Backstage tours of the Opera House are held during the Met season on most weekdays at 3:15pm, and on select Sundays at 10:30am and/or 1:30pm. For tickets and information, call 212-769-7028. Tours of Lincoln Center daily; call 212-875-5351 for availability.

WEBSITE

www.metopera.org



WHEELCHAIR ACCOMMODATIONS

Telephone 212-799-3100, ext. 2204. Wheelchair entrance at Concourse level.

The exits indicated by a red light and the sign nearest the seat you occupy are the shortest routes to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run—walk to that exit.

In compliance with New York City Department of Health regulations, smoking is prohibited in all areas of this theater.

Patrons are reminded that in deference to the performing artists and the seated audience, those who leave the auditorium during the performance will not be readmitted while the performance is in progress.

The photographing or sound recording of any performance, or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Offenders may be ejected and liable for damages and other lawful remedies.

Use of cellular telephones and electronic devices for any purpose, including email and texting, is prohibited in the auditorium at all times. Please be sure to turn off all devices before entering the auditorium.