PHILIP GLASS

AKHNATEN

CONDUCTOR
Karen Kamensek

PRODUCTION
Phelim McDermott

set and projection designer $Tom\ Pye$

COSTUME DESIGNER Kevin Pollard

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Bruno Poet

CHOREOGRAPHER Sean Gandini

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Philip Glass in association with Shalom Goldman, Robert Israel, Richard Riddell, and Jerome Robbins

Vocal text drawn from original sources by Shalom Goldman

Thursday, May 19, 2022 7:30–11:00PM

First time this season

The production of Akhnaten was made possible by a generous gift from the Rosalie J. Coe Weir Endowment Fund and the Wyncote Foundation, as recommended by Frederick R. Haas and Rafael Gomez

Additional funding of this production was provided by The H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang, Ph.D. and Oscar Tang Endowment Fund, Dominique Laffont, Andrew J. Martin-Weber, The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Endowment Fund, American Express, and the National Endowment for the Arts

The revival of this production is made possible by a gift from Rolex, and Barbara Augusta Teichert

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Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER MUSIC DIRECTOR Yannick Nézet-Séguin

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The Metropolitan Opera

2021-22 SEASON

The ninth Metropolitan Opera performance of PHILIP GLASS'S

AKHNATEN

CONDUCTOR Karen Kamensek

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

AMENHOTEP III

Zachary James

AYE, NEFERTITI'S FATHER Richard Bernstein

high priest of amon Aaron Blake

general horemhab Will Liverman

AKHNATEN
Anthony Roth Costanzo

oueen tye, akhnaten's mother Dísella Lárusdóttir

NEFERTITI, AKHNATEN'S WIFE Rihab Chaieb*

AKHNATEN'S DAUGHTERS
BEKHETATEN
Lindsay Ohse
MERETATEN
Katrina Thurman
DEBUT
MAKETATEN

ANKHESENPAATEN
Annie Rosen
NEFERNEFERUATEN
Olivia Vote
SOTOPENRE
Suzanne Hendrix

A PROFESSOR Zachary James

YOUNG TUTANKHAMUN Thaleia Chan-Miller

SKILLS ENSEMBLE
Benjamin Beaujard
Sean Blue
Sean Gandini
Kim Huynh
Michael Karas
Christian Kloc
Brian Koenig
Sakari Männistö-Lister
Shane Miclon
Kelsey Strauch
Jose Triguero
Kati Ylä-Hokkala

This performance is being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 355 and streamed at metopera.org.

Thursday, May 19, 2022, 7:30-11:00PM

Chrystal E. Williams



Anthony Roth
Costanzo in the
title role and Rihab
Chaieb as Nefertiti
in Philip Glass's
Akhnaten

Chorus Master Donald Palumbo

Musical Preparation Caren Levine*, Jonathan C. Kelly, Steven Osgood, Nathan Raskin*, and Katelan Trần Terrell* Assistant Stage Directors Sarah Ina Meyers,

Mirabelle Ordinaire, and Peter Relton

Prompter Caren Levine*

Met Titles Michael Panayos

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Dyeing by Emma van Bloomstein and Frances Baker Additional costumes by Metropolitan Opera Costume Department

Wigs and Makeup constructed and executed by Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department

Content Advisory: Akhnaten contains momentary full-frontal nudity.

For this performance, Met Titles will present only scene headings and selected text.

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The Metropolitan Opera is pleased to salute Toll Brothers in recognition of its generous support during the 2021–22 season.



Synopsis

Act I

Year 1 of Akhnaten's reign. Thebes.

Funeral of Amenhotep III

The opera begins with the death of Amenhotep III. We see him first revealed both as a corpse and as a ghostly figure, reciting an Egyptian funerary incantation. During the funeral ceremony, we see a sacred ritual performed in which the body's organs are carefully taken out and placed into canopic jars and the body is wrapped and embalmed. A ceremony takes place that represents a ritual occurring in the Book of the Dead, in which the pharaoh's heart is weighed against a feather: If his heart is as light as this, it will ensure that Amenhotep will travel through into the afterlife.

Coronation of Akhnaten

The figure of Amenhotep's son steps forward, and the coronation ceremony begins. The new pharaoh is dressed in sacred robes, and the crowns representing Upper and Lower Egypt are brought together to symbolize Amenhotep IV's power over all of Egypt. Once he is crowned, the new pharaoh rises up the stairs to make his first pronouncement.

