

GIUSEPPE VERDI

# FALSTAFF

CONDUCTOR  
Richard Farnes

PRODUCTION  
Robert Carsen

SET DESIGNER  
Paul Steinberg

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Brigitte Reiffenstuel

LIGHTING DESIGNERS  
Robert Carsen and  
Peter Van Praet

REVIVAL STAGE DIRECTOR  
Gina Lapinski

GENERAL MANAGER  
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Arrigo Boito, based on the plays *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV* by William Shakespeare

Saturday, March 2, 2019  
8:00–10:40PM

The production of *Falstaff* was made possible by generous gifts from the **Betsy and Ed Cohen/ Areté Foundation Fund for New Productions & Revivals**, and **Harry and Misook Doolittle**

Additional funding was received from The Gilbert S. Kahn & John J. Noffo Kahn Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. William R. Miller

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from Edwin C. Holmer III

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London; the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto; and De Nederlandse Opera, Amsterdam

# The Metropolitan Opera

2018-19 SEASON

The 188th Metropolitan Opera performance of  
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

## FALSTAFF

CONDUCTOR

**Richard Farnes**

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

DR. CAIUS

**Tony Stevenson\***

FENTON

**Francesco Demuro**

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

**Ambrogio Maestri**

FORD

**Juan Jesús Rodríguez**

BARDOLFO

**Keith Jameson**

PISTOLA

**Richard Bernstein**

MEG PAGE

**Jennifer Johnson Cano\***

ALICE FORD

**Ailyn Pérez**

MISTRESS QUICKLY

**Marie-Nicole Lemieux**

NANNETTA

**Golda Schultz**

Saturday, March 2, 2019, 8:00-10:40PM



KAREN ALMOND / MET OPERA

Ambrogio Maestri  
in the title role of  
Verdi's *Falstaff*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
 Assistant to the Costume Designer **Zeb Lalljee**  
 Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, John Keenan,  
 Dan Saunders, and Jonathan C. Kelly**  
 Assistant Stage Directors **Sara Erde and Yefim Maizel**  
 Prompter **Donna Racik**  
 Met Titles **Sonya Haddad**  
 Italian Coach **Loretta Di Franco**  
 Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and  
 painted in **Royal Opera House Production Department**  
 and **Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
 Costumes constructed by **Royal Opera House Production  
 Department; Metropolitan Opera Costume Department;  
 Das Gewand, Düsseldorf; Seams Unlimited, Racine, Wisconsin**  
 Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig  
 and Makeup Department**  
 Animals Supervised by **All-Tame Animals, Inc.**

**This performance uses gunshot effects.**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds  
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 usher at intermission.

# Synopsis

## Act I

*In and around Royal Windsor, England, during the reign of Elizabeth II.* Dr. Caius bursts into Sir John Falstaff's room in the Garter Inn, accusing him of unseemly behavior the previous night. He further accuses Falstaff's two henchmen, Bardolfo and Pistola, of having robbed him while he was drunk. Falstaff contemplates the large bill that he has run up. He informs Bardolfo and Pistola that, in order to repair his finances, he plans to seduce Alice Ford and Meg Page, both wives of prosperous Windsor citizens. When the men refuse to deliver the letters that Falstaff has written to the two ladies, he ridicules their newly discovered sense of honor, before throwing them both out.

Alice and Meg laugh over the identical love letters that they have received from Falstaff. They share their amusement with Alice's daughter Nannetta and their friend Mistress Quickly. Ford arrives, followed by four men all proffering advice: Dr. Caius, whom Ford favors as Nannetta's future husband; Bardolfo and Pistola, who are now seeking advantageous employment from Ford; and Fenton, who is in love with Nannetta. When Ford learns of Falstaff's plan to seduce his wife, he immediately becomes jealous. While Alice and Meg plan how to take revenge on their importunate suitor, Ford decides to disguise himself in order to pay a visit to Falstaff. Unnoticed in the midst of all the commotion, Nannetta and Fenton manage to steal a few precious moments together.

