

FRANZ LEHÁR

THE MERRY WIDOW

CONDUCTOR
Ward Stare

PRODUCTION
Susan Stroman

SET DESIGNER
Julian Crouch

COSTUME DESIGNER
William Ivey Long

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Paule Constable

SOUND DESIGNER
Mark Grey

CHOREOGRAPHER
Susan Stroman

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Operetta in three acts

Original libretto by Viktor Léon
and Leo Stein, based on the play
L'Attaché d'Ambassade by Henri Meilhac

English version by Jeremy Sams

Saturday, December 23, 2017
8:00–10:50PM

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

Choreography made possible, in part, by a
generous gift from **Mariamne English-King**
in memory of choreographer Zachary Solov

The Metropolitan Opera

2017-18 SEASON

The 44th Metropolitan Opera performance of
FRANZ LEHÁR'S

THE MERRY WIDOW

CONDUCTOR
Ward Stare

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

VICOMTE CASCADA
Jeff Mattsey

BOGDANOVITCH
Mark Schowalter

BARON MIRKO ZETA
Sir Thomas Allen

NJEGUS
Carson Elrod

VALENCIENNE
Andriana Chuchman

HANNA GLAWARI
Susan Graham

SYLVIANE
Clarissa Lyons*

COUNT DANILO DANILOVITCH
Paul Groves*

OLGA
Cassandra Zoé Velasco

WOMAN
Elizabeth Brooks

PRASKOWIA
Margaret Lattimore*

MAÎTRE D'
Jason Simon

CAMILLE DE ROSILLON
David Portillo

GRISETTES
LOLO Synthia Link
DODO Alison Mixon

RAOUL DE ST. BRIOCHE
Victor Ryan Robertson

JOUJOU Angie Schworer
FROUFROU Leah Hofmann

KROMOW
Daniel Mobbs

CLOCLO Anne Horak
MARGOT Catherine Hamilton

PRITSCHITSCH
Gary Simpson

Saturday, December 23, 2017, 8:00-10:50PM



Susan Graham as
Hanna Glawari and
Paul Groves as
Danilo in Lehár's
The Merry Widow

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
 Dramaturg **Paul Cremo**
 Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Thomas Bagwell,
 Liora Maurer, and Steven White**
 Assistant Stage Directors **Daniel Rigazzi and Paula Suozzi**
 Met Titles **Michael Panayos**
 Prompter **Donna Racik**
 Assistant Costume Designer **Paul Spadone**
 Associate Choreographer **Joshua Buscher**
 Assistant Choreographer **Lauren Kadel**
 Special Thanks **Leah Hofmann**
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 Tailors, New York**
 Director of William Ivey Long's Studio **Donald Sanders**
 Wigs and makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig
 and Makeup Department**
 Thanks to **William Dorwart** for his assistance in the
 preparation of the orchestral material

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New
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Excerpts from *The Merry Widow Ballet*, arranged by John Lanchberry,
 and Jeremy Sams's English version of "Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden,"
 from Lehár's *Paganini*, are performed by arrangement with European
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Synopsis

Act I

Paris, 1900. The Pontevedrian ambassador, Baron Mirko Zeta, is giving a ball at the embassy. His home country is nearly bankrupt, and he hopes that their Parisian guests will help them raise the money they need. He's pleased when he sees his young wife, Valencienne, flirting with Camille de Rosillon, a young Frenchman, assuming she's trying to win French support for Pontevedro. In fact, Camille has declared his love for Valencienne and writes "I love you" on her fan. Zeta eagerly awaits the arrival of the guest of honor, Hanna Glawari, a wealthy Pontevedrian widow. He plans to get Danilo Danilovitch, a womanizing aristocrat and the embassy secretary, to marry her so that her millions will stay in Pontevedro. Hanna arrives, and the Parisian men shower her with compliments. Valencienne realizes she has lost her fan with Camille's incriminating message and rushes out to look for it. Finally, Danilo arrives, fresh from a night of partying at the nightclub Maxim's. He and Hanna talk, revealing that they were once in love but that Hanna was considered too far beneath Danilo's status for him to marry her. He tells her he's not interested in marriage and will never say "I love you." Meanwhile, Zeta's chief of staff, Kromow, finds Valencienne's fan and thinks it belongs to his wife, Olga. Zeta, wanting to spare Olga the scandal, convinces him it is Valencienne's. He then meets with Danilo and orders him to marry Hanna for the good of Pontevedro. Danilo tells him that he will keep all the Parisian men away from her but will not marry her. When the ladies' choice dance is announced, Hanna selects Danilo, and after some flirtatious banter, the two finally dance.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:50PM)

