



ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

THE ROYAL OPERA

2009/10 SEASON

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THE ROYAL OPERA 2009/10 SEASON

LINDA DI CHAMOUNIX

Gaetano Donizetti

THE ROYAL OPERA IN CONCERT

7, 14 September at 7pm

Generous philanthropic support from Trifon and Thespina Natsis (Ambassadors)

The Royal Opera's 2009/10 Season opens with two concert performances of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix*, an opera which has not previously been performed by The Royal Opera. Donizetti's opera, written in the semiseria genre, is a blend of melodramatic, romantic, sentimental and comic elements. It was first performed in Vienna in 1842 and includes one of Donizetti's most famous soprano arias 'O luce di quest' anima'.

The plot revolves around a love affair complicated by class barrier and results in the heroine of the opera, Linda, succumbing to madness. However, all is resolved and the opera ends happily.

Mark Elder, Music Director of the Hallé Orchestra and a keen Donizettian, returns to Covent Garden to conduct these opening performances. He previously opened The Royal Opera's 2005/6 Season conducting concert performances of *Dom Sébastien, roi du Portugal*. During the past few seasons, Mark Elder has regularly appeared with The Royal Opera conducting *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *Elektra*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Simon Boccanegra*. He last conducted *Linda di Chamounix* in concert with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Royal Festival Hall in 1997.

One of the rising stars of international opera, Cuban-American soprano **Eglise Gutiérrez** leads the cast singing the title role of Linda, marking her debut with The Royal Opera. She made her professional debut in 2003 in Bogotá, Colombia singing the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a role she repeated with great success in Buenos Aires, Savonlinna, Montréal and Mexico City. She also made her debut at Wexford in 2005 in another Donizetti role, *Maria di Rohan*.

Also new to The Royal Opera is American tenor **Stephen Costello** who sings the role of Linda's lover, Carlo. He makes two appearances at Covent Garden this Season, returning to sing the role of Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* in October.

Joining the cast is Covent Garden regular **Alessandro Corbelli** who sings the role of Marquis de Boisfleury. This outstanding Italian baritone has delighted Royal Opera audiences recently as Sulpice (*La Fille du régiment*) and Don Geronio (*Il turco in Italia*), both roles he repeats later in the 2009/10 Season.

Following performances at the Royal Opera House as Albert (*Werther*) in 2004 and Belcore (*L'elisir d'amore*) in 2007, French baritone **Ludovic Tézier** returns to sing the role of Antonio.

These performances also mark the debut of Italian mezzo-soprano **Marianna Pizzolato** who sings Pierotto, the village poet and childhood friend of Linda. She made her British operatic debut singing Angelina (*La Cenerentola*) for Welsh National Opera in 2007. She has also had success at the Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro as Marchese Melibea (*Il viaggio a Rheims*) and in the

title role of Tancredi.

The cast is completed with **Elizabeth Sikora** as Linda's mother, Maddalena, and Brazilian tenor **Luciano Botelho** making his debut with The Royal Opera as Intendant.

Linda di Chamounix was first performed in London at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1843 and was last performed at Covent Garden in 1887 during the Royal Italian Opera Season, with a cast that included Ella Russell (Linda), Nicolai Figner (Carlo) and Antonio Cotogni (Antonio), conducted by Enrico Bevignani.

These performances are being recorded for future release by Opera Rara.

PRE-PERFORMANCE TALKS

Monday 7 and Monday 14 September, 6pm - 6.30pm

Free 30-minute talk one hour before curtain-up

Clare Studio Upstairs

DON CARLO

Giuseppe Verdi

15, 18, 21, 23 September / 27 September at 3pm / 1 October at 6pm

Co-production with The Metropolitan Opera, New York, and Den Norske Opera, Oslo

Production sponsored (2008) by



This Season marks the first revival of **Nicholas Hytner's** acclaimed production of Verdi's grand opera *Don Carlo*, set in the 16th century, during the Spanish Inquisition which was first seen at Covent Garden in June 2008.

Designs are by **Bob Crowley**, lighting design by **Mark Henderson**, movement by **Scarlett Mackmin** and the fight director is **Terry King**.

Following recent performances at Covent Garden conducting *Elektra*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Lohengrin*, **Semyon Bychkov**, Principal conductor of WDR Sinfonieorchester, returns to conduct these performances of *Don Carlo*.

Don Carlo, based on the dramatic play *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* by Friedrich Schiller, tells the story of the conflicts in the life of Don Carlo, Prince of Spain, after his betrothed Elisabeth of Valois is married to his father Philip II of Spain as part of a peace treaty. The opera explores how the private and public lives of the powerful impact on the fate of nations.

New to the title role is German tenor **Jonas Kaufmann**, whose roles for Covent Garden since his debut in 2004 as Ruggero (*La rondine*) include include Don José (*Carmen*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) and most recently Cavaradossi (*Tosca*).

Returning to the role of Elizabeth of Valois is Russian soprano **Marina Poplavskaya**, a former Jette Parker Young Artist, who made her debut in the role in this production in 2008. Her recent roles for The Royal Opera include Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) and Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*).

The role of Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, will be sung by British baritone **Simon Keenlyside** who created the role in the original production in 2008. His recent appearances at Covent Garden include Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Oreste (*Iphigénie en Tauride*), the title role in *Don Giovanni* and he will sing Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) for The Royal Opera in July 2009.

Italian bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto** sings the first of two roles for The Royal Opera this Season, reprising his role of Philip II and returning in June 2010 to sing Fiesco (*Simon Boccanegra*). Senior Artist **Robert Lloyd** reprises the role of Carlos V.

The role of Princess Eboli will be sung by American mezzo-soprano **Marianne Cornetti**, who makes her debut with The Royal Opera. She has previously sung the role in Tokyo and for the Vienna State Opera. Recent roles include Amneris (*Aida*) at the Arena di Verona and in Barcelona, Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*) in Amsterdam, Preziosilla (*La forza del destino*) in Brussels and Ortrud (*Lobengrin*) in Palermo. Future engagements include her debut at Hamburg State Opera as Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and her return to The Metropolitan Opera, New York as Azucena (*Il trovatore*).

Singing the role of the Grand Inquisitor for the first time at Covent Garden is **John Tomlinson**. He recently created the title role in Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* and also sang Wotan in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for The Royal Opera.

Former Jette Parker Young Artist South African soprano **Pumeza Matshikiza** returns to the role of Tebaldo. She is joined by British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner** who sings the role of Count of Lerma for the first time and Japanese soprano **Eri Nakamura** who sings the offstage role of Voice from Heaven. Both are on their second year of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme.

The Flemish Deputies are sung by the following artists, **Daniel Grice** reprising the role he made his Royal Opera debut with, Jette Parker Young Artist **Changhan Lim**, and also making their debuts at Covent Garden in this production are British baritone **David Stout**, Jette Parker Young Artist South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg**, Jette Parker Young Artist Polish bass **Lukas Jakobski** and British bass-baritone **John Cunningham**.

Notes

Nicholas Hytner's production of Verdi's *Don Carlo* in the 1886 Italian Modena version (5 Acts) was first seen at Covent Garden on 6 June 2008. The French version of the opera, *Don Carlos*, was last heard at Covent Garden in 1996 in a production by Luc Bondy, conducted by Bernard Haitink with Roberto Alagna and Julian Gavin in the title role, Karita Mattila as Elisabeth de Valois, Thomas Hampson as Rodrigue, José Van Dam as Philippe II and Martine Dupuy as Princesse Eboli. The Royal Opera also performed *Don Carlos* at the Edinburgh Festival in 1998.

The last production of *Don Carlo* for The Royal Opera was directed and designed by Luchino Visconti and first seen at Covent Garden in 1958. Carlo Maria Giulini conducted a cast which included Jon Vickers, Gré Brouwenstijn, Tito Gobbi, Boris Christoff and Fedora Barbieri. It was last seen in 1989, produced by John Cox and conducted by Richard Armstrong with Dennis O'Neill in the title role, Katia Ricciarelli as Elisabeth of Valois, Gino Quilico as Rodrigo, Samuel Ramey as Philip II and Agnes Baltsa as Princess Eboli.

INSIGHT EVENING

Thursday 10 September, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Tickets £14 (£6 students and ROH Access Scheme)

Linbury Studio Theatre

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Richard Wagner

29 September, 2, 5, 9, 15 October at 5pm / 18 October at 3pm

NEW PRODUCTION

Co-production with Houston Grand Opera.

Generous philanthropic support from Peter and Barbara Elliston (Benefactors) and The Wagner Circle

Antonio Pappano, Music Director of The Royal Opera, is reunited with German director **Christof Loy** for a new production of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Their first collaboration together in London, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, marked the beginning of Antonio Pappano's tenure at Covent Garden and will continue with *Lulu* in June 2009.

Considered to be one of the great musical works of the 19th century, *Tristan und Isolde* portrays an evocation of passion that surpasses earthly existence. The opera is based largely on the romance by Gottfried von Strassburg from the Middle Ages and tells the story of forbidden love between Tristan and the Irish princess Isolde, betrothed to the Cornish King Mark.

In addition to conducting *Tristan und Isolde*, Antonio Pappano, now in his eighth Season with The Royal Opera, will conduct two further new productions *The Gambler* and *Manon* as well as a revival of *Simon Boccanegra* and the double bill *Gianni Schicchi* and *L'Heure espagnole*.

The rest of the creative team includes designer **Johannes Leiacker** and lighting designer **Olaf Winter**.

Leading Wagnerian tenor, Canadian **Ben Heppner**, sings the role of Tristan for the first time at Covent Garden, having sung the role previously for the Metropolitan Opera in 2008. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1990 as Walther in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and his roles for The Royal Opera have included the title role of *Peter Grimes*, the title role of *Otello* and most recently Calaf (*Turandot*) in 2006.

Swedish soprano **Nina Stemme** returns to Covent Garden to sing the role she recorded with Antonio Pappano with EMI in 2005. She sang her first Isolde for Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2003 and subsequently repeated the role for Royal Stockholm Opera and Bayreuth. She made her first appearance on the Covent Garden stage singing Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*) in 2005.

Making her role debut as Brangäne is French mezzo-soprano **Sophie Koch**. She first worked together with Antonio Pappano and Christof Loy at Covent Garden when she sang the role of Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) in 2002 and her recent roles for The Royal Opera have included Siébel (*Faust*), Ramiro (*La finta giardiniera*) and Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in 2006 and 2008.

Distinguished Finnish bass **Matti Salminen** returns to Covent Garden to sing the tragic role of Tristan's uncle, King Marke, which he also sang recently for the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He made his Covent Garden debut in 1974 as Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*.

Following his recent successes at Covent Garden as Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and as Jokanaan in *Salome*, German baritone **Michael Volle** sings the role of Tristan's loyal servant Kurwenal for the first time with The Royal Opera. He has previously sung the role in Munich.

Singing the role of Melot for the first time at Covent Garden is British tenor **Richard Berkeley-Steele**. He has previously sung the role for Welsh National Opera. He made his Royal Opera debut in the role of General Sir Philip Wingrave in *Owen Wingrave* in 2007 in the Linbury Studio Theatre. Recent Wagnerian roles have included Siegfried for English National Opera as well as the title role of Tannhäuser for Opera Australia.

Having made his debut with The Royal Opera thirty years ago, Welsh tenor **Ryland Davies** now sings the role of Shepherd. Korean tenor **Ji-Min Park**, a Jette Parker Principal, returns to sing the role of Sailor. The cast is completed with current Jette Parker Young Artist South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg** singing the role of Steersman.

Notes

Tristan und Isolde was composed between 1857 and 1859 and premiered on 10 June 1865 in Munich. *Tristan und Isolde* was last heard at Covent Garden in 2002 in a production by Herbert Wernicke conducted by Bernard Haitink with Wolfgang Muller-Lorenz as Tristan and Lisa Gasteen as Isolde. This production was first seen at Covent Garden in 2000.

INSIGHT EVENING

Tuesday 15 September, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Tickets £14 (£6 students and ROH Access Scheme)

Clare Studio Upstairs

CARMEN

Georges Bizet

3, 6, 10, 13, 21, 24 October at 7pm

The Spanish heat and gypsy passion of *Carmen* take to the stage as The Royal Opera presents two runs (October 2009 and June 2010) of **Francesca Zambello's** vibrant production which was first seen at Covent Garden in 2006, with **Tanya McCallin's** richly-coloured designs which recreate the world of 19th-century Spain. Lighting by **Paule Constable** and choreography by **Arthur Pita**.

One of the most popular works in the opera repertory, *Carmen* tells the story of a gypsy girl and her ill-starred love affair with army officer Don José and bull-fighter Escamillo.

Following her highly-successful role debut as Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) during the 2008/9 Season, rising star Latvian mezzo-soprano **Elīna Garanča** returns to Covent Garden to sing the title role of the gypsy temptress, *Carmen*. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) in 2007 and first sang the role of *Carmen* in her native Latvia in 2007.