## Act II

Feigning penitence, Bardolfo and Pistola rejoin Falstaff's service. They show in Quickly, who informs Falstaff that both Alice and Meg are madly in love with him. She explains that it will be easier to seduce Alice, since her husband is out of the house every afternoon between two and three. Falstaff joyously anticipates his seduction of Alice. A "Mr. Fontana" (Ford in disguise) arrives, and to Falstaff's surprise, he offers him wine and money if he will seduce Alice Ford, explaining that he has long been in love with the lady but to no avail. If she were to be seduced by the more experienced Falstaff, she might then be more likely to fall a second time and accept Fontana. Falstaff informs his new friend that he already has a rendezvous with Alice that very afternoon. As Falstaff leaves to prepare himself, Ford gives way to jealous rage. When Falstaff returns, the two men exchange compliments before leaving together.

Quickly, Alice, and Meg are preparing for Falstaff's visit. Nannetta tearfully tells her mother that her father insists on her marrying Dr. Caius, but Alice tells her daughter not to worry. Falstaff arrives and begins his seduction. As Falstaff becomes more amorous, Meg Page interrupts the tête-à-tête, as planned, to announce (in jest) that Ford is approaching. But just at that point, Quickly suddenly returns in a panic to inform Alice that Ford really is on his way. As Ford

rushes in with a group of townsfolk, the terrified Falstaff hides in a large laundry basket. Fenton and Nannetta also hide. Ford and the other men ransack the house. Hearing the sound of kissing, Ford is convinced that he has found his wife and her lover together but is furious to discover Nannetta and Fenton instead. While Ford argues with Fenton, Alice instructs her servants to empty the laundry basket out of the window. To general hilarity, Falstaff lands in the River Thames.

### *Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30PM)

## Act III

A wet and bruised Falstaff laments the wickedness of the world but soon cheers up with a glass of mulled wine. Quickly persuades him that Alice was innocent of the unfortunate incident at Ford's house. To prove that Alice still loves him, she proposes a new rendezvous that night in Windsor Great Park. In a letter that Quickly gives to Falstaff, Alice asks the knight to appear at midnight, disguised as the Black Huntsman. Ford, Nannetta, Meg, and Alice prepare the second part of their plot: Nannetta will be Queen of the Fairies and the others, also in disguise, will help to continue Falstaff's punishment. Ford secretly promises Caius that he will marry Nannetta that evening. Quickly overhears them.

As Fenton and Nannetta are reunited in the park, Alice explains her plan to trick Ford into marrying them. They all hide as Falstaff approaches. On the stroke of midnight, Alice appears. She declares her love but suddenly runs away, saying that she hears spirits approaching. Nannetta, disguised as the Queen of the Fairies, summons her followers, who attack the frightened Falstaff, pinching and poking him until he promises to give up his dissolute ways. In the midst of the assault, Falstaff suddenly recognizes Bardolfo and realizes that he has been tricked. While Ford explains that he was Fontana, Quickly scolds Falstaff for his attempts at seducing two virtuous women. Falstaff accepts that he has been made a figure of fun but points out that he remains the true source of wit in others. Dr. Caius now comes forward with a figure in white. Ford is to marry the pair. Alice brings forward another couple, who also receive Ford's blessing. When the brides remove their veils, it is revealed that Ford has just married Dr. Caius to Bardolfo—and more importantly, Fenton to Nannetta. With everyone now laughing at his expense, Ford has no choice but to forgive the lovers and bless their marriage. The entire company agrees that the whole world may be nothing but a jest filled with jesters, but he who laughs last, laughs best.