Act II

The next evening, Hanna hosts a party at her villa. Danilo arrives late, and Zeta commands him to return to his mission of keeping the Parisian men from Hanna—particularly Camille. Danilo's assistant, Njegus, reveals that Camille is already in love with a mystery woman. Zeta wants to know who she is in order to marry her off to Camille, leaving Hanna free for a Pontevedrian suitor. Believing the fan to be the key to her identity, he asks Danilo to find its owner. When Hanna comes across the fan and sees its inscription, she assumes it is a gift to her from Danilo, but he still won't say "I love you," and she will not accept him until he does. Zeta interrupts their dance, as he is still trying to learn the identity of Camille's secret lover. The men agree to meet in the pavilion to discuss the matter. Camille and Valencienne finally find the missing fan, and this time Valencienne writes "I am a respectable wife" on it. Observed by Njegus, they disappear into the pavilion. When Zeta arrives to meet Danilo, Njegus prevents him from entering the pavilion to protect Valencienne's secret and instead sneaks Hanna in to take her

place. Hanna emerges with Camille, announcing their engagement. A furious Danilo departs for Maxim's, which Hanna takes as proof of his love.

Act III

Arriving at Maxim's in search of Danilo, Camille and Valencienne sneak off to one of the private rooms. Zeta and the other Pontevedrians appear, and the Grisettes—among them a dressed-up Valencienne—entertain the crowd. Eventually both Danilo and Hanna arrive. He forbids her to marry Camille. When she explains that she was merely safeguarding another woman's reputation, he is delighted but still won't declare his love. As the guests reassemble, Danilo announces that Hanna will not marry Camille, but he will not reveal the identity of Camille's secret lover. Njegus produces the missing fan, which he found in the pavilion. Zeta finally recognizes it as his wife's, declares himself divorced, and proposes to Hanna—who informs him that, according to her late husband's will, she will lose her fortune if she remarries. At this, the other men lose interest in Hanna, except Danilo, who finally declares his love and asks Hanna to marry him. She accepts and amends her account of the will: Upon remarrying, her fortune will pass to her new husband. Valencienne asks Zeta to read the other side of her fan—which reads, "I am a respectable wife." With the couples united, the men are left to wonder about the mystery of women.

Franz Lehár

The Merry Widow

Premiere: Theater an der Wien, Vienna, 1905

Lehár's captivating romantic comedy was the biggest success of the composer's career and, along with Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, represents the most enduringly popular example of the operetta genre. The story, which includes its fair share of romantic missed connections and comic twists, presents plentiful opportunities for a wide range of both elegant and humorous stage magic, particularly within the operetta format of musical numbers interspersed with spoken dialogue. Several of these numbers are meant to be understood as actual songs performed within the context of the plot, rather than musical expressions of reality (as is common in opera). This creates a plausible world in which emotions can be colorfully expressed in a wide variety of musical forms, including love songs, folk tunes, and dance music. Beyond creating a vibrant palette of musical styles, this structure also gives the work a versatility that has appealed to audiences ever since its premiere. The cosmopolitan nature of its story—Austro-Hungarian core with a mythically Parisian ambience and non-specific Balkan characters and music—has also contributed to its global appeal. Lehár's work can be seen as a crossroads of styles, cultures, and traditions. The early history of the Broadway musical, with its versatility of song style, heavy use of dance and stage spectacle, and direct popular appeal to a large audience, is massively indebted to operetta in general and to *The Merry Widow* in particular.