Don José, the soldier driven to murderous jealousy, is sung by French-born Sicilian tenor **Roberto Alagna**, singing the role for the first time at Covent Garden. He has sung the role on numerous occasions, including Spain, Japan, The Metropolitan Opera, New York, Genova and at Les Chorègies d'Orange in France. He was most recently seen at Covent Garden as Manrico (*Il trovatore*) during the 2008/9 Season. Following his Covent Garden debut as Rodolfo in *La bohème* in 1992, his roles for The Royal Opera have included Roméo (*Roméo et Juliette*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Ruggero (*La rondine*) and the title roles in *Don Carlos* and *Faust*.

Reprising the role of the bullfighter Escamillo, which he sang at the premiere in 2006, is Italian bass-baritone **Ildebrando D'Arcangelo**. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1996 as Colline (*La bohème*) and his roles for the Company include Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) and Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*). He returns later in the Season to reprise the role of Selim the Turk (*Il turco in Italia*) which he first sang at Covent Garden in 2005.

Returning to the role of Micaëla is Chinese-born Canadian soprano **Liping Zhang** who sang the role in this production in 2007. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Liù (*Turandot*) in 2002 and her subsequent roles for The Royal Opera have included Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Mimì (*La bohème*).

Singing the role of Zuniga for the first time is British bass **Henry Waddington**. Recent roles for The Royal Opera include Sacristan (*Tosca*) and Maestro Spinelloccio (*Gianni Schicchi*).

Returning to the role of Le Dancaïre for both runs of this production of *Carmen* is British baritone **Adrian Clarke** whose recent roles with The Royal Opera include Sid (*La fanciulla del West*) and Mityukha (*Boris Godunov*).

Making his debut with The Royal Opera is French tenor **Vincent Ordonneau** who sings Le Remendado, the role in which he made his debut for the Opéra Comique in Paris in 1991 and has also sung for Opéra de Nancy. He will sing the role again in Paris and Granada in June/July 2009.

Also making her debut with The Royal Opera in this production is British mezzo-soprano **Louise Innes** who sings the role of Mercédès. She returns later in the Season to sing the role of Javotte in a new production of *Manon*. Her recent roles include Hamor (*Jephtha*) in Lucerne and Paris.

The role of Frasquita in both this run and later in the Season will be sung by Japanese soprano **Eri Nakamura**, a Jette Parker Young Artist. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Fifth Maid (*Elektra*) in 2007 and her roles during the 2009/10 Season include Musetta (*La bohème*) and Voice from Heaven (*Don Carlos*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Korean baritone **Changhan Lim**, who made his debut with The Royal Opera as Hermann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008, sings the role of Moralès, one of four roles he sings for The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season.

French conductor **Bertrand de Billy**, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, returns to Covent Garden to conduct *Carmen*, a work he first conducted in Vienna and which he has subsequently conducted in Paris and also for the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He has previously appeared at the Royal Opera House in 1995 conducting Roberto Alagna in concert.

The production was revived in March 2008 and will return in June 2010 with another stellar cast.

PRE-PERFORMANCE TALKS

Tuesday 6 and Tuesday 13 October, 6pm - 6.30pm
Free 30-minute talk one hour before curtain-up
Clore Studio Upstairs

L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE / GIANNI SCHICCHI

Maurice Ravel / Giacomo Puccini

17, 20, 22, 28 October at 7.30pm/ 24 October at 12.30pm

Richard Jones' witty staging of *L'Heure espagnole* and *Gianni Schicchi*, with set designs by **John Macfarlane**, costume designs by **Nicky Gillibrand** and lighting by **Mimi Jordan Sherin**, was originally seen in 2007 and now returns for its first revival.

Returning to conduct this double bill, as he did in 2007, is **Antonio Pappano**, now in his eighth Season as Music Director of The Royal Opera. During the 2009/10 Season he will conduct three new productions, *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Gambler* and *Manon*, as well as a revival of *Simon Boccanegra*.

L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE

L'Heure espagnole, a one-act opera described as a comédie musicale, set to a French libretto by Franc-Nohain, and sees the clockmaker's wife Concepcion receiving her various lovers at the hour when her absent minded husband Torquemada is out winding up the town's clocks. The poet Gonzalve, the banker Don Inigo and the muleteer Ramiro all engage in a hilarious 'hide-and-peek' in the clockmaker's shop, but in the end it is Ramiro who conquers Concepcion's heart.

All the cast return to the roles they created at the premiere of this production in 2007, led by British mezzo-soprano **Christine Rice** singing the role of Concepcion, the highly-sexed wife of the clockmaker Torquemada. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 1998 as Flora (*La traviata*) and recent roles for The Royal Opera have included Miranda (*The Tempest*), Ariadne in the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* and Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*).

The muleteer Ramiro, whose strength and prowess captures Concepcion's attention, is once again sung by British baritone **Christopher Maltman**. His recent roles at Covent Garden include Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Marcello (*La bohème*). He returns later in the Season to sing the role of Gamekeeper (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) for the first time at Covent Garden.

French tenor **Yann Beuron** returns to the role of the student poet Gonzalve. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House singing Laërte (*Hamlet*) in 2003. The cast is completed by British baritone **Andrew Shore** in the role of the banker Don Inigo Gomez. He made his Royal Opera debut in 1992 as Baron Trombonok (*Il viaggio a Reims*).

Notes

The opera was first performed at the Opéra Comique, Paris on 19 May 1911. *L'Heure espagnole* was first heard at Covent Garden on 24 July 1919 with Pauline Donalda, Andre Gilly, Octave Dua, Alfred Maguenat and Edouard Cotreuil in the cast, conducted by Percy Pitt. Prior to the performances in 2007, *L'Heure espagnole* was last performed by The Royal Opera in 1962 in a

production by Peter Ustinov with designs by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. George Solti conducted a cast which included Mary Costa in the role of Concepcion and John Lanigan as Torquemada.

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Gianni Schicchi, the final part of Puccini's *Il trittico* and the most popular of the triptych, is based on a comic story full of greed and conniving referred to in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. The opera revolves around the wily peasant, Gianni Schicchi, who helps a disinherited family circumvent the will of their lately deceased relative, helping himself to some of the goods at the same time while paving the way for his daughter to marry her true love. The opera contains the well-known soprano aria, 'O mio babbino caro' which is sung by Lauretta to her father Gianni Schicchi.

Thomas Allen sings the title role of the scheming Gianni Schicchi, for the first time at Covent Garden, having made his debut in the role with Los Angeles Opera in 2008 in a production directed by Woody Allen. **Thomas Allen** made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1971 and has sung over 40 roles for the Company. His more recent roles with the The Royal Opera include Père Germont (*La traviata*), Music Master (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) and Peter (*Hansel und Gretel*). This marks the first of three roles this Season as he returns to the role of Poeta (*Il turco in Italia*) and also sings Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*) later in the Season.

Making her Covent Garden debut in the role of Lauretta is Swedish soprano **Maria Bengtsson**. Recent roles include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) in her debut with the Opéra National de Paris and Donna Elivra (*Don Giovanni*) for Frankfurt Opera.

American tenor **Stephen Costello** returns to sing the role of Rinuccio, having made his Covent Garden debut earlier in the Season as Carlo in *Linda di Chamounix*.

Also new to the cast is British soprano **Janis Kelly** who sings the role of Nella for the first time, marking her debut with The Royal Opera. Recent roles include Lania (*Skin Deep*) for Opera North and Mrs Nixon (*Nixon in China*) in Athens and also for ENO.

Other newcomers to the cast are **Robert Poulton** who sings the role of Marco, who made his Royal Opera debut in 2000 as Sciarrone (*Tosca*), whilst the role of Gherardo is sung by **Alan Oke** and British tenor **John Upperton** who sings the role for one performance on 28 October.

The rest of the family members are cast as in the original production headed by the Italian mezzo-soprano **Elena Zilio** as Zita, the role in which she made her Royal Opera debut in 2007. The role of La Ciesca is sung once again by Scottish soprano **Marie McLaughlin**, a role she has also sung for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Her most recent roles for The Royal Opera include Hanna Glawari (*The Merry Widow*), Meg Page (*Falstaff*) and Katerina (*The Greek Passion*).

Welsh bass **Gwynne Howell** returns to the role of Simone. He made his Covent Garden debut in 1970 and has given over 900 performances on the Covent Garden stage. His more recent roles for the Company include Gonzalo in the world premiere of *The Tempest* and Old Convict (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*).

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** returns to sing Betto di Signa, one of seven roles for The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season. He returns later in the Season to sing Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Baron (*The Gambler*) and Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

Having made his debut at Covent Garden in 2006 as Sacristan (*Tosca*), Italian bass-baritone **Enrico Fissore** returns to Covent Garden to sing the role of Ser Amantio di Nicolao. British bass **Henry Waddington** sings the role of Maestro Spinelloccio, having previously sung the role of Sacristan (*Tosca*) in 2000, 2002 and 2004. The cast is completed with **Nicholas Garrett** reprising the role of Pinellino and American bass **Paul Goodwin-Groen** reprising the role of Guccio in which he made his Covent Garden debut in 2007.

Notes

Gianni Schicchi was first heard at Covent Garden in 1920. Prior to this production, it was last heard together with *L'Heure espagnole* at Covent Garden in 1962 in a bill which also included *Erwartung*. The production, by Peter Ustinov, included Geraint Evans as Gianni Schicchi and Joan Carlyle as Lauretta, conducted by Georg Solti. The production was revived by Ande Anderson in 1965 as part of *Il tritico*, alongside a new production of *Il tabarro* by Ande Anderson and a new production of *Suor Angelica* by John Copley. Tito Gobbi sang the title role with Elizabeth Vaughan as Lauretta, conducted by John Pritchard. *Gianni Schicchi* was subsequently heard at the Royal Opera House in 1976 in Ande Anderson's production with Sesto Bruscantini as Gianni Schicchi and Jill Gomez as Lauretta, conducted by Miguel Gomez-Martinez.

ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL

Saturday 3 October, 2.15pm - 4pm

Tickets £14 (£6 students and ROH Access Scheme)

Clore Studio Upstairs

INSIGHT EVENING

Monday 5 October, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Tickets £14 (£6 students and ROH Access Scheme)

Clore Studio Upstairs

ARTAXERXES

Thomas Arne

THE ROYAL OPERA IN THE LINBURY

NEW PRODUCTION

30 October, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12 November at 7.30pm / 1, 7, 14 November at 2.30pm

Artaxerxes was one of the greatest successes of the English composer Thomas Arne (1710-78), who is best known as the composer who wrote the music for 'Rule, Britannia!', the music of which comes from the masque *Alfred*.

Thomas Arne wrote *Artaxerxes* in 1762 adapting the libretto from Metastasio's *Artaserse*. The opera is set in Ancient Asia, with its theme of love, loyalty and friendship. Arne successfully merged the florid Italian style of writing with an English libretto, with one particular aria 'The Soldier, tir'd of Wars Alarms' sung by Mandane (Xerxes daughter) becoming a popular soprano showpiece.

This new production is directed by British-born **Martin Duncan** working with The Royal Opera for the first time. His recent operatic credits include *The Last Supper* for La Scala, Milan and *The Adventures of Pinocchio* for Opera North. Designs are by **Johan Engels**.

Ian Page, making his debut with The Royal Opera, conducts the **Orchestra of the Classical Opera Company**. Founder and artistic director of the Classical Opera Company, he has previously conducted the company in the Linbury Studio Theatre in performances of *La finta semplice* in 2000 and *Il re pastore* in 2001.

South African-born countertenor **Christopher Ainslie** sings the title role of Artaxerxes, the younger son of Xerxes. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 2008 as one of the Innocents in *The Minotaur*. His operatic roles have included Arsace (*Partenope*) in Les Azuriales Opera Festival and Ruggiero (*Alcina*) in Riga and Hong Kong.

Making both her debut in the role of Mandane and her Royal Opera debut is British soprano **Elizabeth Watts**, winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Rosenblatt Recital Song Prize in 2007. She made her debut at Santa Fe Opera in 2008 as Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and also sang the role for Welsh National Opera in April 2009.

Singing the role of Artabanes, General of Xerxes' army, is British tenor **Andrew Staples**, an Associate Artist with the Classical Opera Company. He made his Royal Opera debut in 2007 as Jacquino (*Fidelio*) and also sang First Man in Armour (*Die Zauberflöte*) for The Royal Opera in 2008.

Another newcomer to Covent Garden is Australian mezzo-soprano **Caitlin Hulcup** who makes her debut singing the role of Arbaces, the lover of Mandane. Her recent roles include Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) for Scottish Opera and Diana (*La Calisto*) for La Monnaie in Brussels.

Semira, Artabane's daughter and lover of Artaxerxes, is sung by British soprano **Rebecca Bottone**. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 2008 as one of the Innocents in the world premiere of *The Minotaur* and returns to reprise the multiple roles of Maid, Confidante, Waitress, Mistress, Rubbernecker and Society Journalist in *Powder Her Face* later in the Season.

Jette Parker Young Artist American tenor **Steven Ebel** sings Rimenès, one of five roles he will sing for The Royal Opera this Season. He made his debut at Covent Garden as Victorin/Voice of Gaston in *Die tote Stadt* in January 2009.

