

*Giuseppe Verdi*

# Aida

CONDUCTOR

**Marco Armiliato**

PRODUCTION

**Sonja Frisell**

SET DESIGNER

**Gianni Quaranta**

COSTUME DESIGNER

**Dada Saligeri**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Gil Wechsler**

CHOREOGRAPHER

**Alexei Ratmansky**

STAGE DIRECTOR

**Stephen Pickover**

GENERAL MANAGER

**Peter Gelb**

MUSIC DIRECTOR

**James Levine**

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

**Fabio Luisi**

## Opera in four acts

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 7:30–11:10 pm

The production of *Aida* is made possible by a generous gift from **Mrs. Donald D. Harrington**.

The revival of this production is gratefully dedicated to the memory of **James C. Slaughter**, a Managing Director of the Metropolitan Opera from 1994 to 2009.

# The Metropolitan Opera

2011–12 Season

The 1,120th Metropolitan Opera performance of

*Giuseppe Verdi's*

## Aida

Conductor  
**Marco Armiliato**

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Ramfis  
**James Morris**

Radamès  
**Riccardo Massi DEBUT**

Amneris  
**Stephanie Blythe \***

Aida  
**Violeta Urmana**

The King  
**Jordan Bisch \***

A Messenger  
**Adam Laurence Herskowitz**

A Priestess  
**Lori Guilbeau**

Amonasro  
**Lado Ataneli**

Solo Dancers  
**Christine McMillan**  
**Robert Colby Damon**

This performance  
is being broadcast  
live on Metropolitan  
Opera Radio, on  
SiriusXM channel 74.

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 7:30–11:10 pm



Violeta Urmana in the title role of Verdi's *Aida*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**  
Musical Preparation **Donna Racik, Howard Watkins, J. David Jackson, and Liora Maurer**  
Assistant Stage Directors **David Kneuss and J. Knighten Smit**  
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**  
Met Titles **Christopher Bergen**  
Prompter **Donna Racik**  
Italian Coach **Hemdi Kfir**  
Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted in **Metropolitan Opera Shops**  
Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**  
Wigs executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig Department**  
Headaddresses by **Rodney Gordon Studios and Miles-Laity, Ltd.**  
Animals supervised by **All-Tame Animals, Inc.**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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\* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

Yamaha is the official piano of the Metropolitan Opera.

Latecomers will not be admitted during the performance.

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#### **Met Titles**

To activate, press the red button to the right of the screen in front of your seat and follow the instructions provided. To turn off the display, press the red button once again. If you have questions please ask an usher at intermission.

# Synopsis

Egypt, during the reign of the pharaohs

## Act I

SCENE 1 An antechamber in the palace in Memphis

SCENE 2 A throne room in the palace

SCENE 3 An antechamber in the palace

SCENE 4 The temple of Vulcan

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:10 PM)

## Act II

SCENE 1 Apartments of Amneris in the palace at Thebes

SCENE 2 A public square

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:25 PM)

## Act III

The banks of the Nile

*Pause*

## Act IV

SCENE 1 Forecourt at the hall of judgment

SCENE 2 Outside the hall of judgment

SCENE 3 A tomb below the temple

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## Act I

At the royal palace in Memphis, the high priest Ramfis tells the warrior Radamès that Ethiopia is preparing another attack against Egypt. Radamès hopes to command his army. He is in love with Aida, the Ethiopian slave of Princess Amneris, the king's daughter, and he believes that victory in the war would enable him to free her and marry her. But Amneris loves Radamès, and when the three meet, she jealously senses his feelings for Aida. A messenger tells the king of Egypt and the assembled priests and soldiers that the Ethiopians are advancing. The king names Radamès to lead the army, and all join in a patriotic anthem. Left alone, Aida is torn between her love for Radamès and loyalty to her native country, where her father, Amonasro, is king. She prays to the gods for mercy.

In the temple of Vulcan, the priests consecrate Radamès to the service of the god. Ramfis orders him to protect the homeland.