—Robert Carsen

*Reprinted courtesy of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden*

*Giuseppe Verdi*

# Falstaff

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*Premiere: Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1893*

A deeply human comedy full of humor and genuine emotion, Verdi's last opera is a splendid finale to an unparalleled career in the theater. The story is an amalgamation of scenes from Shakespeare, primarily drawn from the comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. It centers on the remarkable personality of Sir John Falstaff, one of literature's most compelling characters: aging, vain, dishonest, a bit crass, prodigiously self-indulgent—but also curiously philosophical. The subject choice of a comedy based on Shakespeare was surprising for Verdi: while there are comic moments in several of his great tragedies, his only real comic opera had been *Un Giorno di Regno*, his second work for the stage and an utter failure more than 50 years earlier. *Falstaff's* supremely well-crafted score, shows that the composer was continuing to grow as an artist even as he entered the ninth decade of his life. It is an astounding work and among the greatest operatic comedies of all time.

### *The Creators*

In a remarkable career spanning six decades, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) composed 28 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. Verdi's role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. The remarkable Arrigo Boito (1842–1918) was also a composer (his opera *Mefistofele*, based on Goethe's *Faust*, premiered in 1868), as well as a journalist and critic. The plays of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) have inspired a huge number of operatic interpretations. Before *Falstaff*, Verdi had already adapted *Macbeth* (1847, revised 1865) and *Otello* (1887, also with Boito as librettist).

### *The Setting*

The opera is set in and around the town of Windsor, west of London. The historical references in Shakespeare's plays place the character of Sir John Falstaff in the first decades of the 15th century, although traditionally the opera has often been set in Shakespeare's time, two centuries later. The current Met production places the action in mid-20th century England, after the Second World War—an era when long-established social norms were rapidly changing and the aristocracy lost much of their wealth and influence.

## *The Music*

*Falstaff* marks a stylistic departure for Verdi and occupies a category of its own, without parallels in the history of the genre. The musical ideas come fast and abundantly, moving from one to the next organically and without discernible breaks. The text is of primary importance, and while this could also be said for other operas, what makes *Falstaff* unique is the abundance of lyricism within a structure that almost completely avoids traditional arias. The orchestra carries the story and occasionally makes colorful comments on the action, while at other times, it represents the overall spirit of the proceedings, such as in the remarkable prelude to Act III, which contains all the sweeping crescendo of a Rossini overture in less than a minute. Several brief but notable vocal solos stand out, among them the title character's playfully comic recollection of his youth in Act II and his melancholy soliloquy on aging in Act III, as well as the young Fenton's serenade in the last scene. But the bulk of the singing happens in ensembles that, despite their highly sophisticated musical structure, seem as natural as speech and adhere perfectly to the lines of the text. The complex counter-rhythms of the ensemble that ends Act I are both funny and the perfect depiction of people at cross-purposes. The opera's celebrated finale is a fugue in which all the characters take part, each one both a perpetrator, and the butt, of the "great joke of life" Falstaff evokes in his final words.

## *Met History*

*Falstaff* came to the Met two years after its world premiere, with Victor Maurel reprising his performance of the title role and Emma Eames as Alice. It was repeated the following year and then retired until Arturo Toscanini conducted a new production in 1909 that starred Antonio Scotti and Emmy Destinn. Tullio Serafin conducted the premiere of a new production by Joseph Urban in 1925. This performance starred Scotti, opposite Lucrezia Bori as Alice and Beniamino Gigli as Fenton. The breakout performance of the night, however, was American baritone Lawrence Tibbett's Ford. The opera returned to the repertoire in 1964 in a production directed and designed by Franco Zeffirelli and conducted by Leonard Bernstein, both in their Met debuts. The cast included Anselmo Colzani in the title role, opposite Gabriella Tucci, Judith Raskin, Regina Resnik, Rosalind Elias, Luigi Alva, and Mario Sereni. This staging remained in the Met repertory until 2005, with such illustrious artists as Renata Tebaldi, Mirella Freni, Pilar Lorengar, Patricia Racette, Marilyn Horne, Stephanie Blythe, Susan Graham, Matthew Polenzani, Tito Gobbi, Cornell MacNeil, Giuseppe Taddei, Paul Plishka, and Sir Bryn Terfel, all making appearances. In 2013, Ambrogio Maestri took on the title role in the premiere of Robert Carsen's production, which also featured Angela Meade, Lisette Oropesa, Jennifer Johnson Cano, Blythe, Paolo Fanale, and Franco Vassallo.



KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA

## Standing Up for Opera

"It's impossible to pick only one, but *Falstaff* is certainly one of my favorite operas," reflected Edwin C. Holmer III, a longtime Met Patron who helped fund this season's revival. Holmer, who passed away earlier this year, was particularly attached to Robert Carsen's lively staging of Verdi's final masterpiece, calling it his "absolute favorite production of any opera I've seen."

Hailing from a family of classical music lovers, Holmer first developed an interest in opera as a teenager when his parents brought him to see Verdi's *Rigoletto*, but it wasn't until he was pursuing his bachelor's degree at Brown University that his self-declared "love affair" with the art form truly caught fire. "I probably spent more weekends in New York than in Providence," he remembered. In those days, in order to see as many operas as possible on a student's budget, he mostly purchased standing-room tickets.

After graduating from Brown, Holmer went on to earn a law degree from Boston University before becoming an attorney in San Francisco. But no matter where his career led, the Met remained a home away from home. As a faithful Subscriber, Holmer saw countless artists launch major operatic careers—from greats of the past like Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti to today's reigning diva herself, Anna Netrebko.

Even after the curtain comes down on the final performance of *Falstaff* on March 16, Holmer's legacy will live on for seasons to come. In honor of another generous gift he recently made to the Met, and as a nod to his early history with the company, the standing room galleries at the rear of the Orchestra level will henceforth be known as the **Edwin C. Holmer III Orchestra Standing Room Sections**.



## Program Note

“The great dream has come true,” wrote Arrigo Boito, the librettist of Verdi’s *Otello* and *Falstaff*, shortly before the former opera was unveiled in 1887. *Otello*’s premiere was an internationally celebrated success, bringing to fruition a proposal that had started eight years earlier when it was tentatively broached over the course of a dinner conversation. Boito refers to Verdi’s dream of creating a new opera based on his beloved Shakespeare, but he might just as well have marveled at the feat of luring the aging composer out of his self-proclaimed retirement from the opera stage.

Verdi had become so identified with the tragic genre that *Otello* must have seemed the perfect culmination of his life’s work. Yet Boito was determined, as he put it in a letter to a friend, “to make that bronze colossus resound one more time.” Verdi, for his part, had long harbored a desire to prove that the scope of his art extended beyond the dramas of gloomy passion with which he had built his reputation.

As early as 1847, Rossini made a pronouncement that still caused Verdi to bristle decades later: “He will never write a semi-serious opera ... much less a comic opera like *L’Elisir d’Amore*.” Undoubtedly, this reminded Verdi of the humiliating fiasco of his only previous attempt at comedy—*Un Giorno di Regno*, his second opera—but he must have also been spurred by an itch to compete with his illustrious predecessor, whose *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* Verdi deemed “the best comic opera ever written,” a work filled with a “wealth of real musical ideas, comic verve, and truth of declamation.”

Shakespeare himself, Verdi’s abiding idol, commanded admiration for the all-encompassing spectrum of a body of work that not only probes the deepest tragedy but also teems with comic vitality. Pioneering Romantics like Victor Hugo—another major influence on Verdi—even reappraised the Bard as one of their own on the grounds of his virtuosity at juggling the sublime and the grotesque within the same play. Verdi had already ventured into similar territory with the decadent festivities surrounding the grim plots of *Rigoletto* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*, for example, or in his almost Dickensian characterization of Fra Melitone in *La Forza del Destino*. Immediately prior to settling down to work on *Otello*, the composer defensively announced to his publisher Giulio Ricordi that he had been on the lookout for a comic opera libretto “for 20 years.” There’s even evidence that just before *Aida*, he briefly considered a libretto titled *Tartufo*—drawn from Molière’s satire of religious hypocrisy.