Artaxerxes was premiered on 2 February 1762 at Covent Garden with Charlotte Brent (mistress to Thomas Arne at the time) in the role of Mandane and the Italian castrato Ferdinando Tenducci as Arbaces. The work received over 111 performances in England before 1790. *Artaxerxes* was last heard in repertory at Covent Garden during the 1842/43 Season.

PRE-PERFORMANCE TALKS

Tuesday 3 and Thursday 5 November, 6.30pm - 7pm

Free 30-minute talk one hour before curtain-up

Linbury Studio Theatre

THE TSARINA'S SLIPPERS

20, 23, 25, 28 November, 1, 3, 5, 8 December at 7pm

NEW PRODUCTION

Generous philanthropic support from Michael Hartnall (Benefactor)

Francesca Zambello returns to Covent Garden to direct the charming tale of *The Tsarina's Slippers*, in a production which sees The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet share the stage together. Designs are by **Mikhail Molrov** and costume designs by **Tatiana Noginova** and draw heavily on the Russian folkloric tradition. Lighting is by **Rick Fisher**.

Alastair Marriott, working with The Royal Opera for the first time, choreographs the ballet, including the melancholy scene at the Enchanted Lake. This and other dance music in the opera will be familiar to ballet-goers from its use in the Tchaikovsky compilation *Onegin*.

Based on a Christmas tale by Gogol, which mixes realistic village comedy with fairy-tale fantasy, the plot recounts how Vakula the blacksmith flies on the Devil's back to St Petersburg to find a pair of slippers worn by the Tsarina herself in order to win the hand of his beloved Oxana.

Having made his debut with The Royal Ballet in 1999, **Alexander Polianichko** now leads a cast of Russian principals in this new production for The Royal Opera. He previously conducted *The Queen of Spades* for The Royal Opera in 2002 and will also conduct *The Queen of Spades* for Welsh National Opera in June 2009.

Singing the role of Vakula, the blacksmith who paints an insulting image of the devil on the local church, is Russian tenor **Vsevolod Grivnov**, making his debut with The Royal Opera. He has previously sung the role of Vakula at La Scala, Milan in 2005. He is a principal soloist with the Bolshoi Theatre and was recently heard in the UK in a performance of *The Bells* at the BBC Proms in September 2008 and previously in *Betrothal in a Monastery* at Glyndebourne in 2006.

Russian contralto **Larissa Diatkova**, a member of the Mariinsky Opera Company, sings the role of Solokha the witch. She made her stage debut with The Royal Opera singing the role of Countess (*The Queen of Spades*) in 2006. Her concert performances with The Royal Opera have included Princess Eupraksia (*The Enchantress*) and Jezibaba in *Rusalka*.

Russian bass **Vladimir Matorin**, also a soloist with the Bolshoi Theatre, sings the role of Chub. He made his Royal Opera debut in concert performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress* at the Royal Festival Hall in 1998. He has also sung the role of Tsar Dodon (*The Golden Cockerel*) and Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*) for The Royal Opera.

Singing the role of The Devil is Russian bass **Maxim Mikhailov**. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) in 1996 and has also sung General Polkan (*The Golden Cockerel*) and the role of the Priest (*Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*) in 2004 and 2006.

Sharing the role of Oxana are two Russian sopranos, both making their debuts with The Royal Opera, **Olga Guryakova** and **Viktoriya Yastrebova**, who sings the role on 5 and 8 December.

Olga Guryakova has been a member of the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre (Moscow) since 1994. Her recent roles include Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) in Moscow and Polina (*The Gambler*) for the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Viktoriya Yastrebova has been a soloist with the Mariinsky Theatre since 2002, where her roles have included Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Violetta (*La traviata*) and Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*).

She was most recently heard in London singing Mahler 8 with Gergiev and the London Symphony Orchestra at St Paul's Cathedral in July 2008.

Singing the role of Schoolmaster is Russian tenor **Vyacheslav Voynarovsky**, another member of both the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre (Moscow) and the Bolshoi Theatre. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 2003 singing the role of Missail (*Boris Godunov*).

Russian baritone **Sergei Leiferkus** returns to The Royal Opera to sing the role of His Highness. He made his debut with the Company in 1989 and his roles have included Scarpia (*Tosca*), Iago (*Otello*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*), Telramund (*Lobengrin*), Rangoni (*Boris Godunov*) and title roles in *Prince Igor* and *Eugene Onegin*.

Making his debut at the Royal Opera house is Russian bass **Alexander Vassiliev** who sings the role of Pan Golova. His recent roles include Priest (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) in Paris and One Armed Brother (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) in Amsterdam.

Singing the role of Panas is British tenor **John Upperton** who made his Royal Opera House debut as Dom Antonio/First Inquisitor (*Dom Sebastien*) in 2005.

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** sings Master of Ceremonies, one of seven roles for The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season which include Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Baron (*The Gambler*) and Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner**, a Jette Parker Young Artist sings the role of Attendant. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*) in 2009 and his roles during the 2009/10 Season include Count of Lerma (*Don Carlo*), Major Domo 1 (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Gastone (*La traviata*) and Second Jew (*Salome*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Korean baritone **Changhan Lim**, who made his debut with The Royal Opera as Hermann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008, sings the role of Wood Goblin. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Moralès (*Carmen*) and Marquis D'Obigny (*La traviata*).

Notes

Tchaikovsky first set this libretto to music in 1872 entitling the work *Vakula the Smith*. The opera was premiered in 1876. Not originally a success, Tchaikovsky revised the opera in 1885 and renamed it *Cheruvichki (The Tsarina's Slippers)* and its premiere took place at the Marinsky Theatre in 1887.

INSIGHT EVENING

Tuesday 10 November, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Tickets £14 (£6 students and ROH Access Scheme)

Clore Studio Upstairs

DER ROSENKAVALIER

Richard Strauss

7, 10, 15, 18, 22 December at 6pm/ 13 December at 3pm

Generously supported by the The Friends of Covent Garden

Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* returns to Covent Garden in **John Schlesinger's** classic 1984 production with sets by **William Dudley**, glamorous costumes by **Maria Björnson**, original lighting by **Robert Bryan** and movement by **Eleanor Fazan**.

Russian conductor **Kirill Petrenko** conducts the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House and The Royal Opera Chorus in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. He was General Music Director at the Komische Oper, Berlin (2002 - 2007). At the Royal Opera House he conducted *Madama Butterfly* in 2003 and the double bill *Duke Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung* in 2006.

Finnish soprano **Soile Isokoski** returns to Covent Garden as the Marschallin, a woman who during the course of the opera comes to terms with the loss of her teenage lover to a younger rival. She sings the role for the first time at the Royal Opera House but has previously sung the role in Dresden, Helsinki, Cologne, San Francisco and Vienna. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) in 1997 and her subsequent roles with the Company have included Mařenka (*The Bartered Bride*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) and Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), a role she reprises later in the Season.

French mezzo-soprano **Sophie Koch** sings the role of Octavian, the Marschallin's young lover, for the first time at Covent Garden. She has previously sung the role in Vienna, Barcelona, Munich, Paris and Baden-Baden. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 1998 as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and her other roles for the Company include Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Silla (*Palestrina*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Siébel (*Faust*), Ramiro (*La finta giardiniera*), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*).

British soprano **Lucy Crowe** sings Sophie, a role she has previously sung for Scottish Opera and will also sing at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin in 2010 and again for her debut at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. She made her debut at Covent Garden as Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*) in March/April 2009.

Singing the role of Baron Ochs for the first time with The Royal Opera is British bass **Peter Rose**. He has sung the role on numerous occasions, most notably for Scottish Opera, Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Seattle and for the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1988 as Lord Rochefort (*Anna Bolena*) and his more recent roles with the Company include Timur (*Turandot*), King Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*), and Kecal (*The Bartered Bride*).

Thomas Allen sings the role of Faninal, Sophie's social-climbing father. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1971 and has since sung over 40 roles for the Company. His more recent roles with the Company include Père Germont (*La traviata*), Music Master (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) and Peter (*Hänsel und Gretel*). He sings three roles for The Royal Opera this Season including the title role in *Gianni Schicchi* and Poeta (*Il turco in Italia*).

South Korean tenor **Wookyung Kim** sings the role of the Italian Singer. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*) in 2007 and returned as Rodolfo (*La bohème*) in 2008.

Singing the role of Valzacchi for the first time with The Royal Opera is British tenor **Graham Clark**. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Mime (*Siegfried*) in 1995 and recent roles for the Company include Captain (*Wozzeck*) in 2006 and the Four Servants (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008. He returns later in the Season to sing the role of Sellem (*The Rake's Progress*).

British mezzo-soprano **Diana Montague** sings the role of Annina. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in 1978 and her recent roles with The Royal Opera include Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Madame Lavina (*Eugene Onegin*).

Singing the role of Major Domo 1 is Jette Parker Young Artist British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner**. He made his Royal Opera debut singing the role of Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*) in 2009. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Count di Lerma (*Don Carlo*), Guard (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Gastone (*La traviata*) and Second Jew (*Salome*).

Jette Parker Young Artist American tenor **Steven Ebel** sings Major Domo II, one of five roles he will sing for The Royal Opera this Season. He made his debut at Covent Garden in the role of Victorin/Voice of Gaston in *Die tote Stadt* in January 2009.

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** sings the role of Commissioner. His roles for the 2009/10 Season also include Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*), Baron (*The Gambler*) and Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

Singing the role of Duenna is **Elaine McKrill** who made her Royal Opera debut in 2005 singing Ortlie (*Die Walküre*) in 2005, reprising the role in 2007.

British bass-baritone **Lynton Black** sings the role of Notary, having made his debut with The Royal Opera as Luther (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008. He returns later in the Season to sing Innkeeper (*Manon*).

Making his debut in the role of the Innkeeper is German tenor **Robert Wörle**, whose recent roles include Fatty (*Anstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) in Los Angeles and Essen.

Der Rosenkavalier is set to an original libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and was first performed in Dresden in 1911.

LA BOHÈME

**Cast A: 19, 21, 23, December, 2, 4 January at 7.30pm / 26 December at 6pm
/ 28 December at 12.30pm**

Cast B: 5, 7, 11 January at 7.30pm

Original production (1974) supported by The Linbury Trust

Puccini's *La bohème*, one of the most famously melodious and popular of all operas, returns to The Royal Opera celebrating 35 years since **John Copley's** production was first seen on the Covent Garden stage in 1974. Designs are by **Julia Trevelyan Oman** and lighting by **John Charlton** after William Bundy.

The opera tells the tragic love story between the impoverished poet Rodolfo and the charming but fragile seamstress Mimi, evolving against the background of Bohemian life in 19th century Paris.

Two fine casts have been assembled for this 23rd revival. Conducting honours are shared between Latvian conductor **Andris Nelsons**, Music Director of the City of Birmingham, making his debut with The Royal Opera, Italian conductor **Maurizio Benini**, conducting the opera for the first time at Covent Garden, and **Paul Wynne Griffiths**, who conducts the performances on 2 and 4 January.

Sharing the role of Rodolfo is Polish tenor **Piotr Beczala** and Jette Parker Principal Korean tenor **Ji-Min Park**.

Having recently sung the role of Rodolfo in San Francisco and Munich, Piotr Beczala sings the role for the first time at Covent Garden. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as the Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2004 and returned to sing the title role in *Faust*, the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*) and Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*).

Ji-Min Park sings the role of Rodolfo for the first time for Covent Garden. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Third Esquire (*Parsifal*) in 2007 and his roles for the Company have included Gastone de Letorières (*La traviata*), Fourth Jew (*Salome*), Scaramuccio (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Pang (*Turandot*), Second Noble (*Lobengrin*), Graf Albert (*Die tote Stadt*), Sailor (*Dido and Aeneas*) and Coridon (*Acis and Galatea*). Ji-Min Park has been chosen to represent the Republic of Korea in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in June 2009.

Sharing the role of Mimì are Russian and British sopranos **Hibla Gerzmava** and **Rebecca Evans**, both singing the role for the first time at Covent Garden.

Hibla Gerzmava made her Royal Opera debut in the role of Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) in 2008. A soloist at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow, her roles there have included Mimì (*La bohème*), Ludmila (*Ruslan and Ludmila*), the Swan Princess (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) and Violetta (*La traviata*).

Rebecca Evans has previously sung the role of Mimì for Welsh National Opera. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 1997 and her roles for the Company include Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*).

New to Covent Garden is Italian baritone **Gabriele Viviani** who sings the role of Marcello, a role which British baritone **Christopher Maltman** also reprises this Season for The Royal Opera.

Gabriele Viviani has previously sung the role of Marcello in Tokyo, Bologna, Valencia, Verona and Torre del Lago. His recent roles include Lord Enrico Ashton (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) in Parma and Valentin (*Faust*) in Valencia.

Christopher Maltman's roles with The Royal Opera since his debut in 1997 have included Sebastian (*The Tempest*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Doctor Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*) and Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*). Earlier in the Season he reprised the role of Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*).