## Act II

Ethiopia has been defeated, and Amneris waits for the triumphant return of Radamès. When Aida approaches, the princess sends away her other attendants so that she can learn her slave's private feelings. She first pretends that Radamès has fallen in battle, then says he is still alive. Aida's reactions leave no doubt that she loves Radamès. Amneris, certain she will be victorious over her rival, leaves for the triumphal procession.

At the city gates the king and Amneris observe the celebrations and crown Radamès with a victor's wreath. Captured Ethiopians are led in. Among them is Amonasro, Aida's father, who signals his daughter not to reveal his identity as king. Radamès is impressed by Amonasro's eloquent plea for mercy and asks for the death sentence on the prisoners to be overruled and for them to be freed. The king grants his request but keeps Amonasro in custody. The king declares that as a victor's reward, Radamès will have Amneris's hand in marriage.

## Act III

On the eve of Amneris's wedding, Ramfis and Amneris enter a temple on the banks of the Nile to pray. Aida, who is waiting for Radamès, is lost in thoughts of her homeland. Amonasro suddenly appears. Invoking Aida's sense of duty, he makes her agree to find out from Radamès which route the Egyptian army will take to invade Ethiopia. Amonasro hides as Radamès arrives and assures Aida of his love. They dream about their future life together, and Radamès agrees to run away with her. Aida asks him about his army's route, and just as he reveals the secret, Amonasro emerges from his hiding place. When he realizes that Amonasro is the Ethiopian king, Radamès is horrified by what he has done. While Aida and Amonasro try to calm him, Ramfis and Amneris step out of the temple. Father and daughter are able to escape, but Radamès surrenders to the priests.

## Act IV

Radamès awaits trial as a traitor, believing Aida to be dead. Even after he learns that she has survived, he rejects an offer by Amneris to save him if he renounces Aida. When he is brought before the priests, he refuses to answer their accusations and is condemned to be buried alive. Amneris begs for mercy, but the judges will not change their verdict. She curses the priests.

Aida has hidden in the vault to share Radamès's fate. They express their love for the last time while Amneris, in the temple above, prays for Radamès's soul.

## In Focus

*Giuseppe Verdi*

# Aida

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*Premiere: Cairo Opera House, 1871*

This grandest of grand operas features an epic backdrop for what is in essence an intimate love story. Set in ancient Egypt and packed with magnificent choruses, complex ensembles, and elaborate ballets, *Aida* never loses sight of its three protagonists: Amneris, the proud daughter of the pharaoh; her slave, Aida, who is the princess of the rival kingdom of Ethiopia; and Radamès, the Egyptian warrior they both love. Few operas have matched *Aida* in its exploration of the conflict of private emotion and public duty, and perhaps no other has remained to the present day so unanimously appreciated by audiences and critics alike.

### *The Creators*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) is the composer of 28 operas that premiered over a period of 54 years. His works continue to form the core of the international opera repertory, cherished equally for their unforgettable music and their humanity. The story of *Aida* was the creation of Auguste Mariette (1821–1881), an extraordinary French archaeologist who was the founder of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo (and whose reputation for great archaeological successes was somewhat tainted when he accidentally blew up an intact tomb). Camille du Locle (1832–1903), who collaborated on the scenario with Mariette and suggested the story to Verdi, had worked with the composer on the libretto of *Don Carlos*. An opera impresario in Paris, he commissioned *Carmen* from Georges Bizet for the Opéra Comique in 1875. *Aida*'s librettist, Antonio Ghislanzoni (1824–1893), was a novelist and poet as well as the creator of some 85 librettos, most of which are forgotten today. He had previously worked with Verdi on the revision of *La Forza del Destino* (1869).

### *The Setting*

The libretto indicates merely that the opera takes place in “ancient Egypt, in the time of the pharaohs.” This may sound vague, but it was a clear direction to approach the drama as myth rather than anthropology or history. Europe’s fascination with the ancient Nile civilization had been piqued with stories from Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition at the end of the 18th century, and continued into the mid-19th century with the numerous archaeological discoveries being taken from the sands of Egypt and shipped to museums in the European capitals.