In other words, Verdi was more or less primed to “resound” once again when, in the summer of 1889, with *Otello* a triumphant fait accompli, Boito won him over with the tempting new prospect of a libretto adapted primarily from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The composer responded with a rush of enthusiasm: “We’ll write this *Falstaff* then! We won’t think for the moment of obstacles, of age, of illness!” As it happened, the creation of his final opera was

interrupted by those very hindrances over the next several years, but it finally premiered in Milan in 1893.

Given the composer's status, *Falstaff* was essentially guaranteed to be received with reverence. Still, the fact that a comic opera could contain so much that was challenging for both its performers and its audiences must have come as a surprise. Not only is the score remarkably mercurial, but the pace of the opera itself remains unrelentingly rapid, a study in coiled energy. What in earlier works might have taken an entire scene to express here incandesces within a compressed time frame, only to jostle against a fresh onrush of musical images.

Verdi, who approached 80 by the time he completed the score, took enormous pleasure in the countless discussions in which Boito engaged him as they hammered out the libretto's details. As a counterpart to his unbridled excitement about the project that he nicknamed "Big Belly," the composer fell prey to fits of melancholy and fretted that he would not live to complete the score.

These polar aspects—the adventure of experimenting, wedded to a wistful sense of a vanishing tradition—can be discerned within the sound world Verdi constructed for *Falstaff*. No other opera by this composer tumbles into action with more headlong momentum—not even *Otello*, whose storm claps raise the curtain with a sudden shock but are accompanied by the vestigial convention of an opening chorus. *Falstaff* dispenses entirely with any hint of a prelude or choral scene-setting. Instead, he launches the opera in a metrically tripping scherzo mode that almost immediately gives voice to the rapid patter of dialogue—a strategy from which Puccini, for one, would learn much.

At the same time, *Falstaff* parades a host of fleeting backward glances over the traditional tropes of Italian opera—structures and idioms Verdi had inherited and developed across his entire oeuvre. Instead of being unfolded at leisure, these dart unpredictably in and out of the hyperactive, continually metamorphosing soundscape that Verdi composed for the array of six scenes economically laid out by Boito's scheme. Think of the brief pockets of lyricism introduced by the young pair of lovers, Nannetta and Fenton, which Boito suggested would be more effective when "sprinkled" throughout the opera, "like powdered sugar on a cake," in contrast to a standard drawn-out duet. Or take the rhetoric of the revenge aria in which Ford momentarily channels a hint of the jealous Moor. The climactic comic frenzy of the second act's finale resembles a mash-up of the most dazzling moment of Rossinian "organized chaos" with a sturdily constructed Mozartean ensemble.

For their source material, Verdi and Boito turned to what is among the thinnest, most lightweight of Shakespeare's comedies. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Sir John—much as he fears giving up "my kingdom" (his ample girth) in the opera's opening scene—is but a shadow of the imposing life force who emerges in the *Henry* chronicle plays. The Falstaff of *Merry Wives* is reduced to

the butt of situation-comedy plotting by the denizens of what the critic Graham Bradshaw describes as “the respectably prosaic world of middle-class Windsor.”

Yet, this uncharacteristically slim, straightforward comedy—according to apocryphal legend, hastily put together to satisfy Queen Elizabeth’s request to see a play showing “Sir John in love”—provided the practical framework needed to bring the most complex and richly layered of Shakespeare’s comic characters to life on the lyric stage. The genius of what Boito and Verdi achieved together was to forge an opera that is, as Bradshaw puts it, “paradoxically more truly Shakespearean than its Shakespearean source.”

This extends beyond Boito’s clever interpolation of material from the *Henry* plays into Sir John’s monologues. As a “translation” of Shakespeare to the dimensions of the operatic medium, *Falstaff* brims over in text and music alike with the equivalent of Shakespearean abundance. Verdi and his librettist had enormous fun trading wordplay back and forth as they parsed the subtleties of Boito’s libretto—an exuberant concoction of puns, varied metrical verse forms, interrelated images, and archaic vocabulary alluding to Italy’s literary heritage (including such writers as Boccaccio).

