



NEWS

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA ANNOUNCES 2005-2006 SEASON

March 17, 2005

World Premiere of "An American Tragedy"

Company Premiere of "Mazeppa"

New Productions of "Roméo et Juliette" and "Don Pasquale"

Gala Performance to Open Season on September 19

Season Closes on May 20, 2006, with

"A Gala Performance Honoring Joseph Volpe"

The world premiere of Tobias Picker's "An American Tragedy," the company premiere of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Mazeppa," and new productions of Charles Gounod's "Roméo et Juliette" and Gaetano Donizetti's "Don Pasquale" highlight the repertory for the Metropolitan Opera's 33-week 2005-2006 season, announced today by Joseph Volpe, general manager, and James Levine, music director.

The world premiere of "An American Tragedy," commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and based on the 1925 novel of the same name by American writer Theodore Dreiser, is on December 2. The libretto is by Gene Scheer. James Conlon conducts, with Patricia Racette as Roberta Alden, Susan Graham as Sondra Finchley, and Nathan Gunn as Clyde Griffiths. The cast also includes Dolora Zajick as Elvira Griffiths, Jennifer Larmore as Elizabeth Griffiths, Kim Begley as Samuel Griffiths, William Burden as Gilbert Griffiths, and Richard Bernstein as Orville Mason. Francesca Zambello directs, with sets designed by Adrianne Lobel in her Met debut, costumes designed by Dunya Ramicova, lighting designed by James F. Ingalls, and choreography by Doug Varone.

"Mazeppa" receives its company premiere on March 6, 2006, with Nikolai Putilin in the title role, and Olga Guryakova as Maria, Larissa Diadkova as Lyubov, Oleg Balashov as Andrei and Paata Burchuladze as Kotschubey. Valery Gergiev, the Met's principal guest conductor, will be on the podium. Making their Met debuts will be the director, Yuri Alexandrov, and the lighting designer, Gleb Filshinsky. George Tsypin designs the sets and Tatiana Noginova designs the costumes.

The new production of "Roméo et Juliette" premieres on November 14 with Ramón Vargas and Natalie Dessay in the title roles, Stéphane Degout making his debut as Mercutio, and Kristinn Sigmundsson as Friar Laurent. Bertrand de Billy conducts. The entire production team will be new to the Metropolitan Opera: Guy Joosten, director; Johannes Leiacker, set designer; Jorge Jara, costume designer; David Cunningham, lighting designer; and Sean Curran, choreographer.

"Don Pasquale," last heard at the Met during the 1979-80 season, returns in a new production on March 31, 2006. James Levine conducts, with Simone Alaimo as Don Pasquale, Anna Netrebko as Norina, Juan Diego Flórez as Ernesto, and Mariusz Kwiecien as Dr. Malatesta. The production is by Otto Schenk with sets and costumes designed by Rolf Langenfass—both returning to the company for their first new production at the Met since the 1992-93 season ("Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg").

The 2005-2006 season opens on September 19 with a Gala Performance comprised of Act II of "Tosca" with Angela Gheorghiu and Bryn Terfel; Act I of "Le Nozze di Figaro" with Isabel Bayrakdarian, Susan Graham, Dwayne Croft, and Bryn Terfel; and Act III of "Samson et Dalila" with Denyce Graves and Plácido Domingo. James Levine will conduct.

The season closes on May 20, 2006, with "A Gala Performance Honoring Joseph Volpe" celebrating the long career of the company's general manager, who retires on August 1, 2006. Mr. Volpe joined the Met in 1964, and rose through the company's ranks, becoming general manager in 1990. The Volpe era at the Metropolitan has been characterized by innovation in all areas of the opera house: artistic, technical, and administrative. The performance will include tributes from current and past Metropolitan Opera artists, as well as solos, duets, and ensembles sung by luminaries of the world's operatic stage. Details will be announced at a later date.

Maestro Levine conducts a number of revivals this season: "Falstaff" with Bryn Terfel in the title role; "Fidelio" and "Lohengrin"—the casts of both operas include Karita Mattila and Ben Heppner;

"Parsifal" with Waltraud Meier as Kundry, Ben Heppner as Parsifal, Thomas Hampson as Amfortas, and René Pape as Gurnemanz; and "Wozzeck" with Katarina Dalayman as Marie and Alan Held as Wozzeck.

The 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth (January 27, 1756) will be marked by three revivals of the composer's works during the season. Maestro Levine conducts "Cosi fan tutte," with Barbara Frittoli as Fiordiligi, Magdalena Kožená as Dorabella, Nuccia Focile as Despina, Matthew Polenzani as Ferrando, Mariusz Kwiecien as Guglielmo, and Thomas Allen as Don Alfonso. Mark Wigglesworth makes his debut conducting a revival of "Le Nozze di Figaro" (casts include Soile Isokoski as the Countess, Andrea Rost as Susanna, Peter Mattei as the Count, plus the debuts of Joyce DiDonato and Alice Coote as Cherubino). Julie Taymor's production of "Die Zauberflöte" returns with conductor Paul Daniel making his debut.