The Creators

Franz Lehár (1870–1948), born Lehár Ferenc in Komárom, Austria-Hungary (now part of Slovakia), trained at the Prague Conservatory, where his mentors included Antonín Dvořák. He wrote some orchestral music but achieved the greatest success with his operettas, especially *The Merry Widow* (*Die Lustige Witwe*), his breakthrough work, and *The Land of Smiles* (*Das Land des Lächelns*, 1929), which includes the hit song "Dein ist mein ganzes Herz". The Vienna-based team of Leo Stein (1861–1921) and Viktor Léon (1858–1940), who also collaborated on libretti for composers such as Johann Strauss II, wrote the libretto for *The Merry Widow*, basing it on French playwright Henri Meilhac's (1831–1897) comedy *L'Attaché d'Ambassade*. For the Met's current production of *The Merry Widow*, British director, writer, and lyricist Jeremy Sams (b. 1957)—who also devised the company's Baroque pastiche *The Enchanted Island*—provided a new English translation.

The Setting

The Merry Widow takes place amid the vibrant artistic, diplomatic, and social worlds of Paris in the early 20th century and in the expatriate community of Pontevedro, a fictional Balkan country that bears some resemblance to Montenegro.

The Music

For *The Merry Widow*, Lehár provided a score that is charming and melodious but also highly sophisticated. Various types of dance music permeate the operetta, providing an opportunity for delightful visuals on stage while at the same time creating an atmosphere of refined giddiness that is central to the story. Hanna makes her entrance singing a mazurka, a Polish folk dance in triple time. Other dance music, with or without vocals, includes a waltz in the Act I finale, “Pontevedrian” dances for the opening of Act II, idealized cabaret music in the Act III party scene, and, most famously, Hanna and Danilo’s duet in the final scene (popularly known as the “Merry Widow Waltz”). Among the vocal numbers, Hanna’s lithe, slightly melancholy, and utterly ravishing “Vilja Song” in Act II stands out. Danilo’s brief entrance aria is witty and urbane, and Camille and Valencienne share a teasing duet in Act I—there is something not quite dangerous about their flirtation at this point, although it becomes much more serious with Camille’s ardent outpouring of love in Act II. The orchestral writing ranges from the grand to the elegant to surprisingly delicate touches like the intertwining cello and violin lines representing Danilo and Hanna in their waltz duet, telling the audience what the characters hardly dare to express themselves.

Met History

Lehár’s operetta premiered at the Met in February 2000, in an English-language production directed by Tim Albery and designed by Antony McDonald. Sir Andrew Davis conducted a cast led by Frederica von Stade, Plácido Domingo, John Del Carlo, Paul Groves (as Camille), and Emily Pulley. Håkan Hagegård also appeared in the role of Danilo (which has traditionally been sung by both tenors and baritones) for five performances in the initial run. For a revival in 2003, Susan Graham took on the title role and Bo Skovhus sang Danilo. Conductors Asher Fisch (2000) and Kirill Petrenko (2003) both made their Met debuts with this work. A new production by Broadway veteran Susan Stroman opened on New Year’s Eve 2014, starring Renée Fleming, Kelli O’Hara, and Nathan Gunn, again with Davis on the podium.

Program Note

The *fin de siècle* was an exciting but tense time. In Vienna, the political world took a swing to the right, with increased anti-Semitism stoked by a divisive mayor. Simultaneously (and arguably consequently), liberal figures such as Freud, Klimt, Loos, Mahler, Schnitzler, and Schoenberg were on the rise, trying to scrape away the pretentious pomp and circumstance that had dominated imperial Vienna for centuries. The battle lines were, in effect, drawn. So it was little wonder that the rest of Vienna was in desperate need of a bit of escapism. And with the death of Johann Strauss II in 1899, Viennese operetta was missing one of its guiding lights. But then, in 1905, Franz Lehár sparked a brand new era with the premiere of *The Merry Widow* (*Die Lustige Witwe*).