The Window of Appearances

At the Window of Appearances, the pharaoh reveals his intentions to form a monotheistic religion. He changes his name from Amenhotep IV, meaning "spirit of Amon," to Akhnaten, meaning "spirit of Aten." Akhnaten, Nefertiti, and Queen Tye glorify Aten, a form of the sun god, Ra. As the trio makes their pronouncement at the window, the sun rises behind them.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:20PM)

Act II

Years 5 to 15. Thebes and Akhetaten.

The Temple

Akhnaten and Queen Tye begin to make the changes that he has promised. He leads a revolt to banish the old religion and replace it with his own. Akhnaten enters the temple and finds the priests performing the old religious rituals. Akhnaten banishes them and forms the new order of Aten.

Akhnaten and Nefertiti

Akhnaten and Nefertiti affirm their love for each other.

Synopsis continued

The City

The site for a new city is chosen carefully. The new city of Akhetaten—"the City of the Horizon of Aten"—is built in praise of the new religion.

Hymn

Akhnaten sings a private prayer to his god. His vision of a new religion and a new society is complete.

Intermission (at approximately 9:40pm)

Act III

Year 17 and the present. Akhetaten.

The Family

Akhnaten and Nefertiti dwell in an insular world of their own creation with their six daughters. Meanwhile, Queen Tye is uneasy. She senses unrest beyond the city's walls. Crowds gather outside the gates, and letters arrive expressing increasing concern about Akhnaten's self-imposed isolation.

Attack and Fall

The priests of Amon emerge from the gathering crowds and break through the palace doors. The daughters try to escape and are drawn away from Akhnaten and into the swelling mass. Queen Tye and Nefertiti are also separated from Akhnaten, who is ultimately killed.

The Ruins

The spirit of Akhnaten's father mourns his son's death. Meanwhile, the new pharaoh, the young Tutankhamun, is crowned in a ceremony similar to that of his father, and the old polytheistic religion is restored. Intercutting this ceremony, a group of modern-day students is listening to a lecture given by a professor.

Epilogue

The ghosts of Akhnaten, Nefertiti, and Queen Tye are heard from the ancient world once again.

Synopsis reprinted courtesy of English National Opera.

Philip Glass

Akhnaten

Premiere: Staatsoper, Stuttgart, 1984

The final installment of Philip Glass's Portrait Trilogy (along with Einstein on the Beach and Satyagraha), Akhnaten is a powerfully meditative narrative concerning the impact of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep IV, known as Akhnaten, "spirit of the Aten"—"Aten" being a name for the sun disk, thought to be an aspect of the sun god, Ra. (Today, Akhnaten is more commonly referred to as "Akhenaten.") Akhnaten's successors deliberately destroyed most of the records of his life, so any discussion about him must be reconstructed from a blend of history, archaeology, and a degree of speculation. It is known that his reign represented a period of unique and violent upheaval in the 3,000-year epoch of the pharaohs. He abolished the already ancient polytheistic order of Egyptian society in order to institute a state religion of monotheistic sun worship but was overthrown after 17 years, and the capital city he built, Akhetaten, was destroyed. Another surviving aspect of this king was his love for his wife, the great beauty Nefertiti, enshrined in surviving fragments of stunning love poetry. Akhnaten is one of Glass's three large-scale operas based on a "big idea," in this case monotheism, following Einstein on the Beach, which dealt with new notions of time and space, and Satyagraha, which explored the spiritual and political revelation of non-violence. Satyagraha and Akhnaten, especially, deal largely with the unseen forces affecting the inner (psychological), interpersonal (political), and universal (mystical) aspects of existence, subjects that are uniquely portrayed by the composer's entrancing musical lines.

The Creators

Philip Glass (b. 1937) is a prolific and influential American composer whose diverse body of work has included film scores, chamber music, music for dance and other theatrical pieces, and various forms of opera. Glass's work is the result of a remarkable blend of traditional training and many other broad, international influences. His numerous collaborations (with artists as varied as Robert Wilson, David Bowie, Brian Eno, and Martin Scorsese) have drawn to his music a wide range of listeners well beyond the established institutions. Glass worked with a team of collaborators to create the libretto for *Akhnaten*, which is sung in four different languages—ancient Egyptian, Akkadian, Hebrew, and the language spoken by the audience, depending on where the performance is taking place. The text of the opera was compiled from various sources, including ancient inscriptions and letters, the Bible's Psalm 104, and even a Fodor's guide to Egypt.