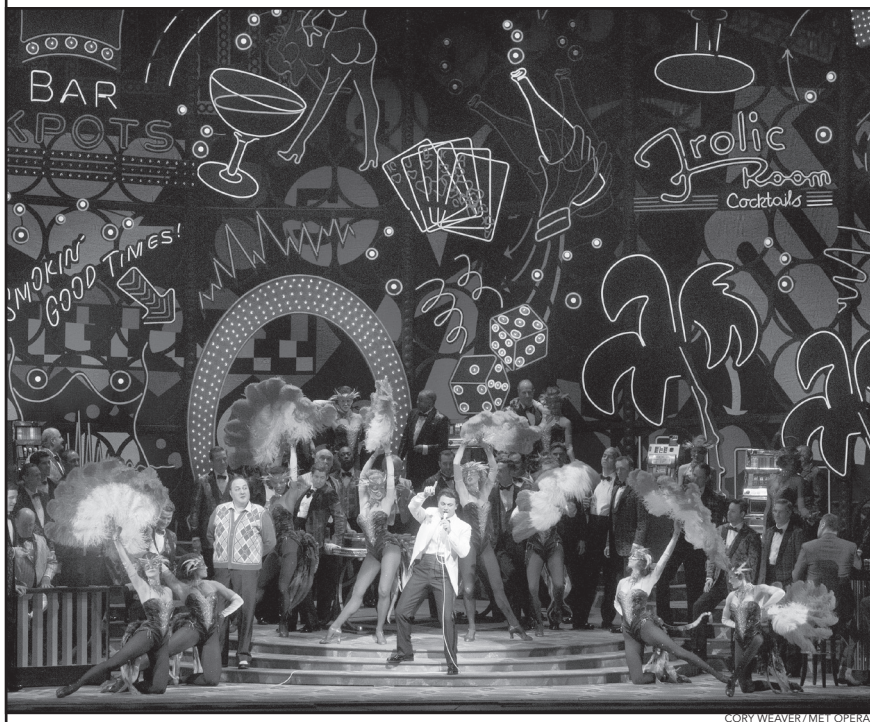
Verdi’s music meanwhile distills and juxtaposes the divergent perspectives that comprise the opera: the idealistic young lovers, the farcical plot set in motion by Alice (Verdi describes her role as “stirring the porridge”), the dramatic conflict introduced by her husband, Ford, who conspires with Dr. Caius, and the self-serving natural force embodied by Falstaff himself, omnipresent throughout the opera—even when Sir John is offstage.

In the third act, in which the comic momentum of the first two yields to a more ritualistic atmosphere for the final scene, Verdi counters the graphic “realism” of his prismatic orchestration with something new: a miraculous evocation of the numinous world that surrounds that society and Falstaff alike. His music for the fearful specters that are summoned to Herne’s Oak and then comically revealed pays tribute to the sources of early Romanticism and its penchant for midsummer magic. But as in the finale of Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the long night’s comedy of errors serves as the prelude to a reconciliation: The fat knight’s “lesson” prepares the way for the young generation to be recognized and securely united in love. Verdi then gathers all the riotous energy of what has preceded and reconfigures it as a fugue, that emblem of strictly organized discipline—his greatest joke of all.

—Thomas May

*Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator. His books include Decoding Wagner and The John Adams Reader, and he blogs at memeteria.com.*

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## The Cast

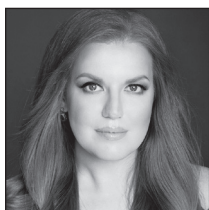


**Richard Farnes**

CONDUCTOR (COLCHESTER, ENGLAND)

**THIS SEASON** *Falstaff* for his debut at the Met and *The Turn of the Screw* at Garsington Opera.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Between 2004 and 2016, he served as music director of Opera North, where he conducted productions of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the Ring cycle, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Death in Venice*, *Otello*, *La Traviata*, Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Falstaff*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Peter Grimes*, Britten's *Gloriana*, *The Turn of Screw*, *Albert Herring*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, *La Bohème*, *Manon*, *La Rondine*, *Werther*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *From the House of the Dead*, and the world premieres of David Sawer's *Skin Deep* and Simon Holt's *The Nightingale's to Blame*. He has also led performances at the Glyndebourne Festival, Covent Garden, Scottish Opera, English National Opera, Israeli Opera, English Touring Opera, Birmingham Opera Company, and with the London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Russian National Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, and Cambridge University Musical Society, among others.