Operetta had provided a musical panacea for the Viennese since the late 1850s, when Offenbach's opéras bouffes dominated the city's playbills. The adopted Frenchman's monopoly on the art form in Austria remained more or less unchallenged until 1874, when Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* burst onto the scene. Coming immediately after the financial crash of 1873, whose effects caused much of the strain of the *fin de siècle*, that masterpiece's blithe maxim, "Happy is he who forgets what cannot be changed," became a regular Viennese slogan. Indeed, every night of the week, the city's operetta houses, the Carltheater and the Theater an der Wien, were packed to the rafters with audiences desperate to forget the recession and resulting remonstrations.

Eventually, composer Richard Heuberger and librettist Victor Léon stole Strauss's limelight with *Der Opernball* in 1898. Keen to repeat the triumph, Léon (a journalist born in present-day Slovakia) and his writing partner, Leo Stein (a playwright from Lemberg, now Lviv in Ukraine), produced a new libretto for Heuberger. It was based on *L'Attaché d'Ambassade*, a play by Henri Meilhac. Together with Ludovic Halévy, Meilhac had written libretti for many of Offenbach's hits, as well as the text for *Carmen* in 1875 and for *Le Réveillon*, the basis for *Die Fledermaus*. Sadly, these theatrical feats didn't seem destined for a reprise when Heuberger delivered his score, which was promptly rejected by the Theater an der Wien. A new composer had to be found, and, after a swift search, the writers daringly plumped for a young Hungarian called Franz Lehár.

Writing *The Merry Widow*, as it came to be known, was something of a homecoming for Lehár. His father had played the horn in the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien before becoming a military bandmaster. Franz Jr. was born in 1870 in the Hungarian garrison town of Komárom. When his father was posted to a new role in Budapest, Lehár was sent to stay with an uncle in what is now the Czech Republic and eventually attended the Prague Conservatory, studying composition privately with Zdeněk Fibich, as well as receiving valuable advice from Dvořák. After graduation and a brief stint as a theatrical violinist, Lehár joined his father's 50th Austrian Infantry Regiment. He was made a bandmaster in 1890 but gave up that position to prepare for the premiere of

his first opera, *Kukuška*, in Leipzig in 1896. Its out-and-out failure brought him back to military life, with posts in Budapest and, eventually, Vienna.

Although his first stage work had been a flop, Lehár was achieving some success with his dance music, not least the infectious waltz “Gold und Silber.” And so he again left military service, becoming a conductor at the summer theater in the Prater amusement park and then moving to the Theater an der Wien. Courageously playing his bosses against their rivals at the Carltheater, Lehár had one operetta, *Wiener Frauen*, produced at the Theater an der Wien in November 1902, with *Der Rastelbinder* following a month later at the Carl. The gamble paid off, and, although his two subsequent stage works in 1904 were failures, his employers kept faith.

The Theater an der Wien’s convictions were soon rewarded. The opening night of *The Merry Widow* on December 30, 1905—capping a musical year in which Richard Strauss’s *Salome*, Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*, Schoenberg’s *Pelleas und Melisande*, and Debussy’s *La Mer* had their premieres—marked the beginning of the “Silver Age” of operetta and established Lehár’s predominance in the genre. The show was soon being performed on tour in Austria, before enjoying productions in Berlin, Hamburg, and Budapest in 1906 and in London and New York in 1907. Ever since, it has been one of the most cherished operettas of all time.

The triumph of *The Merry Widow* undoubtedly stems from its ravishing score and its particularly colorful response to the story’s happy clash of Parisians and Pontevedrians. While satire is part and parcel of Léon and Stein’s story, Lehár’s evocations of “the city of light” and of Pontevedrian (or Balkan) traditions are affectionate and often admirably authentic—Lehár even employs a bouzouki or tamburitza (two mandolin-type instruments), to accompany Hanna’s “Vilja Song.” But this dose of local color would be nothing without the composer’s melodic gift. Like Strauss’s operettas before it, *The Merry Widow* is a veritable smorgasbord of tunes. And yet, echoing the era in which Lehár was writing, his songs and arias have a richer harmonic vein.