## *The Music*

The score of *Aida* is a sophisticated example of Italian Romanticism, imbued with a convincingly mysterious and exotic hue. Making no claims to authenticity (nobody knows what music in ancient Egypt sounded like), Verdi created a unique musical palette for this opera. The grandeur of the subject is aptly conveyed with huge patriotic choruses (Acts I and II) and the unforgettable Triumphant March in Act II. These public moments often serve as frames for the solos of the leading tenor and soprano: his grueling “Celeste Aida” right at the beginning of Act I, her demanding “Ritorna vincitor!” that follows, and her great internal journey, “O patria mia,” in Act III. Perhaps most impressive in this drama of public versus private needs are the instances of solo voice pitted directly against complex ensembles and vast choruses: the tenor in the temple scene in Act I, the mezzo-soprano in the judgment scene in Act IV, and especially the soprano in the great triumphal scene in Act II.

## *Aida at the Met*

The opera came to the Met during the “German Seasons” of the 1880s and was performed in German until 1891. (The Met’s 1883–84 season was a financial disaster, so for a few seasons the company hired less expensive German singers and had them sing in their native language.) *Aida* has been among the most popular operas in the Met’s repertory since those early days. Conductor Arturo Toscanini inaugurated his Met career with a spectacular new production of *Aida* (even though the previous production was only a year old) for opening night of the 1909–10 season. That performance featured the Met debut of Czech sensation Emmy Destinn (who would sing the title role 52 times at the Met through 1920), American mezzo Louise Homer (who sang Amneris 97 times between 1900 and 1927), Enrico Caruso (91 performances as Radamès at the Met between 1903 and 1919), and the great baritone Pasquale Amato (79 appearances between 1903 and 1919). Other unforgettable and frequent *Aidas* at the Met include Zinka Milanov (75 performances, 1938–1958), Elisabeth Rethberg (67 performances, 1922–1942), and the legendary Leontyne Price (42 performances from 1961 until her farewell appearance at the Met in 1985). The current production by Sonja Frisell, with sets by the acclaimed film production designer Gianni Quaranta (*A Room With a View*), premiered in 1988 with James Levine conducting a cast headed by Leona Mitchell, Fiorenza Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, and Paul Plishka.

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2011-12 SEASON

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## Program Note

Many writers dealing with 19th-century European opera have remarked how strong the lure was for composers to write for the Opéra in Paris. Not only were the musical standards supposed to be the highest, the forces that created and performed the works the most estimable, and the fame that could be gained the most lasting—the financial rewards for the composition and performance of an opera were considered the largest a European house had to offer. Verdi had worked for the Opéra on two occasions during the 1840s and '50s: *Jérusalem*, a reworking of *I Lombardi*, premiered in 1847, and *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* followed in 1855. But it is no wonder that he thought of his five-act opera on Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1867) as something of a culmination of his career in the theater.

Having dealt with the forces of the Opéra over a period of some 20 years, he was not over-eager to compose a fourth work for that institution. Nevertheless, shortly after the premiere of *Don Carlos* he found himself being requested by Camille du Locle, one of its librettists, to write another opera for Paris. In a famous letter to du Locle, dated December 8, 1869, Verdi outlined his reasons for not wishing to work there again. It is a precious document, one from which we can glean some idea of how the composer was determined to work from this point on and to what standard: "Hélas! It is not the toil of writing an opera nor the judgment of the Parisian public that holds me back, but rather the certainty of not being able to have my music performed in Paris the way I want it." He then goes on to say why this is so: there are too many self-ordained savants in the French opera houses, "every one wants to judge according to his own lights and tastes, and what is worse, according to a system, without taking into account the character and individuality of the composer." Verdi believes in inspiration, the French "in construction.... I admit your right to criticize, but I want enthusiasm, which you lack in hearing and judging." And, he goes on, "I want art in whatever manifestation of it, not amusement, artifice, and system, which you prefer." Verdi feels each artist has the right—indeed, the obligation—to write according to his own lights and not cut his cloth to others' tastes, especially those of the Opéra. "Each one wants to give an opinion, wants to utter a doubt, and a composer living for a long time in that atmosphere of doubts cannot help, at least in the long run, be slightly shaken in his convictions and end up correcting, adjusting, or even better, spoiling his work." In short, he will have none of it.