Inna Dukach and **Eri Nakamura** both make their role debuts as Musetta.

American soprano Inna Dukach makes her debut at Covent Garden in the role of Musetta. She has previously sung the role of Mimì for the New York City Opera and for Sarasota Opera. Her recent roles include Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) for Opéra Lyra Ottawa and she will sing Liù (*Turandot*) at the Savonlinna Festival in July 2009.

Jette Parker Young Artist, Japanese soprano Eri Nakamura sings her third role of the Season as Musetta. Earlier in the Season she was heard as Voice from Heaven (*Don Carlo*) and Frasquita

(*Carmen*). She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Fifth Maid (*Elektra*) in 2007. She has been chosen to represent Japan in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World in June 2009

Sharing the role of Schaunard is South African baritone **Jacques Imbrailo** and Italian baritone **Simone Del Savio**.

A former Jette Parker Young Artist, Jacques Imbrailo sings two roles with The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season. These performances mark his role debut as Schaunard and he returns later in the Season to sing Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Simone Del Savio makes his debut with The Royal Opera as Schaunard. Recent roles include Don Alvaro (*Il viaggio a Reims*) for La Scala, Milan and Montano (*Otello*) for the Salzburg Festival.

Two former Jette Parker Young Artists share the role of Colline, Lithuanian bass-baritone **Kostas Smoriginas** and South African bass **Vuyani Mlinde**.

Kostas Smoriginas made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Marquis d'Obigny (*La traviata*) in 2008 and his roles for The Royal Opera include Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Angelotti (*Tosca*), Bello (*La fanciulla del West*), Schlemil (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Journalist (*Lulu*), Third Noble (*Lohengrin*) and Mandarin (*Turandot*).

Vuyani Mlinde made his Royal Opera debut as Second Man in Armour (*Die Zauberflöte*) in 2008 and his roles for The Royal Opera have included A Cappadocian (*Salome*), Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*), Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Jake Wallace (*La fanciulla del West*), Fourth Noble (*Lohengrin*), Tom (*Un ballo in maschera*), Orest's Companion (*Elektra*) and Count Ceprano (*Rigoletto*). He returns later in the Season to sing First Nazarene (*Salome*).

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** returns to the role of Benoit which he first sang for the Company in 2005. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*), Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Parson/Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) and Baron (*The Gambler*).

Reprising the role of Alcindoro, which he last sang in 2008, is British baritone **Donald Maxwell**. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1987 and his subsequent roles have included Baron Zeta (*The Merry Widow*), Dr Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*The Bartered Bride*) and Antonio (*Le nozze di Figaro*). He returns later in the Season to reprise the role of Hortensius (*La Fille du régiment*).

The roles of Parpignol, Sergeant and Customs Officer are sung by **Alan Duffield**, **Bryan Secombe** and **Jonathan Coad** respectively, all members of The Royal Opera Chorus.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS

Igor Stravinsky

22, 26, 28, 30 January, 1, 3 February at 7.30pm

Co-production with Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie, Brussels, Opéra National de Lyon, San Francisco Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid in collaboration with Ex Machina, Québec

Robert Lepage's production of *The Rake's Progress*, first seen at Covent Garden in 2008, returns for its first revival at the Royal Opera House. The opera charts the rise and fall of an ambitious young man and is derived loosely from a series of eight satirical paintings and engravings of Hogarth with Stravinsky's score paying homage to classic traditions of 18th century opera. Robert Lepage's colourful and slick staging transplants the story to 1950s America with Tom Rakewell as a Hollywood star who deserts his true love Anne and falls into the company of Nick Shadow, a character of dubious persuasion, the devil in disguise.

Set designs are by **Carl Fillion**, costumes by **François Barbeau** and lighting by **Etienne Boucher**. Choreography is by **Michael Keegan-Dolan** and video design by **Boris Firquet**.

Having made his debut at Covent Garden in January 2009 conducting *Die tote Stadt*, German conductor **Ingo Metzmacher**, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, returns to conduct *The Rake's Progress*.

Singing the role of Tom Rakewell for the first time at the Royal Opera House is British tenor **Toby Spence**. He has previously sung the role at the Opéra National de Paris in 2008, at the Teatro Real, Madrid in this production in January 2009 and at the Theater an der Wien. Having made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1998, his recent roles for The Royal Opera include Ferdinand (*The Tempest*), Váňa Kudrjáš (*Káťa Kabanová*), Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*) and Almoviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*).

British soprano **Kate Royal** makes her debut in the role of Anne Trulove. Following her successful Royal Opera House debut as Miranda (*The Tempest*) in 2007, she returned to Covent Garden to sing Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) in 2008.

Making his debut in the role of the devious Nick Shadow is American bass-baritone **Kyle Ketelsen**. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 2004 as Speaker of the Temple (*Die Zauberflöte*) and his recent roles for The Royal Opera include Escamillo (*Carmen*) and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*).

Singing the role of the famous bearded lady, Baba the Turk, is American mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Blythe** who has previously sung the role for the Metropolitan Opera, New York in 2003. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House in 2003 as Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* and her subsequent roles with The Royal Opera have included Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*) and Azucena (*Il trovatore*).

Singing the role of Sellem for the first time with The Royal Opera is British tenor **Graham Clark**. He has previously sung the role at De Nederlandse Opera in 1998. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Mime (*Siegfried*) in 1995 and recent roles for the Company include Captain (*Wozzeck*) in 2006, and the Four Servants (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008.

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** sings the role of Trulove. His roles for the 2009/10 season also include Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*), Baron (*The Gambler*) and Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

Completing the cast as Mother Goose is Scottish mezzo-soprano **Frances McCafferty** whose roles for The Royal Opera last season included First Maid (*Elektra*), Diana Trapes (*The Beggar's Opera*) in the Linbury Studio Theatre and Mother (*Lulu*).

Notes

This production opened at Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in Brussels in April 2007 and was subsequently seen at Opéra National de Lyon in May 2007, at San Francisco Opera in

November 2007, at Teatro Real, Madrid in January 2009 and at La Scala, Milan in April 2009. The production opened at the Royal Opera House in July 2008.

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

29 January, 2, 5, 10, 12, 17 February at 7pm

Jonathan Miller's contemporary staging of Mozart's double-edged comedy returns to the Covent Garden stage, fifteen years since its premiere in January 1995. Written to a libretto by Da Ponte and first performed in 1790, the opera explores the frailty of human relationships, examining the questions of trust and fidelity with funny, touching and sometime painful consequences.

The opera begins with Don Alfonso challenging two young officers to test the fidelity of their fiancées, the men agree to a wager and in return try to seduce each other's partners which leads to unexpected consequences resulting in Don Alfonso winning the bet.

Making her Covent Garden debut is British conductor **Julia Jones**. She has recently been appointed Chief Conductor of the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon and of the Portuguese National Symphony Orchestra. She held the position of Music Director at the Theater Basel from 1998 to 2002. In the UK, she has recently conducted the Scottish Chamber Opera in 2007 and Opera North in 2006. She most recently conducted *Così fan tutte* at the Vienna State Opera in 2007.

Following her success as Calisto (*La Calisto*) during the 2008/9 Season, British soprano **Sally Matthews** returns to sing the role of Fiordiligi at Covent Garden for the first time, a role she has previously sung with the Netherlands Opera. A former member of the Young Artists Programme, she made her debut with The Royal Opera in 2001 as Nannetta (*Falstaff*) and her recent roles for the Company include Sifare (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*) and Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*).

Georgian mezzo-soprano **Nino Surguladze** returns to sing the role of Dorabella, the first to succumb to the charms of a new lover. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 2006 as Olga (*Engene Onegin*) and has previously sung the role of Dorabella in Genoa.

Returning to the role of Ferrando, which he sang in his debut at the Royal Opera House in 2004, is American tenor **Charles Castronovo**. Subsequent roles for The Royal Opera include Alfredo (*La traviata*) and most recently Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) in 2008.

New to Covent Garden is American baritone **Troy Cook** who makes his Royal Opera debut as Guglielmo. He has previously sung the role of Guglielmo in Santa Fe and Toledo.

Moving from the role of the flirtatious Dorabella to the scheming maid Despina is American mezzo-soprano **Helene Schneiderman**. She first sang Dorabella in this production in 1997, returning to reprise the role in 2001. She made her debut as Despina at the Staatsoper in Stuttgart in 2006.

Having previously sung Guglielmo for The Royal Opera in 1986 and 1992, British bass-baritone **William Shimell** now sings the role of the cynical Don Alfonso for the first time at Covent

Garden. Recent engagements have included performances of Don Alfonso in Japan, Hamburg and Aix-en-Provence.

Notes

Jonathan Miller's production first opened at Covent Garden in January 1995 conducted by Evelino Pidò, with a cast that included Amanda Roocroft, Susan Graham, Bruce Ford, Simon Keenlyside, Thomas Allen and Ann Murray. It has received six further revivals and has evolved and been updated including most recently in 2007, when Jonathan Miller returned to work with a cast that included Dorothea Röschmann, Elina Garanča, Matthew Polenzani, Lorenzo Regazzo, Thomas Allen and Rebecca Evans conducted by Colin Davis.

THE GAMBLER

Sergey Prokofiev

11, 15, 18, 20, 25 February at 7.30pm, 27 February at 7pm

NEW PRODUCTION

Generously supported by the The Friends of Covent Garden

Presented for the first time by The Royal Opera, Prokofiev's opera *The Gambler*, based on Dostoevsky's novel of the same name, tells the story of addiction and social dysfunction in a mythical German casino spa called Roulettenburg.

The main protagonist Alexei, a tutor of the General's family, becomes besotted with his daughter Polina and gets into trouble by obeying her every capricious whim. He is drawn into a spiralling world of desire and debt which leads to his downfall, ending the opera a gambling addict and losing Polina.

This new production reunites Music Director **Antonio Pappano** with director **Richard Jones**. Their previous collaborations include the award-winning *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and the double-bill of *L'Heure espagnole/Gianni Schicchi*, revived earlier in the 2009/10 Season. Set designs for *The Gambler* are by **Antony McDonald** with costume designs by **Nicky Gillibrand**. The production will use an English translation by **David Pountney**.

Music Director **Antonio Pappano**, now in his eighth Season also conducts new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Manon* for The Royal Opera as well as the revival of *Simon Boccanegra*.

German-born Italian tenor **Roberto Saccà** sings Alexei, his debut in the role. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Orfeo in Haydn's *L'anima del filosofo* in October 2001 and returned in the same Season as Leukippos (*Daphne*).

German soprano **Angela Denoke** makes her debut in the role of Polina, one of two roles she sings for The Royal Opera this Season. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House in the role of the Woman (*Erwartung*) in 2006 and returns later in the 2009/10 Season to sing the title role of Salome. She recently made a highly acclaimed debut at Teatro alla Scala in Milan singing Emilia Marty (*The Makropoulos Case*).

Making his debut in the role of General is British bass **John Tomlinson**. Earlier in the Season he sang the Grand Inquisitor (*Don Carlo*) for the first time with The Royal Opera. He recently

created the title role in Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* and also sang Wotan in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for The Royal Opera.

American tenor **Kurt Streit** makes his debut in the role of the Marquis. He returns later in the Season when he sings the role of Bajazet (*Tamerlano*). He made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) in 1992 and his recent roles for The Royal Opera include Don Anchise (*La finta giardiniera*) and Boris Grigorjevič (*Kát'a Kabanová*).

The role of Babulenska, the rich aunt of the General who loses her fortune at the roulette wheel, is sung for the first time by British mezzo-soprano **Susan Bickley**. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House as Fyodor (*Boris Godunov*) in 1991. She then returned as Aksinya (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Ludmila (*The Bartered Bride*) and most recently as Mrs Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*).

British baritone **Mark Stone** makes his role debut as Mr Astley. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in the role of Sonora (*La fanciulla del West*) in 2005 and returned as Vicomte de Valvert (*Cyrano de Bergerac*) in 2006.

Having made her debut with The Royal Opera as Lucienne (*Die tote Stadt*) in 2009, Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Jurgita Adamonytė** returns to sing the role of Blanche. She will also sing Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Covent Garden later this Season.

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** sings the Baron, one of seven roles for The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season including the Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) and Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

Singing the role of Rash Gambler is **Jeffrey Lloyd-Roberts** who first sang with The Royal Opera in 2007 as Gherardo (*Gianni Schicchi*) while **John Easterlin** makes his debut with The Royal Opera singing the role of Prince Nilsky, which he sang for the Metropolitan Opera, New York conducted by Gergiev.

British mezzo-soprano **Elizabeth Sikora** sings the role of Dubious Old Lady. Her recent Royal Opera roles include Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*).

Making her debut with The Royal Opera is British mezzo-soprano **Carol Rowlands** who sings the role of Lady Comme Çi, Comme Ça. She recently appeared at Covent Garden in a Music Theatre Wales production of *Punch and Judy* in the Linbury Studio Theatre and previously sang the role of Babulenska (*The Gambler*) for Grange Park Opera in 2008.