Other notable revivals during the season include Massenet's "Manon" with Renée Fleming and Marcelo Álvarez in the leading roles, and Jesús López-Cobos conducting. Ms. Fleming also reprises the title role of "Rodelinda" with Stephanie Blythe as Eduige, Kobie van Rensburg as Grimoaldo, and John Relyea as Garibaldo. Countertenors Andreas Scholl as Bertarido and Christophe Dumaux as Unulfo both make their company debuts, and Patrick Summers conducts. Plácido Domingo and Olga Borodina are heard in the revival of "Samson et Dalila"; Mr. Domingo is also heard in further performances of "Cyrano de Bergerac" (with Sondra Radvanovsky as Roxane) and conducts six performances of "Rigoletto." Other Verdi revivals include "La Forza del Destino" which returns for its first performances since the 1995-96 season, with Deborah Voigt as Leonora, Salvatore Licitra as Don Alvaro, Mark Delavan as Don Carlo, Juan Pons as Fra Melitone, Samuel Ramey as Padre Guardiano, and Gianandrea Noseda conducting. "Luisa Miller" features Barbara Frittoli as Luisa and Neil Shicoff as Rodolfo, with Carlos Álvarez as Miller and James Morris as Walter.

Among other artists making debuts are conductor Antonello Allemandi and Simone Alberghini as Dandini in "La Cenerentola," Diana Damrau as Zerbinetta and Jon Villars as Bacchus in "Ariadne auf Naxos," Milena Kitic as Carmen and Ana Maria Martinez as Micaëla in "Carmen," Marlis Petersen as Adele and Janez Lotric as Alfred in "Die Fledermaus," Luana deVol as Ortrud and Klaus Florian Vogt in the title role of "Lohengrin," Giuseppe Filianoti as Edgardo in "Lucia di Lammermoor," and Jonas Kaufmann as Alfredo in "La Traviata."

Among artists appearing in roles for the first time at the Met are Johan Botha as Radames in "Aida"; Violeta Urmana in the title role of "Ariadne auf Naxos"; Ruth Ann Swenson as Micaëla, both Marco Berti and Marcello Giordani as Don José, and both Jean-Luc Chaignaud and Erwin Schrott as Escamillo in "Carmen"; Rolando Villazon as the Duke in "Rigoletto"; Angela Gheorghiu and Hei-Kyung Hong as Violetta in "La Traviata"; Olga Borodina as Angelina in "La Cenerentola"; Deborah Voigt as "Tosca"; and Richard Margison as Florestan in "Fidelio."

Other conductors returning during the season are Kirill Petrenko leading "Ariadne auf Naxos" with Susan Graham singing the Composer for the first time at the Met; and Philippe Jordan on the podium for "Carmen" with Denyce Graves in the title role. Also heard during the season are Andrea Gruber in the title role of "Aida," Bo Skovhus as Eisenstein in "Die Fledermaus," Aprile Millo in the title role of "Tosca," Dwayne Croft as Germont in "La Traviata," Elizabeth Futral in the title role of "Lucia di Lammermoor" and Marina Domashenko as Dalila in "Samson et Dalila."

The company will take a mid-season break from January 9 to January 20, 2006, when no performances will be held in the opera house. In May and June 2006 the entire company will tour to Japan, its sixth visit to that country, for performances of "Don Giovanni," "La Traviata," and "Die Walküre." Full details will be announced at a later date.

Information on subscriptions or additional information on the 2005-2006 Metropolitan Opera season may be obtained by calling the Met Ticket Service at (212) 362-6000, or by visiting the Met web site at www.metopera.org

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Complete repertoire and casting for the Metropolitan Opera's 2005-2006 season follow:

WORLD PREMIERE

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY: James Conlon; Patricia Racette, Susan Graham, Jennifer Larmore, Dolora Zajick, William Burden, Kim Begley, Nathan Gunn, Richard Bernstein
Dec. 2, 5, 8, 12, 16, 21, 24 mat, 28

METROPOLITAN OPERA PREMIERE

MAZEPPA: Valery Gergiev; Olga Guryakova/Elena Evseeva, Larissa Diadkova/Olga Savova, Oleg Balashov, Nikolai Putilin/Victor Chernomortsev, Paata Burchuladze/Vladimir Ognovenko
March 6, 10, 14, 18 mat, 22, 25, 27, 30