**Jennifer Johnson Cano**

MEZZO-SOPRANO (ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI)

**THIS SEASON** Meg Page in *Falstaff* and Emilia in *Otello* at the Met, Offred in Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* at Boston Lyric Opera, Bernstein's *Jeremiah* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and recitals at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall.

**MET APPEARANCES** Since her 2009 debut as a Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, she has sung more than 100 performances of 13 roles, including Emilia, Nicklausse/The Muse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Meg Page, Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*, and Waltraute in *Die Walküre*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, the title role of *Carmen* and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at Boston Lyric Opera, Orphée in *Orphée et Eurydice* at Des Moines Metro Opera, Donna Elvira at Arizona Opera, and the world premieres of Mason Bates's *Afterlife* with the Phoenix Symphony and John Harbison's *Crossroads* with the La Jolla Music Society. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Marie-Nicole Lemieux

CONTRALTO (DOLBEAU-MISTASSINI, CANADA)

**THIS SEASON** Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* for her debut and Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* at the Met, Ottone/Giunone in Handel's *Agrippina* in concert with Il Pomo d'Oro, and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Madrid.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Mistress Quickly at Covent Garden and the Vienna State Opera, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* and title role of *Carmen* in concert and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* in Paris, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Wiesbaden and Zurich, Storgé in Handel's *Jephtha* at the Paris Opera, the title role of Rossini's *Tancredi* in concert in Brussels, and Bertarido in *Rodelina* in concert with Il Pomo d'Oro. She has also sung Suzuki in Orange, Amsterdam, and Barcelona; the Sphinx in Enescu's *Oedipe* at Covent Garden; Mistress Quickly at La Scala, the Canadian Opera Company, the Paris Opera, and in Montreal; Azucena in Orange and at the Salzburg Festival; Ulrica in Brussels; Dalila in Montreal; Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and the title role of *Giulio Cesare* in concert and Tancredi in Paris; the Princess in *Suor Angelica* and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* in Vienna; and Polinesso in Handel's *Ariodante* in concert with Il Complesso Barocco.



## Ailyn Pérez

SOPRANO (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

**THIS SEASON** Alice Ford in *Falstaff* and Mimi in *La Bohème* and at the Met, Elvira in *Ernani* at La Scala, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Houston Grand Opera, Micaëla in *Carmen* at Covent Garden, Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Bavarian State Opera, and concert appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**MET APPEARANCES** Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the title role of *Thaïs*, Mimi and Musetta in *La Bohème*, and Micaëla (debut, 2015).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Violetta in Zurich and at Staatsoper Berlin, Marguerite in *Faust* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Violetta and Mimi at La Scala. She has also sung Juliette at the Santa Fe Opera; the title role of *Manon* and Tatyana Bakst in the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Great Scott* at the Dallas Opera; the Countess at Houston Grand Opera; Violetta at Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera, and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Mimi at LA Opera and Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre; and Alice Ford at the Glyndebourne Festival. She was the 2016 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.



## Golda Schultz

SOPRANO (BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA)

**THIS SEASON** Nannetta in *Falstaff* at the Met, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Vienna State Opera and in Zurich, Clara in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* at San Francisco Opera, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Liù in *Turandot* at the Bavarian State Opera, and concert and recital appearances throughout Europe.