In Focus CONTINUED

The Setting

Akhnaten is set during the 17-year reign of Akhnaten, around 1350 B.C.E. There is also an episode in the present day in which a modern guide ruminates on the legacy of the pharaoh while the spirits of Akhnaten and his family continue their journey in the afterlife. The location moves between the ancient Egyptian capital of Thebes and Akhnaten's new capital city at Akhetaten, as well as the ruins of the subsequently destroyed Akhetaten.

The Music

The score of this opera is lyrical, elegiac, and, while clearly a product of its famous composer (whose intricate, repetitive sonic textures unfold differently than most other classical music), is among the most easily appreciated of his creations. The orchestra is standard except for the absence of violins, which accentuates the lower strings, woodwinds, and brass to create a somber eeriness in much of the score. Percussion features prominently, particularly during the remarkable music for the funeral of Akhnaten's father in Act I. The vocal lines also tend toward the melodic, even if they are original and remarkable. The title role is sung by a countertenor, and his wife, Nefertiti, is sung by a contralto or mezzo-soprano in their first vocal appearance (at the Window of Appearances in Act I), she sings lower notes than he does. The couple has love music that morphs into sunworship music and back, convincingly depicting the relationships between erotic and spiritual love. The largest and most distinct solo is Akhnaten's extended Hymn to the Sun in Act II, always (per the composer's instructions) sung in the language of the audience. The other soloists span the spectrum of vocal ranges, from bass (the advisor Aye) to baritone (General Horemhab) to tenor (the High Priest of Amon) to soprano (Tye, the gueen mother). Akhnaten and Nefertiti's six daughters are three sopranos and three contraltos (or mezzo-sopranos). There is a speaking role as well—who gives translations of the sung texts and later offers a modern day reading from a guidebook over the ruins of Akhnaten's city, further adding to the remote historicity of the opera's sound. The chorus has an important role throughout, appearing as priests in the beginning, people of Egypt throughout, and the spirits of the departed at the end.

Met History

During the 2019–20 season, *Akhnaten* had its Met premiere, in a production by Phelim McDermott, who also staged the company premiere of *Satyagraha* in 2008. Karen Kamensek made her Met debut conducting Anthony Roth Costanzo in the title role, alongside Dísella Lárusdóttir, J'Nai Bridges, Aaron Blake, Will Liverman, Richard Bernstein, and Zachary James.

Program Note

n January 6, 1907, the entrance to a rock-cut tomb was uncovered in the Valley of the Kings outside modern-day Luxor, Egypt. The mummy safeguarded within may have been the preserved body of the pharaoh Akhnaten (today more commonly known as Akhenaten). Rigorous DNA testing conducted in 2010 was reported to have confirmed that identification, though the matter remains hotly contested—like just about everything else associated with this most controversial of ancient Egypt's vast lineage of rulers.

Why did Philip Glass choose Akhnaten as the topic for his third opera—a figure so distant in time from the protagonists of his first two operas and so obscure in comparison to them? He started from the premise of wanting to complete a trilogy of "portrait" operas about historical figures whose vision and ideas—in contrast to the violent power of warfare—had effected radical social change and transformed our understanding of the world.

The first two installments of the trilogy, *Einstein on the Beach* (1976) and *Satyagraha* (1980), had focused on well-known figures who left their respective marks principally in the areas of science (Albert Einstein's revolutionary theory of relativity) and politics (Mahatma Gandhi and his advocacy of non-violent resistance in the face of social injustice).

The 14th-century-B.C.E. Egyptian pharaoh seized the composer's imagination as a fitting counterpart in that he represented the realm of religion and would lend historical perspective to a trilogy whose other two subjects were drawn from the modern era. "We know Akhnaten as a man of ideas and, to me, the entire history of humanity is a history of ideas, of culture," Glass reflected in his 1987 memoir, *Music by Philip Glass*.