Their beautifully winding melodies, juxtaposed with the ceremonial music of the ambassador’s soirées and the hi-jinks of Hanna’s party, introduce one of the defining elements of Silver Age operettas: sex. Though eroticism had certainly been part of the preceding Golden Age—*Die Fledermaus* is, after all, about various infidelities—it was now treated with greater sensuality, revealing a more acute realism (as well as parallels with the work of Lehár’s more noticeably “serious” cultural peers). The violin and cello melodies that intertwine in Hanna and Danilo’s duet in Act III, “Music’s Playing” (“Lippen schweigen”), offer just one highlight of Lehár’s attention to emotional detail. Indeed, this waltz alone could mark the transition between the operettas of the 19th century and those of the 20th, of which Lehár was the herald. Rather than being energetic dance pieces, these new waltzes sway and swoon.

Such musical perspicacity is part of the interaction of the characters. The inclusion of a younger couple, Valencienne and Camille, may follow generic standards, but Lehár and his librettists clearly intended the pair's romance to be a source of genuine jeopardy. Their dialogue has a skittish quality at first, but a supplementing vein of chromaticism belies their innocence. Camille's claim that he loves only Valencienne is particularly ardent, and she soon capitulates, joining him in their first duet. In Act II, however, their music takes on an even more passionate tone (enhanced by Lehár's expanded orchestral forces), with unforeseen Wagnerian traces.

Despite the rich characterization of this charming pair, there can be no doubt that Lehár wants our affections and attentions to rest with Hanna and Danilo. Both are accorded winning entrance numbers: Hanna's "If I Was a Parisian" ("Hab' in Paris"), with its thrilling opening crescendo over a timpani roll, and Danilo's "As Diplomatic Attaché" ("O Vaterland"). The latter's refrain, "Then off to Chez Maxim," returns at the conclusion to Act II, when in spite of Danilo's anger at Hanna's supposed love for Camille—she has also successfully duped Baron Zeta—the orchestra reveals the truth of the matter: Danilo may be strutting off to Maxim's, but his heart is with Hanna (as she well knows). And with Hanna's love for dancing, infectious tunes, and unswerving capacity for compassion, it is little wonder that Danilo is so smitten with her—and that so many sopranos and mezzo-sopranos have cherished playing the role.

The Merry Widow has continued to beguile performers and audiences alike for more than a century. After its premiere in 1905, Lehár came to enjoy an almost unparalleled career as an operetta composer—his rivalry with fellow Hungarian Emmerich Kálmán was the genre's primary catalyst in the first half of the 20th century. Perhaps the only misfortune of this operetta's success is its tendency to overshadow Lehár's other inspired works for the stage. After all, each of those no less tuneful, no less true operas and operettas—just like his friend Puccini's *La Rondine* (originally intended for Vienna) or the romantic musicals of Broadway's Golden Age—are thoroughly indebted to the melodic and emotional acuity of *The Merry Widow*.

—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.

The Cast



Ward Stare

CONDUCTOR (ROCHESTER, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON *The Merry Widow* for his debut at the Met; performances with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, including *Carmen* in concert and world premieres by Allen Shawn and Jennifer Higdon; and appearances with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since 2014, he has served as music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and between 2008 and 2012, he was resident conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. For the operatic stage, he has conducted *La Bohème* in concert with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; *Porgy and Bess*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Hansel and Gretel* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Il Tabarro* and *Pagliacci* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Washington National Opera. He has also appeared with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Syracuse's Symphoria, among others.



Andriana Chuchman

SOPRANO (WINNIPEG, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Valencienne in *The Merry Widow* at the Met, Eurydice in *Orphée et Eurydice* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* at Lincoln Center's White Lights Festival, Marie in *La Fille du Régiment* at Atlanta Opera, and concert appearances with Regina Symphony Orchestra and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Miranda in *The Enchanted Island*, and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (debut, 2014).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Micaëla in *La Tragédie de Carmen* at San Diego Opera, Pat Nixon in John Adams's *Nixon in China* at Houston Grand Opera, Marie at Washington National Opera, Boonyi Kaul/India Ophuls in the world premiere of Jack Perla's *Shalimar the Clown* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and Magnolia in *Show Boat* at the Dallas Opera. She has also sung Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Manitoba Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre; Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at LA Opera; Johanna Barker in Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* at Vancouver Opera; Kumudha in John Adams's *A Flowering Tree* at Opera Omaha; Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Valencienne, and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; and Gretel with the Glyndebourne Festival.