**MET APPEARANCES** Pamina (debut, 2017).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She was a member of the ensemble at the Bavarian State Opera, where her roles have included Micaëla in *Carmen*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*, Ortlinde in *Die Walküre*, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, among others. Recent performances include Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Tokyo, Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Salzburg Festival, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at La Scala; and the Countess at the Glyndebourne Festival. Between 2013 and 2014, she was a member of the State Theater in Klagenfurt, Austria, where her roles included Fiordiligi, Princess Ninetta in Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*, and Sophie, among others.



## Francesco Demuro

TENOR (PORTO TORRES, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** Fenton in *Falstaff* and the Duke in *Rigoletto* at the Met, Foresto in *Attila* in Parma, Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Paris Opera, Fenton at Staatsoper Berlin, Cassio in *Otello* in Baden-Baden, and Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs des Perles* in Beijing and in concert in Dortmund, Germany.

**MET APPEARANCES** Alfredo in *La Traviata* and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (debut, 2014).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Rodolfo at Torre del Lago's Festival Puccini and in Bologna; Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* in Beijing; Alfredo and Rodolfo in Naples; Nadir at Staatsoper Berlin; the title role of *Faust* in Stuttgart, Piacenza, Reggio Emilia, and Modena; the Duke in Frankfurt and Verona; Fenton at the Paris Opera, Astana Opera, and La Scala; Arturo in *I Puritani* at Savonlinna Opera Festival and in Budapest; Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Venice and Ancona; Leicester in *Maria Stuarda* in concert in Monte Carlo; and Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Deutsche Oper Berlin. He has also sung the Duke at the Paris Opera, Seattle Opera, San Francisco Opera, and in Zurich, Madrid, Tokyo, Hamburg, Vienna, Beijing, and Parma.



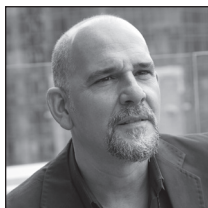
## Ambrogio Maestri

BARITONE (PAVIA, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Falstaff* and Michonnet in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Met, Germont in *La Traviata* in Tokyo, the title role of *Don Pasquale* and Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Vienna State Opera, Scarpia in *Tosca* in Las Palmas, Michele in *Il Tabarro* and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* at the Bavarian State Opera, and the Composer in Salieri's *Prima la Musica, poi le Parole* and Gianni Schicchi at La Scala.

**MET APPEARANCES** Don Pasquale, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Falstaff, Dr. Dulcamara, and Amonasro in *Aida* (debut, 2004).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has sung Falstaff at the Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Salzburg Festival, Lucerne Festival, Astana Opera, and in Chicago, Birmingham, Paris, Budapest, and Dresden, among others. Recent performances include Dr. Dulcamara at the Bavarian State Opera; Amonasro in Verona; the title role of *Rigoletto* at LA Opera and in Hamburg; Don Pasquale at La Scala; Michele and Gianni Schicchi in Reggio Emilia, Piacenza, and Modena; Scarpia at the Vienna State Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Naples; and Amonasro in Muscat.



## Juan Jesús Rodríguez

BARITONE (MADRID, SPAIN)

**THIS SEASON** Ford in *Falstaff* at the Met and the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Marseille.  
**MET APPEARANCES** de Guiche in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* (debut, 2016).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include the title role of *Rigoletto* at LA Opera and in Oviedo, Spain; Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* at the Israeli Opera; the title role of *Macbeth* in Marseille and Avignon; Ford in A Coruña, Spain; Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Rome; Guido di Monforte in *I Vespri Siciliani* in Valencia; and Marcello in *La Bohème* in Seville. He has also sung Rodrigo, Rigoletto, Marcello, and Germont in *La Traviata* in Madrid; the title role of *Nabucco* in Las Palmas; Iago in *Otello* in Valladolid and Las Palmas; Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Rigoletto in Pamplona; Rodrigue in *Don Carlos* and Iago in Bilbao; Ezio in *Attila* and Count di Luna in A Coruña; Count di Luna in Naples; Ford in Málaga, Spain; Iago in Oviedo; Marcello in San Sebastián, Spain; and the title role of Sorozábal's *Black el Payaso* and Roque in Arrieta's *Marina* at Madrid's Teatro de la Zarzuela.