All this serves to explain why Verdi was reluctant to take on a new work for any theater, let alone the Paris Opéra, with all its supposed ability and rewards. It also, even more importantly, gives us an idea of the criteria he had in mind when he eventually composed his next opera, *Aida*. As he cultivated the image of gentleman farmer on his estate at Sant'Agata after the premiere of *Don Carlos*, he consistently turned down various ideas proffered by any number of individuals—yet considered them all very carefully. Thus, when du Locle in

November of 1869 asked him to provide a hymn for the opening of the new Cairo Opera House, he refused, with the comment that he did not compose “pièces de circonstance.” Though the actual documents are no longer available, it seems that it was not until du Locle visited Sant’Agata at the beginning of 1870 that the *Aida* project was presented to Verdi. The viceroy of Egypt, Ismail Pasha, wanted a new opera from the famous Italian composer’s pen, and the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, who was in the viceroy’s service, had come up with a scenario that all hoped would lure Verdi back into the theater. But still the composer balked and found any number of reasons for not undertaking a new work. It was not until the beginning of June of the same year that he finally accepted the idea of *Aida* and laid out his conditions for its composition. Needless to say, they were accepted.

Though there were complications and deferrals of the premiere, the work was finally presented at the Cairo Opera House on December 24, 1871. Its Italian premiere, supervised by the composer (who had not traveled to Cairo), took place on February 8, 1872, at La Scala. Contrary to popular accounts, *Aida* was not commissioned for or performed at the opening of the Suez Canal (which happened in the early months of 1870). Neither did it open the new Cairo Opera House: that event occurred on November 1, 1869, with a performance of *Rigoletto*.

A curious feature of the Verdi canon is the appearance of what could be called a simple, more old-fashioned opera following one or two works with “theatrical” plots and somewhat experimental or “modern” music (to use the terms of Verdi’s critical contemporaries). *Il Trovatore*, a work that seems to sum up the best of his early operas, came after the forward-looking *Rigoletto*; *Un Ballo in Maschera* after *Simon Boccanegra*; and *Aida* after *La Forza del Destino* and *Don Carlos*. It is as if Verdi wanted to retrench, to make sure that the inspiration and enthusiasm he spoke of in the letter to du Locle were securely allied to and tempered by the art that he was insistent on. *Aida* has seemed to some commentators to be too perfect: with the exception of Amneris and possibly Amonasro, the characters seem to have a two-dimensional quality, as opposed to the figures drawn in the round in, say, *La Forza del Destino* or *Don Carlos*. The reason for this could easily be that the music of *Aida* is certainly the most “classical” that Verdi had written up to that point. His uncanny feel for color also allowed him to invent an “Egyptian sound.” While it has nothing to do with actual ancient Egyptian music, it is nonetheless convincing. The orchestration is a miracle of both sonority and delicacy: it is not for nothing that Richard Strauss loved conducting *Lohengrin*, *Carmen*, and *Aida* primarily for the pleasure of observing their orchestration at the closest proximity. The libretto, prepared by Antonio Ghislanzoni under Verdi’s direct supervision, is also clear and straightforward in its presentation of the plot. Verdi’s *parola scenica*—the

“scenic word” that leaps out in a sentence, captures the listener’s attention, and allows him to take in the situation instantly—is in abundance. A very obvious example is Aida’s “Ritorna vincitor!” at the end of the first scene in Act I: She calls it out without any accompaniment, all on stage repeat it in unison, and then Aida, left alone after the general exit, sings it a third time, now bitterly. Could any situation be simpler or clearer? Could any situation be more musically and dramatically exciting?