The production also includes six members of the Jetter Parker Young Artist Programme: British soprano **Elisabeth Meister** who sings Pale Lady, Romanian soprano **Simona Mihai**, who sings Gaudy Lady, Estonian mezzo-soprano **Kai Rüütel**, who sings the role of Venerable Lady, American tenor **Steven Ebel**, who sings Hypochondriac Gambler, South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg**, who sings the role of Potapytch and Polish bass **Lukas Jakobski**, who sings the role of Aged Gambler.

Notes

Prokofiev wrote *The Gambler* between 1915 and 1916 and completed the orchestration in January 1917. The opera received its first performance in 1929 at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels.

TAMERLANO

George Frideric Handel

5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20 March at 6.30pm

PRODUCTION NEW TO THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Royal Opera presents Handel's vivid tragedy, *Tamerlano*, at Covent Garden for the first time. The majestic staging by **Graham Vick**, with its striking designs by **Richard Hudson**, was first seen at Teatro della Pergola in Florence in 2001. Lighting is by **Matthew Richardson** and choreography by **Ron Howell**. The production received further performances at Teatro Real, Madrid in March 2008.

Graham Vick's productions for The Royal Opera have included *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Falstaff*, *King Arthur*, *The Midsummer Marriage* and *Mitridate, re di Ponto*.

The opera revolves around the conflict between the Tartar warlord Tamerlano and his captive, the proud Turkish sultan, Bajazet. His hatred of Tamerlano burning inside him, Bajazet nevertheless has to temper his anger out of concern for his daughter Asteria, whom Tamerlano wishes to marry though she is pledged to the Greek prince Andronico.

Ivor Bolton, Chief Conductor of the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, returns to conduct the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** in Handel's *Tamerlano*. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1995 and most recently conducted *Don Giovanni* and *Iphigenie en Tauride* in 2007 and *La Calisto* in 2008.

Dutch mezzo-soprano **Christianne Stotijn** makes both her debut at the Royal Opera House and her role debut as Tamerlano, Emperor of the Tartars. Recent roles include Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*) in Amsterdam and Brussels and she will sing Storge (*Jephttha*) at the Barbican in June 2009.

The role of Bajazet, Sultan of the Turks, is double cast with **Plácido Domingo** singing performances on 5, 8, 11, 15 and 20 March and **Kurt Streit** singing on 13 and 17 March.

Spanish tenor **Plácido Domingo** sings this role for the first time with The Royal Opera. The role of Bajazet marks the 126th role of his career. He first sang the role of Bajazet in this production at the Teatro Real, Madrid in 2008. He has also sung the role for Washington Opera in May 2008 in a production directed by Chas Rader-Shieber and will reprise the role in Los Angeles in November 2009. The role marks his 26th tenor role for The Royal Opera and the opening night performance on 5 March will mark his 225th performance with The Royal Opera.

Plácido Domingo made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1971 as Cavaradossi (*Tosca*). His subsequent roles with the Company have included Radames (*Aida*), Dick Johnson (*La fanciulla del West*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Hoffmann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Don José (*Carmen*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Turridu (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Samson (*Samson et Dalila*), Manrico (*Il trovatore*), Gustavus III (*Un ballo in maschera*), Vasco da Gama (*L'Africaine*), Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*), Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*), Count Louis Ipanov (*Fedora*), Gherman (*The Queen of Spades*), Arrigo (*La battaglia di Legnano*), the titles roles in *Otello*,

Cyrano de Bergerac, *Andrea Chénier*, *Stiffelio* and *Parsifal* and *Siegfried* (*Die Walküre*). He returns later in the 2009/10 Season to sing the baritone role of Simon Boccanegra.

American tenor **Kurt Streit** made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) in 1992 and returned to the role in 1997. Other roles with The Royal Opera include Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Cassio (*Otello*), Belmonte (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Johnny Inkslinger (*Paul Bunyan*), Jupiter (*Semele*), Prunier (*La rondine*), Don Anchise (*La finta giardiniera*) and Boris Grigorjevič (*Kat'a Kabanová*). He appeared earlier this Season in the role of Marquis (*The Gambler*). This is his debut in the role of Bajazet.

German soprano **Christine Schäfer** and British soprano **Sally Matthews** both make their role debuts as Asteria, daughter of Bajazet. Christine Schäfer made her debut with The Royal Opera as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2000 and returned to Covent Garden as Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) and Gilda (*Rigoletto*). She returns later in the Season to sing Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

British soprano **Sally Matthews** made her Royal Opera House debut as Nannetta (*Falstaff*) in 2001 and her other roles for The Royal Opera include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Iris (*Semele*), Sifare (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) and the title role in Cavalli's *La Calisto*. She sang Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) with The Royal Opera earlier in the 2009/10 Season.

Italian contralto **Sara Mingardo** makes her debut at the Royal Opera House in the role of Greek prince Andronico, which she previously sang in Madrid in 2008. Recent roles include Nérís (*Médée*) in Paris and Toulouse and Maria (*La Vergine dei dolori*) in Bordeaux.

Making her debut with The Royal Opera as Irene is Croatian mezzo-soprano **Renata Pokupic**, who also sang the role in the Madrid production in 2008. Recent performances include Annio (*La Clemenza di Tito*) with Opéra de Lyon, Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*) with Chicago Opera Theater and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Les Talens Lyriques.

Another newcomer to Covent Garden is Italian bass **Vito Priante** who sings the role of Leone. He has previously sung the role in Munich. Recent roles include Silvano (*La Calisto*) in Munich and the title role in *Il Prigioniero* at La Scala, Milan.

Notes

Tamerlano was one of Handel's major works and was composed in the space of 20 days in July 1724. It was first performed at the Kings's Theatre, London on 31 October 1724.

THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN

Leos Janáček

19, 22, 25, 29 March, 1 April at 8pm

Bill Bryden's charming 1990 production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* returns to Covent Garden for its third revival. Designs are by **William Dudley**, lighting by **Robert Bryan** and movement by **Stuart Hopps**.

The inspiration for the opera came from a newspaper comic strip and charts the adventures of Vixen Sharp Ears. It is set in a world of animals and humans, it is both a reflection and celebration of the cycle of life and death in the natural world.

Charles Mackerras, a leading exponent of Czech music, returns to Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* for the first time at Covent Garden. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1964 and has since conducted over 278 performances for The Royal Opera. His most recent performances were conducting *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Kát'a Kabanová*.

Australian soprano **Emma Matthews** makes her Covent Garden debut as Vixen Sharp-Ears. She has previously sung the role for Opera Australia in 2004. Her recent engagements include Zdenka (*Arabella*), the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) and the four heroines in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, all for Opera Australia.

Making her role debut as Fox is British soprano **Emma Bell**. She made her Royal Opera House debut as Leonora (*Maskarade*) in 2005 and returned as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) in 2008. She also sang the soprano role in Britten's *War Requiem* with The Royal Opera at Birmingham Symphony Hall in March 2009.

British baritone **Christopher Maltman** makes his role debut as Gamekeeper. He made his Royal Opera debut in 1997 and his subsequent roles for the Company include Sebastian (*The Tempest*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Doctor Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Marcello (*La bohème*) and Ramiro (*L'Heure espagnole*).

British bass **Matthew Rose** sings Harašta, a role he sings for the first time at Covent Garden. A former Young Artist, he made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Jonas Fogg (*Sweeney Todd*) in 2004. His more recent roles at Covent Garden have included Zuniga (*Carmen*), Colline (*La bohème*), Crespel (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and most recently Polyphemus in the 2009 production of *Acis and Galatea*.

Returning to the role of Schoolmaster/Mosquito is British tenor **Robin Leggate**, who last sang the role for The Royal Opera in 1993. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1977 and his many roles for the Company have included Herod (*Salome*), Monsieur Triquet (*Eugene Onegin*), Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Spalanzani (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*).

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** returns to the role of Priest/Badger which he sang at the last revival in 2003. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*), Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Benoit (*La bohème*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*) and Baron (*The Gambler*).

British tenor **Alasdair Elliott** sings the role of Pásek, the Innkeeper. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1992 as Ruodi (*Guillaume Tell*) and his recent roles for the Company include Master of Ceremonies (*The Queen of Spades*), Gozo (*Madama Butterfly*) and Pong (*Turandot*).

British mezzo-soprano **Elizabeth Sikora** returns to the role of Innkeeper's Wife which she sang at the last revival in 2003. Her recent appearances with The Royal Opera include Annina (*La traviata*), Rosswisse (*Die Walküre*), Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Giovanna (*Rigoletto*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Romanian soprano **Simona Mihai** sings Pepík. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) in 2008 and her roles during the 2009/10 Season include Gaudy Lady (*The Gambler*) and Pousette (*Manon*).

British soprano **Elizabeth Cragg** sings the role of Frantík. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as a Flowermaiden (*Parsifal*) in 2007.

Singing the role of Rooster/Jay is British soprano **Elisabeth Meister**, a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme. Her other roles during the 2009/10 Season include Pale Lady (*The Gambler*) and High Priestess (*Aida*).

American countertenor **Gerald Thompson** makes his debut with The Royal Opera singing the role of Dachshund. His recent roles include Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*) for the Metropolitan Opera, New York and for Glimmerglass Opera.

IL TURCO IN ITALIA

Gioachino Rossini

3 April at 7pm/ 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 19 April at 7.30pm

Rossini's *Il turco in Italia*, written to a libretto by Felice Romani in 1814 when Rossini was only 22 years old, returns to Covent Garden for the first revival of **Patrice Caurier** and **Moshe Leiser**'s visually delightful production, which was originally seen at Covent Garden in 2005.

Set designs are by **Christian Fenouillat**, costume designs by **Agostino Cavalca** and lighting by **Christophe Forey**. Choreography is by **Leah Hausman**.

Italian conductor **Maurizio Benini** conducts *Il turco in Italia* for the first time at Covent Garden, having previously conducted *La sonnambula*, *Rigoletto*, *Luisa Miller*, *Faust* and *La traviata* for The Royal Opera.

A comedy of sexual manners and cultural differences, *Il turco in Italia* shows the flirtatious Fiorilla ignoring both her ageing husband Don Geronimo and her young toyboy as she dallies with the new arrival in town, the handsome Turk Selim, under the watchful eye of the poet Prosdócimo who thinks he has found in her antics the perfect subject for a comic opera libretto.

Returning to the role of Selim the Turk, which he created in the original production, is Italian bass-baritone **Ildebrando D'Arcangelo**. This is his second role of the Season, having reprised the role of Escamillo (*Carmen*) earlier in the Season. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1996 as Colline (*La bohème*) and his other roles for The Royal Opera include Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) and Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

New to the cast as the flighty Fiorella is young Polish soprano **Aleksandra Kurzak**. She has previously sung the role in Hamburg in 2007. She made her debut at Covent Garden in 2005 as Aspasia (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*) and returned to sing Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Italian baritone **Alessandro Corbelli** returns once more to Covent Garden to reprise the role of Don Geronio, which he sang in the same production in 2005 and has also sung at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro. This is one of three roles with The Royal Opera this Season, having sung the Marquis de Bloisfleury in *Linda de Chamounix* and also returning to reprise the role of Sulpice (*La Fille du régiment*). His recent roles for The Royal Opera include Don Magnifico and Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) and both Malatesta and the title role in *Don Pasquale*.

In his third performance of the Season, **Thomas Allen** reprises the role of the poet Prosdócimo which he sang in the same production in 2005. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1971 and has subsequently sung more than 40 roles with the Company. Recent role debuts with the Company include the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, Peter (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and title role of *Gianni Schicchi* earlier this Season.

Making his role debut as Don Narciso is South African tenor **Colin Lee**, who made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Marzio (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*) in 2005. This is the first of two roles for

Covent Garden this Season as he returns to reprise the role of Tonio (*La Fille du régiment*) which he first sang for Covent Garden in 2007.

The role of Zaida is sung by Estonian mezzo-soprano **Kai Rüütel**, new to the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, while the role of Albazar is sung by Jette Parker Young Artist American tenor **Steven Ebel**. He made his debut at Covent Garden singing the role of Victorin/Voice of Gaston in *Die tote Stadt* in January 2009.

AIDA

Giuseppe Verdi

27 April, 4, 7, 10, 13 May at 7.30pm / 1 May at 7pm / 16 May at 3pm

NEW PRODUCTION

Co-production with Den Norske Opera, Oslo, and Palau de les Arts, Valencia

David McVicar returns to Covent Garden to direct a new production of *Aida*, his second Verdi production for The Royal Opera. Set designs are by **Jean-Marc Puissant**, who has previously designed *Jewels* for The Royal Ballet, costume designs are by **Moritz Junge** and lighting by **Jennifer Tipton**.

Written in 1871, and set in the ancient world with Egypt under attack from Ethiopia, Aida, daughter of the King of Ethiopia, a prisoner, is secretly in love with Radames, the Egyptian General appointed to destroy her father. Radames is also the object of the affections of the Egyptian king's daughter Amneris and battles ensue on both a personal and national level.

Aida has all the elements of tragic love, loyalty, betrayal and suspense and includes the famous triumphal march but central to the drama of the opera are the private emotions of the main characters.