While he was preparing the groundwork for Akhnaten in the early 1980s, Glass decided to turn the uncertainties and tantalizing gaps in our knowledge about the pharaoh to his theatrical advantage. He traveled to Egypt to gather impressions from relevant archeological sites and visited the Cairo Museum, where the elusive fragments gathered in a room devoted to Akhnaten inspired an epiphany about how to proceed with the work-in-progress.

As Glass recalled it: "It seemed to me, at that moment, that we needed no more story than was already there, that the missing pieces, far from needing to be filled in or explained, actually added to the mystery and beauty of our subject." With the "mere bits and pieces" relating to the ruler that Glass and his team of collaborators had at their disposal, the essential outlines of the scenario took shape and allowed the composer to form "a highly personal vision" of Akhnaten and his era.

The fact that Akhnaten had even existed lay buried for millennia. In the aftermath of the overthrow depicted in the opera's final scenes, the pharaoh was violently effaced from official history, his revolutionary ideas rejected and revoked. Akhetaten, the new capital city that he founded—which Glass dramatizes in the second act, at the center of the opera—was abandoned and crumbled into

Program Note CONTINUED

ruins. Only with its rediscovery during the archeological expeditions of the 19th century did evidence of the historical Akhnaten emerge, breaking the spell of what Glass calls "a forced amnesia."

The deliberate suppression of all memory of Akhnaten suggests how radical his challenges to the incredibly conservative social order of ancient Egypt must have been. During his relatively brief 17-year reign (from 1375 to 1358 B.C.E. in the chronology that the opera uses), longstanding traditions of artistic expression gave way to unprecedented stylistic changes—such as tender, naturalistic depictions of the pharaoh with his wife, Nefertiti, and their daughters.

But the most radical transformation by far was of religious ideology. Within a few years of assuming power, the pharaoh changed his name from Amenhotep IV to Akhnaten to signal allegiance to Aten, an abstract deity associated with the sun god (Ra). He established Aten as the supreme god, overturning the traditional polytheistic hierarchy and disbanding the class of priests whose power derived from rival gods.

According to Shalom Goldman, a professor of religion and ancient languages whom Glass enlisted as a scholarly consultant on this project, Akhnaten's "rebellion against the massive weight of tradition encompassed religion, statecraft, art, and language; and in each of these areas, he attempted revolutionary innovations." At the time a graduate student at New York University, Goldman worked with Glass to compile the collage of primary-text sources that make up Akhnaten's unusual libretto. The chief sources include poem fragments, inscriptions, diplomatic letters inscribed on cuneiform tablets, and legal decrees. These texts are sung in the original ancient languages (Egyptian or Akkadian, the diplomatic language that had developed in Mesopotamia).

A significant exception is the Hymn to the Sun (attributed to the pharaoh himself), which Akhnaten sings in the pivotal final scene of Act II. Glass requests this aria to be sung in the vernacular language of the audience. English is also spoken in this performance by a narrator figure, whose commentary provides translations of the primary-source texts. In the third scene of Act III, with its dramatic time shift to the present, the narrator additionally reads excerpts from a Fodor's travel guide about the ruins of the ancient city.

And there is a fourth language, which signifies another reason for Glass's fascination with the figure of Akhnaten: ancient Hebrew, for the choral setting of Psalm 104 sung off stage as a counterpart to the Hymn to the Sun. The psalm's uncanny echoes of the Egyptian hymn, for Glass, are meant "to underline the connection of Akhnaten's ideas with those of our own time and culture." The composer's reference is to the controversial theory that Sigmund Freud famously advanced in his 1938 essay collection *Moses and Monotheism*, that Akhnaten's suppressed religious revolution survived and re-emerged—channeled by Moses—as ancient Jewish monotheism.

When Glass was in search of a subject for his third "portrait" opera, it was an even more controversial interpretation of the pharaoh's significance that initially inspired him to consider Akhnaten. A voracious reader, Glass chanced upon a book in which the best-selling "catastrophist" writer Immanuel Velikovsky (1895–1979) argued that the Greek mythical figure of Oedipus was modeled on actual events from Akhnaten's life.

In his original concept, Glass contemplated a simultaneous presentation of the stories of Akhnaten and Oedipus (staged upstage and downstage, respectively) and intended to collaborate with Velikovsky as his librettist. But the writer died before they could meet, and Glass soon abandoned his twinplot concept. As he writes in *Words Without Music*, his more recent memoir, Akhnaten "became much more interesting than Oedipus. We think of the ancient world as Greece, but the ancient world was really Egypt." Rereading Freud's book "convinced me that Akhnaten was the person I was looking for."