Indeed, situations are so clear that it has often been a cause for wonder that Verdi agreed to use Mariette’s scenario as the basis for a new opera at this point in his career. Did he not say in an 1853 letter, while he was completing *Il Trovatore*, that he wanted “subjects that are new, great, beautiful, varied, bold”? A clue to the answer may be found in another letter he wrote to du Locle in May of 1870, when, after reading the *Aida* outline, he said, “There are two or three situations which, if not very new, are certainly very beautiful.” It is easy to imagine the composer reading through Mariette’s scenario (which fairly closely resembled the finished product), sensing the musical possibilities inherent in it.

But it is, of course, the music itself that has assured *Aida* not only its immense popularity but also the enormous esteem in which it is held by musicians. It has already been pointed out that it is Verdi’s most classic score—of the operas preceding it, only *Un Ballo in Maschera* could perhaps have a claim to equal it in this capacity. The melodies of *Aida* fall easily on the ear, yet on examination prove to be far from the more formulaic kind of melody that is met with in the “galley slave” operas. A composer of genius will always bend the verse and the bar line to his own particular needs. To paraphrase novelist John Cheever: “The essence of music is always the singularity of the composer.” Verdi would have been certain to agree when he complained that the French did not take “into account the character and individuality of the composer.” —*David Stivender*

# The Cast



## Marco Armiliato

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *Anna Bolena*, *Ernani*, *Aida*, and *Madama Butterfly* at the Met, *Tosca* in Munich, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* with the Vienna State Opera, *Linda di Chamounix* in Barcelona, *Manon Lescaut* in Hamburg, and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Paris Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** More than 200 performances, including *La Bohème* (debut, 1998), *Tosca*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Rondine*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *La Traviata*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Turandot*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Sly*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Since his 1995 debut at the Vienna State Opera he has returned to that company for a number of works, including *Tosca*, *Fedora*, *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Sonnambula*. He also conducts regularly at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, San Francisco Opera, Barcelona's Liceu, Rome Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, and Venice's La Fenice, among others.



## Stephanie Blythe

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MONGAUP VALLEY, NEW YORK)

**THIS SEASON** *Eduige* in *Rodelinda*, *Amneris* in *Aida*, and *Fricka* in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at the Met, *Azucena* in concert performances of *Il Trovatore* for her debut with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and concert appearances with the New York Philharmonic and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

**MET APPEARANCES** More than 150 performances of 25 roles, including *Orfeo* in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Ježibaba* in *Rusalka*, *Ulrica* in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Cornelia* in *Giulio Cesare*, *Jocasta* in *Oedipus Rex*, *Mistress Quickly* in *Falstaff*, *Baba the Turk* in *The Rake's Progress*, and the *Alto Solo* in *Parsifal* (debut, 1995).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** *Azucena* for her debut at the San Francisco Opera, *Baba the Turk* at Covent Garden, *Orlofsky* in *Die Fledermaus* at the Arizona Opera, *Dalila* in *Samson et Dalila* at the Pittsburgh Opera, *Isabella* in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and *Carmen* in Seattle, *Azucena* and *Mistress Quickly* at Covent Garden, *Isabella* in Philadelphia and Santa Fe, and *Cornelia* and *Mistress Quickly* at the Paris Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



## Violeta Urmana

SOPRANO (KAZLU RUDOS, LITHUANIA)

**THIS SEASON** The title role of *Aida* at the Met, Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* at the Vienna State Opera and Paris Opera, and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Paris Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Odabella in *Attila*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, Kundry in *Parsifal* (debut, 2001), Eboli in *Don Carlo*, Santuzza, and the title roles of *Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *La Gioconda*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** She started her operatic career as a mezzo-soprano, and after making her debut as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at the Bayreuth Festival made her soprano debut in 2002 at La Scala in the title role of *Iphigénie en Aulide*. Since that time she has sung Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* in Vienna, Isolde in Rome, *Gioconda* and Leonora at Covent Garden, and *Tosca* in Florence and Los Angeles. She has also sung the title role of *Norma* in Dresden, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo* in Turin, *Tosca* in Florence and Los Angeles, *Aida* at La Scala, and the title role of Catalani's *La Wally* at the Vienna Konzerthaus.