Conducting Verdi's grand opera *Aida* for the first time at Covent Garden is charismatic Italian conductor **Nicola Luisotti**, Music Director of San Francisco Opera. He made his Covent Garden debut with *Il trovatore* in 2007 returning to conduct *Madama Butterfly* and most recently *Turandot*.

Italian soprano **Micaela Carosi** returns to Covent Garden as Aida, a role she has previously sung at the Arena di Verona, the Metropolitan Opera of New York and the Gran Teatro Liceu in Barcelona. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in the title role of Tosca in 2008 and recently sang Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* at Covent Garden under the baton of Antonio Pappano.

Covent Garden favourite, Argentinian tenor **Marcelo Alvarez**, sings the role of Radames for the first time. Since his debut in 1998 as Alfredo (*La traviata*), his many roles for The Royal Opera have included the title role in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*), Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), the title role in *Werther*, Riccardo (*Un ballo in maschera*), Cavaradossi (*Tosca*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Manrico (*Il trovatore*) and Don José (*Carmen*).

Italian mezzo-soprano **Luciana D'Intino** returns to reprise the role of the jealous Amneris. She had a huge success when she sang the role in her debut with The Royal Opera in 1994 and

has subsequently sung Amneris all over the world, most recently for the Metropolitan Opera, New York and Zurich.

British bass **Robert Lloyd** returns to the role of the King of Egypt, which he last sang at the Royal Opera House in 1977, though his most recent appearance in *Aida* at Covent Garden was in the role of Ramfis in 1996. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1972 in *Khovanshchina* and was appointed Senior Artist with The Royal Opera in 2004. This is one of four roles he sings for The Royal Opera this Season.

Singing the role of Amonasro is Italian baritone **Marco Vratogna** who made his debut in the role at the Arena di Verona in 2007. He made his first appearance on the Covent Garden stage as Paolo Albiani (*Simon Boccanegra*) in 2008.

Korean bass **Kwangchul Youn** sings the role of Ramfis, a role he has previously sung for the Metropolitan Opera, New York and in Berlin. He makes his debut with The Royal Opera in the role of King Henry (*Lohengrin*) in May 2009.

The cast is completed with Jette Parker Principal Korean tenor **Ji-Min Park** singing the Messenger, one of four roles during the 2009/10 Season and British soprano **Elisabeth Meister**, new to the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, singing the role of Priestess.

Notes

Aida was first heard at Covent Garden in 1876 with Adelina Patti in the title role and was first performed by The Royal Opera in September 1949. The role of *Aida* has been presented at Covent Garden with such luminaries as Maria Callas, Joan Sutherland, Leontyne Price, Gwyneth Jones, Montserrat Caballé and Katia Ricciarelli. Since the production in 1949 there have been a further three productions, the last production of *Aida* presented in 2002 and directed, designed and lit by Robert Wilson, conducted by Antonio Pappano, with a cast that included Norma Fantini in the title role and Johan Botha as Radames.

POWDER HER FACE

Thomas Adès

THE ROYAL OPERA IN THE LINBURY

26, 28, 30 April, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 May at 7.30pm, 12 May at 2.30pm

Generously supported by the The Friends of Covent Garden

Following a highly acclaimed run of sold-out performance of **Thomas Adès's** *Powder Her Face* in June 2008, the production returns to the Royal Opera House for its first revival with an unchanged cast.

Thomas Adès's chamber opera *Powder Her Face*, to a libretto by **Philip Hensher**, is based on the life of Margaret, Duchess of Argyll, whose sexual exploits were the stuff of scandal and gossip in Britain in 1963 during her divorce proceedings.

The production, new in 2008, is based on set and costume designs for De Vlaamse Opera, and directed by Venezuelan director **Carlos Wagner**. Designs are by **Conor Murphy**, lighting by

Paul Keogan and choreography by **Tom Baert**. Carlos Wagner directed *Powder Her Face* for De Vlaamse Opera, Belgium in 2002.

Timothy Redmond, Principal Conductor of the Cambridge Philharmonic, conducts this opera for the second time at the Royal Opera House, having also conducted the Russian premiere in a semi-staged version at the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg in 2007.

British soprano **Joan Rodgers** returns to sing the demanding role of Margaret, Duchess of Argyll. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 1983 and her most recent appearances with the Company include the role of Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) in 2002 and Nella (*Gianni Schicchi*) in 2007.

Reprising the multiple roles of Maid, Confidante, Waitress, Mistress, Rubbernecker and Society Journalist is British soprano **Rebecca Bottone**. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in April 2008 as First Innocent in the world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Minotaur* and also sang the role of Semira (*Artaxerxes*) in the Linbury Studio Theatre earlier in the Season.

Following recent performances of Zuniga (*Carmen*) for The Royal Opera, Irish baritone **Alan Ewing** returns to the role of Hotel Manager as well as Duke, Laundryman and Other Guest, while Scottish tenor **Iain Paton** returns to reprise the roles of Electrician, Lounge Lizard, Waiter, Priest, Rubbernecker and Delivery Boy.

Notes

Written when Adès was 24, *Powder Her Face* was commissioned by the Almeida Opera for performances at the Cheltenham Music Festival and received its premiere on 1 July 1995, conducted by Brad Cohen (with Jill Gomez in the title role). The premiere was followed by five London performances at the Almeida Theatre. Since its premiere, the opera has had over 100 performances in Australia, Germany, USA, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Netherlands, Israel, France, Belgium and Iceland.

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

11, 14, 19, 21, 24 May at 7pm

Production generously sponsored (2009) by



Richard Eyre's much-loved atmospheric staging of Verdi's *La traviata* with its rich stage designs returns to Covent Garden for the first of two runs during the 2009/10 Season. Designs are by **Bob Crowley** with lighting by **Jean Kalman**. **Jane Gibson** is the director of movement.

One of Verdi's most celebrated operas, based on the novel *La dame aux Camélias*, it tells the tale of a conflicted courtesan, her devoted lover Alfredo and his disapproving father, and lays bare the hypocrisy of a world that exploited courtesans but refused them a place among decent society.

Franco-Canadian conductor **Yves Abel**, Principal Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, makes his debut at the Royal Opera House and will conduct both runs of *La traviata* during the 2009/10 Season.

Albanian soprano **Ermonela Jaho** returns to the role of the consumptive courtesan Violetta, the role in which she made her Covent Garden debut in 2008, replacing the indisposed Anna Netrebko. She made her professional debut as Violetta in Tirana at the age of seventeen and has subsequently been hailed in the role at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Teatro Giuseppe Verdi, Trieste, Opéra de Marseille, Opéra de Lille and the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin.

Singing the role of Alfredo for the first time at Covent Garden is Albanian tenor **Saimir Pirgu**, who has previously sung the role in Ancona, Vienna, Lausanne, Liège and Santa Fe. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) in 2007.

Russian baritone **Dmitri Hvorostovsky** returns as the disapproving father Giorgio Germont, a role he previously sang with The Royal Opera in 1996, 2001 and 2008. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1992 as Riccardo in *I puritani* and his most recent roles with the Company include Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), the title role in *Eugene Onegin* and Count di Luna (*Il trovatore*).

Returning to the role of Flora Bervoix which she first sang in 2005 is Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Liora Grodnikaite**, a former Jette Parker Young Artist and Principal. She made her Royal Opera House debut as Curra (*La forza del destino*) in 2004 and her recent roles for The Royal Opera have included Varvara (*Kál'a Kabanová*) and Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*).

English baritone **Eddie Wade** once again sings the role of Baron Douphol, having reprised the role most recently in 2008. His roles for The Royal Opera have included Mandarin (*Turandot*) and Indian (*The Bartered Bride*).

The role of Annina is sung in both runs by mezzo-soprano **Sarah Pring** who also sang the role in the 2008 revival. Her roles for The Royal Opera include Madame Larina (*Eugene Onegin*), Wellgunde (*Götterdämmerung*), Berta (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Lisa (*Cyrano de Bergerac*).

Senior Artist **Robert Lloyd** returns to sing Doctor Grenvil which he first sang for the Company in 1975. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Carlos V (*Don Carlo*), King of Egypt (*Aida*) and Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Singing the role of Gastone de Letorières for the first time is Jette Parker Young Artist British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner**. He made his Royal Opera debut in the role of Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*) in 2009. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Count of Lerma (*Don Carlo*), Attendant (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Major Domo 1 (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Second Jew (*Salome*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Korean baritone **Changhan Lim**, who made his debut with The Royal Opera as Hermann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008, sings the role of Marquis D'Obigny for both runs. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Moralès (*Carmen*) and Wood Goblin (*The Tsarina's Slippers*).

Notes

La traviata was first performed at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice in March 1853. The revised version was presented at Her Majesty's Theatre in London on 24 May 1856. Richard Eyre's production of *La traviata* was first seen at Covent Garden on 11 November 1994 with Angela Gheorghiu as Violetta, Frank Lopardo as Alfredo, Leo Nucci as Giorgio Germont and conducted by Georg Solti.

LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT

Gaetano Donizetti

17, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29 May, 1 and 4 June at 7.30pm

Co-production with the Vienna State Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, New York

Generously Supported by The Royal Opera House Endowment Fund

La Fille du régiment, one of the outstanding successes of The Royal Opera's 60th anniversary Season, returns for its first revival with an unchanged cast. Donizetti's sparkling comedy was the first new production French director **Laurent Pelly** created for The Royal Opera, with set designs by **Chantal Thomas**, costume designs by **Laurent Pelly**, lighting by **Joël Adam** and choreography by **Laura Scozzi**. **Agathe Mélinand** is the Associate Director and revised the dialogue for the original production.

Italian conductor **Bruno Campanella**, one of the finest interpreters of *bel canto* repertoire, returns to Covent Garden to conduct *La Fille du régiment*, having previously conducted *Don Pasquale* as well as performances of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for The Royal Opera.

French soprano **Natalie Dessay** returns to the role of tomboy Marie, brought up by an entire regiment of French soldiers. She received the 2008 Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera for her performances in the role. She has subsequently reprised the role in this production in Vienna and for The Metropolitan Opera. She made her Royal Opera debut in 2003 as Ophélie (*Hamlet*).

The role of the love-lorn peasant Tonio who joins the regiment to try and win the approval of Marie's multiple military fathers is shared between Peruvian tenor **Juan Diego Flórez** and South African tenor **Colin Lee** (29 May, 1 and 4 June). The opera is famous for Tonio's aria 'Ab! mes amis!' with its celebrated sequence of nine top Cs.

Juan Diego Flórez first sang the role in 2001 in Las Palmas and has subsequently sung the role in Lecce, Bologna, Lima, in Genoa and in this production in Vienna and for The Metropolitan Opera, New York. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1997 as Potoski in a concert performance of Donizetti's *Elisabetta* at the Royal Festival Hall. Subsequent roles for The Royal Opera include Elvino (*La sonnambula*), Rodrigo (Rossini's *Otello*), Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*), Ernesto (*Don Pasquale*) and Corrodino in *Mathilde di Shabran*.

South African tenor **Colin Lee** sang the role of Tonio for the first time at the Royal Opera House in 2007 in this production. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 2005 as Marzio (*Mitridate, re di Ponto*). His recent roles include Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for the Metropolitan Opera and Elvino (*La sonnambula*) for Flanders Opera.

Returning to the role of Sulpice, his third role of the 2009/10 Season, is Italian baritone **Alessandro Corbelli**. Previous appearances during the Season include Marquis de Boisfleury (*Linda de Chamounix*) and Don Geronio (*Il turco in Italia*). He made his debut with The Royal

Opera in 1989 as Taddeo in *L'italiana in Algeri* and his other roles at the Royal Opera House include Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) and both Malatesta and the title role in *Don Pasquale*.

British soprano **Felicity Palmer** reprises the role of La Marquise de Berkenfeld. Her recent roles for the Company have included Juno/Ino (*Semele*), Klytemnestra (*Elektra*), Mrs Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*) and Kabanicha in *Kát'a Kabanová*.

The role of Hortensius is sung once more by British baritone **Donald Maxwell**. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1987 and his more recent roles have included Second Priest (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Antonio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in 2008 and Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*) in 2009.

Notes

La Fille du régiment was first heard in London in 1847 at Her Majesty's Theatre with Jenny Lind as Marie. The first Covent Garden performance took place in 1861 and it was heard again during the 1863 Royal Italian Season with Adelina Patti as Marie.

This production was first seen at Covent Garden in 2006 with the cast as listed above. Prior to these performances *La Fille du régiment* was last heard at Covent Garden in 1967 conducted by Richard Bonyngue with Joan Sutherland as Marie and Luciano Pavarotti as Tonio in a production by Sandro Sequi.

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**31 May, 3, 9, 15, 17, 23, 30 June at 7pm / 12 June at 6.30pm / 20 June at 6pm /
3 July at 12.30pm**

Generously Supported by The Royal Opera House Endowment Fund

David McVicar's closely observed production of Mozart's comedy exploring the battle between the classes and the sexes, updated to the revolution period in 1830, returns for its second revival, with handsome sets by **Tanya McCallin**, lighting by **Paule Constable** and movement by **Leah Hausman**.