Akhnaten originated as a commission from Staatsoper Stuttgart, and because the 1984 world premiere would take place while the company's main house was being renovated, Glass's orchestral forces would need to fit in a smaller pit space. He decided to downsize by doing without the entire violin section. Still, Akhnaten's sound world, while unquestionably in its composer's unique voice, is overall closer than its two predecessors to more conventional operatic scoring. (Einstein was written for non-operatically trained voices and Glass's own amplified ensemble, while Satyagraha's orchestra was limited to woodwinds and strings).

Glass made a virtue of the lack of violins by drawing out the darker colors that result. The inventive use of percussion (timpani omitted, also for space reasons) and combinations of wind and brass moreover allow for richly contrasted textures. A striking example that carries symbolic weight for the opera's dramatic ideas is the juxtaposition of aggressive, militaristic drumming during the funeral ceremonies for Amenhotep III—the sound of the "old order" that his son dares to subvert—with the sonorities associated with Akhnaten, such as the solo trumpet or, in his beautiful duet with Nefertiti, a pair of solo celli.

The composer's instincts as a musical dramatist are particularly effective in Akhnaten's vocal casting. How to represent a figure "so unusual, even unique, as to be virtually unprecedented in Egyptian, and therefore human, history"? Glass opted to cast the pharaoh as a countertenor (one of several neo-Baroque touches to this score). While the renaissance of interest in the countertenor voice has made it much more familiar than it was when Glass initially wrote this music in the early 1980s, Akhnaten's singing retains a startling effect—at least initially—since he is a silent visual presence on stage until well into the first act. Glass writes Nefertiti as a contralto to be closer in range to her spouse and makes his mother, Queen Tye, a soprano.

Program Note CONTINUED

The opera's tonal palette and use of thematic devices identified with characters or actions mark a departure from Glass's earlier practice. His experiments with polytonality (presenting more than one key at the same time, creating multiple harmonic centers of gravity) impart a greater feeling of ambiguity. The composer has compared the perception of ambivalence that results from his harmonic language to the kind of optical illusion associated with the paintings of Josef Albers, "where you could look at it two ways, but not both ways at once; it can't resolve itself." Akhnaten, he adds, "was my first extension out of a triadic harmonic language that had been fairly simple up until then."

Akhnaten's Hymn to the Sun provides a moment of radiant A major at the center, but the looming presence of A minor—the key in which the opera begins and ends—"stretch[es] over the score, and over the theater, like a shroud," to quote the *Village Voice* critic Leighton Kerner. At the end of *Akhnaten*, Glass quotes a thematic cell from the very beginning of the Portrait Trilogy—the opening scene of *Einstein on the Beach*—but there is no sense of a "return" to where we began.

In Michael Blackwood's 1985 documentary on the making of Akhnaten (A Composer's Notes: Philip Glass and the Making of an Opera, which is available on YouTube), the composer reiterated the relevance of this ancient tragedy for our situation: "There's nothing in the story that isn't contemporary, really; it's about power, and upholding old ideas, and trying to force new ideas into the world, and what happens to the people that do that."

—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



Karen Kamensek conductor (chicago, illinois)

THIS SEASON Akhnaten at the Met, Die Zauberflöte at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the world premiere of Philip Glass's Alice in Strasbourg, Così fan tutte at Arizona Opera, and concerts with the Orchestre Chambre de Paris and Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

MET PRODUCTIONS Akhnaten (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She served as music director and chief conductor of Staatsoper Hannover between 2011 and 2016 and music director of Theater Freiburg between 2003 and 2006. She has also held tenures as deputy music director of Staatsoper Hamburg, interim chief conductor at the Maribor Slovene National Theatre, and first kapellmeister at the Vienna Volksoper. She regularly conducts the works of Philip Glass, including his *Orphée* in New York and Germany, the world premiere of *Les Enfants Terribles* at Spoleto Festival USA, *Satyagraha* and *Akhnaten* at English National Opera, and *Passages* at the BBC Proms and Philharmonie de Paris. She has also appeared at Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Royal Danish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Australia, the Israeli Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, San Diego Opera, and Minnesota Opera, among others, as well as with and with numerous prominent orchestras throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.