Susan Graham

MEZZO-SOPRANO (ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO)

THIS SEASON Hanna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* at the Met, *Celebrating 100 Years of Bernstein* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of Blitzstein's *Regina* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert and Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Ravel's *Shéhérazade* with the San Francisco Symphony.

MET APPEARANCES Since her 1991 debut as the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, she has sung nearly 200 performances in 21 roles, including Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*, Didon in *Les Troyens*, the title role of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, as well as in two world premieres—as Jordan Baker in John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* and Sondra Finchley in Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has performed at all the world's leading opera houses, including the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Salzburg Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Houston Grand Opera, among many others. In 2017, she was appointed as artistic advisor to LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program.



Sir Thomas Allen

BARITONE (SEAHAM, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Baron Mirko Zeta in *The Merry Widow* at the Met and the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Scottish Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Nearly 100 performances in 12 roles, including Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, the Seven Nemeses in Britten's *Death in Venice*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the title role of *Billy Budd*, and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 1981).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has appeared at all of the world's leading opera houses and has been particularly associated with Covent Garden, where he has sung more than 50 roles. Recent performances include the Music Master at the Glyndebourne Festival, Alberto Roc in the world premiere of Thomas Adès's *The Exterminating Angel* at the Salzburg Festival and at Covent Garden, Don Alfonso at Pittsburgh Opera, and Alberto Roc, Prosdócimo in *Il Turco in Italia*, and the Music Master at Covent Garden. He made his directing debut in 2003 with *Albert Herring* at London's Royal College of Music and has since created productions for Scottish Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Pittsburgh Opera, among others.



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HANSEL AND GRETEL

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Just in time for the holidays, Richard Jones's delightfully twisted take on the classic fairy tale returns to the Met, with Tara Erraught and Lisette Oropesa as the rambunctious title siblings. Maestro Donald Runnicles conducts this English-language production.

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The Cast CONTINUED



Paul Groves

TENOR (LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA)

THIS SEASON Danilo in *The Merry Widow* at the Met, Britten's *War Requiem* in Lyon, Faust in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Arndt in Korngold's *Der Ring des Polykrates* at the Dallas Opera, and concert appearances with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, and at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

MET APPEARANCES Nearly 200 performances of 23 roles, including the Painter/African Prince in *Lulu*, Pylade in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Gao Jianli in the world premiere of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Camille de Rosillon in *The Merry Widow*, and the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (debut, 1992).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performance include the title role of *Faust* at New Orleans Opera, Alessandro in Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* at the Paris Opera, Florestan in *Fidelio* at the Santa Fe Opera and in concert at Caramoor, Eumolphe in Stravinsky's *Perséphone* in Lyon and Aix-en-Provence, Veasey in Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain* at Opera Philadelphia, Rodrigue in *Le Cid* in concert with Boston's Odyssey Opera, and the title role of *Lohengrin* at the Norwegian National Opera. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



David Portillo

TENOR (SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON Camille de Rosillon in *The Merry Widow* and Eduardo in *The Exterminating Angel* at the Met, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Houston Grand Opera, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Dallas Opera, Il Conte di Libenskof in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Pasquale in Haydn's *Orlando Paladino* at the Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Jaquino in *Fidelio* and Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* (debut, 2015).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Lurcanio in *Ariodante* on tour with The English Concert, Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Amsterdam, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* in Frankfurt, Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* at San Diego Opera, Dr. Richardson in the world premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at Opera Philadelphia, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Opera Australia, David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* at Palm Beach Opera. He has also sung Andres in *Wozzeck* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pedrillo in Aix-en-Provence, Don Ramiro at Washington National Opera, Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment* at Arizona Opera, and Tamino at Houston Grand Opera.

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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.



ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM AND BINOCULARS

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.