Colin Davis, a former Music Director of The Royal Opera and one of the finest Mozart interpreters, conducts this production of *Le nozze di Figaro* which he conducted in June 2006. He has most recently conducted *Die Zauberflöte*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Così fan tutte* and *Hänsel und Gretel* for The Royal Opera.

David Syrus, Head of Music for The Royal Opera, conducts the performances on 20, 23, 30 June and 3 July. He also conducted performances of this production of *Le nozze di Figaro* in 2008 and other recent operas he has conducted for The Royal Opera include *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen* and *Così fan tutte*.

Uruguay-born bass-baritone **Erwin Schrott** returns to Covent Garden as Figaro, the role he created when the production was new in January 2006. He has also sung the role in Vienna, Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Zurich and Valencia. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Banquo (*Macbeth*) in 2002 and his other roles with the Company include both Leporello and the title role in *Don Giovanni*.

Singing the role of Count Almaviva for the first time at Covent Garden is Polish baritone **Mariusz Kwiecien**. He has previously sung the role at Santa Fe Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, San Diego Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and the Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Marcello (*La bohème*) in 2005 and his subsequent roles with the Company include Giorgio Germont (*La traviata*) and the title role in *Don Giovanni*.

Sharing the role of Count Almaviva is South African baritone **Jacques Imbrailo**, a former Jette Parker Young Artist. He sings the role on 30 June and 3 July. He made his debut in the role at Opéra de Lille in 2008. Earlier in the Season he sang the role of Schaunard (*La bohème*) for The Royal Opera.

The role of the Countess Almaviva is also double cast, with German soprano **Annette Dasch** and Finnish soprano **Soile Isokoski** sharing the role.

German soprano **Annette Dasch** makes her debut at Covent Garden in this role, and will make her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York in the same role in September 2009. She has previously sung the role in Paris and Dresden. Recent roles include Elettra (*Idomeneo*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) at the Salzburg Festival.

Finnish soprano **Soile Isokoski** returns to the role of Countess which she sang in the same production in 2006 and in which she has also appeared in New York, Tokyo and Vienna. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) in 1997. Other roles with the Company have included Mařenka (*The Bartered Bride*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Alice Ford (*Falstaff*) and, earlier this Season, the Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*).

Singing the role of Susanna for the first time at the Royal Opera House is Swedish soprano **Camilla Tilling**. She has already performed the role in Aix-en-Provence, San Francisco and most recently in Paris in 2008. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) in 2000 and her subsequent roles with the Company have included Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Dorinda (*Orlando*), Oscar (*Un ballo in maschera*), Arminda (*La finta giardiniera*) and most recently Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*).

Sharing the role of Cherubino are German soprano **Christine Schäfer** and Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Jurgita Adamonytė**.

Christine Schäfer sings the role for the first time at Covent Garden, a role in which she has previously appeared at the Salzburg Festival and the Opéra National de Paris. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2000 and returned to Covent Garden as Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*) and Asteria (*Tamerlano*).

Having made her debut with The Royal Opera as Lucienne (*Die tote Stadt*) in January 2009, **Jurgita Adamonytė** sings her second role of the 2009/10 Season for The Royal Opera. She has already sung Cherubino in the Salzburg Festival's production on tour in Japan. Earlier in the Season she sang the role of Blanche (*The Gambler*) at Covent Garden.

British tenor **Peter Hoare** sings the role of Basilio, which he has previously sung in Paris. He made his Covent Garden debut as Pang (*Turandot*) in 1996 and recent roles for The Royal Opera include Spoletta (*Tosca*) and Goro (*Madama Butterfly*).

The role of Marcellina is sung by Scottish soprano **Marie McLaughlin**, a role she has recently sung at the Metropolitan Opera, New York and at the Salzburg Festival. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House in 1980 and most recently appeared for The Royal Opera as La Ciesca (*Gianni Schicchi*) in 2007 and 2009.

British bass Senior Artist **Robert Lloyd** returns to the role of Bartolo, which he sang in this production in both 2006 and 2008. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1972 in *Khovanshchina* and in 2004 was appointed Senior Artist with The Royal Opera. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Carlos V (*Don Carlo*), King of Egypt (*Aida*) and Doctor Grenvil (*La traviata*).

American soprano **Amanda Forsythe** makes her Royal Opera debut as Barbarina, a role she has previously sung in Paris. Recent roles include Rosalia (*L'Equivoco Stravagante*) at Pesaro and Venus in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* for The Boston Early Music Festival.

Singing the role of Don Curzio is **Christopher Gillett** whose recent roles include Capt James Nolan (*Dr Atomic*) for English National Opera and Sellem (*The Rake's Progress*) for Garsington Opera.

British baritone **Nicholas Folwell** sings the role of Antonio, a role he has also sung for English National Opera. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1990 as The Poacher in *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

CARMEN

Georges Bizet

5, 8, 14, 16, 18, 21, 24, 26 June at 7pm

Co-production with Den Norske Opera, Oslo, and Opera Australia

Francesca Zambello's production of *Carmen*, which was first seen at Covent Garden in 2006, returns for its second run of the 2009/10 Season.

Greek Conductor **Constantinos Carydis** makes his debut at the Royal Opera House. He has previously conducted *Carmen* in Munich and Vienna and recent performances include *La bohème* in Munich and Vienna and *Il turco in Italia* in Berlin.

Singing Carmen for the first time at Covent Garden is Russian mezzo-soprano **Marina Domashenko**, a role she has previously performed in San Francisco, San Diego and Berlin. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) in 2005.

American tenor **Marcus Haddock** returns to Covent Garden to sing Don José. He made his debut in the role at Glyndebourne in 2002. He has also sung the role in Los Angeles, Houston and Munich. He made his Royal Opera debut as Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in 2003 and returned as Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) in 2008.

Making his Covent Garden debut is Greek baritone **Aris Argiris** as Escamillo, a role he has already sung in Hamburg and Berlin. He is currently a member of Frankfurt Opera where his roles have included Don Giovanni, Rodrigo (*Don Carlos*), Marcello (*La bohème*) and Dandini (*La Cenerentola*).

Latvian soprano **Maija Kovalevska**, winner of the 2006 Domingo Operalia Competition, makes her debut at the Royal Opera House in the role of Micaëla which she previously performed at

the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 2008. She made her UK debut as Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) at Glyndebourne in 2008.

Singing the role of Mercédès for the first time is Irish mezzo-soprano **Paula Murrihy**. She made her Royal Opera debut in 2008 stepping in to sing the role of Tebaldo (*Don Carlo*) for one performance. She becomes a member of Frankfurt Opera in September 2009 and recent roles include Annio (*La Clemenza di Tito*) in Chicago.

Having sung the role of Frasquita earlier in the Season, Jette Parker Young Artist Japanese soprano **Eri Nakamura** reprises the role for the second run of performances. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Fifth Maid (*Elektra*) in 2007 and her roles during the 2009/10 Season include Musetta (*La bohème*) and Voice from Heaven (*Don Carlo*).

South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg**, a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, sings the role of Moralès. He makes his debut with The Royal Opera as Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*) in September 2009 and his other roles during the 2009/10 Season include Steersman (*Tristan und Isolde*), Potapytch (*The Gambler*) and Second Nazarene (*Salome*). He has previously sung the role of Moralès for Glyndebourne Touring Opera in 2008.

Returning to the role of Le Dancaïre for this second run of performances is British baritone **Adrian Clarke**. His recent roles with The Royal Opera include Sid (*La fanciulla del West*) and Mityukha (*Boris Godunov*).

British tenor **Harry Nicoll** reprises the role of Le Remendado which he first sang in this production in 2007. His recent roles for The Royal Opera include Joe (*La fanciulla del West*) and Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Francesca Zambello's production of *Carmen* opened in December 2006 with designs by **Tanya McCallin**, lighting by **Paule Constable** and choreography by **Arthur Pita**. The production was also seen again in January 2007 and revived in March 2008 and October 2009.

MANON

Jules Massenet

22, 25, 28 June, 1, 7, 10 July at 6.30pm / 4 July at 3pm

NEW PRODUCTION

Co-production with La Scala Milan, Toulouse and the Metropolitan Opera New York

Laurent Pelly returns to Covent Garden to direct a new production of Massenet's *Manon* for The Royal Opera, together with the same creative team that produced *La Fille du régiment* in 2007. Designs are by **Chantal Thomas**, lighting by **Joël Adam** and movement by **Laura Scozzi**.

Manon tells the passionate tale of a young naïve girl, who proves irresistible to the young Chevalier des Grieux, who falls in love with her at first sight. The opera charts her life spiraling out of control as she is drawn to a life of extravagance through her reckless pursuit of wealth and passion.

Music Director **Antonio Pappano**, now in his eighth Season with The Royal Opera, conducts *Manon* the last new production of the Season. Earlier in the 2009/10 Season he conducted *Tristan und Isolde*, *Gianni Schicchi/L'Heure espagnole*, *The Gambler* and *Simon Boccanegra*.

Russian soprano **Anna Netrebko** sings the role of Manon for the first time with The Royal Opera. She has previously sung the role at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden in 2007 and for Los Angeles Opera in 2006. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) in 2002 and has returned to Covent Garden to sing Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Violetta (*La traviata*) and Giulietta (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*).

Singing the role of Chevalier des Grieux for the first time at Covent Garden is Mexican tenor **Rolando Villazón**. He first performed the role together with Anna Netrebko at Los Angeles Opera in 2006 and again at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in 2007. He has also sung the role in Vienna, Barcelona and Genoa. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Hoffmann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2004, a role which he repeated for The Royal Opera in November 2008, and subsequent roles with the Company include Rodolfo (*La bohème*), the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*), Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) and the title role in *Don Carlo*.

Canadian baritone **Russell Braun** makes his role debut as Lescaut. He made his Royal Opera House debut as Valentin (*Faust*) in 2006. Recent roles include Prince Andrei (*War and Peace*) in Toronto, Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Paris and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) with the Salzburg Festival on tour in Japan.

The role of Guillot de Morfontaine is sung by British tenor **Philip Langridge**. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Fisherman (*Le Rossignol*) in 1983 and his more recent roles for The Royal Opera include Loge (*Das Rheingold*), King of Naples (*The Tempest*), Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Hiercus (*The Minotaur*) and Marquis/Manservant (*Lulu*).

Having sung the role of Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) earlier in the Season, British bass-baritone **William Shimell** returns to sing Brétigny for the first time at Covent Garden. He has previously sung the role at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Schaunard (*La bohème*) in 1985 and his other roles for The Royal Opera have included Albert (*Werther*), Doctor Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Marcello (*La bohème*) and Olivier (*Capriccio*).

German bass **Christof Fischesser** makes his debut at Covent Garden as Comte des Grieux, a role he sang in 2007 in Berlin together with Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazón. His recent roles for the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden include Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ramfis (*Aida*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*), King Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*) and Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Romanian soprano **Simona Mihai** sings Pousette. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) in 2008 and her roles during the 2009/10 Season include Gaudy Lady (*The Gambler*) and Pepík (*The Cunning Little Vixen*).

Having made her debut with The Royal Opera in role of Mercédès (*Carmen*) earlier in the Season, British mezzo-soprano **Louise Innes** returns to sing the role of Javotte.

Estonian mezzo-soprano **Kai Rüütel**, a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, sings the role of Rosette. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Venerable Lady (*The Gambler*) and her other roles during the 2009/10 Season include Zaida (*Il turco in Italia*) and Flora (*La traviata*).

British bass-baritone **Lynton Black** returns to sing Innkeeper, his second role of the Season, having earlier sung Notary (*Der Rosenkavalier*). He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Luther (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008.

Notes

Manon was written to a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille based on the 1731 novel by Abbé Prost 'L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut'. It was first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1884.

Manon was last seen at Covent Garden in 1994 in a production by John Cox, with Leontina Vaduva as Manon and Giuseppe Sabbatini as Chevalier des Grieux, conducted by Colin Davis. The production used the sets and costumes by Peter Rice from the previous *Manon* production in 1987 but with several modifications and a new fifth act was added. This production opened in 1988 with a cast that included Leontina Vaduva, David Rendall and François Le Roux, conducted by Michael Plasson.

SIMON BOCCANEGRA

29 June, 2, 5, 8, 13, 15 July at 7.30pm

Production generously supported by



Elijah Moshinsky's production of Verdi's most subtle and sombre opera *Simon Boccanegra*, first seen in November 1991, returns for its fifth revival. Set designs are by **Michael Yeagan**, costume designs by **Peter J. Hall** and lighting by **John Harrison**.

Verdi's powerful score highlights the political intrigue of medieval Italy, Simon Boccanegra's election as the first Doge of Genoa is organised to unite the warring factions within the city, but he is soon forced to deal with treachery and rebellion.

Music Director **Antonio Pappano**, in his eighth Season with The Royal Opera, conducts the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House and The Royal Opera Chorus in Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. Earlier in the 2009/2010 Season he conducted *Tristan und Isolde*, *Gianni Schicchi*/*L'Heure espagnole*, *The Gambler* and *Manon*.