Rihab Chaieb mezzo-soprano (montreal, canada)

THIS SEASON Nefertiti in Akhnaten at the Met, Maddalena in Rigoletto in Montpellier, Penelope in Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria in concert with Ensemble I Gemelli, the title role of Carmen at Palm Beach Opera, Dorabella in Così fan tutte at Washington National Opera, and concerts at Deutsche Oper Berlin and with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Les Violons du Roy.

MET APPEARANCES Zerlina in Don Giovanni, Laura in Luisa Miller, Lola in Cavalleria Rusticana, the Sandman in Hansel and Gretel, a Woman of Crete in Idomeneo, and Zulma in L'Italiana in Algeri (debut, 2016).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Charlotte in Werther in concert in Antwerp, Carmen in Cologne, Lola at Dutch National Opera, Dorabella in Santiago, Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro at Cincinnati Opera, Maria Malibran / Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart / Nancy Da Ponte in the world premiere of Tarik O'Regan's The Phoenix at Houston Grand Opera, the title role of Offenbach's Fantasio in Montpellier, Kasturbai in Philip Glass's Satyagraha in Ghent, and the Fairy Prince in the world premiere of David Hertzberg's The Wake World at Opera Philadelphia. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.

The Cast CONTINUED



Dísella Lárusdóttir soprano (mosfellsbær, iceland)

THIS SEASON Queen Tye in Akhnaten at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES Queen Tye, a Shadow Marnie in Nico Muhly's Marnie, a Flower Maiden in Parsifal, Giannetta in L'Elisir d'Amore, Papagena in The Magic Flute, Barena in Jenůfa, a Wood Nymph in Rusalka, a Servant in Die Frau ohne Schatten, Woglinde in the Ring cycle, and Garsenda in Francesca da Rimini (debut, 2013).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS On the operatic stage, she has sung the title role in the world premiere of Silvia Colasanti's *Prosperine* at Spoleto's Festival dei Due Mondi, the title role of *Lulu* in Rome, Cunegonde in *Candide* in concert with New Jersey's Colonial Symphony, and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Icelandic Opera. She has appeared in concert the Philadelphia Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Youth Orchestra of the Americas, Princeton Symphony Orchestra, and at New York's Carnegie Hall and Merkin Concert Hall, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, and Los Angeles's Walt Disney Concert Hall, among others. She was a grand finalist in the Met's 2007 National Council Auditions and is featured in the documentary *The Audition*.



Richard Bernstein BASS (BROOKLYN, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Aye in Akhnaten, Nikitich in Boris Godunov, Foltz in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Zaretski in Eugene Onegin, and the Old Servant in Elektra at the Met and Daland in Der Fliegende Holländer at Opera Maine.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 1995 debut as Zuniga in Carmen, he has sung more than 450 performances of 34 roles, including the First Apprentice in Wozzeck, the Second Guard in The Magic Flute, Aye, the Murderer in Macbeth, Pistola in Falstaff, Bello in La Fanciulla del West, Angelotti in Tosca, Lord Krishna in Philip Glass's Satyagraha, Colline in La Bohème, Orville Mason in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's An American Tragedy, Abimélech in Samson et Dalila, Leporello and Masetto in Don Giovanni, Giacomo Balducci in Benvenuto Cellini, Marco in the world premiere of William Bolcom's A View from the Bridge, and Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has also appeared at the Dallas Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Central City Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Opera Pacific, Cincinnati's May Festival, Tanglewood Festival, Savonlinna Festival, Lincoln Center Festival, and with the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and New Jersey Choral Society, among others.



Aaron Blake tenor (palos verdes, california)

THIS SEASON The High Priest of Amon in Akhnaten at the Met, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte in Berlin and at the Israeli Opera and Minnesota Opera, and Alfredo in La Traviata at the Jerusalem Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Gastone in La Traviata (debut, 2017) and the High Priest of Amon. CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Count Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia at Cincinnati Opera, the Israeli Opera, and Tulsa Opera; Michel in Martinů's Juliette in Frankfurt; Tamino at the Lincoln Center Festival, Adelaide Festival, and Perth Festival; the title role of Andrea Clearfield's Mila, Great Sorcerer at the Prototype Festival; the title role of Candide with the Bangor Symphony Orchestra; and Alfredo at Wichita Grand Opera. He has also sung Tamino, Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, and Pan in Cavalli's La Calisto at Cincinnati Opera; Tamino in Berlin and on tour in Japan; Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi, Fenton in Falstaff, Don Ottavio, Ferrando in Così fan tutte, and Nemorino in L'Elisir d'Amore at Utah Opera; Nadir in Les Pêcheurs de Perles at Tulsa Opera; Roméo in Roméo et Juliette at the Dallas Opera; and Sir Hervey in Anna Bolena at Washington National Opera.