## Lado Ataneli

BARITONE (TBILISI, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA)

**THIS SEASON** Amonasro in *Aida* at the Met, Giorgio Germont in *La Traviata* in Cologne, Scarpia in *Tosca* in Turin and at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the title role of *Macbeth* in Monte Carlo.

**MET APPEARANCES** The title roles of *Rigoletto*, *Nabucco*, and *Macbeth*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, and Giorgio Germont (debut, 2003).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Recent performances include Tomskey in *The Queen of Spades* at Barcelona's Liceu, Barnaba in *La Gioconda* in Madrid and at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Michele in *Il Tabarro* at Covent Garden, *Macbeth* at the Edinburgh Festival, Scarpia with the San Francisco Opera, and Iago in *Otello* in Dallas. He has also sung Scarpia at the Vienna State Opera, Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* at the Los Angeles Opera, and *Macbeth* at the Washington National Opera and Vienna State Opera.



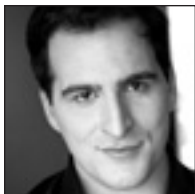
## Jordan Bisch

BASS (VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON)

**THIS SEASON** The King in *Aida* at the Met and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for his debut with the Dallas Opera.

**MET APPEARANCES** Second Knight in *Parsifal* (debut, 2006), Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*, Trojan in *Idomeneo*, and Ceprano in *Rigoletto*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He recently made debuts at the Florida Grand Opera as Raimondo, Seattle Opera in the world premiere of Daron Hagen's *Amelia*, and at the Tanglewood Festival in the Mozart Requiem with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, he appeared last season as Kecal in the joint Met Opera/Juilliard School production of *The Bartered Bride*. He has also sung Angelotti in *Tosca* with the San Francisco Opera, Second Armored Man in *Die Zauberflöte* with Los Angeles Opera, Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* with Portland, Maine's PORTopera, and Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra* at Switzerland's Verbier Festival.



## Riccardo Massi

TENOR (SARNANO, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** Radamès in *Aida* for his Met debut, Enzo in a concert performance of *La Gioconda* at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in Rio de Janeiro, Avignon, and with the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Radamès in Salerno for his 2009 operatic debut, Pollione in *Norma* in Lima, Malcolm in *Macbeth* for his 2010 debut at the Glyndebourne Festival, Jacopo Foscari in Verdi's *I Due Foscari* and Arrigo in *La Battaglia di Legnano* in Rome, and Cavaradossi in Salzburg, for his debut at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, and for his 2011 North American debut with the Palm Beach Opera.



## James Morris

BASS (BALTIMORE, MARYLAND)

**THIS SEASON** Scarpia in *Tosca*, Ramfis in *Aida*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Claggart in *Billy Budd* at the Met and the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

**MET APPEARANCES** He has been heard in nearly 900 performances and 60 roles since his 1971 debut, including Wotan in Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Jacopo Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in *Lulu*, Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Iago in *Otello*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, and the title role of *Don Giovanni*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He has appeared in all the world's leading opera houses and with the major orchestras of Europe and the United States. One of the leading interpreters of Wagner's Wotan, he has sung the role in cycles at the Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and San Francisco Opera, among others.

# What's on Stage

This February, rising soprano Angela Meade returns to the role of her Met debut, Elvira in *Ernani*, opposite Marcello Giordani, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and Ferruccio Furlanetto. Bartlett Sher's production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* returns with Diana Damrau, Colin Lee, and Rodion Pogossov in the principal roles. Stephanie Blythe sings Amneris in *Aida* for the first time at the Met alongside Violeta Urmana in the title role and Marcelo Álvarez as Radamès.

*Verdi*

## ERNANI

FEB 2, 6, 10, 14, 18 eve, 25 mat

*Rossini*

## IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

FEB 4 eve, 8, 11 eve, 15, 18 mat

*Verdi*

## AIDA

FEB 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 28 MAR 3 mat

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