The complex and sympathetic role of Simon Boccanegra contains some of the most beautiful music Verdi ever wrote and is sung by **Plácido Domingo** for the first time at Covent Garden. Simon Boccanegra is a role that Plácido Domingo will sing throughout the 2009/10 season: he will perform the role at the Staatsoper, Berlin in autumn 2009, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York in January/February 2010 and at the Teatro Real, Madrid in June 2010. He has previously sung the tenor role of Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) in the 1857 version at Covent Garden in 1997.

Plácido Domingo made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1971 as Cavaradossi (*Tosca*). His subsequent roles with the Company have included Radames (*Aida*), Dick Johnson (*La fanciulla del West*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Hoffmann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Don José (*Carmen*), Canio (*Pagliacci*), Des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Turridu (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Samson (*Samson et Dalila*), Manrico (*Il trovatore*), Gustavus III (*Un ballo in maschera*), Vasco da Gama (*L'Africaine*), Rodolfo (*Luisa Miller*), Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*), Count Louis Ipanov

(*Fedora*), Gherman (*The Queen of Spades*), Arrigo (*La battaglia di Legnano*), the titles roles of *Otello*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Stiffelio* and *Parsifal*, Siegmund (*Die Walküre*) and earlier this Season, Bajazet (*Tamerlano*).

Since his debut in 1971, Plácido Domingo has performed 25 tenor roles with The Royal Opera, adding the 26th this Season with his performances of Bajazet (*Tamerlano*) and Simon Boccanegra will be his 27th role for The Royal Opera. He celebrates his 225th performance with The Royal Opera during the 2009/10 Season, on the opening night of *Tamerlano*. Plácido Domingo took part in the first Big Screen Relay in 1987 and the BP relay of *Simon Boccanegra* will be his 10th.

Russian soprano **Marina Poplavskaya** makes her debut in the role of Amelia. A former Jette Parker Young Artist, she made her Royal Opera House debut as Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung* in 2006 and her subsequent roles for The Royal Opera have included Rachel (*La Juive*) in concert performances at the Barbican, Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) and Elizabeth of Valois (*Don Carlo*), a role she reprised earlier in the Season.

Singing the role of Gabriele Adorno for the first time is Maltese tenor **Joseph Calleja**. He made his debut at Covent Garden as Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*) in 2002 and returned as Alfredo (*La traviata*), Macduff (*Macbeth*) and Nicias (*Thaïs*).

Returning to the role of Fiesco is Italian bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto** who sang the role at Covent Garden in 2008 in Ian Judge's production of the 1881 version. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1995 as Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and his roles for the Company have included the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Count Walter (*Luisa Miller*), Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*) and, earlier this Season, he reprised the role of Philip II (*Don Carlo*).

Australian baritone **Jonathan Summers** returns to The Royal Opera in the role of Paolo, which he has reprised several times since he sang it for the first time at Covent Garden in 1980. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Kilian (*Der Freischütz*) in 1977 and his numerous roles with the Company have included High Priest (*Samson et Dalila*), Captain Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*), Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) and, most recently, Sebastian (*The Tempest*) in 2007.

Jette Parker Young Artist Polish bass **Lukas Jakobski** sings the role of Pietro for the first time. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*) in September 2009 and his other roles during the Season include Aged Gambler (*The Gambler*).

Notes

Simon Boccanegra was first seen in 1857 at La Fenice in Venice. Verdi subsequently revised the opera, and this version was performed at La Scala, Milan in 1881. This production of *Simon Boccanegra*, directed by Elijah Moshinsky was last seen in 2004 with a cast which included Franz Grundheber and Alexandru Agache sharing the title role, Angela Gheorghiu and Tamar Iveri sharing the role of Amelia and Neil Shicoff and Nicola Rossi Giordano sharing the role of Gabriele Adorno, conducted by Mark Elder.

SALOME

Richard Strauss

3, 6, 9, 12, 16 July at 8pm

David McVicar's powerful and uncompromising staging of Strauss's one-act opera, based on a play by Oscar Wilde, returns for its first revival at Covent Garden. Designs are by **Es Devlin**, lighting design by **Wolfgang Göbbel**, movement/choreography by **Andrew George** and video designs by **Leo Warner** and **Mark Grimmer** for **Fifty Nine Productions**.

The opera with its biblical, erotic and murderous themes shocked audiences when it was first performed in 1905. The opera depicts Salome, stepdaughter of Herod, a teenage girl whose sexual awakening leads to an obsession with John the Baptist, held prisoner by Herod. She demands his head on a platter after he rejected her. The opera is known for its final shocking scene where Salome makes love to the severed head of John the Baptist and also for the 'Dance of the Seven Veils', which McVicar presents in this production as a striking piece of psychological staging.

German conductor **Hartmut Haenchen**, well-known for his distinguished performances of Strauss, makes a welcome return to Covent Garden to conduct *Salome*. He has previously conducted *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Mitridate, re di Ponto* for The Royal Opera in 1991 and *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1994.

Singing the demanding role of Salome for the first time with the Royal Opera is German soprano **Angela Denoke**. She has previously sung Salome in Munich, Vienna and Berlin. She made her debut at Covent Garden in the role of the Woman (*Erwartung*) in 2006 and returned to Covent Garden as Polina (*The Gambler*) earlier this Season.

Making his debut in the role of Jokanaan is Danish bass baritone **Johan Reuter**. He made his Covent Garden debut in the title role in *Wozzeck* in 2006 and returned as Theseus (*The Minotaur*) and Orest (*Elektra*) in 2008.

German tenor **Gerhard Siegel** sings the role of Herod for the first time with The Royal Opera. He has previously sung the role for Nurnberg Opera and he will also sing the role for Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona and the Vienna State Opera. He made his Covent Garden debut as Mime (*Das Rheingold*) in 2005 and reprised the role in 2007. He has also appeared in the role of the Mime in *Siegfried* in 2005 and 2007.

Singing the role of Herodias for the first time at Covent Garden is Russian mezzo-soprano **Irina Mishura**. She will sing the role in San Francisco in October 2009. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Azucena (*Il trovatore*) in 2004.

British tenor **Andrew Staples** sings Narraboth, his second role of the Season for The Royal Opera. He sang Artabanus (*Artaxerxes*) earlier in the Season. He made his Royal Opera debut in 2007 as Jacquino (*Fidelio*) and sang First Man in Armour (*Die Zauberflöte*) for The Royal Opera in 2008.

British mezzo-soprano **Sarah Castle** sings the role of the Page. Her recent roles with The Royal Opera include Dryad (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Siegrune (*Die Walküre*) and Flosshilde (*Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*).

Having made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*) earlier in the Season, British bass-baritone **John Cunningham** returns to sing A Cappadocian.

Having made his debut at the Royal Opera House as Zuniga (*Carmen*), French bass **Nicolas Courjal** returns to sing the role of First Soldier. His recent roles include Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) in Montpellier and Arkel (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in Metz.

Returning for his second role of the season is British baritone **Alan Ewing** who reprises the role of Second Soldier. He was seen earlier in the season reprising the multiple roles of Hotel Manager, Duke, Laundryman and Other Guest (*Powder Her Face*).

British tenor **Adrian Thompson** returns to the role of First Jew. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1997 at the Barbican in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and has also sung Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Arv (*Maskarade*) and Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*) for the Company.

Current Jette Parker Young Artist British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner** sings Second Jew. He made his Royal Opera debut singing the role of Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*) in October 2008. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Count of Lerma (*Don Carlo*), Attendant (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Gastone de Letorières (*La traviata*) and Major Domo I (*Der Rosenkavalier*).

Reprising the role of Third Jew is former Young Artist **Hubert Francis**. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 2003 as Peasant (*Luisa Miller*) and his recent roles with the Company have included Spoletta (*Tosca*), Brühlmann (*Werther*) and Trin (*La fanciulla del West*).

Jette Parker Young Artist American tenor **Steven Ebel** sings Fourth Jew, one of five roles he will sing for The Royal Opera this Season. He made his debut at Covent Garden in the role of Victorin/Voice of Gaston in *Die tote Stadt* in January 2009.

Company Principal British bass **Jeremy White** returns to the role of Fifth Jew which he sang when the production was new in 2008. His roles during the Season include Betto di Signa (*Gianni Schicchi*), Master of Ceremonies (*The Tsarina's Slippers*), Commissioner (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Parson/Badger (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Baron (*The Gambler*) and Benoit (*La bohème*).

Former Jette Parker Young Artist **Vuyani Mlinde** sings the role of First Nazarene, having sung the role of A Cappadocian, when the production was new in 2008. His roles for The Royal Opera include made his Royal Opera, Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*), Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Jake Wallace (*La fanciulla del West*). He sang the role of Colline (*La bohème*) earlier in the season.

Jette Parker Young Artist South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg** sings the role of Second Nazarene for the first time. He makes his debut with The Royal Opera as Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*) in September 2009 and his other roles during the Season include Steersman (*Tristan und Isolde*), Potapytch (*The Gambler*) and Moralès (*Carmen*).

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi

11 July at 6.30pm, 14, 17 July at 7pm

Production generously sponsored (2009) by



Richard Eyre's much-loved atmospheric staging of Verdi's *La traviata*, with its rich stage designs, returns to Covent Garden for the second run of the 2009/10 Season. Designs are by **Bob Crowley** with lighting by **Jean Kalman** and movement by **Jane Gibson**.

Franco-Canadian conductor **Yves Abel**, Principal Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, made his debut conducting the first run of performances of *La traviata* in May 2010 and now returns for further performances.

Returning to the role of the consumptive heroine Violetta, which she created in the original production in 1994, is Covent Garden favourite, Romanian soprano **Angela Gheorghiu**. Following her success in the production, she reprised the role at Covent Garden in 1996. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) in 1992 and her many other roles with the Company include Mimì (*La bohème*), Liù (*Turandot*), Nina (*Chérubin*), Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Amelia (*Simon Boccanegra*), Magda (*La rondine*), Marguerite (*Faust*) and the title role in *Tosca*.

Rising star American tenor **James Valenti** makes his debut with The Royal Opera in the role of Alfredo Germont, a role he has previously performed in Salzburg, Bologna, Hamburg, Brussels, Las Palmas, Toronto, Korea, Berlin and New York. He sings the role opposite Angela Gheorghiu at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in May 2009 and will make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York as Alfredo in March 2010.

Serbian baritone **Željko Lučić** returns to the role of Giorgio Germont, which he has already performed in this production in 2006 and has also sung in Vienna, Frankfurt, Aix-en-Provence and Luxembourg. He made his debut at the Royal Opera House in March 2005 singing the role of Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*).

Singing the role of Flora for the first time at Covent Garden is Estonian mezzo-soprano **Kai Rüütel**, a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme. Her roles during the 2009/10 Season include Venerable Lady (*The Gambler*), Zaida (*Il turco in Italia*) and Rosette (*Manon*).

As in the May performances, the role of Annina is sung by British mezzo-soprano **Sarah Pring**. Her roles for The Royal Opera include Madame Larina (*Eugene Onegin*), Wellgunde (*Götterdämmerung*), Berta (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Lisa (*Cyrano de Bergerac*).

Senior Artist **Robert Lloyd** returns to sing the role of Doctor Grenvil which he first sang for the Company in 1975. His roles during the 2009/10 Season include Carlos V (*Don Carlo*), King of Egypt (*Aida*) and Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*).

Jette Parker Principal Korean tenor **Ji-Min Park** returns to the role of Gastone de Letorières, which he first sang at Covent Garden in 2008. His other roles during the 2009/10 Season include Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Sailor (*Tristan und Isolde*) and Messenger (*Aida*).

Jette Parker Young Artist Korean baritone **Changhan Lim**, who made his debut with The Royal Opera as Hermann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) in 2008, sings the role of Marquis D'Obigny for both runs. His other roles during the 2009/10 Season include Flemish Deputy (*Don Carlo*), Moralès (*Carmen*) and Wood Goblin (*The Tsarina's Slippers*).

Returning to the role of Baron Douphol is English baritone **Eddie Wade**. His roles for The Royal Opera include Mandarin (*Turandot*) and Indian (*The Bartered Bride*).

JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS SUMMER PERFORMANCE

Saturday 17 July at 1pm

Generously supported by Oak Foundation

Once again, the Jette Parker Young Artists make the main stage their own for their annual summer performance staged by fellow Young Artist **José Dario Innella**. It will feature all the singers on the Young Artist Programme, including five who joined in September 2009, British soprano **Elisabeth Meister**, Estonian mezzo-soprano **Kai Rüütel**, American tenor **Steven Ebel**, South African baritone **Dawid Kimberg**, Polish bass **Lukas Jakobski**, as well as the four singers who joined in September 2008, Romanian soprano **Simona Mihai**, Japanese soprano **Eri Nakamura**, British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner** and South Korean baritone **Changhan Lim**. Two conductors from the Programme **Dominic Grier** and **Steven Moore** will share the conducting honours, conducting The Orchestra of the Royal Opera House.

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