Anthony Roth Costanzo COUNTERTENOR (DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA)

THIS SEASON The title role of Akhnaten and Unulfo in Rodelinda at the Met, Armindo in Handel's Partenope in Madrid, the title role of Handel's Amadigi di Gaula with Boston Baroque, and recitals in Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Estonia. He is artist-in-residence for the New York Philharmonic's 2021–22 season.

MET APPEARANCES Akhnaten, Ferdinand and Prospero in *The Enchanted Island*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Unulfo (debut, 2011).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Canadian Opera Company, and Finnish National Opera, among others. In 2018, he produced and starred in *Glass/Handel*, an operatic art installation co-presented by Opera Philadelphia and National Sawdust. He appeared in the world premieres of Jimmy Lopez's *Bel Canto* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Jake Heggie's *Great Scott* at the Dallas Opera and has also premiered works by Matthew Aucoin, Paola Prestini, Gregory Spears, Suzanne Farrin, Bernard Rands, Scott Wheeler, Mohammed Fairouz, Steve Mackey, and Nico Muhly. He was a 2021 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman

The Cast CONTINUED



Zachary James
BASS-BARITONE (SPRING HILL, FLORIDA)

THIS SEASON Amenhotep III / the Professor in Akhnaten at the Met, the title role of Sweeney Todd at Opera Omaha, the Immigration Officer in Jonathan Dove's Flight at the Dallas Opera, and the Pirate King in The Pirates of Penzance at Cincinnati Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Amenhotep III / the Professor (debut, 2019).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Among his recent credits are Cervantes / Don Quixote in Man of La Mancha at Opera Saratoga; the Cook in The Love for Three Oranges at Opera Philadelphia; the Doctor in Wozzeck, the Immigration Officer, Vodník in Rusalka, and Claggart in Billy Budd at Des Moines Metro Opera; the Four Villains in Les Contes d'Hoffmann at Nashville Opera; Amenhotep III / the Professor at English National Opera and LA Opera; Frank Maurrant in Weill's Street Scene at Virginia Opera; Fafner in Das Rheingold at Arizona Opera; and Terry in the world premiere of Missy Mazzoli's Breaking the Waves at Opera Philadelphia. He appeared on Broadway in productions of The Addams Family, South Pacific, and Coram Boy and on television in 30 Rock, Murphy Brown, The Late Show with David Letterman, and PBS's Great Performances and Live from Lincoln Center.



Will Liverman baritone (virginia beach, virginia)

THIS SEASON Horemhab in Akhnaten, Papageno in The Magic Flute, and Charles in Terence Blanchard's Fire Shut Up in My Bones at the Met; the Steward in Jonathan Dove's Flight at the Dallas Opera; Charles at Lyric Opera of Chicago; Price's Song to the Dark Virgin with Chicago Sinfonietta; and Bernstein's Mass at the Kennedy Center.

MET APPEARANCES Horemhab, Papageno, and Malcolm Fleet in Nico Muhly's Marnie (debut, 2018).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Bob in Still's Highway 1, USA at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Silvio in highlights from Pagliacci at Seattle Opera, Silvio at Opera Colorado, Pantalone in The Love for Three Oranges at Opera Philadelphia, Stárek in Jenůfa and Schaunard in La Bohème at the Santa Fe Opera, Schaunard at Opera Philadelphia and the Dallas Opera, the Pilot in Rachel Portman's The Little Prince at Tulsa Opera, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte at Central City Opera and Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, Tommy McIntyre in Gregory Spears's Fellow Travelers at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Figaro in Il Barbiere di Sivigliva at Kentucky Opera and Seattle Opera, and Dizzy Gillespie in the world premiere of Daniel Schnyder's Charlie Parker's Yardbird at Opera Philadelphia. He was the 2022 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leichtman.